KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, HELD ON 9th JANUARY 2024
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, KINGSTON ST MARY, STARTING AT 19.00

Item No	Item	Action By
1.0	**Attendance and Apologies -** In attendance: Cllr D Stripp (Acting Chairman) Cllr P Boyce Cllr P Chicken Cllr S Hancock Cllr A Simpson Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk) Apologies: Cllr P Townsend (Chairman), Cllr D Darch (Somerset) ` 1 member of the public was in attendance	
2.0	**Appointment of Acting Chair -** In the absence of the Chair to the Parish Council the Councillors chose Cllr Stripp to preside over the meeting.	
3.0	**Councillors' Declarations of Interest** - None	
4.0	**Approval of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 12th December 2023** **Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.	
5.0	**Planning** **a) Applications -** **Case Ref: 20/23/0049** - Erection of a two-storey extension to the side of The Willows, Lodes Lane, Kingston St Mary The Parish Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to fully support it. The Council noted that this small, two-story property is in need of updating and has not been lived in for many years. It is located within Kingston St Mary's conservation area and settlement boundary and the Quantock Hills Natural Landscape (QHNL). The dwelling is also very well screened from public view by mature trees and hedgerows. The property is well shielded from nearby residents and the proposed extension will not be visible from the road and will have little if any impact on neighbouring properties, with respect to light, outlook or privacy. The proposed alterations will allow the bathroom to be moved upstairs, thereby making the house more practical and comfortable for the applicant to enjoy. These sympathetic alterations will enable this empty property to become a home, adding a two-bedroom property to the housing stock. This accords with Kingston St Mary's 2021 Housing Needs Survey, which highlighted the need for more two/three-bedroom accommodation in the Parish. From a material planning consideration, the proposed alterations will result in a more efficient use of the land and a property which is fit for purpose as a dwelling. The design, materials and finish of the proposed extension will complement the existing property, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, without harming the QHNL, and will not adversely impact upon visual or residential amenity. **Case Ref: 20/23/0050** - Erection of a first-floor extension with raising of roof to the rear and a single storey extension to the side of Meadow Barn, Hill Farm, Kingston Road, Kingston St Mary	

	The Council considered the above referenced planning application and resolved to fully support the application. The Council noted that Meadow Barn is located within Kingston St Mary's conservation area and the Quantock Hills Natural Landscape (QHNL). The alterations will not be readily visible from the public highway and consequently will have little impact on the street scene or nearby properties. The proposed modifications will make use of materials which match the existing dwelling, thereby ensuring that the extension has an acceptable appearance within the Conservation Area and the QHNL. From a material planning consideration, these sympathetic alterations to Meadow Barn will be subservient to the scale of the main building and give rise to a more efficient use of the living accommodation. The materials to be used will match the existing residential dwelling, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition, as the proposed alterations will have little impact upon the existing street scene, they will not harm the QHNL or adversely affect visual or residential amenity.	
6.0	**Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes –** **i.** **<u>Noticeboard – Staplegrove Rural Area</u>** The Council decided to push this agenda item forward until the next meeting as Cllr Stripp and Cllr Townsend have not yet met with the residents. **ii.** **<u>D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon and Fete – 8th June 2024</u>** Cllr Stripp updated the Council on progress with refreshments, food and sourcing a beacon. Clarification on the date of the beacon lighting was sought and it was agreed this is happening nationally on Thursday, 6th June at 9.15pm. The fete will be held on Saturday, 8th June. **iii.** **<u>Grit Bins –</u>** The Clerk advised the Council that Highways has agreed to fill the 4 new grit bins and we are still waiting for this to happen. The Council agreed to continue to chase Highways on this matter. It was agreed that spreading of the grit was the responsibility of the resident wanting to use it. **iv.** **<u>Playing Field Shelter</u>** Cllr Stripp referred the Council to the quotes for the playing field shelter in the meeting notes and advised that Cllr Townsend is recommending the Council approve the quote from Darren's Den for the following reasons: cost; this supplier provided the last shelter which was to a very high spec and the supplier has agreed to spray the new one with a flame-retardant treatment as part of the quote. The Council agreed to accept the quote and to provide Darren's Den with a cheque for 50% of the cost. **v.** **<u>Gifts and Hospitality – update</u>** Cllr Stripp updated the Council on Somerset Council Standards Committee's position. All Parish Councillors should report gifts and/or hospitality offered with a value of £50 or more. The anomaly here is the Register of Interest form Parish Councillors have to complete requires gifts of >£25 to be disclosed (para 14.1). Cllr Stripp has raised this with the Standards Committee and will raise it again. The Standards Committee emphasised that members of Somerset Council should report gifts declined as well as gifts accepted. However it seems that the version of the Code of Conduct circulated to Parish Councils in Somerset and accepted by KSM PC does not include this clause. The Standards Committee also suggested that the value of these gifts accepted/declined should be reduced to £10, but Full Council voted against this reduction.	Cllr Stripp/Cllr Townsend Cllr Stripp Cllr Townsend
7.0	**The Spinney** – update on funding	Clerk

