

KNOWSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

24 June 2014 - Minutes of a meeting of Knowstone Parish Council

Present:

Cllr John Smith (CHAIR) Cllr Reg Howe, (RGH)
Cllr Suzanne Howe (SMH) Cllr John Stanbury (JRS)
Cllr Anthony Vigus (AV) Richard Vos (Clerk)

Also in attendance: DCC Cllr J Yabsley, ND Cllr E Ley, x4 Members of the Public

@ 8pm the meeting opened

1. Apologies:

1.1 Cllrs RJ Barfoot and DB Morgans

2. Declarations of interest (matters appearing on the posted agenda):

2.1 None

3. Minutes:

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting of KPC having been circulated:

Proposed: "To Approve the draft minutes as presented"

Outcome: PASSED (prop: RGH sec: SMH)

4. Matters arising from the minutes (not on the agenda).

4.1 None

5. Correspondence:

x1 items of correspondence have been received and filed in the correspondence file which was circulated at the meeting

5.1 DALC email 13 June 2014

6. Public Questions (limited to 20 minutes)

Meeting closed for public questions;

There being no questions from members of the public the meeting was reopened.

7. Finance:

7.1 Finance Report: Report was presented by CHAIR

Proposed: "To accept the financial report as accurate"

Outcome: PASSED (prop: SMH sec: JRS)

7.2 None

7.3 Proposed: To approve for payment Clerk's salary £139.60 (incl copying expenses etc.)

John Smith
22/7/14

Outcome: PASSED (prop: SMH sec; JRS)

8. Parish Plan Committee

The meeting was closed for Mrs R Newton to explain the position. The Parish Plan Committee is now defunct. A small balance – approx. £50 – of the original grant for expenses is held in a bank account to which Mrs Newton and Mrs Barfoot are the joint signatories. Mrs Newton will arrange to close the account and have a cheque drawn in favour of Knowstone Parish Council. The Clerk will give Mrs Newton a receipt for the monies.

9. Planning:

9.1 None

9.2 None

10. Report from District Councillor:

10.1 Cllr Eric Ley gave a verbal report on recent developments and matters of interest at District level. Incl a report on North Devon+ grant scheme which Cllr Ley reported had funds available for rural businesses who apply and who might expect to generate employment locally.

11. Report from County Councillor:

11.1 Cllr Jeremy Yabsley gave a verbal report on recent developments and matters of interest at County Council level. The main item of concern in the rural North Devon area is the planned closure of DCC residential care homes. Cllr Yabsley reassured the meeting that DCC would ensure the continuity of service provision to all existing care home residents.

11.2 The plans to revamp DCC's provision of Youth services would lead ultimately to a better service being provided for young people in South Molton.

11.3 Regarding the proposed purchase of land at East Hill Cllr Yabsley advised that DCC were waiting authority to get the valuation done by their nominated valuer. He advised KPC to arrange a valuation of the Land ASAP and suggested that subject to valuation if KPC were still interested in proceeding that the sooner KPC could submit an offer to DCC the better.

12. Purchase of Land – report on progress

12.1 CHAIR led the ongoing discussion regarding the possible investment of KPC funds for the purchase of amenity ground from DCC Farm Estates for the use of the parish.

12.2.1 It was agreed that in light of comments by Cllr Yabsley a valuation should now be obtained as a priority. The Clerk was instructed to contact Geoffrey Clapp Associates (GC) immediately to try to arrange for the valuation to be undertaken soonest.

12.2.2 The valuation will have to be done properly and it is to be expected that GC will want to charge for their time and professional expertise. In discussion it was

agreed that the Chairman in consultation with the Vice-Chairman could agree fees with GC for the valuation; no limit for professional fees was set and any liability for fees will be subject to ratification at the next (or future) meetings.

12.3 Discussion regarding the likely price that DCC would be expecting it is anticipated that the cost of the whole 5 ½ acres will be greater than the funds available. It was agreed that KPC should purchase as much of the enclosure as is possible and that if that meant borrowing money to cover the shortfall between the purchase price and the reserves available then that is what should be done.

12.3.1 The Clerk advised that provided proper procedures were followed –such as obtaining proper valuations - that the council could properly choose to borrow money from a third party lender. Provided the council did not act “ultra vires” (i.e acting beyond its power) there would be no personal liability to the individual council members.

