

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KINGSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUAY HOUSE,
AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2025**

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

In Attendance: County Cllr Julian Brazil
District Cllr Susan Jackson
Four Members of Public
Martin Johnson (Secretary)

24/139 COUNCILLOR VACANCY – CO-OPTION

Julie Taylor was co-opted as the new Member for Kingsbridge North Ward and her Declaration of Acceptance of Office was received.

24/140 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from District Cllr Denise O'Callaghan.

Public Open Forum

Statements from members of public are at Annex A.

**24/141 REPORTS FROM POLICE, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND
SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

141.1 Further to comments made during the Public Open Forum, County Cllr Brazil was made aware that Waverly Community Garden's retrospective application for planters has been refused by Devon County Council (DCC). He would bring this up at DCC's South Hams Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) on 5 March and suggested that a representative from the Town Council (KTC) may wish to attend the meeting. He also supported the proposed new and independent application from the group for a public seat and a reduction in the speed limit in Belle Hill. Further to the previous meeting, he reported upon government's devolution White Paper; the consensus in Devon was to support a Devon & Cornwall unitary authority however, Cornwall was not in favour. Local government reorganisation in Devon had been estimated at between £25m and £100m to cover redundancies, replacement

contracts, legal matters etc. However, South Hams District Council (SHDC) could expand its 'single officer' positions to other district authorities and had already been working collectively to explore a single waste collection service and management of leisure centres. The Somerset unitary authority with a population of over 500k people had projected savings of £18m for the unitary council however, within 6 months it had a £30m over spend and this financial year's funding gap could be £100m. Therefore, rather than saving public monies it had actually cost more. In theory there were good things from reorganisation and examples of best practice had been requested from central government but they had not been received to date. Members brought up that recent road closure signage had been confusing with early notice signs in the town centre reporting 'road closed ahead' which had referred to Coleridge Lane in Chillington which had not impacted on the A379 itself. Finally, he would investigate a road closure in Bridge Street for sewer cleaning which had been scheduled during the school half-term period 27 to 30 May.

A member of public left the meeting

141.2 District Cllr Jackson reported that SHDC had allocated funds for solar panels on Quayside Leisure Centre. She had noted communication regarding KTC's proposed expansion of CCTV to Fore Street and recognised that different people held different views on surveillance matters and it could be an emotive subject.

Cllr Brazil left the meeting

141.3 District Cllr O'Callaghan had reported a couple of matters to the Town Clerk which he reported on her behalf. She had been made aware of children entering the former Garden Mill development site at Lock's Hill because the heras fencing either side of Public Footpath No.6 was in a poor condition and had collapsed in places. Kroll Limited, acting for the Receiver, had been contacted and positive feedback had been received that a security contractor would visit the site to inspect the fencing. A large tree had been felled in Knowle House Close however, the circumstances were unknown at present. The location was outside the Conservation Area and the tree, and adjacent trees, did not have Tree Protection Orders. KTC's Tree Wardens had agreed to make a site visit.

141.4 There was no Police report on this occasion.

24/142 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to discuss one item of urgent business at agenda item 24/153 regarding a request for a grant to be taken under confidential matters.

24/143 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Edmonds declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 24/148.

The following 2 in number agenda items were taken early out-of-turn:

24/147 RECREATION GROUND

Members received notes from a working group held on 30 January 2025 which had discussed the potential permanent closure of the café in the Recreation Ground and related matters. The group had made recommendations for the short (summer 2025), medium (2025-2027) and long (2027 onwards) terms. Members noted comments from a local resident that a business plan for the café could be worked up. After discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to provide the following feedback to SHDC:

- SHDC is recommended to liaise with a person who has expressed an interest in running the café to ascertain if there is an opportunity for the tenancy to be renewed to manage a successful business.
- Should the above not prove fruitful, and the expression of interest to operate the café is declined, then the café should remain closed.
- All seating, tables and overhead canopy for shelter should be removed.
- The building itself should remain and be secured via lockable metal shutters.
- Installation of a Mosquito anti-loitering alarm be investigated.
- A visit by the Police Designing Out Crime officer based in Exeter be requested.
- The toilet to be redesignated as a public toilet, managed accordingly, and included in SHDC's opening/closing/cleaning schedule alongside Fore Street and Quay public toilets. The ongoing operational costs to be negotiated with KTC.
- A kiosk for take away only (hot drinks/dry foodstuffs) be explored.

24/148 WAVERLEY ROAD – PUBLIC SEAT

Members had noted comments made during the Public Open Forum and, after discussion, it was then **RESOLVED** to support Waverley Community Garden's application to DCC for a public bench to be positioned in Waverley Road.

Three members of public left the Chamber

24/144 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 14 January 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

24/145 PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Resolutions in the minutes of the Planning Committees held on 21 January 2025 and 4 February 2025.

24/146 PROPERTY & RECREATION COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Recommendations in the minutes of the Property and Recreation Committee held on 28 January 2025.