	Cllr Stripp advised the Council that Chris Heaynes enquired as to whether the PC can provide public liability insurance for volunteers working in the Spinney and if a planter can be placed underneath the village gateway sign. Cllr Townsend suggested Chris Heaynes contact the Woodland Trust about insurance and the Clerk agreed to ask Zurich if this could be covered by the PC's insurance.	
8.0	**KSM Village Gateway Signage** Cllr Stripp updated the Council on correspondence from the Quantock National Landscape (formerly AONB) regarding the village signage and that QNL are of the opinion it is too urban. The QNL and Somerset Council Highways have agreed to discuss the signage and will ensure the PC is consulted on this issue particularly as the gateway sign was favoured by the community and paid for by the Parish Council.	
9.0	**Internet Banking** Cllr Stripp advised the Council that HSBC has said it can now provide electronic banking for organisations that require dual payment authorisation and Cllr Townsend would like to look in to this. The Council agreed to explore this option with a view to implementing internet banking.	Cllr Townsend
10.0	**Quarterly Financial Review to December 2023** The Clerk advised that Cllr Townsend had completed his audit of the PC's accounts for the period from August to December 2023. She mentioned this audit period was just outside of the 3 months which had been agreed but as from January 2024 the accounts will be audited quarterly. Cllr Townsend has gone through the paperwork including payments, receipts, and VAT. He has also looked at the budget against actuals and pointed out that the PC will be slightly overspent at the end of the budget period by £1,900. This overspend is because of the ash dieback on the playing field and the need to fell trees which are suffering from this disease. He confirmed the PC was in a very good position and its finances were healthy with reserves forecast at the end of March to be over budget. This position took into consideration the spend for the speed limit reduction programme and rebuilding the playing field shelter. The Council agreed it was important the Clerk ensure she was being paid correctly and claimed for her expenses. The Council noted and approved the PC accounts to the end of December.	Clerk
11.0	**Asset and/or Service Devolution -** Cllr Stripp referred the Council to Cllr Townsends response to Somerset Council about Asset and Service Devolution. The Clerk said she had spoken to several local contractors about the possibility of doing lengths men type jobs in the parish. The fees ranged from £20-£25/hour and most were able to do all jobs required except for work involving the highway as they would need to be licensed to work on the highway. The Clerk agreed to speak to the contractors and get more information from them regarding actual hours available and whether they had their own equipment. Cllr Stripp said there was also the possibility of working with other local Parish Councils on this service. The Clerk said the Council had put aside £2,500 in the 2024/25 budget towards asset and service devolution. Cllr Simpson asked what jobs the Council would require this individual to do? The Council discussed this and suggested that a piece be put in Link Up to consult with the community on this. Cllr	Whole Council/Clerk

	Stripp suggested a group of like-minded people in the parish should be formed to take this forward, not necessarily only Councillors, but people who want to take ownership of this and move it forward.	
12.0	**Local Community Networks** – update Cllr Stripp said there was no update on LCNs other than to report the next meeting was scheduled for the 21st February. He did say he was pleased that at the previous meeting it was felt youth provision was very important and hopefully the LCN will explore youth provision and make it a focus.	
13.0	**Climate Change** – update Cllr Stripp reported that after the recent flooding events, the PC has sent a flood report to Somerset Council's Contingency Unit and to Somerset Rivers Authority. It is hoped this information will be helpful in shaping strategic plans for the area. The Council agreed that moving forward flooding should be included in the Climate Change item on the agenda.	
14.0	**Neighbourhood Plan** – update Cllr Stripp updated the Council on the progress of the NP. All the documentation has been uploaded to Somerset Council's website and is open to a Regulation 16 consultation which will run for 8 weeks because of the Christmas period. He went on to say that just before Christmas a new act was passed in Parliament called the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act. This act has an impact on the National Planning Policy Framework on which the NP is based. The Independent Examiner has asked for the consultation period to be extended to the 19th January so Somerset Council can understand what impact if any the new legislation has on the NP. Cllr Stripp said he is hopeful that the PC will be able to hold a referendum on the NP in the Spring.	
15.0	**Kingston Community Partnership** – update Cllr Stripp mentioned the funding of £250.00 which was awarded by Somerset Community Foundation to purchase Christmas gifts for isolated/vulnerable people in the community. Approximately 65 gifts were purchased.	
16.0	**Financial Matters –** The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation and approved the following payments: • £500.00 – Parochial Church Council • £170.40 – HMRC, Clerk's PAYE for OCT/NOV/DEC 2023	
17.0	**Items for Next Agenda –** Please pass any agenda items to the Clerk before the next meeting.	
18.0	**Items for Link Up and KSM Website –** The Chair will do a write up for Link Up.	
19.0	**Date of Next Meeting – 13th February 2024** The meeting closed at 20.23	
Signed:	**Dated:**	