

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee

Agenda

Monday, 14th March, 2016
at 6.00 pm

in the

**Committee Suite
King's Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn**



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**KING'S LYNN AREA
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

DATE: MONDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2016

**VENUE: COMMITTEE SUITE, KING'S COURT, CHAPEL
STREET, KING'S LYNN**

TIME: 6.00 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 6 - 28)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meetings held on Monday 28 September 2015 and 7 January 2016.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Please indicate if there are any interests which should be declared. A declaration of an interest should indicate the nature of the interest (if not already declared on the Register of Interests) and the agenda item to which it relates. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared, the Member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed.

These declarations apply to all Members present, whether the Member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local Member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any business which, by reason of special circumstances, the Chairman proposes to accept as urgent under Section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

5. MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Members wishing to speak pursuant to Standing Order 34 should inform the Chairman of their intention to do so and on what items they wish to be heard before the meeting commences. Any Member attending the meeting under Standing Order 34 will only be permitted to speak on those items which have been previously notified to the Chairman.

6. CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

7. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014, POWERS & ENFORCEMENT

To receive a presentation from Mark Whitmore, Principal Officer, Environmental Health on Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Powers and Enforcement.

8. PLANNING SUB-GROUP - 3 MARCH 2016

At the meeting held on 3 March 2016, the KLACC Planning Sub-Group deferred determination of the application listed below to the King's Lynn Consultative Committee.

16/00097/FM

Construction of 54 dwellings, associated access roads, footways and new areas of public open space and associated external works at land north of Lynnsport, King's Lynn, Norfolk

9. ALLOTMENTS (Page 29)

To receive a report from the Operations Manager on Allotment concessions.

10. CIF ROAD

To receive feedback from the Assistant Director on the CIF road following comments made by the Committee at the previous meeting.

11. PRIORITIES FOR KING'S LYNN

12. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 30 - 31)

The Committee is asked to consider items for a future Work Programme for 2016/2017.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Please note that the meeting scheduled for 14 June 106 has been moved **to**

Tuesday 12 July 2016 at 6.00 pm.

To: Members of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee

Councillors Miss L Bambridge, Mrs S Buck, J Collop, Mrs S Collop,
I Gourlay, C Joyce, C Kittow, G McGuinness, G Middleton, P Rochford,
M Shorting, T Smith, A Tyler, Mrs M Wilkinson and T Wing-Pentelow

For Further information, please contact:

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BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee held on Monday, 28th September, 2015 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor
Councillors L Bambridge, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, C Kittow, G McGuinness,
P Rochford, T Smith, A Tyler and Mrs M Wilkinson

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I Gourlay, G Middleton and
T Wing-Pentelow

1 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

4 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds attended for items

5 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was no Chairman's correspondence. The Chairman did report that Councillor Rochford had enquired as to how to add items to the work programme. The Chairman had advised Councillor Rochford to contact either himself, the Vice Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer.

6 **UPDATE FROM FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING (45 MINUTES)**

The Chairman then invited Tony Hall, Chief Executive of Freebridge Community Housing to give a presentation to the Committee.

The presentation covered:

- Programme of Improvements for Tenants
 - Decent Homes Programme
 - Non-Trads Programme
 - Hillington Square – A place where people want to live
 - Empty Homes Scheme
- New development
 - Keeble Court, King's Lynn and Coronation Avenue, West Winch
 - Passivhaus – Terrington St Clement
 - Waterside, North Lynn
 - Lady Jane Grey Road
- Key Performance Indicators
- What has been achieved
- Future Plans and Changes in National Policy

The Chairman then invited the Committee to ask questions, which are summarised below.

Councillor Tyler referred to the area around some garages on Reid Way and asked whose responsibility it was for maintaining them. He added that if they were the responsibility of Freebridge, then how quickly would Freebridge respond, if an issue was raised in relation to improving the area.

In response, Tony Hall explained that Freebridge had related assets outside of the home and around the property itself. Feedback from the Quality of Life survey had suggested that some people were dissatisfied with the areas around them.

In relation to grass cutting, Tony Hall explained that Freebridge tried to have a good relationship with the County and Borough. He further added that there was still a legacy from the transfer of stock where there was still some land belonging to the Council which would be better placed with Freebridge and vice versa, and some parcels of land had been transferred and where in the process of transferring.

With regards to the garage sites, it was explained that Freebridge had a varying demand for these. Some sites had been redeveloped as infill sites and he referred to a scheme in Hunstanton.

He added that as well as the decent homes standard, he also wanted to look at street lighting, pathways, etc.

With regards to how quickly issues could be dealt with, he explained that this would be on the same basis as repairs. However the difficulty would be if the work needed to be put into the overall work programme.

He concluded that if any Member had any particular issue then please let him know.

