

MINUTES OF THE KINGSDON BI-MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11th JULY 2013 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00pm

Present: Mr. A Masters (Chairman); Mrs. A Saunders (Vice-Chairman); D. Morris, M. Clode, A. Colton and Mrs. E Owen (Parish Councillors); Mr. J. Calvert (District Councillor); Mr D. Ruddle (County Councillor); Mrs. K Hatt (Parish Clerk) plus 36 parishioners.

1. Apologies: None received.

2. Declarations of Interest: None received.

3. Minutes:

The following amendment was noted and agreed: Village telephone box, a quote in the region of £700 from John Yates, Parish council will not match this but give a once off payment of £350.

The chairman reiterated that should any parishioner have any complaints about the parish council please contact a councillor with the complaint and also any items that they would like to see discussed at the next meeting.

4. Kingsdon Community Centre and Sports Field:

A report was given by Councillor Owen; the following are the main points:

On the 13th May the committee met so the Plunkett Foundation consultant could look around the school. A business proposal needed to be submitted by 30th June, so the village consultation had to be re-run. The news of the shop closing changed things as it meant the original business proposal would need to change.

We will now get 100% rate relief as there would be only one shop in the village.

Different grants will have to be applied for as the cash flow system will be different and things like shelving will be required.

A formal thank-you was given to Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Dean Ruddle for all of their prompt help. A meeting was arranged for the 24th June to discuss things further. SSDC suggested that we apply for an immediate community officers grant of £750 but this would need to be matched funded by the Parish council.

The questionnaires had a response rate of 59%; over 50% is considered exceptional.

60% of people said the idea for a café and community area was appealing or quite appealing.

84% said it was important that Kingsdon had a shop.

111 people said that this shop should be based at the school.

At the meeting on the 24th June with Somerset County Council it was explained that the school, adjacent green space and separate playing field needed to generate income. The school and adjacent land has a value of £275,000, with a sum of £5000 per annum as a market rent for the school.

The Kingsdon representatives stated that they were seeking a 25 year lease on the school at 100% rental discount. Furthermore in order to quickly re-establish a shop they needed a temporary six month license for immediate use of the school premises.

SCC agreed in principle however they would need to consult with other SCC colleagues and said that Kingsdon would need to cover legal fees between £500 and £1000. However a grant Locality would be used to cover this.

The six month license would be between SCC and Kingsdon Parish council.

We have been allocated from the Plunkett Foundation a regional advisor who looks after the community shops in this area. All of this help received has been free.

4.1 Temporary Village Shop:

We have an offer from SCC to grant a temporary license for use of the building. We would need to see the license terms before agreeing.

Planning permission needs to be attained and done through the Parish Council.

Mr. J Calvert added the following information – we will need planning consent. The fee is £385, but if this is done through the Parish Council there would be a 50% discount. There is an attempt to wave the fee altogether, if this is not possible; there is another grant we can apply for.

Councillor Owen continued: A meeting was held for volunteers to set up an action group. The action group will be looking at practical issues e.g. hours, stock etc. and they will be helped by the Plunkett Foundation.

The license will include the use of the rear lawn as it is for the whole area until it becomes legally separate. The play equipment can be used – moved or used in situ.
The Parish Council will not be expected to trade as a shop from the parish fund, a separate account will be set up for this.

The license is still currently being negotiated.

Planning permissions for change of use must come first – from a school to a business – this will take between 6 and 8 weeks. To get the maximum grant of £750 from SSDC we need a matching fund of £750 from the Parish Council.

There is a grant that can be applied for, it is about £5000. It would cover legal fees, building survey and so on but it would not cover things like a fridge, shelves, connecting utilities. This is where we would need the grant of £750 and £750 from the Parish Council. This is an extra £250 to the £500 already pledged (2012-2013) for the setting up of the community centre and not a new amount of money.

The following questions were raised:

Q: What happens at the end of the 6 months to the license?

A: The committee will continue negotiations but it is unlikely they would throw us out. But if it is not a success the license will just be given back, termination clauses will need to be checked. The 6 months gives us a trial and the SCC doesn't want the grade 2 listed building empty over the winter months.

Q: What about running/maintenance costs?

A: Running costs will still be there but it will be a pepper corn rent. It will not be handed over in a state and for 6 months we will not be expected to carry out major repairs. SCC will keep the building insured.

