

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 27 November 2023

Councillors present:

A Athwall
N Beecroft-Smith (*Chairman of the Town Council*)
A Comber
A Cook
R Gibson
G Lynch
J Ogden
A Skinner
G Ward

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk
A Dougall – RFO

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – The Chair welcomed all those present, apologies received from Cllr Hook, reason – personal, following the vote they were accepted. Apologies also noted from District and County Cllrs McCallum and Lawson.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – Cllr A Comber, Item 8. – Scout Leader and Director of RFC, non-pecuniary. Cllr J Ogden, Item 8. – Scout Leader, non-pecuniary.
- 3. Minutes of the Full Town Council meeting** held on 16 October 2023, following the vote this were agreed and signed by the Chair. Cllr Ogden noted his apologies had not been noted, the Clerk apologised for her error in not confirming Cllr Ogden's apologies at the October full Town Council meeting.
- 4. Chairman's Communication** – Cllr Beecroft-Smith confirmed the town council had now completed the busiest part of the events calendar for the year. The Fireworks, KTC Remembrance Service, Tree Light Switch On, Ice Skating and Santas Grotto were all very well attended and a great success. He wished to note his sincere thanks to all town council staff for all their hard work during this time. The Chair also thanked the Cllrs who attended and gave their support at these events. It was noted that the Lighting of the Beacon wasn't very well attended and therefore supported this only taking place in the future for specific events. Cllr Beecroft-Smith also attended the reception at All Saints Church on 20 November to welcome the new Vicar, Rev Sarah Quantrill.
- 5. Clerks/Officer Report/Update** – J Abbott provided the following report.
 - Following the Chairs report, also thanked all staff and Cllrs who attended and supported with the events, another very successful year.
 - Received written confirmation from the original builders and architect that there is no 'RAAC' in the MJH building.
 - Tree works to reduce height of Oak tree in office car park have been agreed by ESC Planning (TPO), works due to take place imminently.

- Dentaaid planned visit to Kesgrave cancelled due to shortage of volunteers, hopefully will be re arranged in new year.
- Attended SCC Climate workshop with Cllr Comber on Saturday 4 November in Saxmundham.
- Attended Kesgrave Highschool's first wellbeing fayre with J Catling, supporting 4YP.
- 1000 bulbs have been planted along Legion Green and Cedarwood Walk.
- Attended ESC Chief Ex meeting 1 November.

6. Members of the Public – none.

7. County and District Councillors Reports –

- J Abbott provided a brief update on behalf of County & District Cllr McCallum. The office has been working with Cllr McCallum on road safety at Heath School, an intergenerational project with a local café, various Highway issues and along with Cllr Lawson there is a follow up meeting with Cedarwood Primary School in January re school parking.
- District Cllr G Lynch confirmed still pursuing the ongoing issue with Air B&B properties in residential areas in Kesgrave. Attended recent ESC Scrutiny Committee meeting, where Cllr & Cabinet member Bevan spoke about plans for council housing. ESC holding a Youth Council next February, which will be held in Lowestoft. At the ESC full council meeting the recent 'our direction' survey was discussed with proposed plans, questions made to budgeting the proposals.

8. Finance & Governance –

- a. Finance & Governance Committee meeting minutes; 13 November 2023 – these were noted.

- **Item 11. Saving Accounts and Short-term Investments with Cash Flow Report** – Cllr Gibson summarised the points raised during the F&G meeting.
 - Reserves are funds allocated for future projects and the current interest rates on these deposits are minimal.
 - Flagstone is a deposit scheme with options to save money in short term deposits and instant access accounts.
 - The minimum deposit is £500,000, initially held in a holding account before the Council agrees to deposit funds in a suitable financial institution(s). It should be noted that the £85,000 FSCS limit will be considered.
 - The internal controls will be reviewed by the Council to ensure any risks are reduced.
 - The higher interest rates will earn extra income as recommended in the Internal Auditor report.

Cllr Ogden proposed, seconded by Cllr Gibson, the recommendation by the F&G Committee, to deposit £500,000 with Flagstone. This would require one initial application without having to apply separately to each financial institution. All agreed following the vote to proceed with the application using the services of the Flagstone Saving Platform.

- b. Schedule of Accounts –

- List of Payments for the period 01/09/2023 to 30/09/2023 - all accepted and agreed following the vote.
- List of Receipts for the period 01/09/2023 to 30/09/2023 - all accepted and agreed following the vote.

- c. Transfer from the KTC Card Payments Account for September 2023 - the transfers were agreed following the vote.
 - d. Version 4 Draft Budget 2024/25 – A Dougall presented the report updated with the amendments discussed at the F&G meeting held 13 November 2023 and further adjustments by A Dougall/J Abbott to reduce the precept requirement. The suggestion to reduce to 13.27% by further funding the shortfall from reserves was not agreed - EMR reserves have already been included to fund part of budget and by further reducing the precept, projects would not be funded. Cllr Gibson proposed, seconded by Cllr Lynch to accept the updates with 18.85% increase from 2023/24, acknowledging that the increase is necessary to fund projects in Kesgrave without depleting reserves. Although the overall percentage appears high, in monetary terms, it equates to an increase of £13.95 per annum (26.8p per week). All agreed, except Cllr Ogden and Cllr Beecroft-Smith (abstained), following the vote to accept the changes with further review at the next F&G meeting.
 - e. Grants Policy review / update – Cllr Gibson presented the revised Grants Policy. The main change is the revised wording for repeat applications. All agreed, following the vote, to accept the changes subject to amending the website address and next review 26 June 2025.
- 9. Planning & Development** – Committee meeting minutes; 16 October 2023, 1 November 2023 and 13 November 2023, were noted and Cllr Gibson, Chair of P&D mentioned planning application, 306 Main Road, which was recently discussed by the committee.
- 10. Community & Recreation** – Committee meeting minutes; 20 November 2023 were noted, no questions raised.
- 11. Community Engagement Strategy** – The Chair and Cllr Skinner went over the updated document; it is proposed to continue with the ‘soft launch’ with a view to ‘go live’ in February 2024, following training for staff in January 2024. This was supported and agreed by full council.
- 12. Litter and Fido Waste Bin Policy from East Suffolk Council** – The Clerk confirmed that the draft policy had been circulated and reviewed. Following a discussion, it was agreed for the Clerk to respond on behalf of Council, advising the policy is supported in principal but is repetitive and too long with a few minor points/suggestions to be made.
- 13. Other/Urgent Communications** – The Clerk advised the office alarm had its annual serviced today. This will need upgrading in the next year, it was agreed for the Clerk to look at the system and make proposals in the new year to the Finance & Governance Committee to consider, agree.
- 14. Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 22 January 2024 at 7.15pm at Town Council Office.
- 15. Agenda Items for Next Meeting** – none.
- 16. Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** – no members of the public present.

Agenda items 17a and 18a were then discussed in the CONFIDENTIAL part of this meeting.

this part of the meeting finished at 8.37pm.

Chair**Date.....**

DRAFT