

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

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

In Attendance: County Cllr Julian Brazil
District Cllr Denise O'Callaghan
District Cllr Susan Jackson
Five Members of Public
Martin Johnson (Secretary)

24/88 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Anne Balkwill, Cllr Mel Rollinson and Sgt Charlie Wilkes.

Public Open Forum

Statements from members of public are at Annex A.

A member of public left the meeting

24/89 REPORTS FROM POLICE, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

89.1 A written Police report for the period 8 October to 8 November was received by Members. There had been 66 calls for service in the Kingsbridge area reported via 999/101 calls, emails to the Police and reports online. Of these, 37 were recorded as crimes or incidents for the Police to investigate or carry out further work. They included concerns over the welfare of neighbours, criminal damage, reports of drunk drivers, missing persons, fraud offences against vulnerable persons, several young people acting in an anti-social behaviour over the half-term period, several alcohol-fuelled assaults/anti-social behaviour and several occurrences relating to the renewal of firearms licences. Several meetings between the Police, Town Council (KTC) and local residents had taken place over the previous few months regarding anti-social behaviour in the Recreation Ground and the town in general. The matter was being taken very seriously to attempt to rectify the situation. The Police had brought in partner agencies to work with those causing the issues, foot patrols were carried out on late shifts to show a visible presence and alcohol confiscated from

persons suspected to be under 18s. Given the collective efforts and winter months beginning to draw-in the issue appeared to be under control. The Police would continue to monitor and enforce. The key message to the public was to report such behaviour to build up a picture of when and where it was happening and who by. Finally, Sgt Wilkes was grateful for the opportunity to lay a wreath on Remembrance Sunday and thanked the Royal British Legion and KTC for organising the event. He was happy to discuss any policing matters with Members via email or at the station.

89.2 County Cllr Brazil stated, as Leader of South Hams District Council (SHDC), that differential car parking charges were being proposed due to cost pressures facing the authority from its waste collection and leisure centre services. SHDC council tax increases were capped at 3%, car parking charges had been frozen for the last 4 years and they represented some of the cheapest across the county. There had been much consultation with the 5 towns and a further meeting would take place the following day. He had noted comments made during the Public Open Forum however, in Europe several countries imposed a visitor tax which raised substantial monies to fund local services. The Executive on 21 November would discuss the concept of differential parking and, if supported for further progress, another Executive meeting on 4 December would discuss figures and a public consultation would commence. Going forwards innovative solutions to drive footfall into towns would be welcomed, for example specific market days, and SHDC had granted free parking days prior to Christmas. The South Hams Arts and Cultural Festival 2025 would also be discussed at the Executive. SHDC statistics evidenced that 120 people in the district who were eligible for pension credits had not signed up to date. The Household Support Fund ran until March 2025 for local families which may be facing hardship.

Devon County Council (DCC) had budget pressures particularly regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. DCC had a safety valve agreement with central government over an 8 year period however, the debt needed to be reduced to zero. The Devon Devolution deal between DCC and Torbay Council fed into said budget plans. At present DCC remained focussed on its income from second homes council tax from 2025/26 being used to supplement its core services rather than being ringfenced for housing as supported by all district councils in the county.

89.3 District Cllr O'Callaghan supported the previous report that SHDC was closely considering a car parking differential charging scheme, parking permits were likely to be reviewed independently and she noted that Fore Street Car Park was on that evening's meeting agenda at item 24/98. SHDC would debate the South Hams Festival 2025 shortly. She also supported the need for people to apply for pension credits given some people may lose their winter fuel allowance. A rough sleepers count had taken place that morning and the results for people sleeping on the street, in cars and tents would be published. Finally, she had a meeting scheduled that week to discuss affordable-led housing developments in Ropewalk and acknowledged that there had been a lack of recent information.

89.4 District Cllr Jackson reported that the Kingsbridge Remembrance Sunday event had been reflective. A recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation from South West Water which covered several topics including its

performance, ageing asset base, maintenance, liaison with councils and its business plan. A contractor had been appointed to install PV panels on the leisure centre roof following review of the project as it made economic sense to proceed. Further ad hoc maintenance would also be achieved including the entrance lobby.

County Cllr Brazil and 2 members of public left the meeting

24/90 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

24/91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24/92 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meetings held on 8 October 2024, and 23 October 2024, be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Members noted that the schedule for DCC's local waiting restrictions programme could not be altered in order to accelerate a KTC supported request; and DCC had provided information on how the Waverley Road Community Garden should apply for retrospective permission for its installation of planters.

