KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD VIRTUALLY ON 7th SEPTEMBER 2020

Item No	Item	Action By
1.0	**Attendance** In attendance: Cllr P Townsend (Chairman) Cllr S Hancock Cllr D Stripp Cllr D Taylor Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk) Cllr R Williams (SCC) Cllr D Darch (SWT) 3 members of the public attended the meeting Apologies: Cllr N Townsend Cllr A Wilcox	
2.0	**Councillors' Declarations of Interest –** None	
3.0	**Approval of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 13th July 2020 -** **Resolved:** The minutes were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.	
4.0	**Planning -** **a) Applications:** **Case Ref: 20/20/0021** – Construction of 2 No. balconies to the rear of Millfield House, Kingston Road, Kingston St Mary. The Council considered the above planning application and has no comments to make. **Case Ref: 20/20/0023** – Replacement of dwelling, annexe and outbuildings with the erection of 3 No. detached dwellings with associated garaging and works at Brantwood, Lodes Lane, Kingston St Mary. The Council considered the above planning application and would like to make the following comments. The Parish Council has taken into consideration that the proposed development is located within the Quantock Hills AONB and Kingston St Mary's conservation and settlement areas. The Parish Council also took note of Somerset West and Taunton Planning Department's opinion that "As the site is within the settlement boundary for Kingston St Mary, subject to suitable design, the principle of development is accepted." The Parish Council understands that there is no ban on building in the AONB and that the land proposed for the traditional orchard will remain in private ownership and is not included in this planning application. The proposed dwellings will be situated closer to Kingston Road than the current property and consequently will not negatively impact the setting of the Grade I listed Church or Grade II* Manor House. A high-density development in this location would be out of character with the area, inappropriate with respect to the nearby heritage assets and give rise to highway issues. Whereas the proposed design for three new houses and associated garaging to be built on this brownfield site within the village's residential area is considered proportionate and sympathetic to the conservation area. The demolition and removal of the existing c1980 house and associated outbuildings and their replacement with three traditionally designed energy efficient homes, arranged in a farmyard layout, will enhance this small area of the AONB and the village's conservation area. The retention of the existing hedgerows and trees will shield the neighbouring houses from the new development and contribute towards preserving the natural environment. Two additional dwellings will make a positive contribution to the sustainability of village life and was an important factor when considering this planning application. The Parish Council does not object to this planning application but has several concerns which it would like to see included as conditions, should approval be granted.	

	1. That adequate measures be put in place to prevent surface water runoff onto Lodes Lane and Kingston Road. 2. Kingston St Mary is predominately a 'dark skies' village and the proposed development should not include any street lighting. As per the applicant's Ecological Appraisal, to minimize the impact on any commuting bats, lighting should be low level, with downward deflectors and PIR sensors. This is in accordance with guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and should also apply to any future lighting on this site. 3. The proposed development should include wildlife corridors to aid the movement of species across the site. **Case Ref: 20/20/0025/T** – Notification to carry out management works to one Tree of Heaven, one Willow and one Quince within Kingston St Mary Conservation Area at The Old Shop, Kingston St Mary. The Council considered the above planning application and had no comments to make. It was resolved that future applications of this nature which are routine should be dealt with by the Clerk and the Council advised that a 'no objection' response will be submitted unless advised otherwise by the Council.	
5.0	**Traffic Calming Measures –** The Chair updated the Council on the traffic calming measures. He confirmed the Council's proposal had been submitted and SCC Highways have comeback with an update. They will be gathering their own speed data which should be finished by the end of September and this will then be analysed and the full scheme costed by the end of October. They have provided a detailed project timetable which states it will take 12 months to complete should the project go ahead. SC Cllr R Williams advised that whatever the total cost of the project was, the PC would be expected to pay 20% of that cost upfront which could be as soon as end of October. Assuming all criteria was meet he was hopeful that the project could be put in place well within the 12-month period and possibly by February 2021. The Council offered thanks to SC Cllr R Williams for his continued support with this project. SW&T Cllr D Darch also thanked Cllr D Taylor and Cllr D Stripp for their hard work. She went on to ask about how the community would be canvassed regarding the plan and the necessary signage required to implement it. SC Cllr R Williams said a short engagement period would be offered once the detailed plan and costings were complete and this would allow the local community to comment on the proposal.	Cllr P Townsend/ Cllr D Taylor
6.0	**Walking and Cycling Manifesto for Somerset -** The Chair advised the Council that a response had been submitted and that the Council had been thanked for its input. Item now closed.	
7.0	**Playing Field –** The Chair advised the Council there had been quite a bit of activity on the playing field over the summer. COVID-19 safety messages had been posted, a site meeting held about the new BMX track and it was agreed to continue with the track and 9 new members recruited onto the committee which included Cllr D Stripp and the Chair, Cllr P Townsend. The Chair went on to say an initial meeting was held on 17th August and Cllr Stripp had come up with a proposed action plan for the playing field. Cllr Stripp explained the action plan was broken down into 3 areas the first being jobs which required doing at minimal expense and could be completed by volunteers. These were prioritised and had been allocated to specific people. The second area was revisiting the application which was previously drafted to obtain a grant from the Hinckley Point Impact Fund, but which was never submitted. It was advised the original plan was a bit too ambitious as it was asking for c150K of funding and probably 25K would be more realistic. The plan now is to update the application and resubmit it. The third area, 'the dream plan', was for more equipment should additional funding become available in the future from other areas.	Cllr P Townsend/ Cllr D Stripp