Q: What liability would the parish council have and individually?

A: There would be no liability but we can check this carefully and we would need to check insurance carefully.

Q: Where is the business plan that was promised?

A: As this is a pop up/quick start shop, there can be no business plan but there will be for the longer term plan.

Q: It is the parishioner's money so who will pay if there are any losses/who will return the public money should the shop fail?

A: The Parish council are not liable for any losses and the Plunkett Foundation will give a lot of support to stop it from failing.

Comments from councilors and parishioners:

- a) The former shop may not have had high enough standard of products which is why it was not supported.
- b) The shop is needed to bring life back to the village.
- c) £750 is not a large amount over 6 months to see how things go.
- d) There is a difference between being cautious and negative.

Proposal by Councillor E Owen:

Subject to a satisfactory license agreement (that the Parish council sees and approves before it is signed; a copy goes to the insurance company for their approval and no further liabilities will be involved to the Parish Council or individuals), it is proposed that Kingsdon Parish Council should enter into a license with Somerset County Council on the former primary school to permit access to the building and setting up of a temporary shop, with £750 pledged to the action group for the purpose of setting up the temporary shop.

Seconded by Councillor A Colton.

It was resolved to accept the proposal unanimously. (Although some councillors were more reluctant due to their concerns.)

4.2 Kingsdon Centre:

The school committee is still looking at the longer term plan. They are currently building up the business case. This would have been seen earlier but the closing of the shop changed things and it would never have been possible until after the 24th June as this was when the cost of the building was shared. We will have to fundraise but there are also grants available. We are eligible to apply to SSDC for £12,500 capital grant. If we can raise £10,000 on a community share issue then the Plunkett Foundation will match that with another £10,000 from the Esme Fairbairn foundation, as well as a £2000 bursary. This totals £34,500. Other funding will include a contribution from the Section 106 relating to Kingsdon Manor School development (Confirmation of the amount is still awaited from SSDC).

4.3 Former Primary School Field:

Councillor D Morris reported:

He is very concerned about the field. He is pro a shop in the village, but has concerns about whether the school as a grade II listed building is necessarily the best place for it. If the school is gained there are concerns that it will affect the field. They are listed as separate assets of community value but they have been discussed at the same time. If the council hand over the school to us then they may be less likely to help us keep the sports field. If all our energies go into the school he fears that the school field will get left behind.

He stated that lots of people are keen to see the open space retained and that some villagers would possibly choose this over the school building. Support for the field is clearly demonstrable in the recent survey.

Please raise the profile for the field.

Dean Ruddle explained he is having a meeting about the sport field on Monday where he will try his best but he suspects the county will resist giving the community the sport field.

John Calvert explained the district council has a legal obligation to get maximum return. The council is being very generous to support the shop but the field is a separate issue to the school.

A croquet and boule club has been set up and a case made to sport 50. They have funding for equipment and tuition and are hoping to use the sports field.

It was requested that the club please write to David Huxtable about how they want to use the field.

A temporary license for use of the field may be applied for.

5. Maintenance

5.1 Grass verge cutting

A permit for putting planters in Cary way was discussed. A permit would be required which at the moment only costs £25 with an increase to £165 in September.

Proposal by Councillor A Colton,

The council apply for a permit, at £25, to put planters into the verge in Cary way.

Seconded by Councillor M Clode

It was resolved to accept the proposal unanimously.

ACTION – A Colton to obtain permit.

5.2 Village field walls

A section is being done at a time.

The cost is £3000 not £3,900.

5.3 Telephone box

John Yates and his team have removed the broken glass, removed plastic panes and stripped the paint. The fund raising is going well, £171 from 40% of village. Somerton windows are sponsoring it and providing the glass.

It was confirmed that the team are covered in our insurance policy, and if tools are used properly then they are covered for accidents as well.

The telephone box has been estimated as an asset of about £4000.

ACTION: AS to confirm the asset value with the insurance company.

5.4 Village pound wall

Repairs will be looked at when the village field wall is complete

5.5 Community payback scheme

The scheme was discussed.

The council voted against using this scheme.

5.6 Replacement allotment wicket gate

Mick Conway has replaced the gate free. The Parish council gave him a notice of thanks.

