



Kimbleworth and Plawsworth Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Kimbleworth and Plawsworth Parish Council held remotely via Skype, on Thursday, 10 September 2020 @ 7:00pm.

Present: Councillors – Cole, Craig, Hilland, Hodgson, Jackson, Rippon and Walker.

Also in attendance – John Kelly (Parish Clerk) and County Councillor Wilson.

1. **Welcome:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence:**

Written apologies were received from Cllr Pierre and Cllr Kendall.

***Resolved:** Apologies for the above Parish Councillors were noted by the Council.*

3. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

No interests declared.

4. **Minutes of Council meeting – 09 July 2020:**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 09 July 2020 were approved as a true record by the Council.

5. **Police Report:**

No PCSOs were in attendance. PCSO Payne asked that the most recent PACT report for August and the Chester-le-Street Newsletter (September edition) be circulated with the agenda (acting as his update). All councillors advised they had read the PACT report and newsletter.

6. Parish Matters and on-going items:

a) County Councillors Report

Councillor Wilson advised he was going to organise a site visit with Durham County Council (DCC) regarding the A167 Red Lion crossing and multi-use path (no street lighting available). DCC are to visit Ugly Lane to see what funds, if any, it might qualify for regarding road patching. As it is a public footpath and not road, they are not responsible for road maintenance costs. However, the road is used by the Clean and Green Team to cut grass and empty dog poo bins, and football teams rent the pitch from DCC and park on the road. The road is also used by some residents accessing their properties at the rear, and Northern Power Grid to access their generator. As there are various interested parties and the Parish Council own the football pitch, Councillor Wilson stated he would investigate what actions can be taken to maintain the road surface. An entrance sign for Plawsworth coming off the A167 will soon be placed by DCC, following joint petitioning from the Parish Council and Councillor Wilson. A request will be made to DCC to prevent parking at the triangular piece of land at the north of Cedar Avenue and to add no parking lines to the road, following Parish Council concern at the danger posed to residents. A request will also be made for neighbourhood wardens and police to monitor parking at The Green, now that school has recommenced, and staff at the CYPS office will be asked to park in the community centre car park. The pavement at Park View has been reported as uneven and dangerous and the councillor will report this to DCC for consideration. Councillor Liddle advised that a private company owns The Elms at Kimblesworth and may be considering changing its use to a young persons' home but no planning application has been received yet so no comment can be made until that happens. Councillor Liddle also updated on the hot meals provision from Nettlesworth Community Centre, as part of the Food for Thought project. On a Tuesday, these will now be provided from the kitchen at The Fells. Volunteer staff have recently received training from the Sacriston Youth Project, highlighting good partnership working.

Resolved: *Councillor Wilson will update on all reported issues at the next meeting. Clerk to contact Councillor Wilson for an update and will circulate to the Parish Council.*

[Councillor Wilson left the meeting, following discussion of item 6(e) but prior to the start of item 6(b)].

b) Community Centre Report

The centre has reopened and groups are returning, adhering to the risk assessment completed by Plawsworth and Kimblesworth Community Association. An update on the lease situation was requested but not available.

Resolved: *To note update and Clerk to enquire about the lease for the next agenda.*

c) Planning Applications

- DM/20/02117/VOC – Wheatleywell Lane, Plawsworth - variation at Plawsworth Apartments

Resolved: *The Council agreed to offer comment following a motion from Councillor Cole (seconded by Councillor Rippon) - that alternative measures are available to the applicant for boundary and access, and that DCC must ensure (if this application is approved) that the access is temporary and is not left in perpetuity. Councillor Craig abstained from voting due to personal interest (not pecuniary).*

d) Allotments

The Council received an update on the rent collection for 2020-21 and signing of the new agreement. To date, 23 of the 32 plots have been paid for (£527), and four plots have been vacated (or notice given), of which two offers of tenancy (numbers 7 and 15) have been made. A further five plots require payment by 27th September. Pest control will commence in the coming fortnight. It has been suggested by tenants that the paths require cutting back and tidying. The Council discussed placing a skip to assist with rubbish removal left on plots over the years, and further water taps on site.

