

KNEBWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 7 September 2022 at Knebworth Village Hall at 8.05 p.m.

Present: Councillors Roger Willcocks (Chairman), Adrienne Charter, Charlotte Cosson, Phil Farr, Jeremy Godfrey, Paul Jobling Steve Hemingway, Praba Kugathasan and Paul Ward

In attendance: Claire Graham (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies for lateness were received from Mr Kugathasan and for absence from Mrs Nash.

2. Declaration of Interest

Mr Ward declared an interest in item 16. Mr Ward was granted a dispensation to speak on the item only. He agreed not to take part in the discussion and would leave the meeting at that point.

3. Public Participation

None

4. Minutes

Proposed by Mr Godfrey, seconded by Mr Ward and

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 July 2022 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. To Note the minutes of Committee Meetings

The Council noted the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 7 July 2022 and 3 August 2022 and the Amenities Committee held on 20 July 2022

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

6.1 To approve Christmas Light quote and switch on date

The Council accepted quotes to replace two displays and repair a third. It also agreed a switch on date.

6.2 Remembrance Service

The Parish Council agreed that it will organise the event. An application for road closure has been submitted, however NHDC requires an accredited Traffic Management Company to do this because the police will no longer manage temporary road closures.

Proposed by Mr Godfrey, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved to accept the quote of £740 from Fenton Traffic Management Company to manage the road closure and prepare a traffic management plan..

6.3 War Memorial

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved: to accept the quote from Hirst Conservation to undertake a condition survey of the war memorial at a cost of £2,300.

The sum to be taken from the contingency fund.

6.4 Fencing

Proposed by Mrs Charter, seconded by Mr Kugathasan and

Resolved: to accept Frank Cooper & Son quote to replace 60m of chain link fence at Lytton Fields Play space with bow top fence at a cost of £11,850.

6.5 CCTV

Proposed by Mrs Cosson, seconded by Mr Jobling and

Resolved: to set aside funds in next year's budget to install CCTV in the recreation grounds.

6.6 Play Equipment

The insurance company has agreed the claim for the fire damaged play equipment. An order has been placed and work should commence early November.

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved: to accept Frank Cooper & Son quote to replace one side of the 1.2m palisade timber fence, damaged by the fire, with 1.2m bow top fence.

7. Insurance Review

Mrs Cosson, Mr Kugathasan and Mr Stringer reviewed an updated fixed asset register and agreed valuations for insurance.

The Council is not in a long-term agreement and the renewal from the existing broker has a different company to cover the pub. The Clerk is waiting for a second quote from Zurich.

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mr Godfrey and

Resolved: to accept the insurance quote that meets the Council's needs and is no more than £16,500.

8. Grants

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mrs Cosson and

Resolved: to award a grant of £450 to Knebworth WI to maintain the three planters at the Knebworth gateway signs.

A decision on an application from Playaway was deferred subject to further information being provided.

9. Allotments

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mr Hemingway and

Resolved: to increase plot rent by 10% with a nil charge for water for 2023.

10. Football

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mr Hemingway and

Resolved: to revise KNOBS season fee to £800 for 2022/23 to reflect the reduced number of games.

The Council also agreed to a request for a Knebworth FC finger post at Watton Road.

11. Clerk's Report

11.1 Herts County Council is to commence a consultation on a Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan (LCWIP) for North Herts, including Knebworth, at the end of September. It plans to hold a pop-up event in Knebworth in October.

11.2 Aircraft noise is increasing with flights from Luton and Stansted both flying over and adjacent to Knebworth. The Clerk is to request that LLAL holds a noise surgery in Knebworth.

11.3 NHDC is to discuss parking tariffs at a Cabinet meeting scheduled for 13 September. The Clerk has confirmed with NHDC that it is seeking the introduction of 30 minutes free parking, to be funded by the Parish Council.

11.4 Locality has awarded a grant to commence a review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Technical funding is also being sought for evidenced based policies, however this will not start until the Inspector's report is made public.

11.5 NHDC is promoting Solar Together which will provide quotes to install solar panels on properties.

12. Finance

12.1 To consider appointment of external auditor

Proposed by Mr Willcocks, seconded by Mrs Cosson and

Resolved: to continue with the existing process to appoint external auditors.

12.2 To approve accounts paid

Proposed by Mrs Cosson, seconded by Mr Godfrey and

Resolved: to approve the accounts paid to 31 August 2022

12.3 To review the bank reconciliation

Proposed by Mr Hemingway, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved; to approve the bank reconciliation to 31 August 2022

12.4 To consider quotes

The Council agreed the day rate for litter picking the recreation grounds, to cover the groundsman's holidays.

It agreed the quote to repair play equipment in Lytton Fields and Recreation grounds.

13. Exclusion of members of the public and press

Proposed by Mr Godfrey, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved: that under Section 100A (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business being transacted.

14. Station Pub

The Council reviewed and approved the report and quotes.

Proposed by Mrs Charter, seconded by Mr Farr and

Resolved: a virement of the village hall capital budget to undertake essential maintenance on the pub, outlined in the report.

Proposed by Mrs Cosson, seconded by Mr Kugathasan and

Resolved: to delegate authority to the Acquisitions Working Party for the maintenance project.

15. Exclusion of members of the public and press

Proposed by Mr Hemingway, seconded by Mrs Cosson and

Resolved: having completed the confidential business, that members of the public and press could return to the meeting.

16. To consider the residents' application to close Deards End Road to through traffic

Messrs Ward and Kugathasan declared their interest in this item. A dispensation was granted to present and answer questions only.

Mr Goodhew has initiated a process to stop up and delete Deards End Lane from the public highway. The application requires him to seek support from the Parish Council.

The Council referred to the proposal submitted by Mr Goodhew and the paper prepared by Messrs Ward and Kugathasan. Mr Ward outlined the issues.

Messrs Ward and Kugathasan left the meeting.

Mr Farr stated the request is a binary choice and is very premature to consider shutting one road. The residents do not appear to have not made an effort to maximise road safety for example by cutting back hedges. Closure would benefit forty dwellings whilst other roads in the village are also impacted by traffic. No data has been provided to back up that it is less safe than other roads in the village.

Mrs Charter said there is data available where accidents occur. If this was an area of real concern, then some measures would have already been put in place.

Mr Godfrey felt it was premature, highways in and around the area need to be considered as a whole.

Mr Hemingway said that there is a separate highways department, and the Parish Council cannot solve the issues.

The Parish Council agreed that it could not support the request to close Deards End Lane to through traffic because there are too many variables, and it is uncertain what will happen across the village should development go ahead.

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mr Godfrey and

Resolved: the Parish Council is unable to support the closure of Deards End Lane at this time due to the uncertainty of development in the village and it currently being a valuable amenity road.

It was suggested that residents should be asked to cut back their hedges to provide a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists.

17. Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.

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Chairman _____

Date _____

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