12.4 The Clerk to minute:

12.4.1 GC to be instructed to value the land as soon as possible.

12.4.1a The valuation to be of the whole field 5½ acres (+/-) based on agricultural value with a figure for appropriate uplift for amenity value (to reflect proximity to village) but excluding the land which has already been promised within the DCC development scheme.

12.4.1b GC to be asked to advise separately on the value of the area of land which has been set aside for affordable housing within the DCC development scheme. It is possible that this land might also be available but it's purchase would be additional to the 5 ½ acres currently being discussed

12.4.2 If there is a shortfall between the contract price agreed with DCC for the purchase of the land in question and the cash reserves held by the council KPC will borrow such sums as are necessary from a third party lender to close the gap.

The Clerk read aloud the above minute.

Proposed: To proceed as detailed in the above minute 12.4

Outcome: PASSED (prop: JRS sec; SMH)

12.5 The need to progress the purchase and in particular to arrange the valuation with GC as soon as possible was repeated.

The Clerk read aloud the above minute.

Proposed: To proceed as detailed in the above minute 12.5

Outcome: PASSED (prop: JRS sec; SMH)

12.6 Proposed: The Chairman and The Vice-Chairman are authorised to make a formal offer to DCC on behalf of KPC for the purchase of land at East Hill Farm Knowstone up to a maximum value of £55,000 to buy enclosure 6400 including the plots set aside for affordable housing.

Outcome: PASSED (prop: SMH sec; AV)

13. Highways and Footpaths.

13.1 Members report (Highways) SMH reported that work on top dressing the A361 has nearly been completed

13.1.2 Devon has been allocated a pot of money to get pot-holes filled. A list of pot holes within the parish requiring attention should be compiled.

13.1.3. Further to the recent circulation of the DCC grass cutting and weed control statement

Proposed: The Clerk is to write to DCC highways to make the point that a three year cycle of weed control is not sufficiently frequent and that ragwort should be pulled by hand and burned before it sets seed every year.

Outcome: PASSED (prop: RGH sec; JRS)

13.1.4 The Clerk is also asked to make the point that litter should be picked before the grass verges on the A361 are cut to avoid an unsightly mess

13.2 Members Report (footpaths) CHAIR asked for help to survey the footpaths to identify a schedule of work to be done to maintain and repair the paths and gates etc AV confirmed that he'd be happy to assist.

14. Moors Management Report:

14.1 No report

15. Police Report:

RGH reported – No crimes have been reported in the Knowstone area but the police had been called out on two occasions

Police contact numbers:

In Emergencies call : 999

Non-Emergency call : 101

Email contact : southmolton@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

16. PCC report.

16.1 RGH reported that some rubbish had been fly-tipped on glebe land by Knowstone Court owned by the Diocese. RMH was hopeful that North Devon council had identified the perpetrator.

16.2 There will be two church services each month at Knowstone under the new vicar the Rev David Baker. One service– on the second Sunday of the month - will be a family service the next date for the Family Service will be 13 July at 11.15am

16.3 A survey of the bells in the church tower is to be carried out to establish the serviceability of the bells. RMH is calling for volunteers to help make up a new team of ringers.

17. Village Hall committee Report

17.1 CHAIR reported that he had attended a recent meeting of the Village Hall committee at which lots of good ideas had been passed around; the main concerns for the village hall are: 1. how to raise funds, 2. How best to spend their budget and 3. How to promote use of the village hall by the community.

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18. Members reports:

18.1 The light nights and long days of summer allow farmers to work longer days.
Proposed: That meetings of KPC be scheduled to start at 8pm rather than the usual 7.30pm in the months April, May, June, July August and September; meetings to start at 7.30pm in the remainder of the year.

Outcome: PASSED (prop: JDS sec; SMH)

18.2 The Clerk requested that consideration be given to installing a permanent lockable letterbox at the village hall so that in future official post addressed to the Clerk and or KPC would be delivered to an unchanging address within the parish. This would alleviate the problems experienced in the past when post was sent to private addresses of parish clerks living outside the parish. This was generally felt to be a good suggestion and some enquires can be made as to the likely costs.

19. Date & Time of next meeting:

19.1 Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 22nd July 2014 at 8.00 pm

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

Minutes prepared by Richard Vos (Parish Clerk)

Richard Vos
22/7/14