

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KINGSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUAY HOUSE,
AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2025**

Present: Cllr Julia Wingate (Chairman)
Cllr Anne Balkwill
Cllr Philip Cole
Cllr Martina Edmonds
Cllr Mike Jennings
Cllr Chris Povey
Cllr Graham Price
Cllr Mel Rollinson
Cllr Paul Vann
Cllr Lorna Yabsley

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

24/125 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Mammatt, Cllr Danielle Rawstron, and Sgt Charlie Wilkes.

Public Open Forum

A statement from a member of public is at Annex A.

**24/126 REPORTS FROM POLICE, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND
SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

126.1 County Cllr Brazil reported that Devon County Council (DCC) had received a poor government financial settlement. Special education needs and disabilities had a £50m over spend and the authority's accumulative debt at £200m was greater than its reserves. DCC would be unable to meet government targets for extra funding from the safety valve protection scheme. The Devolution White Paper proposed local government reorganisation with the introduction of unitary authorities for areas with populations over 500k. Various conversations were ongoing and it had been mooted that DCC elections scheduled in May may be cancelled in order to accommodate the proposals; DCC had supported said elections to go ahead. There were undoubtedly efficiency savings to be made if unitary councils took over the roles of several other authorities. However, it was being forced upon Devon authorities, was likely to cost £25-30m from council tax and there had been nothing in the government's manifesto about the plans. Devon's district councils had already been working together to explore a single waste collection service and management of leisure centres. The general public probably did not care as long as current services were sustained however, Cornwall had closed leisure centres and privatised car parks. In Somerset, leisure centres had been offered to town councils. Public

toilets were likely to be passed to local councils. The South Hams population at 80k, West Devon at 55k and Plymouth at 260k were all under the above government threshold. The whole situation was very fluid at present however, a consultation had completed on 10 January and further information and a clear criteria was anticipated shortly. A preliminary solution was anticipated in March and a final report in the autumn. The Town Council (KTC) would be able to respond in due course. However, he feared that a unitary solution would effectively see the introduction of councillors of a similar type who may not be a true representation of the South Hams.

DCC's second home council tax premium at £15m would be spent on pothole repairs. The Police premium would be spent on local policing and the South Hams needed to lobby for more officers. He thanked KTC for engaging with the differential car parking proposals and for making sensible recommendations; the Executive on 23 January would debate the matter. Quayside Leisure Centre was performing best across the district and needed to be promoted well to ensure its viability.

126.2 District Cllr O'Callaghan reported that South Hams District Council (SHDC) had lost its rural service delivery grant at £500k and a recovery grant. The authority had received compensation for the higher employers national insurance contributions to be introduced in April however, the additional sum had not been fully covered. So SHDC had lost out all round however, it was well run financially. The second homes council tax premium also from April would provide an additional £600k which SHDC would earmark for affordable housing projects. The closure of the Recreation Ground café was a big loss and disappointing which was due to the impacts of anti-social behaviour. The suggested extra CCTV camera and security lighting would help to alleviate current issues. A mobile foot outlet which could be closed up at the of the day could be considered. Ward Members had been unaware of the planning application at Dennings in Wallingford Road which had included working hours within the construction management plan that KTC had challenged. She had requested a briefing from the planning officer. The Executive agenda which would include differential car parking proposals would be issued shortly. She had provided advice to a local resident who had experienced problems accessing SHDC's new PayByPhone system. People could still pay by cash. Should the differential car parking proposals be supported cash payment by local residents, registered as such, would provide an extra 30 minutes' free parking i.e. one hour payment would support 1.5 hours parking. The public consultation had received less feedback than the recent motorhomes consultation. SHDC had closely considered KTC's recommendations for Fore Street, Cattle Market and Lower Union Road and supported them in its revised proposed charges e.g. a 50% reduction for 3 hours parking in Fore Street. The Ropewalk affordable-led housing project was moving forwards and Hastoe was working up a pre-application for 10 homes on the brownfield site; progress on the greenfield site was unknown. In the current house building climate it was not unusual for such matters to take time and, further afield, developers were effectively land banking sites with planning permission.

126.3 District Cllr Jackson reported that business at SHDC was fast and furious. However, there was great transparency and all Members had a voice notwithstanding their political allegiances. Everyone was contributing and negotiating well. However, devolution did not appear to be progressing in a

democratic manner at present and looked like a top down scheme which district, borough and city councils had to follow.

