

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KINGSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUAY HOUSE,
AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024**

Present: Cllr Philip Cole (Chairman)
Cllr Martina Edmonds
Cllr Barrie Fishman
Cllr Mike Jennings
Cllr Steve Mammatt
Cllr Chris Povey
Cllr Graham Price
Cllr Danielle Rawstron
Cllr Mel Rollinson
Cllr Paul Vann
Cllr Julia Wingate

In Attendance: County Cllr Julian Brazil
District Cllr Denise O'Callaghan
Eleven Members of Public
Richard Torne, Kingsbridge & Salcombe Gazette
Martin Johnson (Secretary)

23/141 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Anne Balkwill, Cllr Lorna Yabsley, District Cllr Susan Jackson and Sgt Shotton.

Public Open Forum

Members of public made the statements at Annex A.

Eight members of public left the Chamber

23/142 REPORTS FROM POLICE, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

142.1 The Neighbourhood Police team had not supplied a summary for February given its current staff resource.

142.2 County Cllr Brazil reported that Devon & Cornwall had been in special measures requiring an enhanced level of monitoring, prevention of violence against women and girls was poor and the Chief Constable was still suspended. He was disappointed with the Police service at present. He considered the Compassionate Café (Public Open Forum) was a great initiative. Devon County Council (DCC) would consider pulling out of Tumbly Hill Rest Centre at the following day's Cabinet meeting. After Covid-19 the centre had experienced very low footfall and the likes of Age Concern had stepped up to provide enhanced services. DCC had only paid a peppercorn rent for the building to Anchor Housing however, a local group was seeking to take over the unit. He felt that recent sewage discharges in town were disgraceful and the current situation was the result of years of lack of investment

from South West Water (SWW). East Devon District Council had recently supported a vote of no confidence in SWW and he suggested that mass civil disobedience could take place if a costed plan for repairs/new infrastructure was not forthcoming. He noted that the Town Council (KTC) would consider the Devon Devolution consultation at the meeting and suggested that the proposals did not appear to be devolution per se and suggested that KTC may wish to consider what it should look like? The A379 at Stoke Fleming would be re-opening shortly however, DCC was not content with BT's highway works near the K5 housing development at West Alvington Hill. Finally, DCC's portion of council tax had been increased by 4.99% for next financial year 2024/25.

142.3 District Cllr O'Callaghan reported that South Hams District Council (SHDC) was holding regular remote Teams Meetings with SWW alongside representatives from DCC Flood Risk, Environment Agency (EA) and KTC. The outcomes of the recent Kingsbridge IUDM report (catchment study) had emphasised that new infrastructure was required. The EA would investigate a potential illegal discharge into the estuary and SWW was still trying to identify the cause of recent sewage issues. For the following day's anticipated high tides, SWW would have tankers available 2 hours before and 2 hours after in order to clean up and dye tests would continue to establish connectivity between various drainage sources. South Hams Housing Offer had been launched to help local communities deliver more affordable homes in their areas. It provided funding and support to kickstart housing projects, connected with Registered Providers of social housing and hoped to deliver homes where and how they were needed most. The authority was in the process of purchasing one bedroom flats in Westville. SHDC's portion of council tax for next financial year 2024/25 had increased by 2.99% at circa £5 per annum for a Band D property with the aim to sustain the authority as self-sufficient. The garden waste collection service had opened. She was also unhappy with the proposed Devon Devolution Deal; it did not appear to offer enhanced housing opportunities and the 8 district councils would only have 2 votes on the Combined Authority to consider general matters only.

23/143 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

However, the Chairman reported that the new Kingsbridge Skatepark would open at 3.30 p.m. on Thursday 13 March and all Members were invited. The project represented a huge investment from KTC.

23/144 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Cole declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 23/149.

23/145 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 13 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

23/146 PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Resolutions in the minutes of the Planning Committees held on 20 February 2024 and 5 March 2024.

The following tree works' application has been Deferred at the latter meeting and was now re-considered:

Reference: **0595/24/TCA**
Case Officer: Lee Marshall
Applicant: Mr John Gall
Proposal: **T1:** Holm Oak – Lateral reduction by 3 metres on North facing side (back to boundary) due to becoming increasingly overgrown
T2: Leylandii – Lateral reduction by 1.5 metres on North facing side (back to boundary) due to becoming increasingly overgrown
T3: Ornamental Cherry – lateral reduction by 2.5 metres on North facing side (back to boundary) due to becoming increasingly overgrown
T4: Holly – crown height reduction by 3 metres to prevent this becoming a problem and increase new growth lower down
T5 & T6: Sycamore-lateral reduction by 2.5 metres on South facing side (back to boundary) due to dropping large amounts of seeds each autumn which then sprout as many hundreds of seedlings in the vegetable garden
Site: 120 Fore Street, Kingsbridge, TQ7 1AW
KTC: **Recommend Approval**

It was **RESOLVED** to forward the findings of the above planning consultation to SHDC Development Management.

