

MEETING: Kingswood Town Council, Full Council Meeting
DATE & TIME: Tuesday 12th March 2024 7.00pm
PLACE: The Park Centre, Kingswood

Councillors Present: Stephen Forsythe (Chair)
Maria Ingram-Cotton
Sean Rhodes
Alex Massey
Raf Ackbar
Liam Davis
Diane Bentham
Richard Bentham

Absent: Matthew Palmer
Jim Corrigan

Also Present: Charlotte Littlewood, Town Clerk and RFO

06.03.24 Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Ken Rabone, Alison Evans, Sandie Davis,

07.03.24 Declarations of interest and requests for Dispensations
There were no declarations of interest in relation to this agenda.

08.03.24 To approve the minutes from previous meetings.
a. Members resolved to approve the minutes of the Kingswood Town Council Meeting held on 9th January 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Resolved: To sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting

b. Members resolved to approve the minutes of the Kingswood Town Council meeting held on 5th March 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Resolved: To sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

09.03.24 To exclude the public and press due to the confidential nature of the business.

Resolved: To exclude the public and press in order to discuss a confidential matter.

10.03.24 Staffing Committee recommendation
Councillors considered a recommendation from the Staffing Committee to offer the Interim Town Council a permanent contract of employment, having successfully completed a three-month probation period. This was supported unanimously by councillors. A revised contract of employment would be issued, in line with the most recent contract prepared by NALC and SLCC. This offer was accepted by Mrs Littlewood, the interim Town Clerk.

Resolved: To issue Mrs Littlewood with a revised contract of permanent employment.

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11.03.24 Youth Provision – Confidential

Councillors considered a confidential report prepared by the town clerk, based on consultation with youth service providers, on how best to invest in young people and their families, to give opportunities and help to make them thrive in Kingswood.

Several options were considered, and councillors agreed that they offered a great balance of activities and support, some with immediate benefits, and others that would take some time to feel any impact. They demonstrated a commitment to the community, but with an opportunity to try other ideas if they did not result in sufficient return on investment. Discussions were based on youth centre activities, mobile detached youth work, a wellbeing practitioner and support towards creating a family hub in partnership with others, and events in the skate park.

The town clerk was delegated authority to work with the service providers, to develop the relevant contracts and establish timelines and further work that would be needed to activate these contracts. Updates will be provided for future meetings. This remained confidential until contracts could be agreed. A confidential summary of decisions made would be issued to councillors only at this stage.

Resolved: To delegate authority to the town clerk to work with the relevant partners to create the necessary contracts.

The confidential element of the meeting came to an end.

12.03.24 To receive and note draft the minutes from the Planning Committee dated 31st January and 27th February 2024

Councillors noted the minutes from the meeting.

Councillor Rhodes informed the meeting that planning application P23/03509/F, 68 Court Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 9QG had been called into Planning Committee for consideration.

13.03.24 To receive and note the draft minutes from the Finance and Administration Committee dated 27th February 2024

Councillors noted the minutes from the meeting.

14.04.24 To receive recommendations from the Finance and Administration Committee

- a. **Resolved:** As from 1st April 2024 Kingswood Town Council will be registered as an employer with the Avon Pension Fund and make the relevant contributions and pay any other pension administrative costs for all its current and future employees, by virtue of it being a precepting authority and in line with the contract of employment of the staff members. The council accepts the terms as laid down in the Parish and Town council guidance notes.
- b. **Resolved:** To pay the admission fee of £1,900 to Avon Pension Fund
- c. **Resolved:** To agree to the adoption of the Community Grant scheme and that it is launched at the Annual Town Meeting on 28th May 2024

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15.03.24 Annual Governance Statement

Councillors considered the statements in the Annual Governance Statement, and the work that had been done by the Interim Clerk to get the council to a point where they could agree to the assertions. Some of the assertions were a negative, as the council had not been able to undertake that function in its first year of operation.

Resolved: Councillors considered all the assertions in the Annual Governance Statement and agreed that the document be signed by the Chair and Clerk. This document is at Appendix A.

16.03.24 To consider arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting

Resolved: That the Annual Town Meeting be held on Tuesday 28th May 2024, and that the Community Grants Scheme be launched at this meeting. That community groups and leaders be invited to the meeting, along with local press. For Councillors to be encouraged to attend, and to give presentations on plans for the forthcoming year.

17.03.24 To nominate councillors onto committees

- a. Councillor Alex Massey was nominated onto the Staffing Committee.
- b. Councillor Kenneth Rabone was nominated onto the Finance and Administration Committee

18.03.24.1 To nominate a councillor onto the bank mandate for the purpose of authorising payments on the bank account

Resolved: Councillor Maria Ingham-Cotton be become an additional bank signatory.

19.03.24 Members Reports

- **Kingswood Wayfinding Project**
Councillor Rhodes updated the meeting on proposals, and it was agreed that further information and a possible update or presentation be provided at the next meeting.
- **Live Labs – Green Print Project**
The Clerk confirmed that the project was agreed and that communications would be shared by SGC when the project was to go live.
- **Kingswood Park**
Councillors were informed of the success of the National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. An update would be provided at the next meeting.
- Councillor Richard Bentham informed the meeting that he was arranging a Kingswood Bike Show for Sunday 14th July in the Rugby Club: an event with static displays, stalls, refreshments, and fun for the family.

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20.03.24 Planning Applications

Members considered the following planning applications.

- a. **Reference: P24/00394/H.** 15 Lower Cock Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 9RS. Erection of garden room.

Resolved: No objections.

- b. **Reference P24/00429/CLP.** 80 Moravian Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 8NF. Installation of rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion.

Resolved: No objections

- c. **Reference: P24/00446/F.** Building At 83 Downend Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire. Erection of a single storey side extension and raising of roofline to facilitate change of use of outbuilding to 1no. dwelling (Class C3) and associated works.