Councillor Smith referred to the decency standard and asked what was it and how that level was decided upon. He also asked Mr Hall if he would live in a Freebridge property.

In response, Tony Hall explained that there were several Freebridge Houses that he would like to live in. In relation to the decency standards he explained that this was a low standard and the key issues were around bathroom/kitchen life cycle targets. However, Freebridge had gone far beyond the decency standard in relation to insulation and tried to find ways to ensure homes were as energy efficient as possible. He added that if there was more funding available, then they would like to do more.

In response to a comment from Councillor Smith, Tony Hall explained that skirting boards were classed as a decorative feature. Damp issues would have to be investigated but generally it turned out to be condensation. He added that people could not afford to heat their properties and ventilate it at the same time. If it was condensation, then tenants would be expected to wipe down walls, but it would need to be inspected.

Councillor Mrs Collop asked what the future plans were for the Blockbusters shop. It was explained that it was in the programme and the drawings showed retail at ground floor with residential above. It was in the programme for this year but there was also a need to make sure that the building did not deteriorate.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson asked what happened at the Freebridge Board Meetings. It was explained that the Board Meeting was not a public meeting. Tenants were informed about what was happening through Streets Ahead. He further added that tenants could be met on a one to one basis in their own homes as part of the out and about programme. They could also give feedback from the compliments and complaints form. There was also a tenant panel. He considered that there was a healthy relationship and there had not been any call for meetings to be held in a different way.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Wilkinson, it was confirmed that the Board Members were paid. It was explained that Board Meetings were held monthly together with other training events. It was also confirmed that the allowances were published in the annual accounts.

Councillor Miss Bambridge stated that she had put a note in the Members' Bulletin regarding being on the Board and suggested that the current 2 board members could also submit an article.

Councillor McGuinness referred to the Decency Standard and asked if it was the same as 10 years ago.

In response, Tony Hall confirmed that it was and added that it was more beneficial to agree standards locally. Freebridge were trying to make properties as affordable as possible and were working with tenants to reduce energy costs.

Councillor J Collop stated that he was happy to hear about the plans for the Blockbuster shop in view of all the money which had been spent on the bus station, and hoped that the works would be carried out as soon as possible.

He asked whether the Committee could have a tour of the former Zoots site and Hillington Square as he would like to look at the standard of those properties. In response, Tony Hall explained that the Planning Committee had been on a tour on Monday 21 September. He added that he would be happy to take the Committee on a tour.

In response to a question from Councillor Tyler in relation to anti-social behaviour, Tony Hall explained that Freebridge generally worked together with other organisations as part of a team dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Councillor McGuinness referred to the redevelopment at Hillington Square, and asked what the timeframe was for the rest of the redevelopment works.

Tony Hall explained that a paper would be presented to the Board next week on how to proceed and then to talk to the tenants. He added that the plans would have to be reconsidered given the financial constraints.

The Chairman thanked Tony for an interesting and useful presentation.

7 **ALLOTMENTS (45 MINUTES)**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs Nockolds, Portfolio Holder to the meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from Sarah Moore, Operations Manager on Allotments.

Sarah explained that an allotment was:

‘By definition an allotment was: an area of land leased either from a private or local authority landlord, for the use of growing fruit and

vegetables. In some cases this land will also be used for the growing of ornamental plants, and keeping hens, rabbits or bees. ‘

In managing allotments, local authorities were also governed by the following national legislation:

- The Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919
- The Allotment Act 1922
- The Allotment Act 1925
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1947
- The Allotment Act 1950

The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 – this placed a statutory duty on local authorities to provide allotments appropriate to demand and they were traditionally managed by the lowest form of government and therefore the allotments which fell within the unparished areas of Kings Lynn were managed by the Council.

Advice and guidance could also be sought from the National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardens, of which the Council was a member. They held regional forum meetings which allowed officers to get together and exchange ideas and advice, but importantly they were attended by the Societies legal officer who was there to offer legal advice in any difficult or challenging cases.

From March 2014 the management of allotments was moved from the Property Services section to Public Open Space section.

At present there were 14 sites across Kings Lynn, 4 of which were managed by allotment associations, the remaining 10 were directly managed by Public Open Space.

Of these, one site was rented from NCC, the rest were Council owned

There were 476 plots within those 10 sites

There was a waiting list of 90 people, and the Council received on average 2 allotment applications per week

In October 2014, allotments were subject to an internal audit, and the service was reviewed in order to guide future actions required to help to improve the service.

It was noted that improvements could be made to the back office administration and management.

One of the priorities highlighted was the need for an allotments strategy, which would set out the direction and future of the allotment stock, however as there were a number of day to day management operations to improve, it was agreed that this would be delivered during 2016.

A risk assessment had been developed that would be available to tenants and officers alike to cover the range of hazards that could be associated with allotments, such as machinery/ tools, bonfires, personal and public safety.

