

Minutes of the Action Group Meeting Held on 18 September 2018

Present: Vicki Scott, Tim Ambrose, Steve Berry, John Bewick, Will Dorman, Barrie Lambert, Tony Wheeler. **There were no apologies for absence.**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2018 were agreed.

1 Matters arising

1.1 Membership of the Group

No further suggestions had been made.

1.2 Village information leaflet

Copies were available in the Church, Iford & Kingston School and in the pub. It was proving of great interest to visitors as had been hoped.

1.3 Logs

Two more people had responded to the latest appeal for more logs to help protect the verges along Wellgreen Lane. Some of the logs offered had been collected and put in place.

2 Finance

2.1 Steve had heard – at last – that Lloyds had now registered the two new authorised signatories to the bank account – Tim and Vicki - meaning that he could now be paid the sum of £292.76 which had been owing to him for more than a year.

2.2 The sum of £151.29, earmarked earlier for later purchases of plants, was still available and it was agreed that some of this could be legitimately spent on plants for the school grounds, following discussions with the Head Teacher. This left an uncommitted balance of £346.14.

3 Environmental update

3.1` Footpaths

3.1.1 Steve had circulated a draft letter to the Rights of Way Officer at ESCC, asking for the restoration of the physical barrier at the Kingston end of this footpath on safety grounds, since this would avert the danger of children running straight on to Wellgreen Lane. This was approved.

3.1.2 The Ramblers Association had previously contacted the KPC in connection with an apparently lost footpath which had allegedly run from some point in the field with the windmill, to Audiburn, having passed around Castelmer Fruit Farm. The RA wished to have this restored. By 2020, it was believed, all rights of way had to be registered or lost.

However, a survey had concluded that there was no serious historical evidence of the existence of this path. This suggested that the RA's case might not be pursued.

3.1.3 After Barrie and others had complained to ESCC about the overgrown state of the bike path parallel with the Kingston Road, the path had been cut as requested. However, the reduction in the vegetation had been minimal and no attempt had been made to clear the bushes and plants obscuring the stream.

3.1.4 The promised extension to the cycle path referred to above, running from a point opposite Spring Barn Farm and then progressing behind Wyevale to the Swanborough fishing lakes, had now been completed but the surface was rough and unstable and negotiable with difficulty even on an off-road bike.

3.1.5 Steve had taken no further action on the issue of getting two footpaths on Kingston Hill registered as public rights of way.

3.2 Litter

Volunteers from the Action Group continued to collect litter on a monthly basis, with Lewes District Council – by arrangement – afterwards collecting the sacks and other rubbish, frequently including car tyres, from the bins around the burger bar.

4. Tesco “Bags of Help” scheme

4.1 When voting had concluded at the end of June, the Group’s project had attracted more support than the other two competing projects at the local Tesco store and would therefore receive the maximum award of £4000. On 13 September, we had received an e-mail letting us know that £3000 had been credited to our Lloyds Bank Account. The balance would be paid later, subject to us producing a satisfactory interim report on how the first sum had been spent.

4.2 The first purchases would be of primrose plugs and crocus bulbs. The primrose plugs would need to be re-potted, after which they would be nurtured by volunteers, each of whom would look after 25 plants for a number of months. There was a concern about buying bulbs since so many of those commercially grown might have been treated with neonicotinoids – poisons which protected plants from damage by insects by making all parts of the plant toxic. These chemicals were about to be banned by the EU (a step which the UK had opposed) but were still in use. As a major motivation of the project was to make more provision for wildlife in the village, it was clearly necessary to take all possible steps to avoid poisoning pollinating insects including bees.

4.3 Tim agreed to contact the Soil Association for advice and suggestions of suppliers which did not use these poisons and Vicki would do the same in respect of the RHS. Steve would also make enquiries before ordering any bulbs.

4.4 Steve now wished to make a number of minor changes to the project plan submitted in January. He would, however, check first with the organisers and obtain their

permission for any alterations, in conformity with the grant conditions. He anticipated no difficulty with this.

5 Traffic

- 5.1 The long awaited traffic survey by ESCC was now imminent, after which KPC could use its newly purchased portable speed sensor to measure the speed of all vehicles passing through the village.
- 5.2 There had been much public attention given to the issue of air pollution by vehicles and particular concern expressed about the effect of vehicle emissions from vehicles in the vicinity of schools, whose owners left car engines running. KPC was therefore considering putting up notices near the school asking drivers to switch their engines off while they were waiting.
- 5.3 The traffic bollard near the burger bar, in place to prevent cars from parking on the verge, were now in a poor condition. Some had fallen over and others were rotting. When they were first put up as part of a general improvement of the area, the cost had been split 50/50 between ESCC and the KPC. However, given the current dire state of the County's finances, it was thought unlikely that they could make any contribution at the moment. Tony would bring this issue to the attention of the KPC.
- 5.4 Apparently, the gate to the burger bar car park was now being locked at 4-00 pm. This prevented Kingston residents who were using buses to get to Brighton from leaving their car in that area. They were already unable to use the car park which had been originally provided for them as this was now dominated by users of the burger bar.

6 Kingston Conservation Area

- 6.1 Conservation Area (CA) was a designation in the power of Lewes District Council. Once areas had been designated, they could have a "character appraisal" produced. Such an appraisal of the Kingston CA was last done 10 years ago and was available on-line.
- 6.2 While a new appraisal seemed unlikely, it was perfectly possible for Kingston Parish Council itself to review the earlier appraisal and put its comments to the District Council. Whatever their response, KPC might encourage householders to take action in accordance with the recommendations of the earlier appraisal. It was agreed to put forward this suggestion to the KPC.

7. Planning

- 7.1 The effective merger between Lewes and Eastbourne District Councils had resulted in delays of between six and eight weeks in considering planning applications.

- 7.2 A proposal had been put forward for a camping site near Swanborough, with access to it via a farm track.
- 7.3 The appeal against the denial of planning permission for three houses at the Pump House had been unsuccessful.
- 7.4 A proposal for the construction of new houses at Kingsbrook Farm, “called in” by the South Downs National Park Authority, had been rejected. The land concerned was outside the planning boundary.

8. Kingston History and Heritage Group

The Group was seeking funds for a new website, first from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) but perhaps later from Kingston Parish Council. KHHG felt that the website needed to be professionally designed, at a potential initial cost of perhaps £5000 and an unknown annual maintenance sum. However, as the HLF would only consider applications from constituted bodies with bank accounts, the question arose whether the KHHG might apply through the Action Group. There was no opposition expressed to this idea and it was resolved to check the AG’s constitution to see whether such an application might be legitimate.

9 Kingston’s Disused Telephone Box

- 9.1 Steve had earlier circulated a very brief paper suggesting that the disused telephone box in The Street be put to some useful purpose. BT were keen to rid themselves of responsibility for these rural boxes and were willing to sell them for a nominal sum, normally to Parish Councils. Although most of the boxes sold in this way were of the traditional Gilbert Scott design, BT was also prepared to consider selling newer boxes.
- 9.2 It was agreed to float the idea in The Kingston News but not before the KPC had agreed in principle to the notion of assuming responsibility for the box. Some boxes elsewhere now housed defibrillators, while others had been converted to “libraries” or miniature greenhouses.

10 Next meeting

This would be held at 4.45 pm on Tuesday 30 October in the Pavilion.