Resolved: No objections

- d. **Reference: P24/00420/F.** Land At 2 Burnham Drive And 35 Holly Hill Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 4DF. Partial demolition of existing 2 no. dwellings and detached outbuildings. Erection of extensions to form 1 no. new dwelling and 2 no. new flats (Class C3) with access, parking provision, landscaping, and other associated works.

Resolved: No objections, but to ask the planning authority to ensure that there is adequate parking provision within the application.

- e. **Reference: P24/00483/RVC.** Lidl Store Halls Road Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 8JD. Variation of condition 6 attached to permission PK15/5213/F to alter the opening hours. Demolition of existing building. Erection of foodstore with car parking, new access and associated works (Class A1) as defined in Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

Resolved: No objections

- f. **Reference: P24/00461/F.** 46 High Street Kingswood South Gloucestershire BS15 4AJ. Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of 1no dwelling with associated amenity space, refuse/recycling and cycle storage.

Resolved: No objections

21.03.24 Policy Adoption and Clerk's report

Councillors received a comprehensive report from the Clerk of tasks completed as part of the set up of the council. The following policies were adopted:

- a. Risk Management Policy and Risk Strategy

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- 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

22.03.24 Date of the next meeting and consideration of items for the agenda

- a. The next Planning Committee will be held on Tuesday 26th March 2024 at 7pm
- b. The next council meeting will be held on Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 7pm
- c. The Annual Meeting of the Town Council will be held on Tuesday 14th May 2024 at 7pm
- d. The Annual Town Meeting (Annual Assembly) will be held on Tuesday 28th May 2024 at 7pm

Two items for future considerations: Dog mess in the town, and litter and the proposal made during budget setting, to purchase an additional top up service of street care. The clerk was also requested to purchase some branded High Viz jackets.

Meeting Closed: 2035 hrs.

Signed as a True Record.....

Date.....

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Appendix A

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24

Adopted at a meeting of full council on 12th March 2024.

Kingswood Town Council can verify that it has put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

1. Financial Management and Preparation of Accounting Statements

- a) It has appointed a Responsible Financial Officer (also the Clerk and Proper Officer) in accordance with S151 of LGA Act 1972 to be responsible for accounting matters and satisfied that that officer has put in place effective procedures to accurately and promptly record all financial transactions and maintain up to date accounting records throughout the year.
- b) It has ensured that arrangements are in place to enable the preparation of an accurate and timely statement of accounts.
- c) It has prepared and approved a budget before setting the precept.
- d) It has monitored actual performance against budget during the year.
- e) It has undertaken financial appraisals before commencing any significant projects.
- f) It has reconciled the bank accounts with the accounting records on a regular basis and they have been reviewed by members of the authority.
- g) It has put in place arrangements to ensure that the council's funds are managed properly and that any amounts surplus to requirements is invested appropriately.
- h) It has implemented a General and Earmarked Reserve Policy and has reviewed the levels and purpose of all Earmarked Reserves.

2. Internal Control

- a) Kingswood Town Council has maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
- b) The town council has in place Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which incorporate provision for securing competition and regulate the way tenders are invited.
- c) It has put in place arrangements for the safeguard of public money, and how it orders goods and services, incurs liabilities, manages debtors, makes payments and handles receipts.
- d) It has reviewed the effectiveness of the arrangements with the establishment of a Finance and Administration Committee, with Terms of Reference.
- e) Payments are signed off by two elected members, and payments out of the bank are also authorized by two elected members.
- f) The town council has established a bank account and has ensured that it is fit for purpose. It has approved the bank mandate and ensured the signatories are aware of their responsibilities.
- g) The town council has employed a town clerk, and in doing so set out their conditions of service and remuneration package. The town council has joined the Avon Pension Fund and has registered the council as an employer.
- h) The council is aware of the process for the handling of its responsibilities regarding VAT.
- i) The town council has created an asset register, and ensures that the council assets are secure, properly maintained and efficiently managed.
- j) The town council does not have any loans or long term liabilities.

3. Compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices

- a) The town council is aware of the powers and duties and has ensured that all the activities undertaken fall within the council's authority to act.
- b) The council is able to exercise the general power of competence, by virtue of having a recent election and a qualified clerk and a resolution to confirm this.

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- c) Procedures are in place to ensure that the authority is compliant with statutory regulations and applicable proper practices and that these are regularly reviewed and that new requirements, or changes to existing ones, are reported to members and applied.
- d) The authority is satisfied that it has not taken any decisions during the year, or authorized any action, that exceeds its powers or contravenes any laws, regulations or proper practices.
- e) The council has in place a managed email account that enables all councillors and staff to comply with the regulations. All councillors have email addresses that are linked to the council website.

4. Exercise of Public Rights

- a) The town council was not subject to an external audit in its first year of operation and so was unable to exercise the electors’ rights in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

5. Management

- a) The council has assessed its risks and put in place the necessary steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and the application of insurance cover.
- b) The council has identified, assessed and recorded its risks and will ensure that the appropriate measures are in place to mitigate and manage those risks.

6. Internal Audit

- a) The town council has appointed an internal auditor, who will audit the council’s affairs as part of its first audit at the end of the council’s first financial year.

7. Reports from Auditors

- a) As the council was only created in May 2023, there have been no auditors reports during this period.

8. Significant Events

- a) There have been no significant events that has consequences or potential consequences on the authority’s finances.

9. Trust Funds

- a) The town council does not hold any funds in trust.

10. Approval

- a) This annual governance statement is approved by resolution of the members of the council as a whole, at a full council meeting.

Chair of Kingswood Town CouncilDated

Town Clerk to Kingswood Town Council Dated