The waiting list was inherited from Property Services and detailed residents that had made allotment applications as far back as 2010. The recommendation was to bring the waiting list up to date by contacting the residents to ensure that they were, still interested, still in the area and had not been allocated a plot elsewhere.

Consideration had been given to making the eligibility criteria clearer, specifically to ensure that the applicants were residents within the unparished area of Kings Lynn, (those outside of this area, would be eligible for a plot within their own parish), over 18, did not have an outstanding debt with the Council, and were not already allotment tenants of 2 plots or more.

The plots were allocated on a first come first serve basis, where the applicants that had been on the list for the longest got offered the next available plot. They were given 14 days to accept/refuse the plot, and were informed that refusal would either take them off the list, or place them back to the bottom of the list whichever they preferred.

It was recommended that a livestock register be compiled in order to improve two way communications between authorities and tenants in the case of any livestock epidemics, or other issues.

To ensure that tenants were using the allotments appropriately, an inspection regime had been developed along with specific criteria

Cultivation level – it was a requirement that a minimum of 60% of any plot be cultivated, this included areas taken up by, greenhouses or polytunnels, and the area under fruit trees. Also, that the remaining area was kept mown or tidy, free from weeds, debris and litter. Tenants could often complain about a neighbouring plot holder that allowed their weeds to grow up and shed weed seed.

Structures – the structural soundness of any buildings that tenants had placed on their plot tried to be assessed. Conditions varied greatly, from brand new sheds, to homemade tin shacks.

Fences/hedges – a check was carried out to ensure that the tenants were adequately maintaining their bordering hedges or fences, keeping them to a restricted height of 4ft.

Hazardous Materials – a check was made for the presence of hazardous materials such as asbestos and barbed wire, and for other materials which could be hazardous to the soil condition, such as carpet and tyres

Livestock – a check was undertaken to ensure that any livestock appeared to have the basic needs of food, water and shelter, fulfilled and checked for signs that they were regularly attended.

It was found that whilst, on the whole most tenants used the allotments to grow fruit and vegetables there were a number of plots that were being misused, these varied from being uncultivated, used as storage or for other reasons.

Where vacating tenants left their allotments in bad conditions, attempts were made to at least remove the debris and waste left on the plots so that new tenants could at least start to cultivate unhindered. Also over growth was cut back and fence/hedge boundaries were checked, reinstating boundary lines with post and wire where required.

- Tenants in breach got a warning letter – Notice to Tidy 28 days to comply
- Then sent a Notice to Cultivate - 28 days to comply
- Then a Notice to Quit – 28 days to clear and vacate

There was a question on whether the Council tried to recuperate costs from the out-going tenants when items such as these were left behind.

It was recommended that a rule book be compiled that would make it clear to tenants what they could and could not do on their plots, and to explain and formalise the back office procedures.

The rule book was still currently in draft form and would be circulated as part of a consultation plan to tenants by November of this year. The rule book had been compiled by looking at the conditions and rules applied by other eastern area allotment managers, including Hellesdon Parish Council, Norwich City Council and from guidance developed by the National Society.

The rules denoted the appropriate use for an allotment and aimed to ensure that not only tenants were clear on what could and could not be done, but also enabled officers to be able to challenge and evict tenants efficiently should the rules be breached in any way.

In creating this document, the tenancy agreements would need to be revisited to ensure that they referred to the 'rule book', making the two documents work in conjunction with each other.

As tenancy agreements only legally last for 12 months, it was aimed to complete the rule book consultation by February, with an agreed version, and develop the new tenancy agreements by April 2016 for issue to all tenants.

It was likely that tenants would not always read a full rule book, so it was aimed to adopt a similar approach to Sheffield, where tenants got

an illustrated handbook, which read easily and highlighted the most important points.

In short the rule book will cover:

- Waiting list and eligibility
- Cultivation – and what it means
- Structure size
- Tenancy and breach of tenancy
- Anti-social behaviour including visitors
- Visitors
- Dogs
- Fences/hedges
- Bonfires
- Livestock and bees

The Allotments Act 1950 required that an allotment must be let at 'rent that a tenant is reasonably expected to pay', which is not particularly helpful. However our current rental charge was £0.07 per sq metre which equated to £17.50 per year for a standard plot of 250m².

This rent had not been reviewed or increased since 2001 when the charge was £0.063 per sq metre or £15.75 per year

According to the DCLG guidance 'growing in the community' factors that could be used to assess how reasonable allotment rents were:

- Rents in other neighbouring areas
- Charges to users for other recreational or leisure activities

A comparison showed that the Council's current charge for the allotments was extremely low, when compared to a neighbouring council and to leisure charges.

The service was currently subsidised via a special expenses charge of circa £20,000 per annum paid by council tax payers, and the total rent received from the directly managed sites was £8300.

