

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21 July 2025

Councillors present:

N Beecroft-Smith (*Chair*)
A Comber
A Cook
J Ling
G Lynch
J Ogden
A Skinner
G Ward

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – The Chair welcomed all those present, apologies received from Cllr Gibson, reason – personal, Cllr Athwall, reason – personal and the RFO, following the vote these were accepted.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – none.
- 3. Minutes of the Town Council meeting** held on 30 June 2025, following the vote these were agreed and signed by the Chair.
- 4. Chairman's Communication** – Cllr Beecroft-Smith provided the following update:
 - Attended the SALC 75th Anniversary AGM with the Clerk on 1 July in Bury St Edmunds, presentation from SWT and SALC presented their promotional video on Cllr & Clerk recruitment.
 - Attended the ESC Chair and Clerk forum on 8 July in Melton.
 - Thanked Cllrs who attended the LGR meeting on 7 July where ESC/IBC and SCC presented their initial proposals. Will await more information on their final proposals before KTC discuss what, if any additional services they may wish to provide.
 - Attended the ESC Planning Forum on 16 July at Melton, main topic was hedge rows and trees, including discussions and proposals on; tree wardens for ever parish/town, TPO review, protecting ancient hedgerows, tree planting strategy. The ESC local plan expires end of the year, central government housing requirements will put pressure on the planning department, planners expressed the importance of towns and parishes engaging with their community to understand the housing needs in their area.
 - Will present Kesgrave Library's summer reading challenge awards on 7 September.
 - Attending the Suffolk Chairs and Mayors event in Newmarket this week.

5. Clerks/Officer Report/Update – J Abbott provided the following report:

- Last meeting it was agreed to support SCC CIL bid for road safety improvements at Foxhall Road/Bell Lane, this has been confirmed via email, will await any further updates.
- Last meeting it was agreed for KTC to be a Suffolk New College industry partner. The MOU has been signed and returned, Cllr Gibson as our representative will meet with the college in September.
- Attended the SALC 75th Anniversary AGM and the ESC Chairs and Clerks forum.
- Welcomed a Kesgrave High School student for one week's work experience placement last week.
- Cllr Comber attended a meeting at Heath Primary School on behalf of council and the Clerk on 11 July to discuss the SCC report on costings for possible improvements.

6. Members of the Public – none.

7. County and District Councillor Reports – District Cllr Lynch advised the following:

- Received many resident enquiries, which included issues of overhanging trees and grass cutting. ESC Looking to reduce number of cuts per year. Cllr Ling asked who's responsible for deteriorating road signs, and responsible for verge maintenance / cutting – confirmed SCC Highways.
- Attended audit meeting, ESC received a poor audit however this is reflective on the external auditors delays and not within ESC control. This has been feedback to the external auditors. Cllr Ling enquired if external auditors can be addressed for their professional conduct/standards – the contract is with central government.
- Attended full council meeting, vote on LGR proposal for two or three Unitary Councils in Suffolk. Voted for two, however the majority vote was for three.
- Attended Scrutiny meeting, discussions on borrowing money to invest in more social housing, will be a further review in the autumn.

8. Finance & Governance –

- a. Electricity Contract for KTC and MJH – the report was noted, no questions raised (copy attached to these minutes).

9. Planning & Development –

- a. Committee meeting minutes; 30 June 2025 and 14 July 2025 – these were noted, no questions raised.

10. Community & Recreation –

- a. Pump Track Project – the Clerk advised no further update, noting the determination date for the revised plan is 13 August 2025.
- b. ESC Land Adoption – the Clerk advised discussions ongoing with regards to the dowry payments for tree management.

11. Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – the Clerk confirmed a meeting took place on 7 July here at the town council office, where presentations were given by SCC and ESC/IBC on their initial plans for LGR, this was well attended by Town Cllrs. The Clerk also advised a well-informed update from SALC has been shared with all Cllrs via email, noting the East Suffolk Area Forum on 25 September, which the Clerk and Cllr Gibson will attend. This will include presentations from SCC, ESC/IBC detailing their business cases and will help give further insight into the final proposals.

12. Website review /upgrade, incorporating domain upgrade to .gov.uk – Cllr Beecroft-Smith advised the first phase of data has been entered, which includes five years of meeting minutes and finance information. The Clerk confirmed the office received a response from SCC with regards to the domain change advising they no longer provide this service! They referred us to Community Action Suffolk, who we are currently awaiting a response from. Feedback has been given to SCC to update the government website.

13. Other/Urgent Communications – The Clerk advised she is now in receipt of a draft Service Level Agreement from Citizens Advice East Suffolk, which followed a meeting the Clerk had with their Chief Ex as requested by the Finance & Governance Committee. The SLA has been requested to commence April 2026 (this will be discussed at the next scheduled F & G Committee meeting to agree content and amount). CAES would like Council to consider a ‘one off’ grant for this financial year 2025/26. Following a discussion Cllr Lynch proposed a payment of £1,225 in line with their initial grant application, this was seconded by Cllr Ward and following the vote was agreed.

14. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 29 September 2025, 7.15pm, at the Town Council office – noted.

15. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – none.

16. Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 – agreed, no members of the public present.

Agenda items 17a and 18a were then discussed in the CONFIDENTIAL part of this meeting.

this part of the meeting finished at 7.54pm.

Chair**Date.....**