24/93 PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Resolutions, and Recommendation, in the minutes of the Planning Committees held on 15 October 2024 and 5 November 2024 (which included support for planning application 3192/24/HHO, a major application, considered at the latter meeting).

24/94 FINANCE COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 22 October 2024 (public session).

24/95 PROPERTY & RECREATION COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Property and Recreation Committee held on 29 October 2024.

24/96 OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION/COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Members received a discussion paper which provided:

- a timeline of committee and council meetings until the budget and precept for next financial year 2025/26 was required to be agreed at the full council meeting on 14 January 2025,
- a listing of KTC's current ambitions and projects,

- a listing which compared town and parish precepts and council tax Band D contributions across the district for the current financial year 2024/25, and
- a table of guidance figures for KTC council tax Band D rates, Band D monetary figures and Band D percentage figures for potential increases from circa £6,000 through to £100,000.

KTC's current precept for 2024/25 was £210,711 which realised a £91.91 Band D household contribution. The new council tax base rate for Kingsbridge would be received in late December alongside the Consumer Price Index (inflation) figure for the 12 month period to November 2024. For example, and as guidance only:

- a £6,094 increase in precept to £216,805 would realise a new Band D rate at £93.73 which would provide an increase of £1.84 (4 pence per week) at 2%, whereas
- a £100,000 increase in precept to £310,711 realised a new Band D rate at £135.53 which provided an increase of £43.62 (84 pence per week) at 47.5%.

It was noted that Members own council tax bands (for the majority who lived in town) fluctuated between Bands A and G, were evenly distributed across the Bands and some guidance precept increase figures were provided for said different Bands.

Members recognised that the key debate was whether the precept should be increased in order to deliver specific community projects for next financial year 2025/26. At present town and parish council precepts were not capped unlike principal councils but no one could say with any certainty how long this situation would last.

A full debate followed and the salient points were:

- Crowdfunding and encouragement of philanthropy could be explored to gain additional funding for project delivery.
- KTC was likely to pick up tasks from DCC and SHDC given their own financial pressures.
- There was groundswell support for the town to achieve and be the best it could be.
- Some households were struggling and used Kingsbridge Area Food Bank for support.
- KTC had historically been financially prudent.
- KTC held circa £104k in Revenue Reserves at circa 50% of the current precept sum and circa £133k in Capital Receipts following the historic sale of land off Derby Road.
- KTC had finite income streams.
- At first sight it appeared that KTC was now 'falling behind' other councils and therefore would be unable to achieve its community goals given its current finances and a significant increase in precept would be required.
- What would be the criteria for assessing which projects should be delivered?
- The various projects should be placed under themes e.g. art & culture, economy and recreation.
- An independent meeting should be arranged shortly to discuss which projects were viable for delivery in the short term i.e. one to 2 years.

It was **RESOLVED** to hold a breakfast meeting at 8.00 a.m. on Friday 22 November to discuss project delivery in financial year 2025/26 in the region of £100,000.

District Cllrs Jackson & O'Callaghan and a member of public left the meeting

24/97 REMOTE ATTENDANCE & PROXY VOTING AT MEETINGS

Members received central government's consultation "Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings" and considered the posed questions. A majority of Members supported the proposal for remote attendance as it would still require 9 Members to be in physical attendance however, proxy voting would mean that Members could make their decisions before participating in a debate. It was **RESOLVED** to respond to the consultation that KTC supported remote attendance but was unsure regarding proxy voting.

24/98 FORE STREET CAR PARK – PARKING DURATION

Members received the current car parking charges for Fore Street car park: up to 30 minutes at £0.50, 3 hours at £1.00, 4 hours at £3.00 and all day at £7.00. The charging period was 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Members then considered a motion to request SHDC to limit the time duration at the car park to 4 hours with no return within 2 hours. The rationale was to enable greater turnover as the car park was always operating close to capacity with spaces at a premium. A recent survey had been undertaken and, for example, on a recent Wednesday only 9 spaces were available at 11.30 a.m. Members noted that residents' permits could be used in the car park from 3.00 p.m. until 10.00 a.m. the following morning. It was also mooted that the software for RingGo cashless parking payment by phone could be amended to stop remote top-ups. However, at present Members did not have the required data to make an informed decision. It was **RESOLVED** to request car parking data from SHDC for Fore Street Car Park plus usage of resident permits alongside similar information for the Cattle Market Car Park and usage of individual and business permits for the latter.

