

**Minutes of the Kennington Community Forum Final Open Meeting
held on Tuesday, 5 June 2018 at 7.30pm at
St. Mary's Community Centre, Rylands Road, Kennington, TN24 9LL**

Present: Core Group members: Tony Bartlett (Chair), Sandra Dunn (Secretary), Chris Woolgar (Treasurer), John Baker, Carole Ingram (Summer Fayre Committee), Derek Standing.

Members of the community: Kalysha Howard-Smith, Chris Jackson, Chris Morley, Lee Robinson, Graham Skinner, Geoff Stanborough, Kirsty Tippett.

Councillors Paul Bartlett (KCC: Central Ashford) and Simon Howard-Smith (ABC: Bockhanger); Michelle Byrne (ABC Funding and Partnerships Officer).

1. **Tony Bartlett welcomed everyone to the meeting.**
2. **Apologies:** Cllrs Clair Bell (KCC: Ashford Rural East), Andrew Buchanan (ABC: Bybrook), Winston Michael (ABC: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell), Charlie Simkins (KCC: Ashford Rural West), and Phil Sims (ABC: Kennington); Helen Brown, Bill Clark, Paul Graham, Ian Milbery, Mike Paddy, Chris Twydell,
3. **Minutes of the EGM held on 28 November 2017.** These were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.
Matters arising: The Chairman said that he had postponed his resignation, which was to take effect from 31 March 2018. This was so that the Forum could continue to support the Summer Fayre this year.
4. **Proposal to dissolve Kennington Community Forum on 30 June 2018.** The Chairman said that his resignation will now come into effect at midnight on 30 June 2018. The Forum will no longer be quorate so it will have to be dissolved. The Shadow Parish Council will carry out a number of roles previously carried out by the Forum.
5. **Presentation of KCF accounts to end of May 2018.** The Treasurer presented the accounts from 1 September 2017 – 31 May 2018. The main financial activity since September has been publishing the newsletters and maintaining the memorial garden. Ashford Borough Council paid for the final newsletter, which included information on the Shadow Parish Council. Grants received from Kent County Council paid for the work in the memorial garden which included replacing hedging and planting flowering cherry trees. Latterly the activity has related to the summer fayre.
6. **To agree on distribution of surplus funds to local groups.**
 - 6.1. KCF holds approximately £800 which is available for distribution. This money has been raised by the Forum and does not include any grant money from ABC or KCC which has been spent. The Treasurer did not want the money to be spent on matters that the parish council could fund. A few ideas were received from those present. Chris Woolgar suggested that people should email details to her for consideration (email: kenningtoncftreasurer@gmail.com). It was decided that a deadline for receipt of proposals would be set for 15 June 2018.

6.2. Chris Woolgar said that the Forum also had two gazebos. She asked the meeting what they would like her to do with them; she suggested that they could possibly be stored with the summer fayre equipment and could be loaned out. Simon Howard-Smith suggested that Park Run could make use of one or both of them. He will make enquiries.

7. To close the KCF bank accounts.

- 7.1. The main bank activity is now relating to the Summer Fayre. Each year a contingency of £1500 is held over to fund preparations for the following year's fair. The Friends of St. Mary's have agreed to hold this money until the fate of the fair has been decided.
- 7.2. Apart from the £800 that will be distributed, there remains an error receipt of £1000. The bank has not been able to trace who paid this money into the account. They have, however, said that they will hold the money but only when the account has been closed.
- 7.3. It was agreed that the accounts could be closed as soon as soon as practical after 30 June 2018

8. Review of accounts.

- 8.1. A volunteer is required to review the accounts from September 2016 to closure in 2018. Kirsty Tippett agreed to do this. Her offer was accepted with thanks. **Action: Kirsty**
- 8.2. Once this is done it will be necessary to provide ABC with historical and current records of KCF accounts for archiving.

