

KNEBWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Knebworth Parish Council held on Wednesday 9th October 2024 at Knebworth Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Roger Willcocks (Chairman), Steve Hemingway, Paul Ward, Charlotte Cosson, Adrienne Charter, Alexander Hurwitz, Colin Stringer, Paul Jobling, James Cameron.

In attendance: Jodee White (Clerk), Jenni Thompson (Deputy Clerk)

No	Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllrs Nash, and Godfrey. Cllr Ward arrived at the meeting at 20.50.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>None present.</p>	
4.	<p>To approve the minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Hurwitz and seconded by Cllr Stringer and Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on 11 September 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
5.	<p>To note the minutes of Committee meetings</p> <p>The Council noted the minutes of the Finance and Amenities Committee meetings on the 4th of September 2024 Planning Committee meeting held on 11th of September 2024.</p>	
6.	<p>Accounting and Investment Policy</p> <p>The Accounting and Investment policy has been updated to include that earmarked reserves can be established on a needs basis in line with anticipated requirements annually when the budget is agreed, and 'as well at other times during the year' added. Also added that review of earmarked reserves can be undertaken 'during the financial year' as well as also part of the annual budgetary review.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Hurwitz and seconded by Cllr Stringer and Resolved: to approve the updated Accounting and Investment Policy.</p>	
7.	<p>KPC Financial Regulations</p> <p>The KPC Financial regulations were amended with item 4.11 added to say, 'Money may be moved from general reserves to an earmarked reserve upon agreement by the Council.'</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Stringer and seconded by Cllr Hurwitz and Resolved: to approve the updated KPC Financial Regulations.</p>	
8.	<p>Hire prices for 2025/26</p> <p>A document showing the recommended and suggested new hall hire prices from April 2025 was distributed to all Councillors prior to the meeting.</p>	

	It was proposed by Cllr Cosson and seconded by Cllr Charter and Resolved: to approve the Village Hall hire prices for 2025/26 as detailed.	
9.	Remembrance Sunday Parade. An update on arrangements for the Remembrance Sunday Parade was given by the Deputy Clerk. All attendees and organisations are aware of arrangements and Graham Fothergill is assisting in the attendance of dignitaries. The order of service is being printed by St Martin's Church, and a wreath has been delivered for the Chairman of the Parish Council to lay.	
10.	Christmas lights switch on event At the last meeting some discussion was had about contacting the Station Pub to see if they would be able to do a mobile bar and this was followed up. Plans on an event for turning the Christmas lights on this year had moved forward since the last meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Stringer and seconded by Cllr Jobling and Resolved: to support the PC's decision to run an event for the Christmas lights switch on. All were in favour. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have a document of tasks that will need doing prior to the event and are working through these with a working party of Councillors and other volunteers. One of the actions is to do a Risk Assessment and the Deputy Clerk will do this and send to Cllr Stringer for review.	
11.	Assets of Community Value and Open Spaces The Clerk has followed up on the registering of Parish Assets of Community Value (AOCV) with North Herts Council and received a response from an Accountancy Technician in the Compliance Team. The response stated "A parish council is allowed (along with community groups) to nominate properties, which are either privately or publicly owned, as assets of community value. As far as I can see a parish council would not be prohibited from nominating its own properties, but I don't really see the benefit of doing this. If the nominations are successfully identified by NHDC as assets of community value then the Council will enter restrictions against each property, thus limiting what the parish council can do with its own property. Even if the parish council is making a nomination, it does not automatically mean each property nominated will be listed as an asset of community value. Each property still has to pass the relevant test" Cllr Ward advised that the Royal British Legion were not very interested in registering for an AOCV. The remaining establishments that can be considered for registering as AOCV's are the Library, Lytton Arms Public House, the Scout Hut. It was proposed by Cllr Ward and seconded by Cllr Stringer and Resolved: to write to the remaining establishments to enquire if they would consider entering their establishment as an AOCV.	Clerk
12.	Settle Group Update The Clerk advised that she had followed up on this with our County Councillor following meeting with a colleague from Settle. I am still awaiting a response to some of the queries raised by Richard Thake with Settle.	

