

KINGS WALDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Kings Walden Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Breachwood Green on Tuesday 21st June 2016 at 7.45 pm

Present: Cllrs: Amanda King (Chair), Amanda Thompson, Tom Harrison, Jon Chamberlin, Liz Thurlby, Ross Macleod and David Bennett. In attendance: Cllr F Frost, the clerk: Tom Brindley

2.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Martin Rosser.

2.2 Chairman's Remarks

2.2.1 The chairman reminded members that declarations of interest should be made immediately prior to the item under discussion.

2.3 **Minutes of Meeting 17th May 2016** The minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by the chairman.

2.4 Matters arising

2.4.1 The clerk was asked to write to NHDC regarding pollution from landing aircraft.

2.4.2 NHDC was insisting that the Breachwood Times and the History Society complete grant applications for the grants pledged by Cllrs Barnard and Frost. The chairman agreed to pass on the forms.

2.4.3 All other matters were covered on the agenda.

2.5 Public participation

2.5.1 Cllr Barnard had a prior engagement; Cllr Frost read a report on his behalf.

- a. A new highways liaison officer had been appointed.
- b. The Police Commissioner had published a leaflet promoting a scheme whereby, residents would be trained in using a speed monitoring device. To participate in the scheme residents would need to raise a minimum of ten signatures and at least two active volunteers.
- c. Cllr Barnard had successfully petitioned on behalf of a Breachwood Green pupil who had been allocated a Stevenage school. The pupil had now been found a place at a Hitchin school.

2.5.2 Cllr Faye Frost reported on District Council matters:

- a. The local plan will be considered by council on 20th July and the report should be in the public domain early July. There will follow a short consultation period prior to submission to the Secretary of State who would appoint a planning inspector to hold an Examination in Public. Were the council not to submit a plan, the government reserved the right to take over the planning process and impose its own plan.
- b. Area Committee grants had been slashed by 55% and a de minimus of £150 set. Furthermore, precepting authorities (such as the parish council) would not be eligible for grants.
- c. The entire Area Committees structure was under threat as a cost saving measure.
- d. Grants to The Breachwood Green History Society and The Breachwood Times had been approved, but the societies would be required to submit grant applications.

2.5.3 The clerk explained that, historically, parishes had received a discount to council tax, known as "special expenses" to compensate for the fact that in towns, the district council provided play areas while in villages this responsibility fell onto parish councils. This discount was withdrawn and replaced by a grants scheme, known as PACIF, which too had since been withdrawn. Members instructed the clerk to write to the district council objecting to the ban on grants to parish councils, and asking for clarification on how the anomaly between towns and villages would be addressed.

2.6 Council Meeting July 2016

Councillor Amanda Thompson had offered to host a council meeting at the shop in Ley Green. Cllr Thompson explained that the venue could be in the shop, which would be cramped, or in a marquee. Members **RESOLVED** to hold the meeting in the marquee.

2.7 Council Meeting Calendar

Members considered changing the day on which the council met from Tuesday to Thursday in line with a request from the village hall. After discussion members **RESOLVED** to continue holding meetings on the third Tuesday of each month.

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2.7.4 After discussion, members agreed to vary the agenda to give emphasis on specific topics. To allow for this, members **RESOLVED** to receive quarterly financial reports rather than monthly, and to streamline payment approvals. The clerk was asked to draw up a timetable of agendas for the whole year to demonstrate how this would be achieved.

2.8 Finance

2.8.1 **Financial report** The clerk presented the monthly report to 31st May 2016.

2.8.2 The clerk presented the payment list. Members noted that only discretionary payments need approval as contracted sums were approved at the time the contract was placed. This included the payroll, as all staff were on fixed hours, and the gardening contractor who was also on a fixed summer/winter schedule.

2.8.3 S137 Expenditure. Members **RESOLVED** to use powers from S137 of the Local Government Act 1974 to spend £55 (£30 CDA Herts and £25 Kings Walden Gardening Club) for community benefit.

2.8.4 **Payments** totalling £3412.61 were **AUTHORISED** (see list annexed to these minutes).