23/147 SEWAGE DISCHARGES

Members discussed the recent incidents of sewage discharges in Bridge Street, Lime Grove, Mill Street and Quay Car Park. The salient points were:

- Subsequent to an initial face-to-face meeting, SWW had arranged several remote Teams Meetings to update the EA, DCC Flood Risk, KTC and SHDC on sewage matters. The next meeting was scheduled for the following day.
- SWW officers 'on the ground' had been excellent.
- However, there had been no progress on outcomes arising from the Kingsbridge IUDM analysis report (available on KTC's website) which would be managed by SWW, EA and DCC in partnership.
- SWW's focus was to deal with immediate matters.
- A local resident had supplied an excellent report on flooding issues experienced from Autumn 2023 to date.
- KTC had recently produced a "Kingsbridge Flooding – What you need to know and do" leaflet, would be making a presentation to the "Devon Prepared – Whole Society Resilience Conference" on Friday 22 March and would

manage a Flooding Awareness drop-in alongside the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday 6 April.

- Surface water and tidal surges were a natural phenomenon however, action could be taken on the sewer system.
- Salcombe had separated its historical combined sewer system to good effect.
- The Western Backway leat had silted up and required dredging.
- Members considered that a costed and timed plan was required to alleviate current flooding and sewage issues, and discussed whether exceptional action similar to East Devon District Council was needed.

It was **RESOLVED** to review sewage matters at the next council meeting.

County Cllr Brazil, District Cllr O'Callaghan and the Press left the meeting

23/148 A DEVOLUTION DEAL FOR DEVON

Members considered the Devolution Deal for Devon which proposed to establish a new Combined Authority for Devon and Torbay. Information had been viewed from central government, Plymouth City Council, Devon Association of Local Councils and the South Hams Society. It was **RESOLVED** to respond to the public consultation that KTC did not support the proposals and for the public consultation feedback to be delegated to the Chairman and Town Clerk to include the following: another layer of local government would inherently be complex, the proposals were largely aspirational only, Plymouth with circa 25% of the Devon population was not involved, there were concerns over future funding and there was no direct devolution to district, town and parish level.

23/149 GRANT FOR ART PROJECT

Members received a request from the Cookworthy Museum for a grant from KTC's allocated public art strategy budget to support the restoration of an important 18th century dress with local provenance. The estimate from a professional restorer for all labour, materials and a mannequin was £4,100.

Discussion revealed that the remaining allocated budget for public art projects was £6,448 (£3,344 Revenue Reserves plus £4,104 operational budget less £1,000 grant already provided to Harbour House), there was a 'community projects' budget at circa £16,000 for financial year 2024/25, a potential project to brighten the entrances to Fore Street passageways was likely to require funding and the Museum had been successful in gaining funding for its new costume gallery. After discussion, Members agreed that further information was required regarding the historical and local significance of the dress, whether the Museum had made applications to other external funding bodies and how the restored dress would be promoted to local residents to encourage greater footfall.

It was **RESOLVED** to Defer a decision to make a grant to Cookworthy Museum.

150.1 Bandstand Rebuild. The Bandstand was open and could be used however, there was a snagging list. An on-site meeting had been held with DNH Construction on the previous day. Items to be resolved were:

- Electrical cabling currently exposed needed to be boxed in.
- New internal cabling to be re-routed in the original duct to reach the electrical cabinet to provide for 'event cabling' to be routed through a second duct.
- A new method for electrical earthing had left the original earthing pole redundant which required removal.
- All rear metal stanchions (not load bearing) needed to be boxed in to allow the refitting of drop catches which in turn installed the rear awnings during events.
- Two sections of new guttering would need to be refitted to allow the above.
- Re-decoration to be completed.

150.2 Annual Town Meeting & Flood Awareness Event. To be held at the Market Hall on Saturday 6 April between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. as an informal drop-in. The format to be worked-up would include: budget for financial year 2024/25 i.e. how would local residents' portion of their council tax provided to KTC be spent? Q&A session with Members and Flood Awareness matters i.e. Market Hall to be dressed in flood and road closed signs, with sandbags etc.

150.3 Extra litter bins for Easter and Summer. KTC's cast iron litter bins had much capacity to cope apart from the main holiday periods when they required some assistance. Six in number black wheelie bins had been ordered from SHDC to cover the periods Friday 29 March to Monday 15 April and Friday 19 July to Monday 2 September at £491.36 including emptying.