	<p>Whilst it was hoped that a further update could be given at this meeting the Clerk advised that she had not received any response to be able to update. It was suggested that this remains as an ongoing agenda item for future meetings.</p>	
13.	<p>CCTV</p> <p>An updated quotation for the installation of CCTV was distributed from Resistance Fire & Security Systems Ltd.</p> <p>Discussion was had about if CCTV were to be installed on what basis it would be i.e. would we accept responsibility for monitoring for any incidents and generally agreed that this was not the approach.</p> <p>The CCTV would be to increase security and protect assets and that information with the CCTV can be accessed if requested, so as a source of deterrent and of information when required.</p> <p>Discussion was had about the registering of a data processor with the ICO. The Clerk advised that they were already members of the ICO.</p> <p>Discussion was had about how power would be provided to a pole for a camera to be placed upon and suggested that the tennis club be contacted. It was also discussed as to whether planning permission would be given for the pole and that this would need to be considered. The requirement for a Data Protection impact assessment was also discussed.</p> <p>Subject to the above planning permission and impact assessment it was proposed by Cllr Cosson and seconded by Cllr Charter and</p> <p>Resolved: To accept the CCTV specification quote from Resistance Fire & Security Systems Ltd at cost of £6724 + VAT with a maintenance option of £175 + VAT per visit. Option 1 for a CCTV pole was also accepted at £3965 + VAT and Broadband connection at £120 connection cost + VAT then £70 + VAT per calendar month.</p>	Cllr Jobling
14.	<p>Hall intruder and fire alarm and access system</p> <p>Intruder and fire alarm systems and an access system for the Village Hall were discussed. The hall was deemed a low fire risk as ground floor and low risk of entrapment but agreed it was mandatory to have an adequate fire alarm and that the one in situ currently was only a domestic one and not adequate. The need for a Fire Risk Assessment was also discussed and Cllr Hurwitz said that he would request the Clerk to purchase a document and aim to complete this in the next week or so.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Hurwitz and seconded by Cllr Jobling and</p> <p>Resolved: to accept the quotation from Resistance Fire and Security to supply, fit and commission a fire system at £4915.00 + VAT, a basic intruder alarm system at £1895 + VAT with the £95 p/a maintenance with monitoring contract, and an access system at £720+ VAT per door with 5 doors approved and 10 security fobs and video doorbell at £350 + VAT.</p> <p>As no budget had been put in for 2024/25 for this work it was proposed by Cllr Cosson and seconded by Cllr Charter and</p> <p>Resolved: to add an earmarked reserve for Security of £15000 for this work to be done.</p>	
15.	<p>Recreation Ground and Pavilion</p> <p>The Clerk has met with a representative from Playdale and did a tour of the playgrounds. A quote to replace the gravity bowl (Appendix 12) at the main recreation area was provided and the netting at Lytton Fields is due to be replaced for free very soon.</p>	

	<p>They had also suggested a person that can potentially provide some maintenance cover for us at our recreation area. The Clerk and Cllr Stringer are due to meet with them both on the 15th of October. The Clerk will report back to the Amenities Committee on this if not to Parish Council whatever is sooner.</p> <p>A light fitting and a socket have been reported as faulty and due to be fixed next week. Quote in appendix 13.</p> <p>Works to redecorate the ceiling of one of the changing rooms is due to be completed towards the end of October.</p> <p>Works on the pond has been done to remove the initial oil spill. At the time of this update a quote for some water sampling to be done to ascertain any level of water contamination and potential further work was still awaited. An update can hopefully be provided at the meeting. A quote for a new fence to be installed around the pond is awaited. The Clerk was requested to contact the insurance company to request further legal advice on the initial company that was called out but that failed to complete the work in a timely manner and that this matter could then be discussed via email.</p> <p>The boiler at the Recreation ground has been an ongoing issue recently. The Clerk is working with Space Heating to see about the issues and would like to investigate a system whereby the heating and hot water can be controlled via some sort of remote system such as a Hive that has been installed at the Village Hall.</p>	
16.	<p>Village Hall</p> <p>The outcome of a grant application to replace and renew the kitchen and kitchenette is still awaited. An update will be provided if any further information is available at the meeting.</p> <p>Works on light fittings in the hall have been completed and a new extractor fan in the men's toilet has been installed.</p> <p>Works to re-decorate the committee room, kitchenette, and hall area are due to commence on the 21st of October.</p>	
17.	<p>To receive an update from the Clerk</p> <p>The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have completed their Basic DBS Checks and certificates have been placed on their staff files. The check for the groundsman is still waiting for the Groundsman to bring in his passport and ID to complete the check with him.</p> <p>The Clerk and potentially the Deputy Clerk are interested in attending the SLCC Practitioners conference on 29 & 30 January 2025. A link to the conference can be found below.</p> <p>https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/practitioners-conference-2025/. The cost of this conference is both Clerk and Deputy were to attend would be in the region of £700</p> <p>The Clerk advised there is a training budget to cover the costs of the above and Councillors were supportive of attendance.</p>	
18	<p>Finance</p>	
18.1	<p><i>To approve the list of payments 1 to 30 September 2024</i></p> <p>The list of payments 1 to 30 September was distributed prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Cosson and seconded by Cllr Ward and</p> <p>Resolved: to approve the list of payments 1 to 30 September 2024.</p>	