	Cllr Stripp went on to say it was great to see the playing field being used and now an interested and active group of people volunteering to do things. The Chair added that there is no constitution for the Playing Field Committee and he will put together a constitution to present to the committee went it next meets. He also mentioned the problem of members of the public taking dogs onto the playing field and allowing them to foul the playing field. It was agreed this is a difficult subject to deal with this as it is not possible to enforce the restrictions regarding no dogs on the field.	
8.0	**Link Up Funding –** The Chair updated the Council on the position regarding funding for Link Up. As a result of the Council's position, the Link Up committee agreed the possibility of raising additional funding through the precept was not an option. The Link Up committee will request contributions from readers, the Church, Broomfield and Kingston St Mary Parish Councils and through increasing advertising. They will come back to the Council in the future with a request for a donation when they are in the position to do so.	
9.0	**Grants & Donations Policy –** The Chair advised that after the previous meeting, the Council still felt Clause 5.5 of the policy was too prescriptive. The Chair told the Council he had sent the wording of the clause to our internal auditor and she felt it was appropriate to have a clause like this as several of the points raised in the clause the Council didn't have the power to fund. The Chair advised he looked at the clause a new alongside the various relevant local government acts and reduced the number of exclusions to things the Council legally cannot fund. The Chair recommended the changes to the Council to include an application form which covered the point raised about a checklist. Cllr Taylor thanked the Chair and said he supported the Policy. Cllr Hancock agreed with it as well. The Council resolved to adopt the policy.	
10.0	**Local Government Reorganisation –** The Chair advised the Council that two views were being put forward. A single unitary authority by the County Council and two unitary authorities by the District Council. The Chair wished to explore the impact the proposals would have for Parish Councils, local service provision for residents and what PCs were being asked to do with respect to these two proposals. Discussion revolved around the two different proposals and it was highly recommended that Councillors read each and familiarise themselves with the documents. It was agreed that it was too early to get excited about either and it was best that the Council await the decision of the Secretary of State. It was hoped that a period of consultation would then be had which would allow the Council to explore answers to the questions presented by the Chair.	C/F
11.0	**Cllr Sharon Farnham Resignation –** The Chair said he was very sad to have received Cllr Farnham's resignation after 5 years of service and thanked her on behalf of the Council for her hard work over this period.	
12.0	**Permissive footpath from Lodes Lane to the Church –** The Chair advised the Council a letter had been sent to the landowners of Brantwood and Sanctuary as the footpath crosses their land to advise them the Council would be discussing the footpath and whether it wanted to pursue upgrading the path from a permissive footpath to a public right of way. SC Cllr R Williams briefly summarised the difference. He told the Council maintenance of a permissive footpath is the responsibility of the landowners and they have the right to close it. A public right of way is maintained by the County's Public Rights of Way Team and it cannot be closed. It was felt there would be minimal cost in maintaining this path.	C/F

