

MEETING OF KINWARTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

Monday March 2nd at 7:30pm

Present

Cllr G Forman (Chair) - GF

Cllr J Langdon (Vice Chair) -JL

Cllr K Rees - KR

Cllr S Barley -SB

Cllr T Forman -TF

Cllr T Ballinger -TB

Cllr R Rees - RR

Jane MacDowall-Scott (Clerk and RFO) - JMS

In Attendance

Cllr S Juned (Chair of SDC, representing Cllr Holmes, District Councillor and Cllr J. Norris, County Cllr)

Liz Nicholson (Stansgate Planning) and Dan Hatcher (Rosconn Group)

COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Norris (Warwickshire County Council) The following points were highlighted.

- **School traffic:** Work is continuing to identify a long-term solution to pressures caused by school drop-offs and sixth-form parking at Alcester Academy and Alcester Grammar School.
- **Parking Meter** scheme in Alcester High Street has now been dropped.
- **The future of Gt Alne primary school** is still uncertain following a consultation period. The County Council administration will now make the final decision on the future of the school.
- **The County Council approved budget** includes a 4.44% rise in Council Tax and the social care precept, along with £4.2 million in planned “service efficiencies” that are yet to be defined and £2.47 million in reductions to Children & Family Centres. Following feedback from councillors, previously proposed reductions to youth grants were withdrawn, protecting support for local community organisations. Opposition councillors raised concerns regarding long-term financial sustainability and the potential for future increases in council tax, while emphasising the importance of early investment in services for children and young people.

Cllr Juned (Stratford District Council)

Cllr Mrs Juned highlighted the following points relating to the budget:

- **Council Tax-** Stratford-on-Avon District Councillors have set the district element of the Council Tax on Monday 23 February. The amount residents will be asked to pay for a Band D property is £174.18, an increase of 2.99%. The District Council receives 7.0% of the Council Tax – i.e 7p in every £1 paid by residents to pay for all its services. Warwickshire County Council receives 76.7%, the Police 12.8% and Towns/Parishes 3.5%.
- **Neighbourhood Development Plans funding** - £100,000 (over 3 years) supports parish councils but this is being cut by central government.

Signed Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of the Parish Council

- **Health Screening Events** – SDC is supporting Health Screening Events with the Graham Fulford Trust for a second year with events across the District.
- **Housing to Rent** - £1,000,000 (one-off allocation) to secure additional social housing units and reduce reliance on costly temporary accommodation, including residents fleeing domestic violence.
- **Climate Change Fund** - £500,000 (one-off) funding for local climate initiatives
- **Rural Crime Advisors** – SDC continues to fund the Rural Crime Advisors
- **VASA Volunteer Driver Scheme** - £12,000 (for 3 years) Transport for older and mobility-impaired residents
- **Cost of Living Crisis Mitigation Fund** - £250,000 (one-off) Adds to projected £250,000 rollover to create a £500,000 hardship support fund
- Other items were included in Cllr Norris' report.

GF thanked Cllr Mrs Juned and Cllr Norris for their reports.

Pre-application Enquiry for the development of land of Captain's Hill. (Briefing paper submitted)

For the benefit for all in attendance, Cllr Mrs Forman emphasised that the presentation by Stansgate Planning and Rosconn were for information only, that the Parish Council is not the planning authority and that no decisions would be made. The presentation would be allowed 10 minutes followed by questions of clarification.

Dan Fatcher (Rosconn Director) introduced the site- 2.67 hectares of Green Belt land, a proposal for 40-50 dwellings of mixed sizes, of which 50% will be affordable. He said they consider this to be 'grey' belt – ie land with access and adjoining existing development which could be built on without harming the landscape and which would contribute to the District's 5 year housing supply which it currently doesn't have.

Questions raised included: explanation of what 'grey' belt is, housing density, access onto Captain's Hill, drainage and run off, the sloping character of the site and how this will appear in the landscape.

Rosconn/Stansgate confirmed the importance of landscaping, the likely inclusion of a landscaped buffer zone, the need for ecological enhancement to ensure at least a 10% net gain.

The Chair thanked the presenters and everyone for their questions. She reminded everyone that should a formal application be received, the Parish Council will comment directly on the proposals to the planning authority.

MAIN MEETING

- 1. Apologies.** None
- 2. Disclosure of interests.** No interests disclosed.
- 3. Confirmation of the Minutes.** Minutes confirmation proposed by TF, seconded by JL. Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting held 5th January 2026.
- 4. Exclusion of the Press and the Public.** The Chair explained that it was necessary to pass a resolution to enable the Council to discuss item 9 (Tender for mowing and hedge maintenance

Signed Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of the Parish Council

contract in private due to the business confidentiality aspect of the matter. The following resolution was passed.

Kinwarton Parish Council resolved: *That pursuant to the public (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 9 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.*

Decision: The resolution was passed unanimously.

5. On-Going Matters

5.1 Training: The Clerk reported that Cllrs Mrs Langdon, Mrs Ballinger and Mr Rees had attended 'new' Parish Councillor training sessions with WALC during January and February. She also reported attending a new Clerk session on finance which was very helpful. JMS reminded Councillors that there is a range of short courses available for councillors and that they should let her know if they wish to attend.

5.2 St. Mary's Park entrance upgrade: TF reported he had met with the contractor who had proposed a single hinged lockable bollard to protect the entrance from unauthorised vehicle entry but wide enough to permit pushchairs and wheelchairs to enter. Also included is resurfacing and barriers over the bridge. It was proposed to do the job in one go. Asked if the council had made a formal decision on the proposal and the expenditure. It was agreed this needed to be checked in previous minutes as the exact position was unknown.

