

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KINGSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUAY HOUSE,
AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY 9 JULY 2019**

Present: Cllr Anne Balkwill (Chairman)
Cllr Dena Bex
Cllr Philip Cole
Cllr Helen Cope
Cllr Martina Edmonds
Cllr Barrie Fishman
Cllr Mike Jennings
Cllr Steve Mammatt
Cllr Chris Povey
Cllr Peter Ralph
Cllr Julia Wingate

In Attendance: County Cllr Julian Brazil
District Cllr Susan Jackson
District Cllr Denise O'Callaghan
Sgt David Green
Chris Brook, SHDC Head of Assets
Dr Rachael Kiddey, Kingsbridge International Society
Tom Ladds, Kingsbridge & Salcombe Gazette
Seven Members of Public
Martin Johnson (Town Clerk)

19/38 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES – CO-OPTION

It was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Steve Mammatt to fill the councillor vacancy in Kingsbridge East Ward. Declarations of Office were then received for Cllrs Cope and Mammatt (the former having been co-opted at the previous meeting).

19/39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs John Gall and Graham Price.

Public Open Forum

Members of public made the statements at Annex A.

Dr Kiddey and 4 Members of Public left the Chamber

The following agenda item was taken early out-of-turn:

19/46 HOTEL AT ROPEWALK

Members had already discussed and received briefings from South Hams District Council (SHDC) on the authority's proposal for a hotel at Ropewalk at Planning Committee, and independent meetings, but wished to realise the Council's current position on the concept. Moreover, SHDC had requested Kingsbridge Town Council

(KTC) to provide input to a draft press release which was due to be published the following day. Members held a full discussion and asked questions of clarity to SHDC's Head of Assets who was present. The salient points were:

- The proposal for an 85 bedroom, 4 storey hotel was likely to be an emotive issue with many people for and many people against the concept.
- SHDC needed to consult widely as a similar emotive concept for a Quayside regeneration in 2017 had been received as a top downwards project which did not receive the support of the Kingsbridge community.
- Car parking was a pivotal issue and 32 additional parking spaces mooted for the Cattle Market car park would be nowhere near enough to accommodate 85 guests.
- Changes in parking tariffs had effectively identified the town's main car parks as the Quay for visitors, Fore Street for shoppers and Cattle Market/Lower Union Road for commuters.
- Holistic parking permit usage needed to be understood for Kingsbridge i.e. Town Centre permits (Quay & Duncombe Street car parks), Peripheral parking permits (Cattle Market & Lower Union Road car parks), Business permits, Leisure Centre permits (Cattle Market & Quay September to May) and Residents permits (3.00 p.m. to 10.00 am.).
- Hotel guests were likely to arrive in the evening and leave early morning which may dovetail with current usage capacities i.e. different users at different times of day. The hotel was likely to be used two thirds by business people and one third by holidaymakers.
- Historical car parking data 3 years old could not be relied upon to evidence matters of this magnitude and up to date car parking statistics were required for Members to review and assess the impact of a hotel.
- There was a regular stream of traffic to the Cattle Market car park from 8.30 a.m. and it was full up from 9.00 a.m. during the working week.
- SHDC officers policed all town car parks daily and therefore must know where there is current underutilisation but at present KTC Members could not identify where it was.
- Hotel guests could also use Quay car park.
- The Premier Inn totally understood current dynamics of the Cattle Market car park. There would be no formal link between the hotel and the car park, as elsewhere, hotel guests would have to park on-street or in off-street car parks during their visit.
- An 85 bed hotel may be too large for a small market town and £10m could be spent elsewhere in Kingsbridge e.g. affordable or community housing.
- SHDC reported that an open market housing appraisal was conducted for Ropewalk about 2 years ago, delivering standard developer profit, but the figures barely stacked up.
- Given SHDC's purchase of the Ropewalk site at £465k, build costs and ancillaries; KTC Members did not understand how a low cost development of circa 15 to 20 homes could not be achieved. While this would not provide an enduring income stream for SHDC it would realise immediate community benefits if the homes had specific covenants for local workers etc.

