

DRAFT MINUTES
MEETING OF KINGTON & DORMSTON PARISH COUNCIL
 Clerk Lisa Cope Tel- 07773793185 Email kndparishcouncil@gmail.com
 Walcote, Top Street, Charlton, Worcs WR10 3LE

Held in Kington & Dormston Village Hall
Monday 11th March 2024 at 7:30pm

Present:

Cllr M. Tilt (Chair)	Cllr S. Richins
Cllr R. Drake	Cllr T. Richards
Cllr P. Collins	Cllr I. Bull
Cllr V. Longmore	Cllr E. Faizey
County Cllr L. Robinson	District Cllr N. Dawkes

In Attendance: Clerk and No members of the public were in attendance.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – None

1. **APOLOGIES-** None
2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST-** None declared
3. **GRANTS FOR DISPENSATION-** None received.
4. **MINUTES-** The minutes from the meeting held on 15th January 2024 were approved and true and correct as proposed by Cllr Tilt and seconded by Cllr Collins
5. **PROGRESS REPORTS:**
 - a) **District Councillors Report- Nick Dawkes- None**
 - b) **County Councillors Report-Linda Robinson**

It has been finalised to cover a net £ 22.2m. overspend in funding. This is in line with many other regional authorities across the country with several like Birmingham having declared bankruptcy and been served with 114 notices from Government. Birmingham residents are facing a 21% tax increase. Happily, we are not in that position but significant pressures have been highlighted in respect of children social care payments, home to school transport and adult social care.

Our County Council's tax precept will increase to 4.99%. in relation to two parts.

2% Adult Social care precept ring- fenced in order to contribute to existing cost pressures due to Worcestershire's ageing population.

2.99% for other Council services to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate plan 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future and the priorities identified by the public and business community.

Council officers have been offered voluntary redundancies to help reduce costs with other cost cutting measures under discussion. It was announced that this will not affect frontline services and that we are still moving forward with existing schemes. The continued year on year increase in the cost of children social care placements emphasize the importance of continuing the drive to recruit foster carers.

Much of County Hall remains closed due to the presence of RAAC being discovered in some of its concrete. Full Council & Planning meetings are being held at District offices to be able accommodate large numbers

Fines for parents taking children out of school without permission will rise across England from September.

The minimum fine will increase from £60 to £80 per parent as part of a government drive to return attendance to pre-pandemic levels.

One school told BBC News one out of every three of its pupils absent without permission had been on a family holiday during term time. A head teachers' union said fines were needed to avoid "chaos" in schools.

Local authorities currently have their own policies on when to issue fines, so the likelihood of parents being fined depends on their school's location. In [a 2022 investigation](#), some local authorities told BBC News no penalties had been issued, while others handed out thousands in one year.

But in an attempt to create a more consistent approach across England, new guidelines tell schools to consider a fine after a child has missed five days' school without the head teacher's permission. If parents fail to pay their fine within 21 days, it doubles. The £60 fine was introduced in 2013 and has not been increased in the 11 years since.

Head teachers will retain some discretion over which cases to send to the council for potential fines and where support is needed.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said most fines were for unauthorised term-time holidays. Families with absent children should first be offered support - but fines were an important option.

"If it's a deliberate decision to take your child out of school for unauthorised absence, then that's something we do not want to encourage," Ms Keegan said. "We have to get children back in school, otherwise they can't get access to a fantastic education."

But the tougher approach will prove controversial with parents struggling to afford a holiday or who feel let down by the school system. The changes being set out on Thursday come after slow progress to improve school attendance since the pandemic - a problem other UK nations and other countries have also struggled with.

Persistently absent children are defined in England as those who have missed at least 10% of school, which adds up to about one month across a school year. In autumn 2019, 15% of secondary and 11% of primary pupils were persistently absent. But in the autumn term of the current school year, 24% of secondary and 16% of primary pupils were classed as persistently absent, [in government figures published last week](#).

Design work on the Midlands Rail Hub is set to begin.

An additional £123m has been allocated towards the project, which the government says will increase capacity at Birmingham Moor Street station and reduce congestion on routes around the city.

Transport secretary Mark Harper said the Midlands Rail Hub project will bring "huge benefits" to passengers in the region. The government added that the first phase of the proposals would mean an extra train every hour in both directions between central Birmingham and places including Cardiff, Bristol, Cheltenham and Worcester.

The plans were made possible because of funding reallocated from HS2.

