KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, HELD ON 12th MARCH 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 P Townsend (Chairman) Cllr P Chicken Cllr S Hancock Cllr A Simpson Cllr D Stripp Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk) Cllr D Darch (Somerset) Apologies: Cllr P Boyce Three members of the public were in attendance.	
2.0	**Councillors' Declarations of Interest** – None	
3.0	**Approval of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 13th February 2024** **Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting were approved and will be signed as a true record at a future date.	
4.0	**Planning** **a) Applications –** **Case Ref: 20/24/0001/T** - Notification to fell one multi-stemmed sycamore tree and one laurel within Kingston St. Mary Conservation Area at Brantwood, Lodes Lane, Kingston St. Mary The Council considered the above planning application and had no objection to the application. The Parish Council noted that the sycamore and laurel trees are causing property damage and that their proposed removal is therefore reasonable and will not harm the character of the conservation area. **Case Ref: 38/23/0347** - Variation of Condition Nos. 02 (to amend the approved Masterplan and add Parameter Plans), No. 24 (to deliver the spine road on Staplegrove West only), removal of Condition No. 25 (the temporary access road to Corkscrew Lane) of application 34/16/0007 on land at Staplegrove West, Taunton (The Staplegrove Garden Community) The Chair and Cllr Darch updated the Council on a recent meeting with Bloor Homes regarding the Staplegrove West and East developments. **b) Conditional Approvals:** **Case Ref: 20/23/0044** - Removal of Condition No. 05 (holiday occupancy) of application 20/05/0005 on Plots 15 to 18 Mill Meadow, Parsonage Lane, Kingston St Mary **Case Ref: 20/23/0045** - Variation of wording to Condition No. 03 of application 20/06/0039 (Condition No. 01 of appeal decision - holiday occupancy) to allow full residential use of Plots 19 and 20 Mill Meadow, Parsonage Lane, Kingston St Mary The Council was updated on the situation regarding the conditional approvals above by the applicant.	
5.0	**Matters Outstanding from Previous Minutes –** i. Noticeboard – Staplegrove Rural Area The Council agreed to carry this item forward.	Chair/Cllr Stripp

	i. D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon & Fete – 8th June 2024 The Chair and Cllr Stripp updated the Council on progress. The Council agreed to invite both Cheddon Fitzpaine and Broomfield Parish Councils to the event. ii. Internet Banking The Council agreed to carry this item forward. iii. Biodiversity Duty & Policy The Council discussed the proposed biodiversity policy and Cllr Hancock agreed to investigate the possibility of someone in the village conducting a baseline assessment for the biodiversity audit. The Council approved and adopted the Biodiversity Duty & Policy.	Chair/Cllr Stripp Chair/Clerk Cllr Hancock
6.0	**Parish Noticeboards –** The Chair advised the Councillors that some of the noticeboards in the parish were not in very good condition. The Clerk said that maintenance work needed to be done on them and that the noticeboard at Mill Cross was in particularly bad condition. The Council agreed to contact local carpenters to see if it could find a local tradesperson to do the work.	Chair
7.0	**Kingston Relief in Need Charity –** to appoint a trustee The Council agreed to appoint Charles Hunt as a trustee to the Kingston Relief in Need Charity.	
8.0	**The Spinney –** The Chair asked a member of the public to update the Council on the situation with the Woodland Trust regarding making the Spinney more accessible. The member said that funding in the region of £5-£10k has been accessed through the Quantock Hills National Landscape to improve the site and make it more accessible. He has been in contact with the Woodland Trust over the last year about this and has recently received correspondence from the Trust stating the Spinney does not require any improvements and the matter is closed. Another member of the public present at the meeting who is a Chartered Surveyor, has a Forestry degree and has managed woodlands in the past is keen to get involved. He also has an interest in accessibility and believes the site is currently not accessible for wheelchair users. As an attractive and important village asset, he feels it would be nice to have disabled access through the Spinney. He also stated general maintenance was needed but agreed as a woodland, the site needed to be managed carefully. He said he would be happy to take on this role and hoped approval from the Woodland Trust to make the site more accessible would be granted. He asked the Parish Council for its support. The Council discussed the situation and agreed that certain areas of the Spinney should not be disturbed. The Council also agreed to support efforts to make the Spinney more accessible for wheelchair users by improving the existing pathways.	
9.0	**Kingston Black Apple Trees** Cllr Stripp updated the Council on the Kingston Black Apple Tree project. He said there has been a lot of interest in the tress and he has ordered 30 whips. He would also like to order tree guards and asked the Parish Council to support the purchase of the guards up to a total of £225.00. The Council agreed to donate £225.00 towards the purchase of tree guards.	
10.0	**Annual Parish Meeting** – Date and invitees The Chair advised the Council that the date for the Annual Parish meeting needed to be agreed and that it could potentially be combined with the Neighbourhood Plan meeting and the Community Land Trust meeting. The referendum for the	Chair/Clerk