- KTC had to be rigorous in interrogating the current proposal for a hotel as it would undoubtedly change the current Kingsbridge dynamic and Members needed to provide a truly informed opinion.
- SHDC wished to achieve 3 pillars from the land asset at Ropewalk: employment, economic growth and a commercial return.
- The hotel required £10m up front borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board with a conservative estimate of 1% return/£100k per annum taking loan repayments into account to deliver £2.5m plus RPI over the duration of a 25 lease. The PWLB loan would be at a fixed rate. Business rates would also be gained from the hotel. At the end of the 25 year lease period the asset would return to SHDC.

It was then **RESOLVED** to call for a public meeting to be held, before a planning application is submitted, to hear if the Kingsbridge community is For or Against SHDC's proposal for a hotel at Ropewalk.

The above resolution would be forwarded to SHDC as KTC's comments to be included in a draft press release.

SHDC Head of Assets and 2 Members of Public left the Chamber

19/40 REPORTS FROM POLICE, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

40.1 Sgt Green presented the Police report for June 2019. A total of 27 crimes had been committed; 28 crimes had been recorded during the same period in 2018 and 43 in 2017. Crimes had included: 10 assaults (including 3 minor injuries and 3 offences against Police officers), 4 harassment/public order, 1 sex offence, 1 burglary dwelling, 5 theft/attempted theft, 4 criminal damage, 1 possession of cannabis and 1 public nuisance.

Inspector Tom Blanchard was the new sector inspector and had met some Members recently. A busy period was approaching with Fair Week and increase in policing incidents due to holiday makers and greater traffic. The Kingsbridge Licensees Forum and KTC/Police Liaison Committee had met in June. He then responded to a Member's question; the Turning Corners Project raised at previous meetings had a close liaison with the Community College, Kingsbridge Youth for Christ and the Police.

Sgt Green left the Chamber

40.2 County Cllr Brazil reported that he was a member of Devon County Council's (DCC) Children's Scrutiny Committee, Audit Committee and Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee; the latter dealt with large infrastructure projects. He had been in contact with the Foodbank about a potential reduction in rental charges however, liaison would be required with the Family Advice Support Team which was the main tenant at Horizons in Fore Street. The A379 at Frogmore had been earmarked for a road closure however, it had not taken place and the contractor would be required to reschedule; it was likely for works to

take place out of business hours for 1 or 2 nights. Cllr Brazil then answered Members' questions:

- He acknowledged that the RNLI had not received planning permission to date, additional to a licence, to install a sculpture at the head of the estuary to mark its 150th anniversary.
- A planning application at the rear of 129 Fore Street, supported by KTC on 3 occasions, would be received by the Development Management Committee on 17 July. He was aware of concerns raised about car parking, overlooking, overdevelopment and ecology matters.
- He acknowledged KTC's discontent regarding some recent planning decisions and noted an invitation to the Head of Development Management to meet with KTC Members. However, he reported that KTC had a good reputation at SHDC and its recommendations were considered to be consistent.
- DCC would provide its recommendation regarding highways matters during the planning consultation stage for the proposed hotel at Ropewalk. However, he considered that the Kingsbridge community's energy should be harnessed and SHDC should approach KTC and ask Members what could be done with £10m.

40.3 District Cllr O'Callaghan had emailed Luke Winham, owner of the Kings Arms Hotel, regarding the poor state of the building but had not received a response to date. She noted that KTC had agreed to fund cosmetic exterior repairs but was reluctant to be associated with its unsatisfactory material condition as a pane of glass had dropped from a first floor sash window recently. She had also contacted SHDC senior officers to request action. Local residents had requested that some areas of Duncombe Park be left for wildflowers and Environment Services had asked for KTC's opinion; the Town Clerk noted the matter and would take it to the next Parks & Open Spaces Committee. SHDC officers were due to discuss litter, waste and recycling matters with KTC shortly. Finally, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 11 July would receive a report on the proposed hotel at Ropewalk; the business case was likely to be restricted information.