HOLD THE DATE – Worcestershire County Council Town and Parish Councils Conference

Cllr Marcus Hart, Cabinet Member for Communities, would like to invite you to Worcestershire County Council's next Town and Parish Council Conference, which will take place on:

Wednesday 12 June 2024 from 6 – 9pm

To be held at Wyre Forest District Council Offices, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 7WF

6 to 7 pm - Information market place to speak to officers and partners on a range of topics

7 to 9pm – conference with presentations from a range of speakers including Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service and representatives from the council to cover such areas as highways and the digital switchover.

If you wish to reserve a place for your council, please email the name, contact email and council they represent by email to strengtheningcommunities@worcestershire.gov.uk by **2nd June.**

6. HIGHWAYS

The Clerk attempted to get more road markers for the bend in Kington opposite the Church but highways visited the site and concluded that there is insufficient land left to do so.

Cllr Drake noted a road sign on Cockshot Lane on a right- hand bend is obscured by the neighbouring property’s hedge- Cllr Collins offered to speak with the landowner to cut back to make the sign visible.

Cllr Richins commented that of the new trees planted last year one had now died at Kington and only 2 remained from the 6 planted at Dormston. Clerk to contact Limebridge regarding any guarantees on the one in Kington and for a replacement cost for all trees and consider replacement at the May meeting. Cllr Collins suggested that if the Dormston trees are replaced a narrow trench should be dug along the verge to try and prevent the same destruction happening again.

7. LENGTHSMAN

The lengthsmen is currently only on light duties due to a pulled shoulder, the signs and cones he requested were ordered and are now with Cllr Collins.

8. PLANNING

There were no new applications to consider, application W/23/00306/FUL on Brockington Cottage has now gone to appeal, Cllrs requested the existing response is re-sent to the inspector-Clerk to action.

9. FINANCE –

a) The following payments were approved by all Cllrs:

Lisa Cope	Salary	£512.00	Cheque 000580
HMRC	Lisa Cope Tax Jan	£142.56	Cheque 000581
Lisa Cope	Expenses	£54.74	Cheque 000582
Paul Caldicott	Lengthsman	£315.00	Cheque 000583
HMRC	Lisa Cope Tax March	£128.00	Cheque 000584

- b) The bank balance as of 29th February 2024 was £6,989.06
- c) The Internal Auditor was discussed and Cllr Tilt proposed Pat Powell be asked if she would be happy to audit the accounts again- all Cllrs in favour, Clerk to action.

10. SMART WATER

A new proposal had been received from Neighbourhood Watch for all Cllrs to consider and this was circulated before the meeting with the Police and Crime commissioner offering to supply 37 kits, the Parish Council would need to fund 110 its at a cost of £981.23 + VAT.

Only 66 properties had registered their initial interest in having Smart Water following a campaign carried out by Neighbourhood Watch.

In an initial vote the majority of Parish Council voted against paying for the Smart water project as they felt that at present there was not the demand from residents.

After discussing further how the project has been successful in Peopleton where a working party went door to door to all properties registering the kits on the doorstep a majority of Cllrs voted to fund the Smart water project if the Neighbourhood Watch agreed to hold a village event and then do doorstep kit registering if required to ensure the village meet the required 70% of kits registered to gain the signage for the Village.

Clerk to contact Neighbourhood Watch and see if they would agree to the proposal above, if agreed Cllr Robinson then offered divisional funds to help finance the project.

11. ENVIRONMENT GROUP

The Parish Council considered whether a village environment group would be beneficial however Cllrs decided that there would not be enough interest for it to run at present.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

None to discuss.

13. COUNCILLORS REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Cllr Collins enquired about the Village Hall electricity meters, the Clerk shared that they were booked for 26th February for EDF to replace the meters with Smart Meters but did not turn up- Clerk to chase again.

Cllr Richins enquired as to any further progress with speeding in the village, Cllr Robinson shared that the Police are still awaiting feedback from villages on where a Speed Van could park safely along the A422 to conduct speed checks- Cllr Collins offered to drive the road and mark on a map possible locations.

Cllr Faizey shared requests from residents on needing more refuse bins in the villages, ideally it was decided that one would be situated on the empty post outside the Village Hall at Dormston and another by Kington near the Church- Cllr Dawkes to look into this.

Cllr Richards added that residents have complained about a sign for Mill House Care Home coming out of the end of Kington Lane onto the A422 blocking driver’s sightlines- Clerk to check with highways and whether advertising consent is required.

Cllr Dawkes added that a message via a resident on the village WhatsAapp group could cause offence and should be removed, similarly relevant processes should be in place to remove anything similar in the future- Cllr Richards to look into the group settings and message the villager directly.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting was agreed for Monday 13th May 2024 starting at 7:00pm in the Village Hall, this will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Signed Chairman.....

Date.....