**Kingston Action Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022.**

Present: Vicki Scott (Chair) Steve Berry, Catherine Dampney, Barrie Lambert, Alex Leith, Rob Watson, Tony Wheeler

Apologies – David Hoare

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 7 April, were approved. There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda.

2 **Membership**

Vicki welcomed Catherine to her first meeting. It was noted that David Hoare was to replace John Bewick as one of the two KPC members of the Group.

2. **Finance**

2.1 The balance as at the last bank statement dated 14 June was £3270.06, this sum including the £2000 grant received from the Chalk Cliff Trust. Money owed totalled around £900, the bulk of this for the MOT at the Community Wildlife Garden and smaller sums for thank you gifts of wine (£40) and sundry items. Another grant was expected shortly, from the SDNPA in the sum of c £350 for greenhouse staging and a pond liner. Income remained at £338 per annum. The fate of the CARES application was still unknown although news had been promised first by Easter and more recently, by mid-June.

3 **Planting Plan**

3.1 The Planting Plan submitted to the KPC in February and approved at the Council’s meeting on 9 March had set out detailed spending proposals for 2022/3 with suggestions for the following years totalling £10,000 in all.

3.2 The Plan included a proposal for an entirely new meadow area on St Pancras Green. Its precise area would need to be agreed with the KPC once the position of the new sporting and recreational facilities (boules court, table tennis, outdoor gym) had been settled.

3.3 The Plan also envisaged more snowdrops on Snednore and The Avenue and more crocus on St Pancras Green. Bulb-planting on the estate would be more difficult since ESCC insisted not just on all householders in particular streets favouring planting but on a “cultivation licence” for each street. Perhaps a “champion” in each street would ease the burden on the Group.

4 **Footpath Action Plan**

4.1 The paper by the joint working group had been discussed at a meeting with Chloe Rowling of the ESCC Rights of Way and Jan Knowlson, SDNPA Ranger. A further meeting with ESCC was scheduled for 16 June. ESCC’s dire financial position posed a barrier to action but there were some measures which could be undertaken with little or not cost.

5 **Community Garden**

5.1 The greenhouse donated by Diana Crabb to replace the one destroyed by storm Eunice had now been all but completely re-glazed, after the foundations of the old greenhouse had been extended.

5.2 Following a meeting in March, work on the perimeter path around the garden was now well-advanced. A digger had been hired to excavate this and wood re- claimed from the Iford Estate used to provide a border. The excavated area had been partially filled with MOT (a granular sub-base composed of re-cycled crushed concrete and rubble) and would, when mechanically compacted, be topped with hoggin or something similar.

5.3 The path was therefore likely to be completed by early July. By this time, it would be too late in the year to begin major planting so this would now have to wait until the autumn, allowing time for discussion. We needed to remember that a local nursery which grew all its plants without peat had offered the Group wholesale prices.

5.4 It was agreed that a bog garden would pose fewer problems than the originally envisaged pond but a source of water would still need to be found. Tony would ask Bruce Adams (whose background was water engineering) whether the Group could construct its own connection with mains water. If that were possible, it was financially feasible. In the meantime, Catherine offered to research suitable plants for the boggy area.

6. **Report from KPC**

6.1. The KPC now had a new permanent Clerk, Julie O’Donnell.

6.2 The proposal for 12 houses on the site of Castelmer Fruit Farm had been questioned by influential officers on the SDNPA. ESCC Highways were also apparently opposed to this development. Were it to be aborted, it would increase development pressure on Audiburn and on the Hancock land near the former Kings Brook Farm.

6.3 No decision had yet been made by the KPC over whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan or not. Tony re-iterated his offer to help should it be decided to go ahead.

**7 In Bloom**

7.1 This year’s judge, Chris Murphy, would be coming to The Pavilion at 2-00 pm on 12 July. He had expressed a wish to meet as many people as possible with an involvement in the areas covered by the competition. Vicki would circulate the South East In Bloom Newsletter. So far, we had submitted no application although one had been prepared.

8 **AOB**

8.1 The Tuesday morning volunteers group had cleaned some of the road signs in the village, some of which had been almost too dirty to read.

9 **Next meeting**

This would be on Tuesday 2 August in The Pavilion at 4.45.