24/149 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

149.1 Flooding & Sewage Meeting. The following day, 12 February, at 1.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber KTC would host DCC, SHDC, Environment Agency, South West Water and the MP's representative for a flooding and sewage discharge meeting.

149.2 Annual Town Meeting. A local council must hold its Annual Town Meeting between 1 March and 31 May. For several years KTC had broken the rules by holding such meetings as interactive drop-ins with local residents at either the Market Hall or in the Town Square on a Saturday morning (rather than holding a formal meeting with agenda and subsequent minutes). Members supported another drop-in at the Market Hall in early March. Chiefly, this would be an opportunity for Members to earmark the budget, precept and projects for next financial year 2025/26 and receive comments and queries from local residents.

149.3 Twinning Association. It was likely that the current committee would wind-up the Twinning Association at its Annual General Meeting on 18 February and official visits with Weilerbach would no longer take place. The Isigny-sur-Mer visits ended in 2016.

149.4 Kingsbridge Community Champions. Promotion had commenced with a deadline of 14 March for nominations.

149.5 Requests to other agencies. Global advertising had been requested to repair the large billboards in West Alvington Hill opposite the entrance to Station Yard Industrial Estate. Further to agenda item 141.3. Kroll Limited had been requested to repair the heras fencing adjacent to Public Footpath No.6 as it traversed Lock's Hill (K4/Garden Mill development site).

149.6 Vacancies. Dodbrooke Feoffees wished to recruit more Trustees and Cllr Edmonds reported her interest. The Police Councillor Advocate position was vacant following Cllr Fishman's retirement and Cllr Jennings stated his interest.

24/150 REPORTS ON MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND AUTHORITIES/AGENCIES

150.1 Devon larger local councils forum 23 January 2025. A remote meeting had discussed potential devolution matters.

150.2 SHDC/KTC Recreation Ground pond meeting 28 January 2025. Notes from a positive meeting would be forwarded to all Members.

150.3 KTC Recreation Ground working group 30 January 2025. See agenda item 24/147.

150.4 SHDC/Kingsbridge In Bloom/KTC grounds maintenance meeting 4 February 2025. Notes from another positive meeting would be forwarded to all Members.

150.5 SHDC/Mayors & Clerks meeting 5 February 2025. The meeting focussed on the potential consequences of devolution.

24/151 FINANCE – PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members received a schedule of payments due to date 11 February 2025. It was **RESOLVED** that the payments amounting to £8,068.11 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

24/152 SOCIAL MEDIA

Members noted that a recent Instagram post “CCTV be warned” had been too aggressive and had been taken down following liaison with a local resident. Members considered social media was a great tool however, KTC’s Social Media Policy needed to be reviewed and some Members questioned the benefit of Instagram per se. After discussion, the introduction to the Instagram page would be amended. Moreover, a post would be produced to highlight KTC’s influence upon SHDC’s proposals for a differential parking scheme from 1 April 2025 and other suggested topics were brought up.

24/153a BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN – GRANT

To be taken under Confidential matters.

District Cllr Jackson left the meeting

24/154 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

Questions and updates were received regarding:

- The proposed week-long Kingsbridge Fringe Festival commencing on Saturday 6 September to include Abbathon, drag night, storytelling and “Stars In Their Eyes”.
- The Backways art project was at the design stage with 3 locations identified to start, designs and costs were being worked up however, further funds were required.

24/155 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Not required as members of public had left the meeting.

24/153b BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN – GRANT

A community group had requested a grant outside of the traditional timetable whereby approved grants were disbursed in early May each year. It was **RESOLVED** to feedback to the group that KTC was willing to consider making a grant early out-of-turn however, a formal application including its latest accounts would be required.

24/156 STAFFING

Members received an update on staffing matters and it was then **RESOLVED** to identify 5 to 7 Members to form an interview panel and to provide said panel delegated powers to appoint a new Town Clerk in early July 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

..... Presiding ChairmanDate

Annex:

A. Public Open Forum.

Public Open Forum

1. Kirsty and Sonia, from Waverley Community Garden, stated that they wished to apply to Devon County Council for a public bench to be installed on a patch of ground adjacent to the footway in Waverley Road. The location had become a mud bath due to cars parking over a grass verge. The group requested KTC's support for its application and for the bench to be placed on KTC's Asset Register for ongoing management and public liability insurance.

The Chairman thanked them and reported that the relevant agenda item 24/148 would be discussed shortly.

2. Peter Pallis requested that he be allowed to make comments when the Recreation Ground café at agenda item 24/147 was discussed.

The Chairman responded that she was content.

3. Andrew Lidstone had attended a previous council meeting to request that vegetation be cut back on both sides of Belle Hill all the way to Belle Hill playing fields. There had been a significant increase in traffic since the development of Applegate Park and the 2 issues combined had made driving hazardous.

The Chairman responded that DCC had replied to KTC's request on 18 December to report that the area would be inspected in the New Year. KTC would request an update and also enquire if a historical request for the 20mph speed limit which commenced at the junction with Belle Cross Road/Fosse Road could be reconsidered and moved to the northern side of the entrance to Applegate Park in Belle Hill.