

Kessingland Parish Council



Minutes of the Kessingland Parish Council Meeting At 7.00pm on Wednesday 8th November 2023 held in the Council Chamber, Marram Green

Members present:	Councillors D. Boyle (Vice Chair), C. Carter, C. Cook, M. Dunne, I. Graham (Chair), A. Green, S. James & J. McLean
Other Cllrs in attendance:	None
Others present:	None
Clerk to the Meeting:	N. Coleby (Parish Clerk) & D. Blowers (Admin/Committee Clerk)

123. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the meeting protocol.

124. Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Robin de Brea, Neil Glendinning, Bob Saunders & Lisa Truman. Acceptance of apologies was proposed by Cllr Boyle and seconded by Cllr McLean with all in favour.

125. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda and there are no written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. A dispensation has been granted to Cllr Green in respect of his role as district councillor.

Councillors considered the request for dispensation that had been received from Cllrs McLean and Truman. The dispensation for Cllr Truman is due to her membership of the Friends of Kessingland CofE Primary Academy and Kessingland Help In Need and the dispensation for Cllr McLean is also in respect of her membership of the Friends of Kessingland CofE Primary Academy and also as a committee member for the Kessingland Sports and Social Centre. There is no personal financial benefit from membership of these bodies but there are financial relationships between the organisations and the council. Cllr Graham proposed that dispensations for Cllrs

McLean and Truman should be granted by the council for the period of this term of office or whilst they are involved with the named organisation. It was noted that neither of the councillors received any financial benefit from the positions however there are or could be financial interaction between the parish council and these organisations. This was seconded by Cllr Dunne with all in favour.

126. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Due to time constraints no minutes have been circulated this month. Parish Council minutes for the meeting that was held on 11th October 2023, will go to the next ordinary meeting of the council, minutes from the committees which were on the agenda for noting will go to the committee for approval and then be circulated as part of the agenda for the next ordinary meeting.

127. Public Forum

During each meeting the council will hold a public forum for a period of 10 minutes. During this time, residents will have a maximum of 3 minutes each to put views/questions to the Chair regarding matters on the agenda. Where possible the Chair will respond but the matter may have to be deferred and placed on a later month's agenda for discussion.

127.1 There was no report from Suffolk County Council.

127.2 Cllr Green provided a report about East Suffolk. He noted that the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board had met (Cllr Green is a member as Chair of the Carlton Colville, Kessingland and Southwold Community partnership) and that the key areas of their work for this year would be to look at actions/activities/organisations can do work to support mental health in children and young adults. One of the primary pressures for children in our community partnership is that there are no high schools which means that when children transition from primary to secondary school friendships can be fragmented because they could be in different classes or schools and have to make new friends and deal with peer pressure where it may not have previously existed as they had a social support structure built up through primary school. Another main priority is rural isolation and more elderly residents of which our community partnership (Kessingland in particular) have a higher demographic of elderly people in the community. The Community Partnership awarded £5000 for starting a Men's Shed in Southwold. East Suffolk Council has responded to the Government's decision to create more oil and gas licences by confirming that it will no longer accept new tenancies from companies committed to its production. The East Suffolk redevelopment of the old post office in Lowestoft has won an East Suffolk Quality of Place Award.

127.3 There were no members of the public present in this meeting and no comments had been received prior to the meeting.

128. Finance

128.1 It was noted that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee on the 29th September 2023 had not yet been received.

128.2 It was noted that the minutes of the 1st November meeting will come to the next meeting of council. This being the case, council will receive an update of account balances.

- 128.3 It was noted that the Finance & Governance committee approved a change in the billing for IT provision and support. Up until now the council has paid a monthly direct debit which covers the monthly support contract as well as the Broadband provision at Francis Rd. It increased recently with the addition of Vade, however the licenses for all of the email accounts and full licences for staff laptops as well as the domain licence were paid via one off payment on an annual basis. This has now changed and the council will now pay a set monthly figure to cover all of our IT delivery from our provider.
- 128.4 It was noted that the situation with mandates and closure of accounts is still ongoing however it is being followed up.
- 128.5 A brief overview of Scribe was given by the Clerk to the committee.
- 128.6 It was noted that no requests for changes in budget funding have been received by any of the committee's chairs. Almost all committees will meet during November, therefore they are asked to consider if they anticipate any additional spending requirements in 2023/24 so that the Budget Working Party can consider any effects on the budget for 2023/24. Cllr Boyle advised that the Events and Communications Committee were planning to hold an annual Village Show in 2024 and this would require additional funding to cover the costs as the inflatables would cost around £5k and there would be other costs to be met. It was noted that £10k would be a large amount to add to the Events budget and raise via council tax. The Clerk suggested that as this would be the first year that the council could use reserves so that the 2024 costs could be used to consider ongoing council costs and therefore budget needs. It may also be that additional funding or sponsorship may be able to be investigated. There is currently funding in the Civic and Ceremonial reserve from funds earmarked for the Jubilee and coronation which could be earmarked for the Village Show. It was agreed that this would be referred to the Budget Working Group for building into budget considerations.
- 128.7 It was noted that the council's electricity contracts for Francis Road were due for renewal. In 2020 the council attempted to move both its electricity contracts to a green energy provider, Opus energy however one of the accounts was still under contract so could not be moved and remained with British Gas. The British Gas contract ended when energy prices were at their peak so there was no point looking at renewing any contract at that time. The council's contract with OPUS energy came to an end in October of this year and the broker which deals with local government provision contacted the council about renewing the contract. Requirements were discussed, especially regarding the council's determination to use a green energy provider and our broker checked which providers had the best prices. The usage on the British Gas supply is so minimal that no one would take over that provision and Opus Energy remained the most competitive of the Green Energy providers. Under delegate powers the Clerk consulted with the Chair of Finance over the quote (at the moment quotes only last for the maximum of a day as the market is changing so rapidly) and agreed to approve the quote and sign the contracts. It will see an increase in costs on the Opus contract (as the council had fortunately been locked into a three year contract which had not been affected by the increases over the last year) but this is less than ten pence per unit on any of the time periods in which that account operates and the British Gas contract, which was on a variable contract have dropped by around a third, however there the Standing

