

**MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2013 IN KERSEY VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM**

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, John Maltby, Veronica Partridge, Giles Hollingworth, Yvonne Martin, Natalie Blyth the Internal Auditor, Jenny Antill (for part of the meeting) 7 members of the public and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge

134/13 APOLOGIES were received and accepted from John Robinson; apologies were also received from PCSO Amanda Coleman. Jenny Antill apologised that she would arrive late.

135/13 CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANCY FOR ONE PARISH COUNCILLOR

The vacancy had continued to be promoted but no applications had been received to fill the vacancy.

136/13 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

137/13 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received

138/13 REPORTS -The meeting was adjourned to receive reports.

a) **Police** – PCSO Coleman had sent a report stating that 1 crime had been reported since 16 September, the theft of heating oil. She apologised for missing our meeting on 16 September and reported that there had been 3 crimes between July and September; a burglary, criminal damage and theft of heating oil. The police are seeing a high number of heating oil thefts and suggest that alarms, locks and screening for oil tanks are a good idea. Babergh SNT teams are now on 'Twitter' where you can get up to date information on things that are happening, not just crimes, across the whole of Babergh, Babergh East, Babergh West and Sudbury and Cornard. Just follow us ...@BaberghPolice

Councillors discussed the merit of using police time for an officer to attend our Parish Council meetings. It was agreed that it was beneficial to be able to have a two way conversation and for there to be a police presence in the Parish on a regular basis.

b) **Suffolk County Councillor** – to be received later in the meeting.

c) **Babergh District Councillor** – No report

The meeting was reconvened.

139/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2013 were signed and dated as being correct.

140/13 CLERK'S REPORT

SCC highways has confirmed that they are responsible for trees adjacent to the highway in Kersey, such as the Oak Tree on the Vale Lane triangle. Highways have not yet removed the signs left after resurfacing work during the summer because the road markings have not been put back, the contractor has been reminded to attend to this. The grit heaps in and around Kersey have been or will be topped up very soon. Several potholes in and around Kersey have been patched recently.

Kersey Mill was contacted during October asking if advertising signs could be placed so as not to obscure visibility for drivers.

Thank you to Giles Hollingworth who has constructed a grit box for Vale Lane and for preserving and oiling the decorative timber 'Kersey' sign.

141/13 CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Babergh has written to promote their textile recycling scheme, textiles for recycling can be placed in special textile recycling bags and then placed in the top of the blue recycling bin. The free special bags can be collected from Hadleigh Library. It was agreed to keep a few bags in the Parish Council box in the church for parishioners to take as necessary.
- b) Babergh has written asking for nominations for their community achievement awards, the Clerk has nomination forms.
- c) Suffolk County Council are consulting on the future of home care and community meals in Suffolk. Everyone was encouraged to respond to this consultation individually via the SCC website (www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations). There is the opportunity to speak to SCC representatives at a special event at Hadleigh Library on 18 December.

142/13 FINANCE

A copy of the accounts to date and a financial statement, showing bank balances and expenditure for approval were tabled by the Clerk; these are appended to the minutes. Payments were all approved. Councillors agreed to review the budget when discussing the budget and precept later in the meeting. The external auditor BDO has completed the external audit of the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013, the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have given cause for concern. A notice of conclusion of audit has been displayed on the notice board.

A report was read from Natalie Blyth our Internal Auditor. She had completed her interim internal audit on Monday 7 October and everything was found to be in order.

143/13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

B/13/00909/FHA Row View, The Street – Erection of new shed (following demolition of existing). Babergh granted permission for this application on 4 October. It was noted that this application was received by Babergh on 5 August so took just over 8 weeks to determine.

B/12/01285/TCA Kersey Primary School - to fell 1 Oak tree. Councillors considered this application and agreed to fully support the felling of the Oak tree since it was damaging the playground.

B/13/01255/FHA Stay Bar, The Street – Erection of detached 3 bay cart lodge. Councillors considered this application and agreed to fully support it.

Despite a number of email requests by the Clerk the Parish Council was still awaiting a reply from the planning department at Babergh regarding feedback for planning decisions when the Babergh decision is contrary to Parish Council comments or recommendation.

Jenny Antill joined the meeting.

144/13 KCPC WORKING GROUP

The Working Group met in October and put in place plans to work on maintaining the playground over the winter/spring. KCPC will not run the plant sale in 2014. The mowing rota went well again, thanks to all those who helped. Thanks also to the Whymarks for providing a home for the mower. RoSPA carried out their annual inspection in September; their report has been received and circulated to Councillors and KCPC working group members. The report states that the present overall risk for the playground is medium. The report recommend attention is needed to the cricket net area, where there is excessive weed growth, bark chippings under the play equipment needs forking over to remove the weeds, the gate needs adjustment, the timber equipment needs to be monitored since it is beginning to show signs of rot, the swing frame needs to be replaced. It has also been noted in quarterly inspections that the grass is beginning to wear into a muddy hole under equipment; a solution is to fit rubber matting underneath to prevent this. Work is planned over the coming months to address all these points. An extra £200 needs to be put in the budget to cover these items which needs approval by the Parish Council. Quotes have been received for replacing the swing frame and it is planned to accept the quote from Norfolk Games & Frames to do the work at a cost of £1,230 plus VAT. This is £230 over the figure already in the budget, which will need approval by the Parish Council. KCPC has