The Chairman thanked Sarah for the presentation and then asked the Committee for any questions, which are summarised below:

Councillor Tyler added that he knew that allotments were important to people in the area, and asked what the biggest problems were and what was the positive aspect?

The Operations Manager explained that the biggest challenge was getting people interested in what they were able and not able to do. The positive side was some of the individual sites and the sense of community and explained that in North Lynn a group of people met up every Saturday morning, had breakfast and shared ideas, etc.

Councillor Rochford asked whether the Committee could have a copy of the draft rules. He also commented that he did a tour of allotments and clearly some were not being used for the purpose they were let, and asked whether the Council could enforce against those.

The Operations Manager agreed to send out a copy of the draft rules and welcomed any feedback from the Committee. The Operations Manager explained that enforcement could take place but it could take up to three months to evict a tenant. She added that she would be happy to help groups of people set up allotment associations.

Councillor Collop referred to special expenses which were incurred in the running of the allotments as King's Lynn did not have a Parish Council to run them. He added that it cost the Council a lot of money to run them and considered that the running of allotments should be reformed. However, if they were to be reformed then he considered that it should be done properly. He thought that allotments were good but that the Council was not charging enough. He added that Associations were run well but thought that they charged more.

The Operations Manager explained that she had been unable to clarify how much associations charged as this depended on a number of things. She did plan to have an Allotment Forum this year.

In response to a question from Councillor Collop regarding who made the decision to put allotment charges up, the Executive Director explained that the Committee's views were required in relation to this issue.

The Portfolio Holder explained that she would welcome a decision from the Committee in relation to any increases in rents for allotments. She added that it was costly for the Council if they had to go and clear a site. She further explained that the rents had not been increased in line with inflation. There would need to be a 12-month notice period given if there were to be any rent increase. She informed the Committee that South Wootton Parish Council currently charged £25.00 per year.

The Executive Director suggested that a report be prepared on the issues raised and some further work undertaken in relation to costings and presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Smith referred to an increase from £17.00 per year to £72.76 and stated that any increase of that nature needed to be undertaken in stages, as he considered that people would give up their allotments due to the rent increase.

Councillor Miss Bambridge stated that, whilst she was not against the rent being increased, she did consider there was a limit as to what it could be. She stated that residents of South Wootton who had an allotment paid £25.00 but it would be a big leap to increase to £70.00.

She added that allotments also gave a health and exercise benefit, which should not be ignored.

Councillor Collop added that the rents for allotments could be increased then the Special Expenses paid by all residents of King's Lynn could be reduced. He added that people living in King's Lynn did not always know what their money was being spent on.

Councillor McGuinness stated that it would be helpful in the report if information could be included on the impact of having to carry out remedial work. He also asked about bonfires and whether there was any guidance which covered this, and used an example of a parcel of allotments in South Lynn which was surrounded by houses, where bonfires were lit regularly.

The Operations Manager explained that she was proposing that bonfires be banned in the summer months.

Councillor McGuinness added that it would be useful to look at those sites which were surrounded by houses individually.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, the Operations Manager explained the process undertaken when letters had to be written to people when action was required to tidy up their allotment. She added that in most cases, when the first letter was sent, this normally prompted a response from the individual, where she could then assess the situation and whether there was a need to carry out any further action.

Councillor McGuinness also asked whether there was a baseline in relation to the state of the allotment when handed to a person. In response, the Operations Manager explained that a photograph was taken on the day the allotment was offered to a person.

The Chairman thanked Sarah for the presentation and attending the meeting.

AGREED: (1) That, a report be prepared and presented to the next meeting in relation to increasing rents for allotments.

(2) That a copy of the draft rulebook for allotments be sent to the Committee for their comments.

The Walks

Councillor Collop raised the issue of litter in the Walks following a Friday evening, which appeared to be coming from the two retail units near the crossing.

The Operations Manager explained that she was aware of the situation and would monitor the issue. However, this tended to be more of an

issue when the weather was better. She explained that the Friends of the Walks had made a connection with the retail units and asked them to help with the litter picking. She added that the bin at the bottom of the Walks was often full and emptied on a regular basis. She would look at installing another bin at that end of the Walks.

8 **REVIEW OF THE 2015 EVENTS PROGRAMME (30 MINUTES)**

The Committee received a presentation from Martin Chisholm, Business Manager on the Review of the 2015 Events Programme.

The presentation covered the range of events provided and numbers of people who attended.

The Chairman thanked Martin for the presentation and asked if the Committee had any comments/questions which are summarised below:

Councillor Tyler stated that the events appeared to be received well, and asked if the events provided was something that other towns of similar size to King's Lynn did.

In response, the Business Manager explained that events such as GEAR, the Olympic Torch and the Classic Car show were very successful events in bringing people into the town.

