

Kimbleworth & Plawsworth P a r i s h & C o u n c i l

Kimbleworth and Plawsworth Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Kimbleworth and Plawsworth Parish Council held remotely via Skype, on Thursday, 11 March 2021 @ 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors – Cole, Craig, Hilland, Hodgson, Jackson, Kendall, Rippon and Walker (part).

Also in attendance – John Kelly (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Wilson and two members of the public.

During the public participation section prior to the formal meeting commencing, a member of the public (a tenant from the allotments) requested that an excessive amount of rubbish (left at plot 26 by the last tenant) be cleared by the Council. It was said that the metal, plastic, wood and bricks was not a proportionate or fair amount for the current tenant to clear and that it is an environmental hazard and risk to the tenant. It also results in a decrease in land available to the tenant. The Chair advised the item will be discussed later on the agenda (item 6(j)).

1. Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence:

There were no written apologies.

Resolved: *Nothing to resolve.*

3. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

No interests declared.

4. Minutes of Council meeting – 11 March 2021:

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 February 2021 were approved as a true record by the Council, with one amendment, suggested by Cllr Kendall, (that elections are per ward in the Parish elections and there are two seats in Kimbleworth, two seats in West Nettleworth and seven seats in Plawsworth) agreed by the Council.

5. Police Report:

PCSO Payne (not present) asked that the most recent PACT report for February be circulated with the agenda (acting as his update). All councillors advised they had read the PACT report. Cllr Jackson gave an update to the Council on the anti-social behaviour occurring in the woods near to Woodland Terrace. He has visited the site with a warden from Durham County Council (DCC) to discuss the litter and camp that has been built there. A plan will be put in place to clear the camp and check the woodland area more regularly.

6. Parish Matters and on-going items:

a) County Councillors Report

Councillor Wilson is still waiting on a response to the request to place the wooden carving and bench at this triangular piece of DCC land. Cllr Wilson was pleased to hear that the recent site visit at the woodland opposite Broadmires, between Cllr Jackson and the DCC warden, had been positive (as discussed under the agenda item above). Cllr Jackson reminded Cllr Wilson that he had enquired about the potential for a fence around the woods at a previous meeting – Cllr Wilson will push DCC for a response on this. Cllr Wilson advised that DCC have no record where the water for the trough was shut off in past years and that all new running water would require Northumbrian Water approval and implementation. There is no further action required from DCC regarding the water source. Cllr Craig asked Cllr Wilson to continue discussions regarding a safer crossing for the A167 at the Red Lion. Cllr Cole asked Cllr Wilson for his thoughts on the X20 bus route (correspondence to be noted later in the agenda) – he said he was generally supportive of any travel that assisted residents to attend work and visit family (or make essential journeys) on mornings, evenings, and weekends.

[Cllr Walker joined the meeting].

Cllr Walker asked Cllr Wilson to contact DCC regarding the requirement for a drop kerb on Cedar Avenue to assist those in wheelchairs to cross the road near to Oak Crescent.

Councillor Liddle sent an update to the Clerk regarding Ugly Lane. Discussions continue with DCC regarding improving the road, possibly providing parking, and erecting a fence around the football pitch.

Resolved: *Councillor Wilson and Councillor Liddle to update on all queries at the next meeting.*

b) Community Centre Report

Cllr Walker advised that free hot meal provision continues from the centre, for vulnerable residents. There is no update on the extension to the lease, due to end November 2021.

Resolved: *To note update.*

c) Planning Applications

None.

Resolved: *No planning applications to discuss.*

d) Allotments

The Clerk advised someone had recently placed a padlock on plot 7, without permission from the tenant. The plot was unlocked to allow pest control to access. The lock was forcibly removed. Pest control attended site on 27 February to carry out checks. The Clerk read a briefing paper that had been circulated to the Council with the meeting papers, which detailed the rubbish issues at plot 26. The previous tenant had held the plot for two decades with very few inspections by KPPC. Many buildings were erected, and excessive materials accrued, including metal, wood, and bricks. The new tenant has uncovered an excessive number of materials under the soil and at the back of the plot when they have cleared the garden. Photos were shown to the Council by the Clerk. Cllr Craig proposed that three quotes for clearance be collected and that the Council remove the rubbish. He had witnessed the previous state of the plot at first hand and believed the Council may have a duty to remove the items due to health and safety issues. Cllr Cole seconded the motion and the Council agreed to clear the rubbish – a quote will be agreed at the next meeting.