	The Council discussed the history of the path and the pros and cons of upgrading it to a public right of way. The Council decided it was in the community's best interest to further assess the situation and the Chair asked SC Cllr R Williams to approach the PROW Officer and ask for his advice on the best way forward in this regard.	
13.0	**'Changes to the Current Planning System' and 'White Paper: Planning for the Future' –** SW&T Cllr D Darch talked about the paper and said there was quite a lot about the reforms that organisations such as, the Town and Country Planning Association, environmental groups and Shelter did not like. She felt there were some welcome things in it but stated if it goes through it will radically change how planning takes place with the aim to supply more land into the system and accelerate planning and house building. She felt the biggest area of concern is the target for housing nationally will be increased to 300,000 homes a year. A parallel document 'Changes to the Current Planning System' proposes a new algorithm for calculating housing need which will increase local targets significantly. We could be expected to build about 24,000 homes in our district which is double the current building rate over the next 20 years. She urged the Cllrs to look at the lengthy document to form their own opinions and felt it was important that Parish Councils commented on the document. The Chair advised the Council's response to the consultation questions, all 26 of them, was required by 15th October. The Council resolved to speak to Cllr A Wilcox to ask him to review the documents and consider the questions, involving the Council in the process, with a view to completing the process before the next meeting so the Council will have a finished document to look at for the October meeting.	C/F
14.0	**Allocating activities and responsibilities to Individual Parish Councillors –** The Chair said Cllr Stripp had raised this item and he also felt as a Council we should consider allocating activities/topics to different Councillors so they can lead on an area but in this process being mindful of current commitments. Cllr Stripp went on to say this would be a good way forward as it allows individuals to take ownership of areas they are interested in and progress them. The Council then knows which member is following an area and keeping on top of it and reporting back allowing the Council to make decisions about the activity/area. It was a good way to share the work and ensure clear channels of communication. The Clerk agreed to review historic notes and advise the Council of areas of responsibility delegated to Councillors in previous Councils. The Council agreed this was a good way forward and it was resolved to designate areas of responsibility to individual Councillors. It was also agreed because of Cllr Farnham's resignation the Council would need to advertise the vacancies as there were 3 posts to fill. It was agreed to take all channels and avenues available to the Council to advertise the posts.	Whole Council
15.0	**Bid for Somerset Climate Emergency –** The Chair updated the Council that grants between 5K and 75K are now available from Somerset County Council for projects to help Somerset become carbon neutral by 2030. The projects must satisfy certain criteria and there are 2 windows for applications, being October and December. The Chair asked if the PC wanted to bid for this funding and he put the following ideas were put forward, traffic calming measures reducing carbon emissions and Village Hall heating. Cllr D Taylor agreed to lead in this area and will review the application and determine what the Council can do.	Cllr P Townsend/ Cllr D Taylor

	The Chair felt the Village Hall committee would need to be responsible for compiling and submitting a bid for the VH heating upgrade.	
16.0	**Clerk's Salary Update –** The Clerk asked the Council to approve a small salary increase for her which has been awarded by the National Joint Council for Local Government and back dated for 2019/20. The Council resolved to award the raise retrospectively.	Clerk
17.0	**Financial Matters** ❖ £168.48, SW&T – Dog Bins x 1 emptied between 1st April – 1st July, 2020 ❖ £56.44, Steen R&W – Annual renewal of domain name, mail hosting facility and upgrade to unlimited storage ❖ £100.00, SW&T – replacement cheque for May 2019 election fee. Initial cheque destroyed by SW&T Council. **Resolved**: The Council agreed to make the above payments. The Council went on to discuss the position of SW&T no longer accepting cheques as a method of payment. The Clerk proposed the Council pay future SW&T invoices using PO Counters. The Council resolved to use this method. The Clerk agreed to add Cllr D Stripp and Cllr D Taylor to the bank mandate and to enquire about any process in place which may allow the Council to use an online banking facility in the future.	Clerk
18.0	**Items for Next Agenda –** Please pass to the Clerk.	
19.0	**Items for Link Up and KSM Website -** Chair to do a write up for Link Up	Cllr P Townsend
20.0	**Actions from March 2020 Meeting – Not discussed but to be carried forward to a future meeting** a) **Highways –** The Council discussed SCC's plan for the new advisory 20mph speed limits hoped to be in place by 2022 outside all schools in Somerset. **b) Playing Field –** The Clerk updated the Council on the ongoing efforts to get quotes for new equipment for the playing field which hopefully will be funded by available S106 funding. She advised she and Cllr P Townsend were completing the application and were hoping for assistance from the Chair of the Playing Field Committee. c) **Natural environment –** The Clerk advised that a meeting had been scheduled for 23 March with SWT. d) **Council Reserves** - i. Clearing of roadside verge on Kingston Road by the Grange and the Spinney ii. Furniture for the Playing Field Pavilion e) **Housing Needs Survey** – The Council agreed the existing wording for the covering letter and survey were fine.	C/F
21.0	**Date of Next Meeting – 12th October 2020** The meeting closed at 21.50	

Signed:		**Date:**	