In relation to the luminaire display, it was confirmed that currently officers were looking to have a Xmas display on some buildings.

In response to a comment, the Business Manager explained that the 60% of the fee from the spitfire trail was going towards the Mayor's Charity.

Reference was to niche markets within the town and it was explained that these tried to be put on when events were taking place.

It was reported that the footfall on the 40s day was up by 50-60% and for the Mods and Rockers event was up by 70%.

The Business Manager explained that Sunday events produced the strongest increase in footfall. He added that the niche events were not always as successful.

The Executive Director explained that some basic research was carried out to see what worked in other places. He added that a lot of work and effort went in to the planning of the events. In relation to the luminaire light show he was aware that people did come to King's Lynn specifically to look at them. He added that Xmas would be a unique selling point as not many places had the light shows with sounds and lights.

Councillor Rochford referred to the Heritage Open Day and highlighted that a lot of restaurants were closed, and suggested that businesses should be encouraged to keep open longer on Sundays when events were taking place.

The Business Manager also expressed disappointment as the events were publicised.

The Business Manager also explained that a report would be presented to the Joint Panel Meeting in due course.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds, Portfolio Holder, explained that a report would be going to the Town Centre Partnership and to a Panel meeting. The Eastern Daily Press also did a report on the events and the media in general was also helping to promote events.

Councillor Collop stated that there must be a budget in order to be able to provide these events. The Executive Director explained that there was a Town Centre Promotions budget of £150,000. Councillor Collop asked if he could have a breakdown of finances and it was explained that this would be included within the Panel report.

The Executive Director explained that there were a lot of good things happening in King's Lynn for example redevelopment of the Tuesday Market Place and Saturday Market Place, bus station, riverfront – all of which had helped to lift King's Lynn. He added that if you could attract people to visit King's Lynn then they felt that it was a good place to visit.

The Business Manager asked that if any Member had feedback on any of the events, then please email him.

Councillor McGuinness referred to car parking promotions, and asked whether the lost revenue from less car parking spaces had been taken into account. In response the Business Manager explained that there was parking capacity at weekends within the town centre, although it might be that people had to look for them. He added that revenue would only be lost if someone then went to another town.

The Executive Director explained that parking revenue was up and car parking charges had not been reduced.

In response to a comment from Councillor McGuinness, the Business Manager explained that consideration was given to trying not to clash with other events taking place. He stated that the Classic Car event did clash with an event at Sandringham, but there were still enough people at the event.

In relation to advertising, Councillor Smith stated that as you drove past King's Lynn there was nothing to tell you that an event was taking place in the town. He asked whether a sign could be erected before the event took place.

Councillor Smith also asked whether traders were given any ideas and cited shops in Sheringham which took part in the 40s weekend.

The Business Manager explained that the Town Centre Partnership did have a good working relationship with the Vancouver Quarter. He added that it was not easy for the peripheral streets which did not open on a Sunday.

In relation to signage, the Business Manager explained that it was governed by regulations, however consideration could be given to the use of temporary signage in the future.

Councillor Tyler pointed out that a lot of shops participated in the Halloween event, which was put on most years.

Councillor Miss Bambridge added that the issue of promotion was raised at the Town Centre Partnership where it was explained that signs could not just be erected and planning permission needed to be applied for. She added that not all traders were part of the Town Centre Partnership.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Town Centres Manager did go round to each shop individually to tell them about forthcoming events.

The Chairman thanked the Business Manager for his presentation.

AGREED: That Members of the Committee would email the Business Manager feedback on any of the events which had taken place.

9 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was Thursday, 7 January 2016 at 6pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee
held on Thursday, 7th January, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT: Councillor A Tyler (Chairman)
Councillors L Bambridge, Mrs S Buck, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, G Middleton,
P Rochford, T Smith, A Tyler and Mrs M Wilkinson

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I Gourlay and T Wing-
Pentelow

1 WELCOME

The Chairman, Councillor Tyler welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also thanked the officers who had supported the Committee since it had been formed.

The Chairman welcomed Stuart Ashworth, Assistant Director who would be the new Management Team's representative for the meeting. He also welcomed Quentin Brogdale from Norfolk County Council for item 7 of the agenda.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee was asked to confirm that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2015 were a correct record, however several Members commented that they had not been able to access them on the Ipad.

The Chairman advised that if any Member had any problems accessing minutes or the agenda then they should contact IT or Democratic Services before the meeting.

AGREED: That confirmation of the minutes be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

5 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds on item 9 – Allotments.

6 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

The Chairman reported that he had received an email from Mr J Loveless about bulbs being given to schools to plant. The email also asked if Councillors would be happy to promote this.

In response to a query from Councillor Miss Bambridge, the Operations Manager explained that Mr Loveless had been given some sacks of bulbs from the Nursery. Mr Loveless subsequently went back to the Nursery and saw some more stock of bulbs but these were not available and had been allocated to other people.