5.7 Flooding funding

Any issues of flooding in the village were discussed as there is some funding available.

Allotment hill was discussed but the ditches are going to be cleared followed by the drains to see if this will solve the problem first.

The question was raised – does anyone know of any flooding in the village?

There was no response.

6. Highways

6.1 Speed limit

It was reported that we were waiting for the speed camera to be installed; the camera was installed at the bottom of allotment hill. The camera has since removed and we are now waiting for the results to be collated. A Colton said he would publish the results in the chronicle, and that should there be evidence of speeding it would be taken to consultation.

7. Village noticeboard.

Martin Singleton and Mike Windsor have erected the notice board. The parish council gave them a notice of thanks.

8. Children's Play Area/Equipment

It was reported that Mike Brown is making headway with grant applications; a £2000 grant has been agreed.

It will cost in the region of £25,000.

We need to satisfy Virador that we support Mike Brown.

It was recommended that we can use £1000 out of the children's fund, a small admin fee may be payable. The other £1000 is already allocated to a baby/toddler swing.

GTH have no objection to erecting further equipment but ask that they are consulted before installation.

The old school play equipment can be moved to the village field however planning have said only two more pieces of equipment and no more than 4 metres high without applying or planning consent

ACTION: Mike Brown to let Elaine Owen know if we want the old school play equipment.

Proposal by Councillor A Saunders:

The parish council support Mikes Brown's application to Virador for a grant of £10,000 for which a contribution from the Parish Council would be £1000 from the children's fund. This would come back to the Children's fund via the grant received.

The Parish Council supports and thanks Mr. Brown for his efforts to secure grants for the extra play equipment and accepts his offer to see the project through

Seconded by E Owen.

It was resolved to accept the proposal unanimously.

9. Village website

It was reported that Hannah Carlisle has sent a detailed specification of the website. A design brief has been sent to the councillors.

There is an events calendar (crucial to help village hall bookings), historic photos, village hall page, church and clubs and the parish council.

Photos from the calendar can also go on it.

All the meetings about the school could go on the website – a quicker publication of the minutes.

The ongoing costs would be hosting costs, not more than £125 a year, about £10 a month. An advantage to councillors is personal email address would not be on the site.

No work will be started until we have written to say what is on the site.

Not everyone was convinced we need a website. We also need to be cautious of on-going costs.

It was stated that it will be important that the whole thing is updated all the time. Different pages will be updated by different people.

It will take Hannah 32 hours to do 7 pages.

A £120 doesn't seem excessive a year to support the village hall.

Proposal by Councillor E Owen:

The parish council accepts the cost of £600 to set up the website with running/ongoing costs to be investigated which could be around £120 per year. Councillor Owen to report back further on these costs at the September meeting

Seconded by A Colton.

It was resolved to accept the proposal by majority provided that we will monitor the costs.

10. Charles Arnold Baker

Purchasing this book was discussed as it is a necessary legal aid to the council.

It was resolved unanimously to purchase the book immediately as long as we get the latest 9th edition.

ACTION: A Saunders to purchase book.

11. *The Good Councillors Guide* new national guidance for parish councillors

This is an important brand new guide for parish councillors. It gives advice and lists some items that we need legally.

It was resolved unanimously to hold a separate meeting to decide on the implications for the council once all councillors have read the document.

ACTION: K Hatt to organise the meeting once councillors have had chance to read the material.

12. Cheque signing and financial report

12.1 Financial report

It was reported that the internal auditor has signed the accounts off.

In accordance with the required details the notice of Audit has been displayed. The external auditor has been notified that they will be late. 40% of organisations don't send them until September.

There is a new external auditor this year.

With Ian's help all of the accounts have been updated into a computer accounting programme written specifically for this Parish Council. The accounts and financial reporting have been updated, everything will be held on computer with back up discs. It was acknowledged that hours have been spent by A Saunders doing this and the preparation of the accounts for audit.

It was proposed that the council's accounting follows the system that has been in operation for years and is now updated on to computer discs.

All councilors were happy for T Masters to sign the accounts off.

12.2 Cheque signing

Cheques signed out of Council:

- a) M.Singleton reimbursement for noticeboard installation £24.06
- b) Mrs.K. Hatt May and June £50 monthly imbursement
- c) SCC for the permit of £25

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