2.8.5 The clerk reported that the proposed internet banking controls were not working as planned. It was agreed that bank signatories would be give limited access to internet banking to enable a two-step authorisation of online payments. Cllrs Bennett, King, and Thurlby agreed to be added to the internet banking mandate.

2.8.6 Cllr Macleod volunteered to discuss the internet banking authorisation with his Lloyds bank business manager.

2.8.7 The clerk advised that he would document an improved cash handling process for the youth club and that cash above the float requirement would be banked.

2.9 Annual Return - Accounting Statements

2.9.1 The internal auditor had reviewed the books and signed the Annual Return.

2.9.2 Members reviewed the Accounting Statements prepared and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and authorised the Chairman to sign the Accounting Statements on behalf of the council.

2.9.3 The clerk explained that the accounts would now be open for examination by the public.

2.9.4 **External Audit** The clerk explained that he would now prepare a variance analysis explaining any significant changes from the previous year. This, together with the annual return and bank reconciliation, would be sent to the external auditor.

2.10 Risk Register

Members reviewed the risk register (annexed to these minutes).

2.11 Planning

No planning applications had been notified and no planning decisions had been made.

2.12 Recreation Grounds and Play Areas

2.12.1 The chairman was still seeking a meeting with the head of Breachwood Green JMI school regarding sharing of the junior pitch.

2.12.2 The Clerk advised that the cheque received from the Tigers football club was being held until the sharing arrangement had been concluded.

2.12.3 The annual safety reports on Breachwood Green and Kings Walden play areas had been received. The conclusion was medium risk with no urgent safety actions. Members agreed to consider the report in more detail at a future meeting.

2.12.4 Cllrs Macleod and Chamberlin had been unable to arrange an inspection of the council's gardening equipment, which was stored in a shed belonging to the cricket club. Cllr Chamberlin agreed to approach the cricket club to obtain access and carry out an inspection. Following the inspection, a strategy for servicing and replacing gardening equipment would be devised.

2.12.5 Cllr Macleod considered the invoice for mower servicing was good value and the council affirmed that it was not seeking an alternative maintenance supplier.

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- 2.12.6 The clerk was supported in his stance that the maintenance supplier should only act following receipt of a purchase order and not on verbal instruction from any other party.
- 2.12.7 A meeting had been arranged with a playground equipment supplier who would survey the play equipment and make recommendations for refurbishment. Cllr King would meet the contractor.
- 2.12.8 It was agreed that Cllr King would also take the surveyor to Ley Green and that this play area would be included in the refurbishment plan.
- 2.12.9 Cllr Thurlby noted that the prohibition signs at Breachwood Green had become distressed. Members **RESOLVED** to replace the signs and to include wording regarding use of drones and model aircraft.

2.13 Highways (including footpaths and street naming)

- 2.13.1 **Parish Path Benches:** Cllr Chamberlin was still seeking to meet with Nic Cooper regarding siting of benches.
- 2.13.2 **Quad Bikes** It was reported that quad bikes were using the footpath from Oxford Road to Bendish through Great House Wood, since the stile had been removed.
- 2.13.3 Cllr Harrison agreed to discuss what could be done with Tom Goldsmith, the county footpaths officer.
- 2.13.4 Members were advised that the use of motorised vehicles on a footpath was a police matter. The landowner's responsibility was to ensure the footpath was kept free of obstructions not to control who or what used it.
- 2.13.5 The clerk was asked to approach Mr Goldsmith to ask for a copy of the definitive footpath map, as this would allow easier identification for reporting of footpath issues.
- 2.13.6 Cllr King had attended the County Highways Liaison meeting.

2.14 Village Hall

The council had removed the filing cabinet from the committee room and the cupboard from the rear corridor and relocated them in the youth hut.

2.15 Youth Club and Youth Hut

- 2.15.1 The clerk had purchased a cash register which had been handed over to the youth workers.

2.16 Grant Application: Kings Walden Gardening Club

- 2.16.1 The council had received a request from Kings Walden Gardening Club to sponsor a prize at the autumn show. Members concluded that, while they did have the power to make such an award, it would be better to support the show in general, by making a donation towards running costs in return for an acknowledgement in the programme. The council **RESOLVED** to award £25 towards the Kings Walden Gardening Club autumn show. As the amount was low, it was agreed to waive the grant application formalities.

