

KESSINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Extraordinary Kessingland Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 25 October 2017 at 7.00pm in the Parish Council Offices at Marram Green, Hall Road, Kessingland

Members present: Councillors L Martin (Chairman), B Burden, J Borderick, J Difford, S James, B Kite, M Dunne, B Nicholls, E Smith, J Thompson and P Wernham.

Others present: Waveney District Councillor Alan Green, Parish Clerk and 1 member of the public

1a APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd.

1b DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS – No declarations of interest were received.

1c DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of pecuniary interests were received.

1d REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS - No requests for dispensation were received.

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During this part of the meeting residents were able to put questions to the Chairman regarding local concerns and to ask questions.

(a) Comments from Members of the Public

A member of the public expressed disappointment regarding the outcome of the result of the informal referendum on the future funding of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) post for Kessingland. In particular concern was expressed regarding the restricted working hours that were worked by PCSOs. Clarification was given regarding the role of the Kessingland PCSO when attending community meetings and groups.

RESOLVED

That the PCSO for Kessingland be requested to contact the member of public present at the meeting in terms of future attendance at a Methodist Church meeting.

3 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER POST

Councillors considered a report regarding the future funding of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for Kessingland following the informal referendum held during October 2017.

The informal referendum was held as significant dissatisfaction had been expressed regarding the full time funding of the PCSO post in the sum of £31,700 and the restricted working hours to before 6pm (Monday to Friday) and 1 in 3 weekends (8am – 4pm). There had been a significant increase in anti-social behaviour across the village, the majority of which occurred during the evenings and weekends when the PCSO did not work. It had therefore been questioned whether the funding of the PCSO post represented value for money.

The result of the informal referendum was as follows:

Total number of votes cast	-	549
Those in favour of retaining the PCSO post	-	311 (56.65% of the vote)
Those against retaining the PCSO post	-	238 (43.35% of the vote)

Therefore, there was a majority of 73 votes in favour of continued funding of the PCSO post for Kessingland for 2018/19.

The Parish Council would soon be in the position of having to consider the budget and precept for 2018/19 and so the issue of continued funding of the PCSO post for 2018/19 would be considered as part of the budget and precept setting process. Clarification was given that the Parish Council would need to take into account the results of the informal referendum but were not statutorily required to comply with the outcome.

During the current year there had been an unprecedented level of vandalism and anti-social behaviour on the Francis Road Community Playing Field and also in relation to bringing some of the buildings on the site up to standard. It has also been agreed that to install CCTV in order to protect our assets and provide evidence of criminal activity on the site. No budgetary provision was made for this unexpected expenditure. As a result, the level of General Reserves will have been significantly depleted during 2017/18 and so consideration would need to be given to replenishing the level of General Reserves from the 2018/19 precept. There was some uncertainty at this stage regarding the actual cost of the PCSO for 2018/19 as Police salary negotiations were on-going.

The Parish Council would continue to lobby for revised working hours for the PCSO for Kessingland so that the needs of the community were met and the service was delivered when it was needed the most – ie evenings and at weekends.

During the discussion on this item, reference was made to Tiptree Parish Council which funded a private security firm to work 4 evenings a week in their local area at an estimated cost of £10,000 a year, which had resulted in a reduction in anti-social behaviour. It was considered that it would be beneficial in exploring this option in the future.

It was reported that the Chief Constable for Norfolk was going to abolish all PCSO posts in Norfolk and use some of the saving to fund the employment of Police Officers, who would be able to work evenings and weekends. The Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner had publicly stated that he would want to retain the PCSOs for Suffolk but the Central Government Police Settlement budgets for 2018/19 would not be received until December 2017 and so this position statement could be under review.

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council considers the outcome of the informal village referendum on the future funding of the Police Community Support Officer post for Kessingland for 2018/19 when considering the budget and precept for 2018/19.

12 RESPONSE TO SUFFOLK OF ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS CONSULTATION ON PRECEPT SETTING FOR 2018.19

The Local Association of Information Services had issued a briefing paper, circulated by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, regarding a Precept Consultation being undertaken by Central Government. The Consultation Document was considered by the Finance Working Group at its meeting held on 19 October 2017. There were two key questions that were relevant to Parish / Town Councils as follows:

1. Do you have any views on council tax referendum for 2018/19 for principle local authorities?
2. Do you have any views on whether additional flexibilities are required for particular categories of authority? What evidence is available to support this specific flexibility?

Copies of the full consultation document and a Draft Response approved by the Finance Working Group had been circulated prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Draft Response to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) Precept Consultation Document be approved and the response be sent to the Department for Local Government & Communities, SALC and Peter Aldous (Member of Parliament for Waveney).

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

Chairman

Date