18.2	<p><i>To approve the bank reconciliation for 1 to 30 September 2024</i></p> <p>The bank reconciliation for September 2024 was distributed prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Cosson and seconded by Cllr Ward and Resolved: to approve the bank reconciliation 1 to 30 September 2024.</p>	
18.3	<p><i>To review and approve quotes</i></p> <p>A quote was received to replace the gravity bowl at the main recreation area has been received. This is being worked on as part of the larger recreation ground maintenance project.</p> <p>Councillors did not resolve to accept the quote.</p> <p>A quote from was received for a faulty light fitting and socket at the Pavilion and has been accepted and is due to be fixed next week as this cost was within the Clerks financial parameters.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Ward and seconded by Cllr Hurwitz and Resolved: for the quote from Peter Wright electrical to repair the above at a cost of £225.00 and £115.00 + VAT respectively.</p>	
18.4	<p><i>To receive the flexed budget to the end of September report.</i></p> <p>The flexed budget report was distributed prior to this meeting and was noted by Councillors.</p>	
18.5	<p><i>To receive the suggested earmarked reserves report for 2024/25 and 2025/26.</i></p> <p>The Clerk distributed reserves balance report and reserves notes (Appendices 18 & 19). Items on the report were discussed.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Hurwitz and seconded by Cllr Hemingway and Resolved: to approve earmarked reserves for CCTV of £10,000, security of £15,000, and for the Christmas lights event for 2024 of £2000.</p>	
18.6	<p><i>To receive an update on the external audit and notice of conclusion of Audit</i></p> <p>Appendix 20 shows the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 that was signed back in June 2024. Appendix 21 is the External Auditor's Report and certificate 2023/24. The report was posted on the website and noticeboards by the 30th of September deadline. The except for matter of the AGAR not being completed accurate before submission re Section 2 Box 2 related to the CTRS grant being incorrectly added to this figure and has now been corrected in this year's budget transactions and will be restated for the next years AGAR.</p> <p>Section 1, Assertion 2 has also been corrected as the council formally acknowledged the budget figure in their May full council meeting, although this was not done at the correct time hence meaning a comment in the external auditor's report.</p>	
19.	<p>Exclusion of Members of Public and Press</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Hemingway and seconded by Cllr Ward 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.</p>	
20.	<p>To review progress on the lease for the Station Pub</p> <p>The lease for the Station Pub starting from February 2025 was distributed prior to the meeting in Appendix 22.</p>	

	<p>The Clerk advised Councillors of the wording from the solicitor that had the engrossment letter of the lease on it.</p> <p>Councillors reviewed the lease and queried the addresses stated but expressed no other observations.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Hurwitz and seconded by Cllr Hemingway and Resolved: to accept the lease for the Station Pub starting in February 2024 as detailed in Appendix 22.</p> <p>The Clerk was requested to liaise with the solicitor to get this lease executed.</p> <p>The Clerk was also requested to arrange a meeting with the Station pub tenants regarding ongoing decoration commitments in the current lease prior to its expiration.</p>	JW
21.	<p>Station Pub</p> <p>The Clerk advised that work on the ceiling on the station pub have been approved and awaiting a start date.</p> <p>An issue arose recently with the guttering on the first-floor accommodation recently during heavy rain, which caused a leak into the pub. Herts guttering services visited on Monday 7th of October and the Clerk advised that a quotation is awaited for repair to the guttering.</p>	
22.	<p>Staff Update</p> <p>Office staff are working well together but have had a slight increase in workload over the last week or so, mostly due to the oil spill in the pond but also due to organising of the Christmas lights event. The Deputy Clerk has requested to be paid for additional hours worked in w/c 30/09/2024. The Clerk approved this as with her remit according to the Scheme of Delegation item 6 "<i>Parish Clerk</i> The authority to sanction and authorise payment of overtime so long as the costs can be contained within the parameters of the approved budget. All Councillors were in favour.</p> <p>The Clerk has done her first session of her CiLCA, and further sessions are booked. She will be taking 3 hours per week to do studying for this qualification.</p>	
23.	<p>Inclusion of Members of Public and Press</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Stringer and seconded by Cllr Ward and Resolved: to readmit members of the Public.</p>	
24.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>It was discussed if the PC wished to mark the departure of Cllr Phil Farr and agreed that a gift would be purchased, and he would be invited to the next meeting to present the gift.</p> <p>The use of the shops in the Village High Street under the McCarthy Stone marketing suite was discussed and agreed that these had been difficult to let, and this should be queried.</p>	

The meeting closed at 10.30p.m.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____