**Kingston Action Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2022.**

Present: Barrie Lambert, Steve Berry, Dinah Morgan, Vicki Scott & Tony Wheeler

Apologies: John Bewick

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 6 January, were approved. There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda.

2. **Finance**

2.1 Steve had circulated a summary showing the current position. Although the account balance as at 28 January, the date of the latest bank statement, was £1250.27, most of this was owed either to Rob (£210.15) or Steve (£839.86). The sum available was therefore £200.26 – almost enough to cover the cost of the annual rent and insurance premium, although these were not due until April and September respectively. Income remained at £338 per annum.

2.2 It was agreed that we should apply for a small grant from the SDNPA in respect of the pond liner and staging for the greenhouse at the Community Wildlife Garden. We would also reiterate our request to the KPC for the unallocated portion of the £1000 set aside under the Council’s small grant scheme, assuming that no other group had applied for it. Steve would do both.

3 **Planting Plan**

3.1 This had been submitted to the KPC earlier this week after circulation to the Action Group for comment and would be discussed at the Council’s meeting on 9 March. It contained detailed spending proposals for 2022/3 with suggestions for the following years totalling £10,000 in all. As a concession to those who had complained about the uncut areas of grass on the green exacerbating their children’s hay fever, it proposed to reduce these from two to one.

4 **Footpath Action Plan**

4.1 This plan would also be considered at the next meeting of the KPC. The information about individual paths had been condensed into a table. Among other things, the plan suggested that when path signs were replaced in future years, each should show the destination of the path, the distance to it and the path’s number. Assuming approval by the Parish Council, the next stage would be discussion with the Rights of Way team of ESCC and the SDNPA Ranger. The Plan would also be sent to the Ramblers Association.

5 **Community Garden**

5.1 Since the last meeting there had been some progress, including:

* Shrub planting, including several donated fuchsias
* A hole for the pond had been dug
* 50 hedgerow trees had been planted along the original post and rail fence
* A new post and rail fence had been erected
* A villager had donated a number of items including a step ladder, garden tools and a wheelbarrow

5.2 The next stages would include an improved planting plan; the erection of guttering around the shed and garage; and linking the water butts. We also needed a mains water supply. It had been established that an application for this would cost around £100 while the actual connection charge could be as much as £2000. Rob would convene a meeting to discuss planting.

5.3 During the recent storm, a tree had fallen and destroyed the greenhouse. It was agreed that Rob would write to Lewes District Council to ask whether they would pursue a claim for insurance against the owner of the garden from which the tree had fallen. If not, he would ask the owner himself to make the claim, offering if necessary to write a letter to the insurance company.

5.4 It was agreed that we should not attempt to shift the broken glass or greenhouse frame ourselves but allow the claim to take its course and get the site cleared by professionals.

5.4 The tree had been sawn up, unbidden, by Ray Harrison and Philippe Biddulph. It was agreed that the Group would buy bottles of wine for them both and also one for David Hoare who had almost single-handedly dug the holes for the post and rail fence. Steve would arrange this. Vicki would write to each of them to express our thanks.

6. **Neighbourhood Plan**

6.1. As reported in The Kingston News, the KPC had invited Chris Paterson, Communities Lead at the SDNPA, to the annual Village Meeting on 20 May to talk about the process involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Should the village go down this path, Tony, who had been the planning specialist during his time on the KPC, would become the AG’s main representative on whatever body was established to take this forward.

6.2 Neighbourhood Plans had legal status and could influence planning decisions such as the determination of the future of the land between the village and Spring Barn Farm, perhaps the biggest issue to be faced by the village over the next decade or so. The Plans also allowed for the selection of what were called Community Assets – a process allowing local communities to have a role in their future protection.

7 **Next meeting**

7.1 This would be on Thursday 7 April in The Pavilion at 4.45.