Resolved: Council to note rent and pest control updates. The Clerk will contact Councillor Wilson to check whether the Clean and Green Team can maintain the paths at a small cost. Councillor Hodgson advised he would check if volunteers from Changing Lives could be supervised to cut the overgrown paths back (this work was agreed by Council if required). Also, the Council agreed for the Clerk to collect quotes on new water taps and a skip (and place on agenda for a later meeting) but only after a site inspection with Councillor Craig, to see what other methods may be available to resolve both issues. It was agreed Councillor Craig and the Clerk will erect a partition between the two plots soon to be vacated (25 and 26) so they can be allocated to separate tenants on the waiting list.

[Councillor Walker left the meeting at 8.00pm].

e) Highways and road signage

This item was discussed immediately after 6(a) at the Chair's request. Parking issues at The Green and the north entrance to Cedar Avenue were raised with County Councillor Wilson.

Resolved: Councillor Wilson will investigate and provide an update at the next meeting

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

The Council discussed the spring/trough project. The Council thanks Changing Lives for the donation of research (paid by Changing Lives) from the County Council's archive. The content of the research will be circulated to the Council. The council agreed to pay £146 to Northumbrian Water to investigate the source of the trough and the feasibility for reconnection.

Resolved: Clerk to circulate archive research letter to all councillors. Council approved payment to Northumbrian Water of £146.

g) Broadband

The Clerk offered a detailed update regarding the 2019 consultation in County Durham regarding the application for State Aid to improve broadband. Nettlesworth and Kimblesworth broadband speeds and proximity to network boxes means they would not qualify – as they already receive sufficient speeds. However, Plawsworth would qualify for vouchers towards work, as they do not currently receive a good standard of broadband. A cost may still fall on residents and businesses in the areas so they will need to be canvassed and a quote received from BT for total cost.

Resolved: The Council agreed Clerk to send councillors the detailed broadband process and review from DCC and create a letter/poster for Cllr Craig to put through Plawsworth residents' doors. Cllr Hodgson will canvass local businesses. Clerk to request a quote from BT Openreach (the difference between voucher cost and total would require funding).

h) Christmas Tree 2020

Cllr Rippon asked for a tree to be donated by Congburn Nursery and they have kindly agreed. This will be a potted tree, not to plant. A discussion took place regarding lighting and associated costs.

Resolved: Clerk to investigate the costs of lights for next meeting.

i) Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

The Council discussed again the track south of Kimblesworth, running to Kimblesworth Grange. A land registry search has been completed online to check who the owner of this area of land is.

Resolved: The Council agreed for the Chair to check the maps obtained through the search and to defer this item.

j) Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Craig put himself forward for the role of Vice-Chair. The council unanimously agreed for him to fill the role until next election.

Resolved: Councillor Craig is the new Vice-Chair of KPPC. No acceptance form is required for this position.

k) Ordinary Meetings in person

The Council discussed meetings considering the Coronavirus. The Clerk advised that the National Association for Local Councils (NALC) and the County Durham Association for Local Councils (CDALC) continue to advise against meetings in person. The Coronavirus Act allows for virtual meetings up until May 2021. Recent government announcements have included a new 'rule of six' and although work is exempted (which would cover councillors), the public can also attend council meetings (by law). Their attendance would likely be against the general guidance of 'rule of six', although there is no specific guidance for this sector.

Resolved: The Council agreed for meetings to continue virtually in October, November and December. A further vote will take place in December for the months of January, February and March. The Clerk will carry out a risk assessment for councillors in their role.

l) Flowers in the parish

The Council discussed an abandoned flower bed at Hillmeads, Nettlesworth. Options were discussed for it to be adopted and maintained or grassed over. Regarding additional planters at Plawsworth and in the West Nettlesworth ward (Sacriston), Cllr Craig asked that the item be deferred to a later meeting so he could investigate tree planting instead of planters.