sufficient funds in reserve to cover all these additional costs. Sadly the slide was damaged by a falling tree in the recent storm. The Clerk is liaising with KCPC and the insurance company to file a claim and get repairs completed so the children can enjoy using the slide again. The Clerk has followed up the possible safety risk with the air skier, it had been hoped to fit new restrictors but unfortunately it needs some welding so until this is arranged one side of the air skier is not useable, it has been made safe and taped off. The Annual Quiz was held and it was a very enjoyable evening won by The Famous Five. Sadly numbers were down from last year despite the excitement surrounding the “New Silver Cup” for the winning team. The audience was particularly pleased to see the return of Bryn Hurren as Quiz Master, after a sabbatical last year and in particular the new round on the habits of slugs! It would be good to see numbers up next year given all the effort that goes into organising the evening. Councillors approved the additional money requested for the KCPC budget.

145/13 FOOTPATH WORKING GROUP

John Maltby reported no problems with the footpath network in Kersey. The Working Group met in September. Suffolk County Council has been invoiced for path mowing this year. The Working Group has proposed to SCC that path 21, from the junction with path 16, eastwards to the A1141 be downgraded to a category 2 path since it is rarely used and is becoming very difficult to mow. John Maltby and the Clerk will meet to discuss whether any category 2 paths should be considered for upgrading to 1. As is often reported, residents are asked to pick up their dog mess while out walking.

The meeting was adjourned to receive a report.

Suffolk County Councillor –Jenny Antill apologised for arriving late and said she had just come from a conservation area launch event for Gt Waldingfield; the area is being managed for the benefit of bees and butterflies. Jenny encouraged the creation of this type of conservation area. The County Council are discussing the budget at present with the final budget to be agreed in February. As expected significant savings need to be made, these will be made in adult and community services, the termination of the BT communications contract and the new energy from waste incinerator. The Government grant to local government is reducing every year, it is expected that eventually the Government will not give any grants to local government. The SCC budget for the current year is on target. Education is under the spotlight again with Ofsted still raising concerns that educational standards in Suffolk are not rising fast enough. SCC has condemned plans to place a toll on the A14; it is an unwarranted tax on Suffolk. Jenny is meeting with the highways department this week to discuss improvements to a number of roads in her division. The SCC Better Broadband project is on track to give all properties 2mb speed by the end of 2015. The Council chamber has been renamed in honour of King Edmund the Martyr. Jenny then answered questions from the floor.

Jenny gave her apologies and left the meeting.

The meeting was reconvened.

146/13 PROGRESS ON WRITING A COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

John Hume has been working on a Community Emergency Plan for Kersey. The experience of the recent storm and the lack of electricity has highlighted the need to have a plan to protect and support the vulnerable in our community. Yvonne Martin and Giles Hollingworth have agreed to work with John to put together a plan for Kersey using a pro-forma and will bring this to the next meeting.

147/13 PROGRESS ON ARRANGEMENTS TO UPDATE THE PARISH PLAN

John Hume has discussed with Alan Line, the previous Parish Plan steering group Chair, how to update our Parish Plan. Alan said he did not feel it was worth going through the whole process again as it was a huge project. He felt the Parish Council should look back at the Action Plan so see what has been completed and what could be still be worked on. He also suggested looking at the Parish Plan steering group presentation given when the Parish Plan was published in 2008. There may be issues identified which are still relevant and need to be addressed. Any other new issues identified

could also be added to a new action plan. John Hume will forward the presentation to the Clerk for circulation to all Councillors with the Action Plan. This item will be put on the agenda to discuss at the next meeting.

148/13 TO DISCUSS WAYS TO IMPROVE THE FOOTPATH LINKS BETWEEN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE AND VALE LANE INCLUDING THE PROPOSED JUBILEE STEPS

Giles Hollingworth gave an update on the project. The Working Group has put together a presentation document outlining the plan, the need for the improvements, including photographs, technical drawings and costings for the proposed new steps. This will be converted into an electronic document so it can be circulated to SCC and possible sources of funding. The project is slowly progressing. Officers from Highways have taken a look at the road around the corner from the School to Vale Lane to see what pedestrian safety improvements could be made. They believe that it would be possible to lower the verge however there are issues that would need to be considered such as:

- a) Depth of utility cables/pipes in the verge.
- b) The stability of the existing electric/telephone pole.
- c) Re-positioning of existing signs.
- d) Re-location of grit heap.
- e) Kerbing of corner to protect lower verge.
- f) Future maintenance (SCC policy to only cut this class of road once a year).
- g) Funding of the work – SCC currently have no budget for minor improvement schemes such as this so funding would have to be sourced elsewhere.

The Working Group had also briefly discussed this area and came up with the idea to pipe the ditch to make the grass verge wider so pedestrian could walk safely on the verge. The Clerk will discuss this idea with the Highways department.