Charge on that account is still high but there is nothing that the council can do about it.

128.8 Councillors noted that, following parish council's delegation to deal with the council's insurance policy to the Finance and Governance committee, the council's insurance was agreed and a policy taken out with Clear Councils Insurance (formerly BHIB Councils Insurance). All the different policies had good elements but the Clear Councils Insurance policy equalled or was better than the other policies and was also the lowest quote by a significant figure. There are still a couple of items which the Clerk and the Chair of Finance wish to discuss with our insurer which are likely to increase the premiums but it will still remain lower in cost than the other quotes.

128.9 It was noted that the Finance and Governance committee delegated authority to deal with the allotments' maintenance to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairs of Leisure & Amenities and Finance & Governance. Two providers did a site visit and the council has now received both quotes. A decision will be made once the two Chairs and the Clerk could review them.

128.10 Following the council's purchase of new play equipment the council's reserves have been reduced to a level where the need to set up new deposit accounts is minimal. When one of the council's accounts is closed it is extremely likely that those funds would take the council's main deposit account higher the FSCS maximum. This would also be the case for the council's other main deposit account. Council may wish to consider whether to put a further £10k into the CCLA account as that is the account which is paying the highest interest at this time. Council has delegated authority to move funds between accounts to the Clerk and Chair of Finance and Governance, however this varies from that delegation as the CCLA is not a bank account and not covered by FSCS (although it has the highest rating for financial security that a financial firm can have). The council gave thought to this consideration. Cllr James proposed that when the funds from Barclays are transferred to the council's main deposit account, that the council put any funds over the FSCS limit for the council's two Deposit accounts into its CCLA account. This was seconded by Cllr Boyle with all in favour.

129. Audit

129.1 Councillors noted that there is nothing to report in this section as the RFO is still compiling a report for council.

130. Governance

130.1 There is a new independent Records Office in Lowestoft, Lowestoft And District Independent Archive (LADIA) and to consider which archive, Ladia or the Suffolk Archive (most material at the Hold in Ipswich and some at Lowestoft Library) the council would wish to use should it want to archive council paperwork. Council considered this item and felt that archived material would be better held locally rather than in Ipswich however council felt that more information was needed. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to arrange a visit to the Lowestoft Independent archive so that the facilities could be seen and the council could raise any questions that would help inform it's decision on where items would be archived.

131. Climate, Culture, Community & Development Committee

- 131.1 The minutes of the 3CD meeting of the 2nd October 2023 will come to the next meeting for noting.

132. Emergency Planning Committee

- 132.1 The minutes of the Emergency Planning committee of 27th September 2023 will come to the next meeting for noting.

133. Events & Communications

- 133.1 The minutes of the Events & Communications Committee meeting of the 26th September 2023 will come to the next meeting for noting.
- 133.2 It was noted that the Annual Survey has been circulated to all councillors. Response has been positive to the layout and questions. The one query was about there being nothing about the Village Fridge in the survey. In order to include it something else would need to be removed as the survey currently fills four pages which is the maximum recommended size for a survey. Although some things in the survey are existing provisions, the main aim of the survey are to get views on Parish Council projects whereas the Fridge is a community project. It is not intended that the annual survey should be a stand-alone survey and it has been proposed that as well as the annual survey, smaller surveys are run through the year in the Village News. The first could be about food and food waste and include the Village Fridge. Council felt that the plan of including the survey in with the Village News on the website and Facebook along with posters on notice boards and finding locations in the village where forms could be collected and returned was the best way to try to maximise survey completions and returns. Council also agreed that a prize draw for completion of the survey would help to improve the level of completed surveys returned. Although the survey was originated by 3CD, the Events and Communications committee would be the natural body to deal with organising the administration of the survey with support from the office. This item will be placed on the next Events & Communications meeting.