Cllr Cole asked whether a deposit could be requested for plots and asked the Clerk to research this – the Clerk advised his initial thoughts were that a small deposit would not cover the costs of clearance in the worst cases, that the allotment act may not allow for deposits, and a request may be prohibitive for some community members. Cllr Cole thanked the tenant of plot 26 for their commendable efforts in ‘turning the plot around’.

Resolved: *The Council will remove the rubbish collected at the rear of plot 26. The Clerk will arrange three quotes for clearance and bring back to April’s meeting. All other updates to be noted.*

e) Highways and road signage

No updates.

Resolved: *Nothing to resolve.*

f) Spring/ water trough at the roadside, Nettlesworth entrance (west)

The Clerk reminded the Council that a briefing paper was circulated and discussed at February’s meeting. It gave three options for the proposed renovation of the water trough, risks, and potential costs. All options were reliant on two outstanding items – a written report required from Northumbrian Water regarding resource required to provide running water to the trough and a response from DCC as to whether the source was still available to provide water to the trough again (DCC have now responded and advised this action would solely be for Northumbrian Water to carry out). Once Northumbrian Water have finalised their report, a decision can then be made on the three options – original water source, water pump, or dry feature. Cllr Hodgson asked if a working group meeting could be arranged prior to the next full council meeting, to discuss options again. The Clerk said he would do this.

Resolved: *To note updates. Clerk to arrange a working group meeting prior to April’s Council meeting.*

g) Broadband

The Clerk gave an update on fibre broadband for Plawsworth. An application was submitted on 4 February and a quote was received from Openreach on 26 February - £168,957 for 42 properties, with coverage including the 11 interested properties when canvassing opinion in the new year. The government’s voucher scheme closed on 19 February so no assistance with costs is currently available. However, a new scheme is to be announced in April 2021 and KPPC will need to await that information before proceeding with any action. Cllr Craig suggested the Clerk write to interested parties with a holding letter to explain the closure of the current voucher scheme, and the future announcement of a new scheme. The Council agreed to this action.

Resolved: *To note update and Clerk to update residents of Plawsworth that registered an interest in fibre broadband.*

h) Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk presented the Scheme of Delegation for review, with two suggested amendments: to remove 2.24 allowing the Clerk to make emergency donations for the betterment of the area (eg to assist with the pandemic); and to replace it with a delegation for the Clerk to arrange repair of the allotment tap, up to a cost of £100. Cllr Cole suggested 2.24 remain and a new 2.25 be added for the water tap repair – the Council agreed this amendment.

Resolved: *The Council reviewed the Scheme of Delegation and approved the current delegation for 2021-22, with one amendment to add at 2.25, for the Clerk to arrange repair of the allotment tap up to a cost of £100 (as described in the circulated draft document).*

i) HR Panel Terms of Reference (ToR) and Staff Appraisal Policy

The Clerk presented the HR Panel Terms of Reference and Staff Appraisal Policy for review. The Council approved the documents with no amendments.

Resolved: *The Council approved the HR Panel Terms of Reference and Staff Appraisal Policy for 2021-22.*

j) Council Action Plan and Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk explained the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, to limit aggressive planning applications and extensive new builds in an area. Planning applications must fit with a neighbourhood plan if one is in place. It requires a request to the local authority to be a 'designated neighbourhood area', gathering views of residents and aligning the plan with the local authority plan, as well as all relevant laws. The plan requires a housing needs assessment and is independently examined. A referendum takes place with the local electorate to verify the plan – recent examples include Lanchester and Durham City, who have a plan to be voted upon at the May 2021 elections. The Clerk advised a neighbourhood plan is not restricted by size of an area but KPPC may wish to consider this in future years instead, or over a long-term period rather than looking to create one now – the positive of the plan would need to be weighted against resource required and all councillors may need to spend some time on such a project, or an external company can develop the plan, but financial resource would be required. A neighbourhood plan is a big project.