40.4 District Cllr Jackson reported that she would attend the above Overview & Scrutiny Panel. Following the previous meeting she had discussed car boot sales fees with SHDC officers however, there was a £55 per event blanket fee. She was pleased that SHDC Communications had supported Kingsbridge In Bloom and issued a recent press release; she had championed the group and requested grounds maintenance before the next judging date.

19/41 URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr Balkwill agreed to take one agenda item at 19/51: Fair Week Carnival.

19/42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Povey non-pecuniary interests in agenda item 19/44; sub agenda items 19/13.4 and 19/13.7.

19/43 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 11 June 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

19/44 PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Resolutions in the minutes of the Planning Committees held on 18 June 2019 and 2 July 2019.

19/45 PROPERTY COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Property Committee held on 25 June 2019.

19/47 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was **RESOLVED** to request Kingsbridge Feoffees to consider Cllr Ralph to take over from Cllr Fishman as one of KTC's nominated Trustees.

19/48 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

48.1 Kingsbridge Fair Week – Request for assistance. Carol Horton, Treasurer, had requested Members to support Fair Week by taking around donation buckets at events. A listing and timings were advised.

48.2 Litter & Waste meeting. Cllr Cole and the Town Clerk would meet Daniel Taylor, SHDC Localities, & Sarah Moody, SHDC lead waste officer, at 12.00 noon on Thursday 11 July to discuss litter and waste matters in Kingsbridge. Members had been alerted and several matters would be brought up which had been forwarded to SHDC in preparation.

48.3 Old Photos. On clearing the 2nd floor attic for potential new usage, there were circa 20 photos of former KTC Chairmen dating back to the 1940s. There was nowhere in Quay House to display or store elsewhere. Members suggested they should be digitalised and the Community College contacted to ascertain if an art project could be identified for them.

48.4 South Hams Town Centres. Tom Jones, SHDC Head of Place Making, had requested KTC to organise and lead a meeting to identify key issues of concern alongside Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Chamber of Commerce and others. Feedback was required by late September to SHDC with a listing of individual town action points which would then feed into a holistic South Hams action plan.

48.5 South Hams Development Management Committee Site Inspection Monday 15 July at 10.30 a.m. Re-advertisement (revised plans) for 4 dwelling houses to the rear of 129 Fore Street, Kingsbridge would be subject to the above site inspection. Subsequently, the application would be received at SHDC's

Development Management Committee on Wednesday 17 July. It was agreed for Cllr Cole and the Town Clerk to represent KTC at the site inspection.

48.6 Community Housing Scheme at Ropewalk. Tom Morris had requested KTC to provide input into SHDC's Home England grant application and the Town Clerk would action.

48.7 Committee Membership – New Members. It was requested for Cllrs Cope and Mammatt to consider sitting on committees.

48.8 Green Flag – Recreation Ground. There was a press embargo for one week before the results were released into the public domain.

19/49 REPORTS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND AUTHORITIES/AGENCIES

49.1 Love Your Park (Recreation Ground family fun day Sunday 11 August) meeting 17 June. Notes from a meeting with KTC's partners, an event map and draft programme were distributed to Members. The Reception team were working hard to enable a successful event and Members were requested to contribute 1 or 2 hours on the day to offer assistance or act as Stewards. Cllr Bex had agreed to work in Café Decks for the duration of the event.

49.2 Kingsbridge Licensees meeting 20 June. Notes had been forwarded with the agenda.

49.3 KTC/Police Liaison Committee 21 June. Notes had been forwarded with the agenda. The local resource position would be queried due to the forthcoming retirement of a Police Constable.

