

# LUSTON GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE JOINT EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF LUSTON GROUP PARISH COUNCIL HELD WITH KINGSLAND PARISH COUNCIL AT 7.00PM ON THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2024 AT CAWLEY HALL

**Present – Luston Group PC:** I Stevens (Chairman), C Pearson (Vice Chairman), E Coates, R Bennett Jones, P Edwards, K Wood, A Capell and W Talbot Ponsonby.

**Present – Kingsland PC:** P Saunders (Vice Chairman), R Harris, S Hicks, S Morgan and B Watkins.

**In attendance:** Mr A Cockcroft, Mr A Goodchild, EDF, Mr N Holden, Jacobs, Ward Councillor D Hurcomb and Mr R Hewitt, Clerk. Eight (8) members of the public were present.

### 1. Receive apologies for absence

*1.1* Luston Group PC: A Brandish and J Oatley.

*1.2* Kingsland PC: C Sawyers, D Fordham, D Thompson and J Vaughan.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

*2.1* Disclosable Pecuniary. None.

*2.2* Non-disclosable Pecuniary. None.

*2.3* Non-Pecuniary. None.

*2.4* Written requests for dispensation. None.

### 3. Matters raised by local residents

Luston Group Councillors raised concerns about potholes and condition of road surfaces by Lydiatt's crossroads, fly-tipping on Kingsland Road, Eyton, grip by Cheese Bridge, Eyton, overgrown trees on verge approaching junction of C1040 and B4361, missing cover on well off Kingsland Road, Eyton and grips and culverts on Seggin Lane.

### 4. Ward Councillor D Hurcomb's Brief Report (for information only)

Ward Cllr. D Hurcomb's report was noted, and a written copy will be circulated. The budget consultation anticipates ring-fencing funding for library services in 2024-25.

### 5. Proposals for 'Weir improvements' on the River Lugg

*5.1* Consider proposal to request support for ongoing local projects. **DECISION:** To ask EDF/ Hinkley Point about community social responsibility funding for parish projects following the conclusion of the consultation on proposals for 'weir improvements.'

Ward Cllr. Hurcomb said the weir proposals will need to go through the planning process. Members of the public raised concerns about the proposal and reported that the weirs are not maintained properly at present.

*5.2* Briefing by EDF on proposals for 'weir improvements' on the River Lugg to provide "easement of existing barriers to fish migration which... support plans already being considered by the Environment Agency".

Mr A Cockcroft, Mr A Goodchild, EDF and Mr N Holden, Jacobs, briefed the meeting on their proposal to remove a weir on the River Lugg between Kingsland and Eyton as part of the consultation on the Material Change to the Development Consent Order for Hinkley Point. The intention is to undertake measures which support fish populations upstream of the River Lugg. The public consultation is the start of a process expected to conclude in 2026 with a decision by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

With specific reference to the proposed removal of one of the weirs, it was stated that “Our intention is not to increase flood risk in any of our activity or in any final proposal”. According to the presentation, the weirs “offer no flood defence benefit” and “interrupt the natural sediment regime”.

Cllr. I Stevens (Chairman) invited comment from councillors and members of the public. Two members of the public said the weirs keep water in the river to support fish stocks in dry weather and prevent water running quickly downstream in wet periods. The weirs were put in place as part of a flood alleviation scheme to protect Leominster from flooding. The removal of a weir in recent years by the Environment Agency reportedly caused soil erosion immediately. It was felt that the weirs should be maintained properly, including the existing fish passes.

Ward Cllr. Hurcomb raised the question of who will pick up the cost of increased flooding and/ or saving fish from the river in the dry season as a result of weir removal. The cost is likely to fall on local taxpayers. The proposed scheme needs proper thought. EDF was urged to review their modelling.

Cllr. Saunders, Kingsland PC asked about other the projected benefits and suggested that the data from other similar initiatives shows no certainty that weir removal will lead to an increase in fish stocks.

EDF were asked whether or not fish passes had been considered, particularly given the existing fish passes in the weirs.

The Chairman of the joint meeting, Cllr. I Stevens, asked that the points raised are given serious consideration and thought by EDF, and noted that, to judge from the response in the meeting, the proposed weir improvements as outlined have caused significant disquiet.

Mr A Goodchild thanked the parish councils and public for the points raised and said an alternative option is possible: “If we can achieve the same objective then we can actively explore”. The parish councils were asked to consider responding formally to the public consultation.

[Kingsland parish councillors left the meeting.]

[Cllr. E Coates left the meeting.]

**DECISION:** To approach local landowners to ask about their experience of the functioning of the weirs since the 1970s.

## 6. Planning

233647 5 Lilac Grove, Luston, HR6 0EF. Proposed works to self-seeded Willow shown on Plan 1. The tree is infected with honey fungus and requires pollarding to reduce height and weight to keep it in a safe condition. The works to be carried out are the pollarding of the tree at a height of approximately 2.5m. **COMMENT:** The proposed tree works are supported.

## 7. Finance

7.1 Payments for consideration:

DC Gardening Services, lengthsman drainage work – £2,879.50

**DECISION:** Payment agreed for electronic payment.

7.2 Lengthsman programme 2024-25: Expression of interest, grant funding, annual maintenance programme, and match funding. **DECISION:** To participate in the lengthsman scheme 2024-25, to submit an expression of interest to this effect, and to contribute £1,122.00 from parish council funds on the understanding that this will be matched by the highway authority.

Ward Cllr. Hurcomb said the absence of white lines on the B4362 has been escalated with the highway authority.

## 8. Date of Next Full Council Meeting

**DECISION:** The next meeting will be at 7.30pm on Monday 5 February 2024 at Cawley Hall, Eye.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed as a true record \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_