9. The shadow parish council

- 9.1. Cllr Bartlett explained how the shadow parish council will operate. It will have no statutory powers and have no legal entities but will operate in the same way as a parish council. It will look into issues such finding premises from which to operate, and the costs involved, including premises costs, insurance, clerk's salary, etc. It would also consider policies and procedures. The shadow parish council will consult the community as to what it expects. To facilitate all this ABC has made £5000 available.
- 9.2. The work that the SPC will do will help set the budget required and from this the parish precept will be calculated. This is the additional charge that will be collected by ABC along with the council tax.
- 9.3. Help is available from ABC and also Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and experienced parish councils have also offered to provide advice
- 9.4. So far the SPC consists of eight people: Cllrs Paul Bartlett and Phil Sims, Tony Bartlett (Chairman, KCF), Derek Standing (Core Group member, KCF), Chris Morley (ex. Chairman KCF), Kirsty Tippett, who has lived in Kennington for 10 years and works on accounts at Brakes, plus two others. A further eight are required. Kennington will be the second largest parish in Ashford with an electorate of 11,000.
- 9.5. Closing date for nominations for the parish council is early April 2019. If all vacancies are not filled then the council will co-opt, but in that case it will have no 'general powers of competency' which will limit its powers.

10. Demolition of Bockhanger Community Centre

- 10.1. Cllr Howard-Smith explained that a task group had looked into the state of the community centre and had produced a 20-page report which was presented to ABC's

Cabinet who decided that there was no alternative to its demolition. Cllr Howard-Smith voted against the proposal to demolish. He said that if people wanted the centre to remain then they must write in and object to the application. Groups who used the hall have now either been offered alternative accommodation or are actively searching. The library will be relocated into the children's centre. It was pointed out, however, that it is not just existing users of the hall that should be considered. Others who might want to use it will not be able to. A community centre can be a hub for the community.

10.2. There was much discussion about the lack of maintenance carried out on the centre, which had caused its deterioration, also about the lack of consultation with the residents. It was pointed out that KCF had helped facilitate a previous consultation with residents which had identified four options for the site, and the residents had agreed a plan to replace the community centre with a smaller one with new shops which would be paid for by new housing on part of the site. This had been rejected because ABC had been unable to find a developer willing to make a business case for it.

10.3. Michelle Byrne agreed that the hall was dangerous. She also said that it is difficult to get people prepared to run halls.

10.4. Chris Morley pointed out that there was a dearth of facilities north of the M20; Bockhanger is the only ABC funded facility in that area. The two halls nearby are for existing groups; what about new groups?

10.5. He said that the Local Plan, under examination at present, has a section on community facilities and this application is in contravention of the Plan. Points from the LP include:

5.406: *'The provision of good quality community infrastructure and services designed around people and their cultural, leisure, health, learning, social and wellbeing needs is fundamental to the creation of strong, vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.'*

5.408: *'It has been proved that community infrastructure that offers a range of services at one site, or 'Hub', helps to establish a focal and active point that benefits the area and community life.'*

5.411: *'Retaining existing facilities wherever practical is the most sustainable way of enhancing and expanding provision. This position is supported by the NPPF which recognises the importance of community and social facilities and requires that LPAs guard against the unnecessary loss of this valued provision, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day to day needs.'*

5.412: *'The Council therefore aims to protect social and community infrastructure and to guard against unnecessary loss unless there are strong reasons why this is no longer viable or where provision is replicated nearby.'*

He said that the decision should be postponed until the Local Plan is adopted.

10.6. Cllr Paul Bartlett said that ABC recognises that it could have been done better and there is goodwill to resolve the issue. Objections should be put in as soon as possible. He thought that the best scenario would be that if the application to demolish were granted then a condition would be put in place to replace the building with a new facility by a certain date. If this did not happen then ABC would be in breach of its permission.

10.7. Kennington Community Forum will put in a representation and the SPC will look at the options. All those concerned about the demolition should either go online to put in their representations or write in. The application number is **18/00765/AS**.

11. Any other business:

- 11.1. It was the final meeting of the Forum. Chris Woolgar was thanked for all the hard work she had done over the years, for her advice, and for keeping the Forum's finances on track. Sandra Dunn was thanked for her efforts in recording the meetings over many years. Both were presented with bouquets of flowers.
- 11.2. Tony Bartlett was thanked for taking on the mantle of Chairing the Forum. Without his dedication the Forum would have wound up when the previous chairman resigned.
- 11.3. All were thanked for attending the meeting.