

Meeting: Kingswood Town Council

Date: 12th March 2024

Author: Town Clerk

Item for Consideration: Project Update, Policy Adoption and Clerk's workplan update

1.0 Green Print Project Update

Three councillors met with the Town Clerk to consider the locations designated by SGC as suitable open spaces and verges to introduce the scheme of reducing the frequency of the grass cutting and collecting and removing cut grass, to add to the food waste chain, for the purpose of reducing the carbon footprint of verge maintenance operations.

Councillors had no reason to not support any of the locations identified and have asked that Sough Gloucestershire Council implement the scheme, but to be mindful of any comments that might be raised by members of the community in relation to specific sites, and to consider and respond to any issues raised on a case-by-case basis. An update on the project is attached.

2.0 Kingswood High Street Partnership

The Town Clerk along with 2 SGC/KTC councillors attended the first meeting, which was for the purpose of bringing a number of stakeholders to discuss matters and opportunities affecting the High Street, and how we can work together. Items considered include: Regent Street Project, Vacant Units, Kings Chase Project, Christmas and Easter Events. This partnership will meet every two months.

3.0 Summer Floral Scheme

After some delays and overcoming some issues, the Town Council now has a planter license, for the positioning of the baskets in Regent Street. The council has also been awarded a grant of £3,980, towards the scheme. The council is waiting to receive a quote from a company that will provide the floral displays as well as undertake the maintenance and watering.

4.0 Information requests from members of the public

4.1 A member of the public complained about excessive dog fouling. They were referred to SGC.

4.2 A member of the public complained about overgrown paths. They were referred to SGC.

5.0 Resignation of Councillors

To note that the resignation of Cllr Robinson did not result in a public poll. Instead, the vacancy can be filled by cooption at the meeting on 9th April 2024. The advert regarding the vacancy created by Cllr Ingham is still active and the council will be informed on 25th March if a poll has been called. If not, the council will be able to coopt at a future meeting.

6.0 Library Project

The Town Clerk has met with the Operations Manager of South Gloucestershire Libraries, to consider how the council can collaborate with the library and provide funding to support ongoing library functions and services. The council will be informed in mid April after a SGC cabinet meeting, or how it can financially support the library. A report will be brought to a future meeting.

7.0 Communication and Engagement

The Communication working party met and an agreement was made at the Finance and Administration Committee that the council enters a 6-month contract to have a full page in the monthly Kingswood Voice, for parish news, starting from April 2024. Most councils agree to how they intend to communicate, the channels and methods they use and how they review its effectiveness. To this end a Statement of Community Engagement is attached for consideration. The Town Clerk will be writing monthly articles, based on encouraging residents to engage with the council, to promote the community grant scheme, to consider applying for a vacancy of councillor and to give an indication of what the council will be doing in the coming months.

7.0 Investment in Kingswood Park

Below is the press release of the successful awarding of Heritage Lottery Fund to Kingswood Park.

“South Gloucestershire Council and the Friends of Kingswood Park are celebrating after securing a grant of over £2.6 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore Kingswood Park to its former glory. The Council has been working in close partnership with the Friends of Kingswood Park community group to restore and enhance the park, with the latest announcement on 19 February being the biggest ever grant funded investment for a green space or park in South Gloucestershire.

The grant from The Heritage Fund forms a large part of the total project cost of £3,360,857 and means the Friends Group can realise their dream of bringing the park back to its former glory – which has been a goal since the volunteer group was formed in 2005. Restoration of the park is part of the council’s wider £25 million Kingswood Masterplan, a regeneration vision for Kingswood town centre to make it a better place to live, work and visit.

Kingswood Park opened in 1934 and is the only significant area of green space in Kingswood town centre. The next step of the project will be to start implementing exciting plans to make the park and its heritage accessible to everyone, with work expected to begin this Spring.

Funding will be used to improve park amenities including new centrally located accessible toilets and Changing Places facility, an improved and expanded play area with better equipment, an improved performance space, and a mobile refreshment facility, all combining as a hub for the park and local community.

There will also be improvements to signage around the park, restoration of walls, gates and railings and other heritage features, resurfacing of paths, additional new wildlife-friendly planting including native trees, hedges and fruit tree planting. Access will be improved by building a new 'missing link' footpath to create a full circuit of the park, along with the installation of new access ramps.

A three-year programme of activities will also allow people from across the Kingswood community to learn about and celebrate the park's heritage. Running alongside the improvement work will be a three-year programme of community events and activities with a focus on health and wellbeing, skills, and training.