24/99 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

99.1 Waste in Fore Street. Notwithstanding SHDC mailed/hand-delivered letters, public notices positioned on street furniture and KTC Facebook message (1,299 post engagement) black bin bags full of rubbish continued to be piled up on non-waste collection Tuesdays. It was the only location across the district where this practice occurred on a regular basis. SHDC was currently progressing several potential prosecutions. KTC had stapled advisory notices on said black bags.

99.2 SWW press/social media release. KTC had been requested to add a quotation to a South West Water press release regarding ongoing works to prevent flooding in town.

99.3 South Devon National Landscape – Community Representative Election. KTC had been invited to vote for one of 2 candidates by a deadline of Friday 15 November.

99.4 Christmas late night shopping & day's free parking. Late night shopping in town would take place on Thursday 12 December. SHDC's kind offer of a free parking had been supported by local traders and the Chamber of Commerce for Saturday 14 December.

99.5 Bioregional Learning Centre – Climate Adaptation Learning Journey. The series of visits across the district took place 3 to 7 June which KTC had taken part in. A discussion paper and video had been circulated to all Members. Cllr Fishman had agreed to respond on behalf of KTC.

99.6 Meet the Leader of Devon County Council. The South Hams event would be held at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday 14 November at The Watermark in Ivybridge. The presentation would cover DCC's priorities, key challenges, plans for 2025, budgets and future strategies.

99.7 Car Parking – Differential Charging. Further to the council meeting held on 23 October, SHDC had now received initial feedback from all 5 towns regarding the proposals. A Mayors and Clerks meeting had been arranged for 5.30 p.m. on 13 November. Cllr Wingate and the Town Clerk would attend.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders paragraph 3.x. to allow the meeting to continue over a time limit of 2.5 hours.

24/100 REPORTS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND AUTHORITIES/AGENCIES

100.1 Kompan/KTC Treblepark play area 10 October 2024. A worthwhile meeting had worked-up ideas to introduce an enclosed play area for under 5s which had been requested during the public consultation for the recent basketball court refit.

100.2 SHDC Community Development/KTC meeting 15 October 2024. Officers from the newly formed SHDC team had introduced themselves to the Chairman and Town Clerk.

100.3 Internal audit 16 October 2024. The audit report had been received to be considered at the next Finance Committee on 26 November.

100.4 SHDC/local councils Climate & Nature Symposium 16 October 2024. Cllr Vann reported upon a useful symposium.

100.5 SHDC/KTC car parking differential charging meeting 16 October 2024. SHDC had made a presentation to Members as a precursor to the council meeting held on 23 October.

100.6 Police/SHDC/KTC liaison meeting 21 October 2024. A worthwhile meeting had discussed: crime statistics/trends, Police Station front desk operations, monthly Police surgeries, recent anti-social behaviour and staff resource.

100.7 Devon Communities Together emergency planning workshop 23 October 2024. The workshop had provided some good advice to include in KTC's Kingsbridge Emergency Plan.

100.8 Environment Agency (Flood Risk & Coastal Erosion)/KTC meeting 28 October 2024. Cllr Vann and the Town Clerk had held a worthwhile meeting with EA officers who had offered a presentation to Members on how to engage with local volunteers for Flood Warden roles.

100.9 Dartmoor Energy/KTC meeting 31 October 2024. Cllr Vann and the Town Clerk had received much information from a Quay House site meeting which had explored the installation of PV panels on the south west roof. The outcome was disappointing that, for various reasons, there was no potential for an installation.

100.10 Remembrance Sunday 10 November 2024. Several Members had participated in the march and service at the War Memorial and as marshals to assist the road closures. The Chairman had laid a wreath and attended the Mill Club afterwards for KTC's gift of a King Charles' portrait to the Royal British Legion.

24/101 FINANCE – PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members received a schedule of payments due to date 12 November 2024. It was **RESOLVED** that the payments amounting to £32,485.44 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

24/102 SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chairman would appear shortly in an Instagram post and Members would forward their ideas for future stories to Cllr Yabsley.

24/103 BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

None.

24/104 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

None.

24/105 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the nature of the business about to be transacted at agenda item 24/106 below, it was advisable in the public interest, that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

24/106 FINANCE COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 22 October 2024 (confidential session – staffing matters).