The Operations Manager also confirmed that the Council would be happy to promote bulb planting by schools.

7 **KING'S LYNN TRANSPORT ISSUES**

The Chairman invited Quentin Brogdale to give an update to the Committee on King's Lynn Transport Issues.

He explained that he had been sent some questions on behalf of Councillor Gourlay and would answer those, as follows:

- *The growth of King's Lynn and surrounding areas and how the overstretched road network was going to cope with this extra traffic.*

In response, it was explained that any major development would be referred to the County Council as a consultee on highways issues. As a consultee the County Council would assess the highway impact and, if necessary, recommend any appropriate mitigation measures.

- *Could traffic lights be installed at Asda and Winston Churchill Drive not hospital entrance at peak times.*

It was explained that this had been put forward for inclusion in the Traffic Management Programme.

- *Problems had been encountered with parking on Winston Churchill Drive and on William Booth Road, starting to park on both sides of the road which if it developed would mean cars and buses potentially would have to reserve back along the road.*

In response, it was explained that if buses were faced with roads not satisfactory, this was in the process of being monitored and if the problem existed then measures would be taken.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson informed the Committee that the problem was particularly a nuisance along Winston Churchill Drive, and that she had spoken with Sally Bettinson from NCC so she was also aware of the issue.

- *What roads on Bishop Park, Fairstead and King's Reach were still awaiting adoption?*

It was explained that Norfolk County Council were still waiting for the roads to be brought up to adoption standard which was the responsibility of the developer.

- Who was responsible for the state of footpaths on these two developments?

In response, it was explained that the developer would be responsible until the developments were adopted.

- *How often was the service roads and footpaths inspected on Fairstead, or is it dependant on residents or Councillors reporting the need for repair.*

It was explained that there was an inspection regime carried out on a 12 week programme which operated a priority system. He pointed out that some of the road on Fairstead did not belong to Norfolk County Council.

- *With new estates what steps were being taken to speed up adoption? There were problems with the new estate in the Baldock Drive area which required action by Ronald Mortimer.*

In response, it was explained that the Baldock Drive area was not adopted and there was no current plans for these to be. It would be the responsibility of the developer.

The Assistant Director referred to the problems with the adoption of Baldock Drive and Millfield Estate and explained that the problems had not only been encountered here but also across the country. He explained that the Council now added a condition on permissions for new estates regarding arrangements for future maintenance of the estate, and this condition would continue to be added onto any permission.

Councillor Collop added that the developers constructed Millfields and then went bust leaving the residents having to pay for the road. He stated that he understood that developers

should make good a section of the road before moving onto the next part.

Quentin Brogdale explained that until the developers put forward a scheme for adoption it was their responsibility. The Assistant Director added that the Council would now be imposing a condition on how they would maintain the estate in future and that condition could be enforced.

Councillor Tyler had raised the following issues:

- *Lorries using Loke Road and Tennyson Avenue and turning at the Woolpack corner into Loke Road.*

It was explained that Norfolk County Council were now in the process of implementing a 7 tonne weight limit.

Councillor Tyler added that there was a problem with cracks leading into people's properties. He asked for assurance that the measures put forward by Norfolk County Council would solve the problem.

Quentin Brogdale explained that it would be illegal for any HGV over 7 tonnes to use that route. He added that Norfolk County Council would encourage the Police to enforce and prosecute.

Councillor Mrs Buck stated that a resident had taken a note of the HGVs using the route and a lot were learner drivers.

The Operations Manager queried whether this would restrict the events that took place in the Walks. It was explained that the weight limit would have the proviso 'except for access'.

Councillor Miss Bambridge asked when the restriction would be put in place as this issue had been raised at SNAP meetings for at least the last 3 years.

Mr Brogdale advised that he would find out and let the Democratic Services Officer know, who would forward the information to the Committee.

Councillor Miss Bambridge stressed the importance of cooperation with the Police on this and the need for the Police to enforce and prosecute.

- *General traffic issues in King's Lynn*

Councillor Tyler stated that as a cyclist, he had noticed an increase in traffic within King's Lynn. Quentin Brogdale agreed that there was an increase in traffic particularly in the town centre. He explained that widening works were taking place

where they could and traffic lights were being replaced to be responsive.

Councillor Tyler reported that the traffic lights at the Woolpack in Gaywood often changed within seconds. Quentin Brogdale suggested that this could be a fault.

Councillor Smith asked how often County Highways looked at the whole of King's Lynn and considered other options. He stated that the main road through his ward had been the same as 80 years ago. He added that some houses had 3 cars. He asked how the town's rush hour could be stopped.

In response, Quentin Brogdale explained that County Highways did not just look at junctions in isolation, all traffic lights were linked and monitored and all movements could be seen throughout the town.