Councillor Leigh Ingham, Cabinet Member for Communities and Local Place at South Gloucestershire Council, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that the National Lottery Heritage Fund has granted this considerable support to rejuvenate and improve Kingswood Park. The park is the most prominent green space in Kingswood town centre and has been enjoyed by generations of local people since 1934. We're hoping the activities we put on will get even more people enjoying the park on a regular basis.

"The funding is a game-changer in terms of how we'll be able to transform and update the park for the benefit of residents and the wider local community. As ward member I understand how much of a positive impact this investment into the local community will have and it wouldn't have been possible without the help and support of the Friends of Kingswood Park. We would like to extend our sincere thanks for their continued work and commitment."

Stuart McLeod, Director of England – London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "We're thrilled to support Kingswood Park and their vision to create an accessible green space for the community. We believe that everyone should be able to access, connect with and enjoy nature on their doorstep – whether they are in urban areas or the countryside. It is thanks to National Lottery players that we can support projects like this which bring people together and transform the communities we live in, making them better places to be."

The main aims of the Kingswood Park restoration project are to:

- Encourage more and wider range of people, voluntary groups, and schools to use and celebrate the park heritage with more events and activities.*
- Provide a new mobile park refreshment facility.*
- Improve facilities for all including new play equipment, better access and toilets.*

- *Look at opportunities to provide a new park refreshment facility.*
- *Restore paths, walls, masonry and other features.*
- *Share the heritage of the park and research its history.*
- *Contribute to the regeneration of Kingswood Town Centre.*
- *Improve the park landscape and biodiversity.*
- *Carbon neutral management of the park.*

For more information visit <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/restoring-kingswood-park/>

[Kingswood Park Lottery Award | Fantastic news! We have been awarded £2.67m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to renovate Kingswood Park - after collaborating with the Friends of... | By South Gloucestershire Council StreetCare | Facebook](#)

8.0 Policy Adoption

8.1 To create the necessary internal systems and have a process of strong governance it is necessary for the council to adopt a number of policies and procedures. Some are mandatory, some are advised, some are best practice. As the council will have its first audit in Spring 2024 it is necessary to get them in place as soon as possible. Policies are created from using recommended policies and templates from SLCC, NALC and reputable councils who already have adopted them, then tailored to the needs of Kingswood Town Council. As policies are adopted it will be necessary to review earlier adopted policies to ensure that they are all aligned.

8.2 The policies to be adopted at this meeting are:

- a. Risk Management Policy and Risk Strategy
- b. General and Earmarked Reserve Policy
- c. Whistleblowing Policy
- d. Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- e. Safeguarding Policy
- f. Statement of Community Engagement
- g. Communication Policy
- h. Data Protection Policy
- i. Data Breach Policy
- j. Data Retention Policy
- k. Subject Access Request Procedure
- l. Community Grant Scheme

Clerks Workplan update

4.1 This report provides an ongoing update of the actions that have been completed under business function headers. Its purpose is to ensure that the council is compliant with the necessary legislation and regulations that impact on town councils. It also gives councillors and the public confidence that matters are being managed, with the appropriate checks, review dates and transparency.

	Item	Action	Dates /Notes
Finance	Banking Arrangements	Unity Bank: Functioning bank account	Live, operational and in need of 2 more councillors to act as signatories.
	Finance Software	Rialtas Alpha systems (Receipts and Payment) purchased and in place and in use since January 2024. Will need to be upgraded next year when the council's finances increase, and a finance assistant is in post to oversee the transition.	To obtain quotes from RBS on the Income and Expenditure software and implement for April 2025.
	Authorisation of payments procedure	All payments must be authorized by 2 councillors, and a payment list be presented to each council meeting.	Implemented from December 2023 and procedures in place for authorizing of bank payments
	VAT	Need to undertake a VAT Form 126 reclaim from HMRC once payments are on the finance system.	To be completed in March 2024 as part of year end process
	Bank Reconciliations	Need to present to committee meetings monthly once the process is in place.	First bank reconciliation to take place at end of March 2024.
	Budget	Budget agreed, precept requested from SGC, budget to be put on RBS system as part of year end process	First discussion on 28 November 2023 second discussion 12 December, with ratification on 9 January 2024.
	Year end processes	Need to ensure a system of internal control is in place. Finance and Administration Committee established, Terms of Reference in place and committee informed of its need to be aware of ensuring that certain procedures are carried out annually, quarterly or at meetings.	In place by March 2024. Internal Audit visit confirmed for May 2024
	Financial Regulations	Adopted but will need to be revised by Finance and Administration Committee in April meeting	18 May 2023 with an annual review in April at Finance and Administration Committee
	Asset Register	Created	December 2023
	Contracts Register	Created	December 2023
	Investments Policy	Need to agree investment strategy and source suitable banks for deposits once precept 2024 is received	To be implemented in Summer 2024