	Neighbourhood Plan is scheduled for 2nd May so the annual meeting would need to be held before this. The Council agreed to hold the meeting on Thursday, 25th April provided the village hall was available.	
11.0	**Asset and Service Devolution** – The Chair advised the Council that it had been approached by Somerset Council's RoW Volunteer & Trails Officer with the offer of a volunteer strimmer to help maintain the footpaths in Kingston St Mary provided the Parish Council was prepared to pay for half of the volunteer's training which would cost £82.50. The Council agreed to fund half the training and agreed to extend an invitation to the volunteer to come and meet the Council. The Clerk agreed to ask the existing Parish Footpaths Liaison for an update on their plans. The Council also discussed the letter received from Somerset Highways laying out its planned and reactive maintenance programme and budget cuts. The Council were pleased to note the budget cuts would not take effect until the 2025/26 budget period and agreed to wait until the price list for highway services was published before making any further decisions on this. Cllr Stripp updated the Council on a meeting he had with residents about the problems with surface water on the Kingston Road causing icy conditions. It was agreed the drains under the road in this area required annual maintenance to minimise this problem in the future. Cllr Chicken updated the Council on his correspondence with local tradesmen regarding the lengths man role and agreed to invite them to attend the Council's meeting in April.	Clerk/Cllr Chicken
12.0	**Local Community Network** – update Cllr Darch and the Clerk attended the last LCN meeting which was held virtually. Cllr Darch and the Clerk explained that a working group for highway matters was being set up. As a Parish Council within the LCN, we are invited to attend this working group. It is envisaged that the meetings will take place once a quarter and during the day. The Chair asked if any of the Councillors would like to be the Council's representative on this group. As no one put themselves forward, the Chair agreed to speak to two members of the parish to see if they would be interested in taking on this role. The youth working group was also discussed and Cllr Stripp said he would like to be included in this group.	Chair/Clerk
13.0	**Climate Emergency –** update Cllr Darch updated the Council on the visit from FWAG and said she feels the best way to deal with flooding in the parish is to work with FWAG on this. The Council agreed. The Chair advised the Council that the funding request submitted to the Environment Agency for a Natural Flood Management feasibility study had been unsuccessful.	
14.0	**Neighbourhood Plan** – update Cllr Stripp told the Council the independent examiners final report has now been finalised and it is the first time in the history of the local authority that the independent examiner hasn't come back with queries. A few amendments have	Cllr Stripp

	been suggested and these will be incorporated in the plan. Once the process has been completed the NP will go to referendum and the 2nd May date is being targeted. Cllr Stripp agreed to submit an article about the NP and referendum for the April and May issues of Link-Up. The Council agreed to produce and fund a flyer (A5 size) to deliver to the villagers after the 25th April meeting.	
15.0	**Kingston Community Partnership** – update Cllr Stripp updated the Council on the CLT and said they have a meeting on Thursday with the Housing Enabling Team. He is hoping there will be a way the S106 funds from Mill Meadow can come to the CLT. Cllr Stripp said he and the Chair visited Stoke St Gregory where a community group has set up a community benefit society which is like the CLT. The community benefit society has taken over the pub which also houses the village shop. It is a really good story to tell and the CLT is a similar vehicle, a legal entity which can hold assets, so it could run a community orchard or community allotment. The community benefit society in Stoke St Gregory has also actively encouraged social housing and has worked with a local builder to develop some very nice social homes.	
16.0	**Financial Matters –** The Council noted the monthly bank reconciliation and approved the following payments: • £750.00 – Paul Townsend, contribution towards the cost of Mindray C1A Fully Automatic Defibrillator & External Heated Cabinet with keypad lock • £256.99 – Steen R&W, hosting of kstm.uk website and editing and technical maintenance of PC pages on website for 6 months • £52.00 – Jack Council, VAT on village green maintenance invoice paid 6th June 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 said he would like the following items to go in Link-Up: Defibrillator at Mill Cross; Planning; Neighbourhood Plan, CLT and Annual Parish Meeting.	
19.0	**Date of Next Meeting – 9th April 2024** The meeting closed at 21.02	
Signed:	**Dated:**	