2.17 Correspondence

- 2.17.1 The Chiltern Society magazine was circulated.
- 2.17.2 A notice requesting residents to make known their views regarding the local plan had been circulated.

2.18 Date of Next Meetings

- Parish Council: Tuesday 19th July 2016 7.45 pm at **Kings Walden Stores, Plough Lane, Ley Green.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.35 p.m.

Signed Chairman _____ Date _____

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PAYMENTS APPROVED

<i>Power</i>	<i>Payee</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Chq #</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>
4	Todeka	Office services	FPO		60.00	50.00	10.00
5	T Brindley	Clerk Expenses	CQ		108.71	91.66	17.05
1	W Billington	Gardening (estimate)	FPO		250.00	250.00	0.00
2	Play Safety	Annual Inspection	FPO		201.60	168.00	33.60
4	HAPTC	Training	FPO		35.00	35.00	0.00
2	J Davey	Mower servicing	FPO		74.60	74.60	0.00
4	DCK Beavers	Payroll admin	FPO		30.00	25.00	5.00
7	Kings Walden Gardening Club	Grant	CQ		25.00	25.00	0.00
7	CDA Herts	Subscription	CQ		30.00	30.00	0.00
5	Payroll	Payroll	FPO		2597.70	2597.70	0.00
TOTAL					3412.61	3346.96	65.65

Powers:

- 1 Grass cutting: Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10
- 2 Play area/Glebe land: LG (Misc Provisions) Act 1976 s.19
- 3 HAPTC membership: LGA 1972 s.143
- 4 Audit, Insurance, Training: LGA 1972 s.111
- 5 Salary/expenses: LGA 1972 s.112(2)
- 6 Other, Localism Act 2011
- 7 S137: LGA 1972 s137

KINGS WALDEN PARISH COUNCIL

RISK REGISTER

Area	Risk	Controls	Impact	Probability	Score
Assets	Protection of physical assets	An asset register is maintained, the insurance value increased annually; value and assets register reviewed at meeting following the annual council meeting.	3	1	3
Councillors' propriety	Registers of interests and gifts and hospitality	Register of interests completed. Declarations of interest recorded at each meeting. Members regularly reminded to update Register of Interests.	2	3	6
Employer Liability	Payroll	Payroll calculations outsourced. Payroll payments brought in house	2	2	4
Employer Liability	Comply with Employment Law	NALC/SLCC/HMRC guidance followed re contract terms and employment practice. Employment Committee monitors.	2	1	2
Employer Liability	Clerk lone working	Telephone communication available.	1	1	1
Finance	Signatories	All councillors to be signatories to ensure cheques can be signed promptly.	2	2	4
Finance	Financial controls and records	Council's Financial Regulations based on national recommendations.	3	1	3
Finance	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept	Detailed budget prepared based on prior year experience and known future changes. Financial report to Council meetings to show actual to budget comparison.	2	1	2
Finance	Loss of cash through theft/dishonesty	Fidelity cover in place (limit increased in 2015). Generally, no cash is held.	1	1	1
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	Clerk to clarify legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary. Subscription to HAPTC, NALC, SLCC	2	2	4
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	Council no longer has the General Power of Competence, revert to S137	1	2	2
Legal Liability	Proper and timely reporting via the minutes	Council meets monthly and always receives and approves minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes made available to public via the web site.	1	2	2
Legal Liability	Proper document control	Document register has been compiled and reviewed regularly.	1	2	2
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	Play Areas inspected regularly.	2	2	4
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	Risk from cricket balls penetrating MUGA is recognised. The council will work with the Cricket Club to implement a solution.	4	1	4
Liability	General risks to Council, Councillors and Clerk	Comprehensive insurance policy maintained in form designed to protect against risks to which local authorities are exposed.	3	1	3
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	Insurance policy covers public liability and property risk.	3	1	3
Liability	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership (especially playground)	Insurance in place. Annual checks of play area made by a qualified specialist. Items with a risk above 8 are addressed.	3	1	3
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	Problems identified with roads, footpaths, trees etc. referred to responsible authority at NHDC or HCC.	1	1	1