Decision: Agreed that TF would get the contractor to send the invoice for the work to the Clerk and she would check the position regarding the minutes when this was last discussed. *This needs to be discussed and agreed at the next available meeting.*

5.2.1 Playground Inspection Contract. JMS reminded that the Council that the contract for playground inspection was coming up and asked the council if it wished to extend the contract with the existing contractors. There is money allocated for this in the 26/27 budget and the cost is under £500. There was a question about the height of the swings and the contractor would be asked to check this.

Decision: Unanimously agreed to extend the existing contract with HAGGS.

5.3 New Biodiversity Noticeboards. TF reported that the average price for large information noticeboards is £1500 which includes design work. There was also discussion about smaller freestanding signs to identify natural areas and specific habitats although also concern about vandalism. It was agreed that the larger signboard was something for the future but that 3 smaller signs and posts should be purchased at £15 each + £15 per post. It was agreed that TF would produce the sign tailored to be appropriate to Kinwarton. KR also asked that Biodiversity be a regular item on the Agenda.

Decision: That TF arrange the design and commission three small signs and posts for areas to be agreed upon. Bio-diversity to be a regular item on the agenda for KPC meetings.

Signed Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of the Parish Council

5.4 Installation and unveiling of tree plaque . It was agreed that this would be done at 10.30 on 21st March. TF would arrange the necessary preparation. JMS would invite MM and ZIC.

Decision: The plaque installation and unveiling would take place on 21st March at 10.30am.

5.5 Parish Council Precept 2026/27. The Clerk reported that she had submitted KPC's application for the 26/27 precept and that this had been confirmed. Payment would be made in April and September.

5.6 Parish Newsletter. The Chair thanked KR for her work on the newsletter which will be printed and circulated in the next few weeks.

Decision: The newsletter was approved.

5.7 Report of the CEO of Stratford District Council on local government reorganisation. [Report no 1 in the circulated papers]. The report was noted and Councillors indicated in a vote they are in favour of a two unitary option, as favoured by Stratford District Council. The Chair encouraged individual councillors to submit their responses to the consultation which ends on 26 March. The Clerk said she would draft a response on behalf of the Parish Council to send to the Government.

Decision: The council agreed they would support a two unitary option for Warwickshire which best suits the character, needs and historical connections of this area. JMS will draft a KPC response to send on behalf of the Council to this effect.

6.0 Planning applications: No new applications had been received.

7. Financial Matters

7.1 Financial Expenditure Report: Report no 2 in the circulated papers. The expenditure report was agreed having been proposed by KR and seconded by TF.

7.2 Bank Switch update: The Clerk reported that this was running smoothly although there had been some delays because beneficiaries hadn't switched automatically so were now having to be uploaded and approved separately. The bank card application was ready for signing and would be sent straight away.

7.3 Financial Management Software: Report no. 3 in the circulated papers. JMS had circulated a report explaining the business case for purchasing 'Scribe' software which is tailored for parish councils. This would see the end of reliance on Excel spreadsheets and the risks attached to that. She was confident that this would save the Council money in the longer term- accountants fees and her time. It would also ensure greater transparency and easier reporting to the Council each month. There was agreement that this was the right way forward for the Council and the decision was unanimous.

Decision: Agreed to purchase Scribe Software at a cost of £299 one off payment and £42 per month thereafter (including VAT).

Signed Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of the Parish Council

8. Correspondence. JMS reported that two emails had been received (i) Mess left following the removal of a tree in St. Mary’s Park and (ii) the vandalism of the bus stop on Captain’s Hill. Both had now been resolved.

9. Consideration of mowing and hedge maintenance contract tenders.

Members of the public and press were reminded that they were to leave the meeting at this point although there were none in attendance. District and County Council representatives had already left. See the resolution passed at point 4 above.

Submissions by two contractors had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There was agreement that there was little separating the contractors in overall contract value. In the following discussion it was agreed that the deciding factors were;

- **Experience** – One tenderer has been working with KPC for a number of years and has useful experience. Whilst they haven’t worked with KPC, the other has several Parish Council contracts and it was felt that given the small scale of the KPC contract, this could be easily picked up and effectively delivered.
- **Value for money**- the contract prices were similar but one contractor was incorporating more work than the other.
- **Responsiveness** - One contractor has a larger business than the other and it was felt was likely to be more responsive.
- **Confidence** - One contractor put forward a more professional submission which councillors felt gave them confidence in the quality of their service.

Decision: Following consideration of the submitted tenders, it was resolved to award the contract for mowing and hedgerow maintenance services in Kinwarton to Thomas Fox Landscaping. The decision was proposed by Cllr Gill Forman, seconded by Cllr Tim Forman and had unanimous support of the Council.

10. Date of next meeting. The Chair highlighted the need to change the next 2 meetings as they fall on Bank Holidays. She also said it may be necessary to cancel the April meeting as the Clerk will be in hospital. It was agreed to keep the dates in place for the time being and that TF will book a room at Globe House for the 13th April and 11th May (AGM and Parish Assembly). Following dates will be June 1st and 6th July, all starting at 7pm.

Decision: Dates to stay in place for the time being. TF to book a room for April and May meetings.

Signed.....Gill Forman.....(Chair)

Date.....13 April 2026.....

Signed Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of the Parish Council