150.4 Traffic Management Course for Community Events. The course was required for community group volunteers to manage temporary road closures at events such as Fair Week, Kingsbridge Celebrates Christmas and Remembrance Sunday. The qualification at £150 per head lasted for 5 years. KTC had arranged for a trainer from the Notter Bridge Training Centre to instruct the one day course in the Council Chamber. Cllr Jennings and the Town Clerk would attend alongside 6 persons from community groups and other councils.

150.5 Fair Week outdoor movie. Movies On The Square would not take place during summer 2024 however, KTC had already paid for one movie to be brought forward from 2023 which would be held on Thursday 25 July during Fair Week commencing at 9.15 p.m. Notwithstanding that the film would commence after the 9.00 p.m. 'watershed' Members agreed that it must be classified PG because it would be nigh impossible for Stewards to police the Town Square as a cinema environment.

150.6 Council Chamber redecoration. Members viewed colour samples and agreed their preference.

**23/151 REPORTS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND
AUTHORITIES/AGENCIES**

151.1 PCC/KTC/other agencies Police Station enquiry office official opening 21 February 2024. The Chairman and Police & Crime Commissioner had ‘cut the ribbon’.

151.2 Police/KTC/other agencies Key Individuals meeting 22 February 2024. A worthwhile meeting had been held with the Sector Inspector.

151.3 SHDC/KTC/Hastoe Ropewalk housing developments meeting 23 February 2024. A 100% affordable housing scheme was progressing and a draft timetable would be worked up for delivery.

151.4 South West Water/Environment Agency/DCC/SHDC/KTC sewage meetings 1, 4 and 6 March 2024. Further to agenda item 23/147, SWW had hosted updates on current sewage discharge matters.

151.5 Kingsbridge Information Centre. It was anticipated that the clock would be reinstalled on the roof before Easter.

151.6 Friends of Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary. The inaugural meeting on 29 February had witnessed an excellent turn out.

23/152 FINANCE – PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members received a schedule of payments due to date 12 March 2024. It was **RESOLVED** that the payments amounting to £11,548.13 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

23/153 BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

None.

23/154 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

Members were asked to consider an external Padel Court alongside other Open Space, Sport & Recreation projects.

23/155 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the nature of the business about to be transacted, at agenda item 23/156 below, that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

Three members of public left the meeting

Public Open Forum

1. Sue Stiles and Judy Hales from the Kingsbridge Compassionate Café provided a briefing on the project to Members. The salient points were:

- The café had moved from Harbour House to its new venue at the Kingsbridge Care Hub in November 2023.
- It opened every second and fourth Saturday from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
- Compassionate Cafes were community-led movements run by Compassionate Friends which enabled local residents experiencing bereavement, or caring for someone with a life limiting illness, the opportunity to talk to someone over a cup of tea and cake.
- Friends were there to offer support, company and lend a friendly ear within a welcoming and safe space.
- There were similar cafes operating in Plymouth, South Brent and Tavistock.
- An anonymous donor had provided funding however, rent needed to be paid and going forwards further funding would be required.
- Comments received had included: “grief is something that can be shared” and “chatted and cried in perfect harmony”.

The Chairman thanked Sue and Judy for their presentation and for providing such a great service for the Kingsbridge community.

2. Ben Hunter from Knowle House Close spoke on behalf of neighbours, who were also present, regarding parking fines received at their homes. The salient points were:

- They lived in a row of properties towards the end of the cul-de-sac where the driveways in front of their homes were short meaning that their cars encroached on to the adjoining pavement. Driveways elsewhere in the Close were longer and did not have such issues.
- The Close was quiet and historically there had never been any problems with the above practice.
- However, DCC enforcement officers had issued several parking fines in 2023 which had continued to date. He had previously challenged a parking ticket which had been rescinded. He received his latest fine in December 2023 to which he had appealed and an outcome was awaited. A neighbour had received a parking fine on the previous Saturday.
- There were double yellow lines (no parking at any time) at the mouth of the Close on entry from Fore Street which subsequently led to single yellow lines (no parking Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. & Saturday 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.) adjacent to their homes.
- Local residents were aware that this was not KTC business but were seeking support for the parking fines to stop.
- Cllr Brazil reported that DCC enforcement officers did not proactively visit Knowle House Close and only visited when requested to do so by local resident(s). On receipt of complaints DCC was duty bound to attend.
- A request could be made for the single yellow line to be removed and to delete current parking restrictions. Such a request would also be received

by KTC for its comments. However, DCC's local waiting restrictions programme was a long process via public consultation. It was not possible to issue 'an embargo' while any administration was underway.

The Chairman thanked Ben and his neighbours for making KTC aware of their parking issues and suggested they consider making a request for current waiting restrictions adjacent to their homes to be lifted.