149/13 AGREE DATES FOR ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2014

The following dates were agreed for Kersey Parish Council Ordinary meetings in 2014. They are all on a Monday evening at 7.30pm in the village hall. If additional meetings are needed because there is something which needs discussing before the next ordinary meeting an extraordinary meeting will be called giving as much notice as possible.

13 January	Parish Council
10 March	Parish Council
7 April	Annual Parish Meeting + short Parish Council
12 May	Parish Council Annual Meeting
14 July	Parish Council
15 September	Parish Council
17 November	Parish Council

150/13 REPORT FROM CLERK'S JOB APPRAISAL AND SALARY REVIEW

John Hume gave a report from the Clerk's job appraisal and salary review meeting, appended. John and the Clerk met on 13 November and discussed the work carried out over the past year. It was agreed that Sarah would remain on salary grade SCP 27. It was agreed to increase her working from home allowance from £110 pa to £120 pa with immediate effect. This allowance was last increased in 2010. This payment is to compensate for computer depreciation and space, lighting, heating and electricity used in private property on Council business. It was agreed to review this again in 6 months.

151/13 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2014/2015 - DISCUSS BUDGET AND SET PRECEPT

Councillors all had a copy the Budget to 31 March 2014 and the Precept for 2014/15 and a copy of the Budget, Spending and Reserves Forecast for the next few years, both appended. The current budget and the actual and estimated spending to the end of the financial year showed that the Council is in line to stay within budget. Councillors then discussed the budget for 2014/15. Babergh had written a couple of letters recently to explain the impact of the Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) scheme and the uncertainties surrounding the tax base, precept capping and possible precept referendum. As

yet the Government has made no announcements about these issues. Last year Babergh passed on 100% of the grant to offset the impact of the LCTR scheme, they have now agreed that this will be phased out over 4 years at a 25% reduction each year starting in 2014/15. The Clerk outlined how this would affect the Parish Council budget and spending forecasts for the next few years. Fortunately last year the Parish Council made the prudent decision to request a precept to meet the total budget in addition to accepting the LCTR grant. This means that the Parish Council should be able to meet its budget requirements over the next few years and keep Council Tax increases below 2%. This should ensure increases would be below the threshold for capping or precept referendums if they were introduced. Councillors then discussed the budget, it was agreed not to renew the subscription for the Local Council Review Magazine, all other figures in the budget were agreed.

Budget for 2014/15:

Administration	£618.00
Clerks Salary	£3,551.00
Training/Meetings	£200.00
Street Lighting	£265.00
Street Light ILS conversion repayment	£75.00
Suffolk ACRE Insurance	£590.00
Glebe Insurance	£50.00
Hedge Cut - The Glebe	£80.00
Playground Safety Inspection	£85.00
Dog Litter Bin emptying charge	£43.00
Kersey Guide booklet printing	£10.00
St Mary's Church	£380.00
Chairman's Allowance	£0.00
Election costs	£25.00
Church Walk future maintenance	£130.00
Footpath Map printing reserve	£50.00
Contingencies:	£300.00
	£6,452.00

At this stage the Parish Council did not have all the relevant information to agree the precept for 2014/15 this will be agreed at the January meeting, assuming all the relevant information is available.

152/13 TRAINING

Planning training for the whole Council has been arranged for Thursday 28 November in Kersey Village Hall. It was agreed to delay the start time for the session until 4.30pm because of a power cut in Kersey during the day. Other training opportunities are regularly circulated to all Councillors.

153/13 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS – None attended

154/13 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

28 November Babergh parish liaison meeting John Hume & Sarah Partridge to attend.

2 December SALC/Babergh area meeting John Maltby to attend.

155/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Concern was raised about the pavement by the village sign at the bottom of the Church Steps; a resident had recently slipped over. The pavement is rather green and slippery, it was suggested that a hand rail along the steep section could be considered. The Clerk will contact the Highways department.

Concern was also raised about poor parking on Church Hill, a large silver 4x4 has been parking right on the corner and on pavements outside other residents' properties. It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to the owner. It was also agreed to write to all the residents of the row of terraced brick cottages near the village sign to ask if they could use the parking area behind their properties.

The Clerk was asked to talk to Babergh about getting the edges of Cherry Hill swept, the dead leaves and dirt at the edges of the road is making it narrow and slippery.

The meeting was adjourned for 'Parish Time'

It was asked if the school could remind parents to park safely when dropping off or collecting their children. The Clerk will contact the school.

It was reported that a lilac tree in Vale Lane had blown down during the recent storm, it is blocking a path. There is also another small tree in the hedge line which needs some attending before this falls down. The Clerk will contact SCC and Babergh.

The meeting was reconvened.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Appended to these minutes are 6 sheets:

Kersey Parish Council Receipts and Payments to date (2 sheets)

Kersey Parish Council Finance sheet for 18 November 2013

Report from Clerk's job appraisal and salary review November 2013

Kersey Parish Council Budget to 31 March 2014 and Precept for 2014/15

Kersey Parish Council Budget, Spending and Reserves Forecast