The Clerk gave an update to the Council on the suggested KPPC action plan (circulated prior to Christmas and with the March meeting papers). Cllr Cole asked that the review of insurance arrangements be placed earlier in the Council's timeline for next year (currently March – will be moved to February). The Council will send items to the Clerk for a draft action plan, to be approved at May's meeting – projects and new items can be considered over time.

Resolved: *To note updates.*

k) Internal audit

The Council agreed to appoint the internal auditor from last year, Gordon Fletcher, to assist with the AGAR for 2020-21. The fee for the service remains £150.

Resolved: *The Council agreed to retain the internal auditor for 2020-21 AGAR, at a cost of £150, and for any subsequent queries during 2021-22.*

l) Publication Scheme

The Clerk presented the Publication Scheme for KPPC. Cllr Cole suggested the cost of a stamp for postage be added to each row (currently listed below the table for all items). The Council approved the scheme subject to this amendment and the document will be added to the Council website. The Council agreed the budget for 2021-22 and this will be published to the website in line with the new scheme.

Resolved: *The Council approved the Publication Scheme for KPPC and to publish the budget for 2021-22.*

m) Parish Council insurance

The Council were notified of the renewal amount with Zurich insurance of £257.60 and agreed the renewal.

Resolved: *The Council agreed to renew with Zurich at the cost of £257.60 for the year.*

n) Grant applications

- None

Resolved: *Nothing to resolve.*

o) Training

- None

Resolved: *Nothing to resolve.*

p) Correspondence

- Resident requesting refill of KPPC's salt bin at Hillmeads, Nettlesworth.
- Resident (further) contact regarding the X20 bus route through Kimblesworth.
- Resident (different to the above) contact regarding the X20 bus route through Kimblesworth.
- Resident regarding the rubbish in the woodland between Broadmires and Woodland Terrace.
- Tenant at the allotments requesting excess rubbish removal found at plot from previous tenant.
- Thanks, received from local foodbank for donation (Food for Thought).

Resolved: *Correspondence noted: a request to fill the salt bin was made to DCC and the action is now completed. Regarding the X20 bus route, the Council's position remains the same as minuted in February. However, the Council did note that they will ask for community views in the next newsletter, and if the bus route is found to be negative for most residents, they would decide whether to offer new consultation to the bus company. The rubbish in woodland at Broadmires has been inspected by DCC and they have advised they will clear it. The allotments query relates to item 6(d) and a resolution has been made as stated in these minutes. The Council received thanks for their donation to Food for Thought foodbank.*

7. Financial Matters:

a) Payments

Resolved: *The following payments were agreed (and invoices will be signed by the Chair at the next meeting held in person):*

- (1) The sum of £276.70 be paid to J Kelly (Clerk service, 1st – 28th February, 30 hours)
- (2) The sum of £3.49 be paid to J Kelly (HP ink, February)
- (3) The sum of £10.00 be paid to CDALC (Election training, 9th February)
- (4) The sum of £540.00 be paid to ALV IT Solutions (website hosting and support)

The Council thanked ALV IT for their good work in the last two years, in respect of the KPPC website.

b) Receipts

Resolved: *The following receipts were noted and will be signed by the Chair at the next meeting in person:*

- PAYE (to HMRC) February hours, March submission (£69.20)
- Printer subscription with HP - see item 7(a)2. above (£3.49)

[The Chair suspended Standing Orders at 20.59 with one section of the agenda left to complete and verify].

c) Bank statements and direct debits

Resolved:

Statements checked:

- January 2021 – received and will be signed at the next meeting held in person.

Direct debits (and standing orders) checked by the Chair and to be signed at next meeting held in person:

- HMRC (February payment) – checked on January statement (paid 1st February).
- Certification for Information Commissioner's Office – next due on February statement.
- Anglian Water trading as Wave (quarterly) – next due on March statement.

The Chair noted that any underpayments of PAYE to HRMC, resulting from the monthly set amount for the bank standing order (£65), will be cleared at year-end.

8. Date of Next Meeting

08 April 2021 to commence at 7.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 21.02.

Chairman

Date