

**MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2016 IN KERSEY VILLAGE HALL AT
7.30 PM**

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, Yvonne Martin, Veronica Partridge, Giles Hollingworth, John Maltby, Ian Fidell, Iqbal Alam, 3 members of the public and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge

147/16 APOLOGIES - None

148/16 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

149/16 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received

150/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2016 were signed and dated as being correct.

151/16 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

B/16/01042 Orchard Barn, Uplands – Erection of single storey rear extension. Councillors looked at the documentation and plans and agreed to fully support the application.

B16/01247 and B/16/01248/LBC Wickerstreet House, Wickerstreet Green – Erection of single storey garden room and erection of replacement outbuilding (following demolition of existing conservatory and existing outbuildings). Amendments to previously approved applications B/16/00633 and B/16/00634. Councillors viewed all the documents and plans and agreed to fully support the proposals subject to the retention of the historic fabric of the building as mentioned in Leigh Alston's report.

152/16 TO DISCUSS WEBSITE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS FROM 1 NOVEMBER 2016

Since the last meeting new information has come to light regarding the transfer of the webhosting service from SCC to CAS on 1 November. The proposed service is not quite as expected and CAS do not currently have appropriately trained staff to support the service. The current website software is now out of date and is no longer being upgraded which could cause problems; CAS cannot confirm whether they will be moving to the latest version. None of this is satisfactory. Suffolk.Cloud are offering an identical service to that currently provided. They have experience of working with parish councils and SALC and have been using the website software for more than 10 years. They are offering to transfer and then host websites until March 2017 for free for the first 60 councils who sign up and then their hosting and support service would be £100/year. It was agreed to transfer the website to Suffolk.Cloud hosting.

153/16 TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT PRECEPT CONSULTATION

Currently parish and town councils are not affected by the requirements of precept referendum. However, the government regularly reconsider and leave open the possibility of extending precept referendum principles to all parish councils. To introduce this goes against the principles of the Localism Act. Currently the proposal is to impose precept referendums on councils with a precept of at least £500,000 but the government are also considering precept referendum for all local councils who increase their precept by more than 2%. Councillors discussed that this might seem reasonable for councils with a large precept. However, if the same criteria were applied all councils including those with quite small precepts, like Kersey, this would be very restrictive. The Clerk outlined that a 2% increase in our current precept of £6,786 would be £135.72 (for a band D property this would increase the parish precept by 75 pence a year or less than 2p/week) This small increase of £135 on our total precept would not go very far when you take into account the usual increase in the cost of some services and would make it impossible to consider new projects without the need for a costly referendum. The cost of a referendum would have to be borne by the Parish Council and would probably cost around £1,000. Before deciding to embark on a new project the Parish Council consults

residents and gains their approval. Therefore, to have to hold a referendum to increase the precept to cover the costs of a new project would be ridiculous as the Parish Council would have already gained the support of the community. It would probably make projects unviable once the extra £1,000 to cover the cost of the referendum is included in the budget for the project. The current defibrillator project is a good example of this situation. Councillors agreed this was an important consultation and one the Council should respond to; the Clerk was asked to respond accordingly.

154/16 TO AGREE A RESPONSE TO THE SALC CONSULTATION

SALC are carrying out an on-line consultation with all parish councils to ask about public services and their delivery in Suffolk. Councillors discussed all the questions and agreed a response which the Clerk will submit. Regarding broadband the Council were generally happy with the provision but were disappointed at the speed of fast broadband roll out and the lack of publicity once a parish has access to fast connections. (Kersey now has access to fibre optic fast broadband on both the Hadleigh and Boxford exchanges.) It was agreed the community engagement with Suffolk Police was poor and there was a particular concern with a lack of police presence in the parish. The SCC highways service with Kier has declined and they are too slow to respond to problems and then the standard of work completed is poor. Parking was also highlighted as a problem in the parish. Councillors commented with regard to planning that they are concerned about threats to heritage, lack of affordable housing and that the current Babergh planning department is understaffed, under-experienced and is therefore unable to provide an adequate service.

155/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A survey about the Suffolk Village of the Year Awards had been received. Councillors went through the questions and the Clerk will submit a response on-line.

A Councillor commented that they did not like the number of advertising boards outside Kersey Mill which spoilt the appearance and may obscure highway visibility. The Clerk was asked to email Kersey Mill to express these concerns.

At the next SALC/Babergh area meeting in November a new Chair for the meeting will be elected, no Councillors from Kersey wished to be nominated for this position.

There had been an incident recently when Kier, the SCC highways contractors, had tried to remove the Pudding Stone from the pavement at the top of The Street; it was considered a pedestrian hazard. Fortunately, a member of the public noticed what was going on and prevented the removal. The Parish Council wrote to SCC about this incident and asked for assurance that this sort of thing would not happen again. A response has been received and circulated to all Councillors which gave very limited reassurance. Various ideas were discussed as to how the Pudding Stone could be protected to prevent inadvertent removal in the future. One idea was to have a plaque made and laid into the pavement next to the stone to make people aware of its historical significance. Another was to get a preservation order placed on the stone, but it was felt this may not prevent accidental removal as there had been no consultation before the attempted removal. It was agreed to ask Jenny Antill to put forward these ideas when she has a meeting with highways in October.

The meeting was adjourned for 'Parish Time'

A group of residents are keen to erect a decorated and lit Christmas Tree in the centre of the village for the festive season. One idea is to locate this on the Market Place, or as an alternative next to the footbridge beside Bridge House. The Parish Council will make enquiries with SCC highways whether this would be possible.

The meeting was reconvened.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

There are no sheets appended to these minutes.