134. Leisure & Amenities

- 134.1 The minutes of the Leisure and Amenities committee meeting of the 26th September 2023 will come to the next meeting to be noted.

135. Personnel

- 135.1 The minutes of the extra-ordinary Personnel committee of the 6th September and 20th October 2023 will come to the next meeting to be noted.
- 135.2 Councillors noted that there have been some employment law changes which may have an effect on the council policies, procedures and contracts as well as differences between staff contracts which needs to be considered. It was further noted that the Chair of Personnel and the Clerk will be reviewing the contracts. Councillors recognised that preparation of staff contracts are delegated to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of Personnel as long as they are in line with the standard staff contract which has been approved by council. As this review will look to standardise staff contracts and terms and conditions council agreed that a putting in place a standard process would be

sensible. Cllr Green proposed that parish council delegate power to review, update or amend contracts where there is no financial impact or where impact has been anticipated and budget allowance put in place to the Personnel committee with review on a four yearly basis unless there is a legislative change which requires earlier review. If there is a financial impact then the Personnel committee would make a recommendation to the Finance and Governance committee. F&G would then consider the financial impact and make a recommendation to Parish Council. Should the recommendations differ then both would be placed before Parish Council for its consideration. Cllr Boyle seconded the proposal with all in favour.

- 135.3 To receive an update and report on the interviews for Youth Leader and consider any further action required.

This item will be dealt with in the confidential section (Item 142.2).

136. Planning & Highways

- 136.1 The minutes of the Planning & Highways meetings of the 18th October and 1st November 2023 will come to the next meeting to be noted.

- 136.2 It was noted that due to Storm Babet, the presentation about flood management work in Church Road and Marsh Lane was unable to take place. However an update was provided. It is hoped that the next stage of work will start between mid-December and mid-January however this may be affected if we have more storms such as Babet and Ciaran. The main project has progressed to a point where it is unlikely to face major delay and the third part of the project is integral to the other stages so hopefully this will still go ahead as well. Although the work could be done much more quickly if Church Road could be closed, the difficulties such a move would cause means that only one lane of the road will be closed and will have traffic lights. It is envisioned that the work will take about three weeks on this stage however it might be more if some of the other work could be consolidated with stage 2. Parkdean have been contacted and have no wide loads scheduled during the proposed period and have contacted their head office to let them know that wide loads will not be able to get access during that period. They are aware that there could be time slippage and are being kept updated.

137. Reports on Council Projects

- 137.1 It was noted that a meeting was held between the council and Southwold Town Council to discuss working together to access funding for boardwalks for both places as has been installed in Lowestoft.

138. Other Council business

- 138.1 Councillors noted that Storm Babet resulted in flooding in the village, luckily (as far as the council is aware) the flooding did not enter any properties in the parish although some residents' gardens were underwater and at least one was affected. One of the affected areas was Griffith Close and Cllr Ladd has worked with the parish council to get the draining ditch and culvert cleared so that water will be able to drain away more quickly and reduce the risk of flooding. It was noted that work on clearing the ditch will start on the 12th of December and will continue on Tuesdays (excluding Boxing Day). The council gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Ladd for his prompt action in relation to this matter.

139. Reports from Councillors & Officers Relating to representative roles.

139.1 No written reports have been submitted this month however a verbal report will be provided regarding the Carlton Colville, Kessingland and Southwold Community Partnership. Cllr Green noted that this item had been included in his report.

140. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 10th January 2024 at 7.00pm at Marram Green.

141. Items for the next agenda

The last date for notifying the Clerk of items for the agenda will be the 5.00pm on the 2nd January 2024.

142. Exclusion of the Press & Public

That is accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 (Sections 100 and 102), the public and press be excluded for the remaining items of business due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted including contractual and personnel related matters. This was proposed by Cllr Graham and seconded by Cllr Boyle with all in favour.

142.1 It was noted that the letters regarding a public open space in Kessingland have been sent as requested at the last parish council meeting. Council will be kept informed of any progress regarding this matter (From 121.4).

142.2 To receive an update and report on the interviews for Youth Leader and consider any further action required. (From 135.3).

A report had been circulated and council discussed the contents of the report. Cllr James proposed that the council should endorse the decision of the Personnel committee regarding the recruitment of a Youth Club Leader. This was seconded by Cllr Boyle. The proposal moved to the vote which resulted in four votes in favour of the motion, two votes against and two abstentions meaning that the proposal was passed.

143. The Chair noted that he would be attending the Remembrance Day at St Edmunds church and would be laying the wreath at the war memorial and hoped to see other councillors present. People should meet at the war memorial at 10.45am. A parishioner had made the wreath for the council and it's quality was noted. Cllr Graham proposed that a £20 gift voucher should be presented to the parishioner as she will not accept payment, which was seconded by Cllr James with all in favour.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Parish Council

I certify that these are accurate minutes of the above meeting as approved at a meeting of the Parish Council held on the _____.

Signed

Dated

Cllr Ian Graham
Chair, Kessingland Parish Council