The Executive Director, Commercial Services explained that he had recently met with Tom McCabe and it had been suggested, as a pilot scheme, to carry out some changes to London Road. He outlined the proposed changes and stated that County were looking at that at the current time.

Councillor Mrs Buck stated that when travelling from South Lynn, there was no way of getting onto the roundabout because cars blocked it. The Executive Director explained that there was no loading restriction on the roundabout currently but consideration was being given to putting a loading restriction on.

The Executive Director advised the Committee that Norfolk County Highways had reduced budgets available to them.

The Executive Director referred to the road at South Lynn (CIF) into King's Lynn which was currently used by buses and asked why this could not be opened up for cars. He suggested that the planning permission might need to be varied or a new permission sought.

The Assistant Director explained that the road was tied to funding, the criteria of which would need to be looked into further.

Councillor Tyler referred to the traffic crossings at night being silent. Quentin Brogdale explained that at night there tended to be less traffic, and the noise that the crossing made was quite piercing and did irritate residents.

The Chairman thanked Quentin Brogdale for attending the meeting and for a useful discussion.

AGREED: That, the Assistant Director/Norfolk County Council investigates the possibility of opening the CIF road for cars to help alleviate the traffic issues around the Southgates roundabout.

8 **KING'S LYNN SPECIAL EXPENSES**

Toby Cowper, Principal Accountant gave a presentation to the Committee on King's Lynn Special Expenses. The presentation covered the following:

- What are 'Special Expenses'?
- What Special Expenses were charged for?
- How the Special Expenses were calculated.

The Committee noted that the estimated Special Expenses Charge for 2016/2017 would be £43.33.

Councillor Collop stated that King's Lynn was the only area that could not spend its money where it wanted to. He added that people should know where the money was being spent.

The Executive Director explained that a special expense charge was made on Hunstanton, Downham Market and King's Lynn.

Councillor Rochford added that as he understood it King's Lynn Councillors were elected to give the views of the public.

Councillor Collop stated that Hunstanton had some control over how money was spent. He added that King's Lynn Councillors had never had the chance to have an input on how money was spent.

In accordance with Standing Order 34, Councillor Mrs E Nockolds stated that at the Regeneration & Development Panel held last night, a report on Grounds Maintenance had been considered and agreed a Special Expense for all Parishes. In addition, the Council held budget meetings which any Councillor could come along at speak at. This Committee had also been formed and could put its views forward.

The Chairman stated that from the debate there was obviously a desire for the Committee to be able to discuss this item in greater detail. He suggested that an item be added to the Work Programme earlier to allow a discussion on special expenses.

The Principal Accountant suggested it could be considered at the September meeting as part of the budget process.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson also requested that a paper be written for the item rather than a power-point presentation.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson also requested a list of street lights and numbers be sent to her.

Councillor Smith referred to closed churchyards and asked why the Council had to pay for that. In response, it was explained that the Council had a statutory responsibility for closed churchyards.

The Committee then discussed the issue of grounds maintenance. The Executive Director explained that the County previously only paid for 5 cuts on highway grass. The Council had taken on the responsibility to cut the grass on highways to ensure it was kept to a high standard. The County Council were now only going to pay for 4 cuts per year. A review had been carried out and each individual space had been looked at. For example if Winston Churchill Drive was only cut 4 times per year then it would make the area look untidy and the estate would deteriorate. It had been agreed to implement an 18, 12 or 6 cut regime, and areas had been allocated into these cut regimes. This could be reduced or increased as required.

The Executive Director explained that the Borough Council would be receiving 20% less from Norfolk County Council in relation to grounds maintenance. The Borough Council was receiving less money from Government and had to look at different ways of working.

The Executive Director suggested that the Committee might want to consider, as part of Special Expenses, a list of aspirations for King's Lynn.

AGREED: (1) That Special Expenses be added to the Committee's Work Programme for September.

(2) That the Committee considers their aspirations for King's Lynn at the next meeting.

9 **KING'S LYNN ALLOTMENTS**

The Committee were given a presentation from the Operations Manager and were invited to make appropriate comments.

The Operations Manager explained that, as discussed at the last meeting, officers were asked to put together a proposal that could move the service away from the reliance on the special expense charge and capital funds by looking at a rent increase.

The current rent was £17.50 per plot.

Special expenses charge for allotments provided a further £20k income.

April 2017 – Increase rent to £35.00 (double current rate) with no change to special expense charge, but keep a maintenance allowance of £8.

April 2018 – Increase rent to £52.50 which would reduce special expenses from £20k to £12k

April 2019 – Increase rent to £70.00 which would further reduce the special expense charge to £4k

If at any point there was an underspend then this could be transferred to reserves for future maintenance.