	Reserves Policy	Presented to Finance and Administration Committee	Reserves to be created in the new financial year.
	Procurement Policy	Adopted	Adopted 9 January 2024
	Purchase Orders	Purchase orders in use	From December 2023
Policy and Governance	Meeting Dates	Agreed 2 nd Tuesday of month in Park Centre	Agreed 12 December 2023
	Standing Orders and Code of Conduct	Adopted but needs amending – to be presented for reconsideration at Finance and Administration Committee in April 2024	Adopted on 18 May 2023 To review by Finance and Administration Committee in April 2024
	Creation of Committees with Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference for Finance and Administration and Staffing Terms of Reference for Planning Committee Terms of Reference for Staffing Committee	Adopted 12 December 2023 9 January 2024 9 January 2024
	Delegated Scheme of Delegation and Authority	Completed but will need to be revised periodically	Adopted 12 December 2023
	General Power of Competence	Report completed and presented to full council.	Adopted 12 December 2023
	Internal Auditor	Lightatouch engaged	Lightatouch engaged, decision at 12 December 2023 council meeting. First visit in May 2024
	Office Address	To be sought	Ongoing
	SGC Planning Portal	Access given; comments being submitted after every meeting.	In line with Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee
	Transparency Code	Need to be compliant with all aspects of the code: Publication of all minutes, agenda, policies	Registration with the ICO completed 6 th March 2024
	Register of Members Interests	Completed Need new councillors to sign when coopting	Need to check every 6 months
	Insurance	Annual policy in place and covers Public Liability, Employers Liability, Council Assets, Fidelity Guarantee.	Review in May 2024
	Risk Management	Risk Management Policy and Strategy presented to Finance and Administration Committee	Full Council to adopt on 12 March 2024
	Information	Website privacy notice	Adopted 18 May 2023
		Need for a focus on FOI, GDPR, Privacy, Security Compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR 2018 and be fully compliant	Needs to be implemented in early 2024

		Publication Scheme	Approved 9 January 2024
	Annual Governance Statement	Part of the annual review of internal governance and audit	To be presented to full council on 12 March 2024
	Cooption Policy	Adopted, along with application from	9 January 2024
ICT	Website	Managed by contractor, updated by clerk	Completed and launched November 2023
	Emails	.gov.uk emails in place for all	Completed
	Phone	Land line number available for the council	Completed
	Security	Via provider	Completed
	Software	Via provider	Completed
	Training	Via provider	Ongoing
HR	Interim Clerk – 6 month contract	Contract Signed	November 2023
	JD, Contract up to date	Completed	November 2023
	Permanent Clerk after May 2024	For staffing committee to consider	Meeting 23 January 2024 with a recommendation to full council on 12 March to retain interim clerk
	Other staff	Budget process has identified several large projects, which will impact on workload of staff: currently one full time clerk, might need to employ additional admin support as the workload increases	Report to full council in April 2024
	Pay roll	Entered in to contract with PATA payroll, approved by Finance and Administration Committee on 27 February 2024	Delegated to town clerk to start onboarding process
	Pension	Recommendation to join the scheme to the Finance and Administration Committee on 27 th February 2024	Full Council to agree at meeting on 12 March for implementation on 1 st April 2024
	Policy Implementation	Sickness Absence, Disciplinary and Grievance policies ready for adoption Whistleblowing policy presented for adoption Training policy to be drafted	Adopted on 9 January 2024 12 March 2024
Marketing	Face book	Live with growing number of followers.	Ongoing
	Website	Went live on 13 November 2023 and being updated regularly	Ongoing

	Press	Monthly article to be written in Kingswood Voice Monthly article to be written SGC monthly publication.	From April 2024
	Information Sharing	Weekly news sent to all councilors	Started mid January 2024
Training	Clerk	Finance, internal control and community engagement. Part of the Asset Based Community Development workshops with Locality One day summit on community engagement and consultation Social Media	Ongoing
	Councillors	At your Place training agreed Planning Training Having difficult conversations training	January and February 2024