The meeting closed at 9.27 p.m.

..... Presiding ChairmanDate

Annex:

A. Public Open Forum.

Public Open Forum

1. Beth Richards, Engagement Curator at Harbour House, presented a Skate Park art project proposal to dovetail with KTC's adopted public art strategy for Kingsbridge. The salient points were:

- To offer a young person led creative opportunity to create public art; to create a project which demonstrated skating as a positive past-time with great well-being impacts; to help remove barriers to access skating for those who cannot afford equipment; and to act as a research and development phase towards applying for larger funding pots for such art projects e.g. Arts Council England.
- Proposed partners were KTC, Harbour House, Kingsbridge Community College (via its Enrichment programme with HH and its Skate Club) and Kingsbridge Skate Park.
- Delivery would be managed by a series of workshops to investigate the public perception of young skaters and to consider how artworks can promote skating as a positive contribution to the community. Six workshops using screen-printing, illustration and graphic design to create stickers and skateboard deck designs. Helmets, protective pads and skateboards to be produced by skate park users and sixth formers which would be stored in a public access "Skate Library". These could be borrowed, free of charge, so that skate park users who may not have their own equipment can still access the facility. Four to six workshops would create a community mural at the skate park possibly working with a town based artist. A celebration event would complete the project where skate films would be screened outdoors, DJs will play and skaters would demonstrate their skills.
- The proposed budget for 12 workshops, mural materials, skate library materials and production costs, producer costs and a contingency including in-kind Harbour House and KTC staff time was £5,346.

Members asked several questions which Beth answered:

- It was proposed for the mural to be painted on a specific wall at the Skate Park and for it to be 'spruced up' as required.
- £1,000 within the budget was earmarked for the Skate Library and would purchase kit for circa 10 persons.
- The physical location of the Skate Library had to be agreed however, Harbour House was happy to host it. Alternatives were a lockable box on site or at Quayside Leisure Centre.
- The timeline for the project was flexible and it was encouraged to be short term to commence as soon as possible however, Harbour House was able to work on other projects.
- There was potential to explore external funding for contributions towards costs.

The Chairman thanked Beth for her proposals which Members would consider shortly.

2. Carmen Redondo, local business owner, stated that she was concerned about SHDC's proposal for the introduction of differential car parking charges which could

see visitors charged double the current rates. This was likely to put pressure on visitors and traders would inevitably lose trade. Moreover, staff who lived out-of-area would be designated as visitors and also have to pay higher parking charges. In Europe it was regular for car parking to be free-of-charge from the early afternoon onwards which was a positive impact and sustained trade throughout the business day.

The Chairman thanked Carmen for her statement and, supported by fellow Members, replied that:

- KTC had liaised and responded to SHDC's proposals.
- Manipulation of shopping behaviour via car parking charges was important.
- The town centre was indeed quieter in the late afternoon.
- The conundrum was how to help local shops and manage the town centre as best possible while also managing SHDC's finance deficit.

3. Lee Bonham, SHDC Ward Member for Loddiswell, stated that he sat on the Salcombe Harbour Board. The Slipway in Quay Car Park was included in the Strategic Business Plan 2022-27 for a dinghy rack however, current boat parking and vegetation constrained improvements.

Furthermore, he was aware of several requests to fund local sports and recreational projects. At present S.106 developer contributions for the town included an allocation for a football/grass/3G synthetic pitch however, there appeared to be little progress being made and it may be apt to start conversations regarding re-allocation.

On behalf of the Chairman, the Town Clerk replied that:

- KTC's Planning Committee had recently agreed a response to the Harbour Board's public consultation on its business plan. It had reported that the type of Slipway rack storage should be carefully considered to ensure the current turning ability for vehicles with trailers was preserved and KTC wished to be invited to any on-site meetings.
- All information on local allocations for S.106 funding was contained in the Kingsbridge Open Space, Sport & Recreation plan 2018-28 available on KTC's website. A meeting of the Kingsbridge Sports Forum was likely to be held shortly to update various clubs on progress to achieve a 3G pitch. The project was challenging however, local football clubs and their governing bodies were keen to explore all opportunities.

4. Julie Taylor stated that autumn leaves were blocking surface water drains and given diluted street sweeping resources she suggested that local people should be encouraged to clear drains outside their properties. She also thanked KTC for the recent Remembrance Sunday event.

The Chairman thanked Julia for her comments.