49.4 SHDC/KTC proposed hotel at Ropewalk meeting 24 June. Notes had been emailed to all Members.

49.5 Kingsbridge In Bloom's South West In Bloom judging day 5 July. The town looked stunning and Members thanked all KIB volunteers for their incredible efforts and related assistance. National competition judging would take place on Thursday 1 August.

49.6 Play Area Tender Panel 9 July. The Town Clerk had attended a meeting to determine the contractor to refit several South Hams play areas including Duncombe Park and Montagu Road. A decision had been made but was confidential until all tenders had been informed.

49.7 DCC & SHDC ward members/KTC public realm improvements meeting 9 July. County Cllr Brazil, and District Cllrs Jackson and O'Callaghan, supported KTC's ambitions to improve the town centre's public realm.

19/50 FINANCE – PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members received a schedule of payments due to date 9 July 2019. It was **RESOLVED** that the payments amounting to £17,046.60 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**19/51 BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN:
FAIR WEEK CARNIVAL**

The Town Mayor and Members were invited to take a role in the Carnival on Saturday 27 July and several suggestions were aired. Cllr Wingate was Fair Week President for 2019. It was **RESOLVED** for Members to consider KTC’s participation in the Fair Week Carnival and to feedback with ideas.

19/52 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions to the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

..... Presiding ChairmanDate

Annex:

- A. Public Open Forum.

Public Open Forum

1. Dr Rachael Kiddey had created a Community Sponsorship Group (CSG) called Kingsbridge International Society (KIS). CSG was a Home Office initiative which enabled local groups to form, take responsibility for raising of funds, and to prepare for the arrival and support of an approved vulnerable refugee family to live in Kingsbridge. CSGs already operated in Ashburton and Exeter and the South West region was one of the most active in the UK. Most groups were set up as Community Interest Companies. Rachael had grown up in the South Hams and she was hopeful that KIS could work together with the town, district and county councils, alongside other agencies and professionals, to offer a refugee family a warm welcome to the town with support to rebuild their lives after the trauma of being forcibly displaced from their home by war. A minimum of £9,000 had to be raised for housing, transport, language lessons and provision of related needs as they settled in. Local people with various professional skills were needed, volunteer drivers and private rented accommodation which could be rented for a maximum of £750 per month. Once the above had been established a Resettlement Plan could be formulated for a 2 year period to enable the Home Office to match an appropriate family.

KIS had held 4 meetings to date, would break for summer and the next meeting would be held at 7.00 p.m. at the Quaker Meeting House on Thursday 5 September. It was intended to hold a 2 stage public meeting at the Methodist Church Hall in due course to introduce the project to the wider Kingsbridge community and hopefully glean support.

Cllr Balkwill thanked Rachael for her presentation and, echoed by fellow Members, reported that the project had KTC support.

2. Colin Baker, Badgers Green, Kingsbridge held concerns with the proposal for a Premier Inn in Ropewalk which would be located 30 metres from his home. He had emailed Members with his representations and was aware that other Kingsway Park residents held similar concerns to his own:

- The hotel would take light and sunlight away from his property.
- He had visited the Cattle Market car park for the last 3 days: day 1 at 11.15 a.m. the car park was full, day 2 at 11.00 a.m. there were 3 spaces available and day 3, that day, at 11.00 a.m. there were also only 3 spaces remaining. He queried where the 85 guests and staff would park? Vehicles parked up in the 4 in number coach bays had received parking fines. Moreover, remote from the car park, vehicles were already parking illegally in the locale. The proposal was a non-starter because of car parking alone.
- Ropewalk highway had 2 dangerous bends and no footpath for some distance. He was regularly overtaken while walking in the highway and

Community College students used it before and after school and throughout the day to attend lessons at the leisure centre swimming pool.

- A 4 storey building would be an eyesore which would be viewed from across town.
- He questioned if the sewerage system would be able to cope with a hotel at this location.
- The proposal would have a huge negative impact on the neighbouring Gordon Carling Home.

Cllr Balkwill thanked Colin for his statement and reported that the issues he raised would be considered during the planning application process.