Resolved: The Council agreed for letters to be placed through the door of properties 'within line of sight' asking for their views. The item will then be placed on a later agenda for Council agreement along with additional planters in the parish area.

m) Clerk's contract

The Council were read a notice from NALC advising the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) had agreed the new pay scales for 2020-21 to be implemented from 1 April 2020. The Clerk's pay point has now increased by 31 pence per hour and requires backdating to April 2020. An additional day's annual leave is to be added to the contract, so the Clerk will now receive 22 days (not 21) plus the existing two extra statutory days (pro-rata).

Resolved: *The Council noted pay increase and annual leave change (pro-rata).*

n) Budget update

The Clerk summarised the budget position for KPPC and year to date payments. There has been a slight underspend to date on room hire, councillor training courses, newsletters, and stationery. Clerk hours were higher than expected in the first half of the year due to AGAR and resolving allotment issues under the new agreement, so that element of the budget is currently higher than projected. The budget summary will be circulated to all councillors. The current bank balance for the Parish Council is £36,661.49

Resolved: *Clerk to send budget summary to the Council.*

o) Grant Applications

No applications to discuss.

Resolved: *Nothing to resolve.*

p) Training

- The Clerk has passed his qualification for Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) and will now register for CILCA qualification (agreed by the Council in 2019, and course cost and training hours included in budget).
- CILCA mentoring by CDALC (8th September) attended by the Clerk.

Resolved: *Training update noted.*

q) Correspondence

- Land ownership follow up enquiry (East View, Kimblesworth)
- Litter on land – request to contact Northern Gas and request removal and fence repairs (behind Eureka Mews)
- Allotment photography (NE Drones)
- Co-op bank changes to digital services
- Installation of fencing query (Sycamore Road, Kimblesworth)

Resolved: *Correspondence noted:- the Clerk to contact resident at East View to advise the Council may be able to support future action regarding trees and the drainage but the first step is land registry, which the Council requested the resident to complete earlier in 2020 (once the land owner is discovered, next steps can be looked at); the Clerk to contact Northern Gas to request tidying of land/collection of rubbish, and fence repairs; offer of local drone photography noted and added to Council files; Co-op digital service changes summarised; and Clerk has contacted resident to advise fencing enquiry must be made to landlord.*

[The Chair suspended standing orders regarding the two-hour limit on the length of meetings at 8.57pm approached – all councillors agreed they could stay at the meeting a further 15 minutes].

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 £233.33 was paid to J Kelly (Clerk service, 1st – 31st July, 26 hours)
- (2) The sum of £120.85 was paid to J Kelly (2019-20 holiday pay, 14 hours)
- (3) The sum of £372.17 be paid to J Kelly (Clerk service, 1st-31st August, 32 hours inclusive of 18 hours holiday pay and pay adjustment post-April 2020)
- (4) The sum of £7.98 be paid to J Kelly (HP ink, July and August)
- (5) The sum of £18.00 be paid to J Kelly (online land registry searches)
- (6) The sum of £249.20 be paid to CDALC (April 2020 to May 2021 subscription)
- (7) The sum of £100.00 be paid to SLCC (subscription renewed September 2020)
- (8) The sum of £200.00 be paid to Ash Signs (newsletter and fly tipping signs)

b) Receipts

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

- PAYE (to HMRC) July hours, August submission (£88.60)
- PAYE (to HMRC) August hours, September submission (£93.00)
- Printer subscription with HP - see item 7(a)4. above (£3.49 July)
- Printer subscription with HP - see item 7(a)4. above (£3.49 August) - Worldpay receipts – land registry – see item 7(a)5 above (£18.00)

c) Bank statements and direct debits

Resolved:

Statements checked:

- June 2020 – received and will be signed at the next meeting held in person.
- July 2020 – 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 (July payment) – checked on June statement (paid 1st July)
- HMRC (August payment) – checked on July statement (paid 1st August)
- Anglian Water trading as Wave (quarterly) – next due September statement

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

8. Date of Next Meeting

08 October 2020 to commence at 7.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 9.12pm.

Chairman

Date