Nothing could be changed until April 2017 as 12 months' notice would have to be given. A course of action needed to be agreed to be able to inform tenants with their next invoices in April

Councillor Mrs Buck stated that if the proposals went ahead then she would like to see a concession made for charities who used allotments, as funds were tight for those organisations.

The Operations Manager explained that charities did not currently have concessions, but she could look into that with any proposed increase.

Councillor Rochford stated that he supported the idea of youth groups or charities receiving a concession and would like to see by 2020 no charge to special expenses for allotments.

The Executive Director stated that the Committee as a group could make a recommendation on what that money could be spent on.

Councillor J Collop stated that the review needed to be carried out however he could not see the running costs for the Council.

The Executive Director explained that the cost of running allotments was £28,000 - £8,000 rents and £20,000 special expenses.

Councillor J Collop stated that if the Council did increase rents then people tended to look after their allotment better, and this would not cost the Council as much to maintain them. The Executive Director explained that the costs might reduce on a phased basis and the maintenance cost could reduce. Any money could be put into reserves.

Councillor J Collop added that eventually allotments would become self-sufficient.

Councillor Tyler asked that if the proposal went ahead would there be a fall-off in the people wanting to use an allotment.

Councillor Rochford advised that there was a massive waiting list.

The Operations Manager explained that it was a possibility that the popularity of allotments might fall away, however they were currently fashionable and it would be quite easy to do a marketing campaign. She did not see this as a major issue.

In response to a query from Councillor Mrs Collop, it was explained that 10 plots out of 557 allotments were used by schools, etc.

In response to a query regarding the size of plots, the Operations Manager explained plots did vary in size and the Council did try to match people up with their requirements.

The Committee agreed with the proposal to increase rents, and would like to see any expense to Special Expenses removed. The Committee would also want a review after a year and that a waiver or reduced cost be introduced for charities/schools or groups who were deemed worthy.

The Committee recommends that:

Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer to increase rents and to remove a charge to Special Expenses, and a report be presented to the next meeting outlining how this would be achieved.

10 **APPOINTMENTS TO PLANNING SUB-GROUP/DISCUSSION ON FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Chairman reported that he had approached Councillor Rochford to see if he would be willing to be a Member of the Committee's Planning Sub-Group. Councillor Rochford had agreed.

Councillor Smith also volunteered to become a member of the Planning Sub-Group. It was advised that Councillor Smith would need to undertake some training beforehand and the Democratic Services Officer would contact him with the date.

Councillors Mrs Collop and C Kittow had already volunteered to be a member of the Sub-Group.

11 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2016/17.

Councillor Rochford informed the Committee that he had been approached by the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Bike Users Group about a proposal for a bike hire scheme in King's Lynn.

Councillor Smith raised the issue of having Smokeless Zones in the town centre.

AGREED: (1) That, this item be added to the Work Programme for a future meeting and Councillor Rochford contact the Group directly with dates of the Committee.

(2) That the issue of Smokeless Zones in the town centre be added on the Work Programme for a future meeting.

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Monday, 14 March 2016** at **6pm** in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Allotment Concessions

Following on from the last meeting where the proposals to increase the allotment rents were agreed, there was a request to consider the impact that this increase may have on community groups, charities and schools. I have made a comparison of how other councils charge these groups and can find no evidence that they are treated any differently.

However, to make the increase affordable for these groups, I have looked into making a 25% reduction in rate, applicable in April 2017, when the charges will go up. The following table demonstrates the charges year on year:

Date Applicable	Standard Charge	Reduced Charge	Price per M2	Price per week
Year 1 – April 2017	£35.00	£26.25	£0.10	£0.50
Year 2 – April 2018	£52.50	£39.38	£0.15	£0.75
Year 3 – April 2019	£70.00	£52.50	£0.21	£1.01
Year 4 – April 2020	Increased in line with inflation			

There are currently 4 groups that will be offered the concession rate, who between them tend 13 plots in total. We aim to write to all tenants of all plots to inform them of the rise in charges, providing the required 12 months notice, by the end of March 2016.

**KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017**

7 January 2016

- King's Lynn Special Expenses
- King's Lynn Transport Issues (Quentin Brogdale, NCC will attend)
- Allotments (Sarah Moore)
- Planning issues

14 March 2016

- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Powers & Enforcement
- Allotments (report from Operations Manager)
- Aspirations for King's Lynn
- CIF Road

12 July 2016

- West Norfolk Disability Forum – invite representatives from the Forum
- Smokeless Zones for in the Town Centre
- King's Lynn Bike Users Group – Proposal for a bike hire scheme in King's Lynn
- Policing in King's Lynn

26 September 2016

- Special Expenses
- Bus Transport – invite representative from Stagecoach.

5 January 2017

Other Issues:

- Presentation from Voluntary Organisations
- Waste/Recycling
- Role of the Neighbourhood Teams
- Future Housing Development for King's Lynn