126.4 A written Police report for the period 10 December to 13 January was received by Members. There had been 40 calls for service for Kingsbridge via 999/101 calls and emails to the Police which needed attendance. As a result 72 occurrences had been generated for further investigation or safeguarding work. The reports included: missing persons, applications to the Police to disclose information, several assaults with less serious injury (and one of a more serious nature), fraudulent use of a debit card, shopliftings and several incidents of criminal damage within private dwellings. While the number of occurrences had increased assurance had been provided that several crimes had needed to be recorded from one incident, several generated of an administrative nature and several that were not crime-related but purely for the Police to enact safeguarding mechanisms. There had been several meetings with the KTC, SHDC and residents about the Recreation Ground and he was pleased that a Neighbourhood Watch scheme had been set up for the area. He was also content that anti-social behaviour around town had been low during the winter months however, the weather had probably been a factor. The area would continue to be patrolled as the weather picked up in spring. He appealed to the public to report policing issues via email, the force website or at the station's enquiry office which was open 1000-1500 Monday to Saturday. Sgt Wilkes aimed to attend the next council meeting in person but was happy to discuss any matter beforehand.

County Cllr Brazil left the meeting

24/127 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

24/128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24/129 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 10 December 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

24/130 PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Resolutions in the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7 January 2025.

After deferral at the committee meeting, and following a site visit, it was further **RESOLVED** to Recommend Approval for the following tree works' proposals:

Reference: 4032/24/TPO
Case Officer: Lee Marshall
Applicant: Mrs A Merritt

Proposal: TPO no 32, 2004, ref 697
For works see Arboricultural Survey and Tree Risk Assessment Report
Site: Melleray, 70 Embankment Road, Kingsbridge, TQ7 1LA

and to forward the above findings to SHDC Development Management.

24/131 FINANCE COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 9 January 2025.

The Precept for financial year 2025/26 was confirmed at £277,913 which would require a KTC Band D council tax contribution at £113.61. This was an increase at £21.70 (42 pence per week) from the current financial year 2024/25.

A key driver for the increase in Precept was to achieve a £75,000 budget for community projects which had been earmarked for a pump track or padel court; introduction of street lighting in Ropewalk, Tumbly Hill and Duncombe Street; and a refit of the Memorial Shelter.

24/132 RECREATION GROUND

Members noted meetings held on 24 September and 17 December 2024 which had considered anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Recreation Ground. The latter meeting had received a report that SHDC had agreed to end the café lease early and the facility had closed. A Neighbourhood Watch scheme had commenced for the park area and an extra CCTV camera for surveillance at the front of the park/Embankment Road end was anticipated to be introduced shortly following agreement by SHDC and KTC. There were several potential outstanding matters including: loss of toilet, loss of hire of play equipment (putting, boules and table tennis), ongoing ASB (should the tables, seats and sheltered area remain) and suggested introduction of security lighting. Very recently 2 expressions of interest in the café building had been received by KTC which had been directed to SHDC Assets.

It was **RESOLVED** to form a working group to consider the potential permanent closure of the café in the Recreation Ground, and related matters, with the aim of forwarding comments to SHDC for consideration.

A member of public left the meeting

24/133 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

133.1 Town Councillor Vacancy – North Ward, Kingsbridge. The notice for ward electors to call an election had completed that day and SHDC Elections Office would inform KTC of the outcome shortly.

133.2 Vacancy on the Planning Committee. Cllr Rawstron had stepped down from the Planning Committee due to work commitments.

133.3 Devon Surface Water Flood Forecasting Alert System. DCC had organised online workshops on 9 and 13 January for volunteers who had agreed to take part in the DRIP project.

133.4 VE Day 2025. The 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) would take place on Thursday 8 May. The Royal British Legion was likely to organise an event.

133.5 Kingsbridge Flooding & Sewage Meeting. A scheduled meeting with South West Water, Environment Agency, DCC, SHDC and the local MP had been cancelled in mid-December. Revised dates had been circulated and it was likely for an afternoon meeting on 12 February in Quay House to be confirmed shortly.

24/134 REPORTS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND AUTHORITIES/AGENCIES

134.1 Kingsbridge Sports Forum 11 December 2024. A worthwhile meeting with good attendance from several bodies had agreed to a press release to seek public opinion on where an all weather pitch could be located.

134.2 Recreation Ground anti-social behaviour meeting 17 December 2024.
See agenda item 24/132.

134.3 Bandstand carol singing 20 December 2024. The event had been well supported and much enjoyed. A professional PA system would be booked for 2025.

134.4 Recreation Ground CCTV meeting 8 January 2025. See agenda item 24/132.

24/135 FINANCE – PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members received a schedule of payments due to date 14 January 2025. It was **RESOLVED** that the payments amounting to £16,658.98 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

24/136 SOCIAL MEDIA

Members considered several Instagram posts including: Quayside Leisure Centre (love it and use it), Citizens Advice weekly outreach service in Quay House, new KTC council tax contribution for next financial year 2025/26 and estuary activities.

24/137 BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

None.

24/138 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

None.

The meeting closed at 8.23 p.m.

..... Presiding ChairmanDate

Annex:

A. Public Open Forum.

Public Open Forum

Peter Pallis, a local resident, stated that he was in attendance to listen to the discussion regarding the Recreation Ground café (agenda item 24/132) and expressed an interest in the facility.

The Chairman thanked Peter and District Cllr O'Callaghan reported that she could provide contact details for the relevant SHDC department.