

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 30 March 2026

Councillors present:

A Athwall
N Beecroft-Smith (*Chair*)
A Comber
R Gibson
J Ling
G Lynch
J Ogden
G Ward

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk
A Dougall – RFO

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – The Chair welcomed all those present, apologies received from Cllr Cook, reason – personal, these were accepted. Apologies also noted from County and District Cllrs D McCallum and S Lawson.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Ogden, item 8 – Scout Leader, non-pecuniary and Cllr Comber, item 8 – Scout Leader and Director of Rupert Fison Centre.
3. **Minutes of the Town Council meeting** held on 16 February 2026, following the vote these were agreed and signed by the Chair.

The Chair proposed to bring forward item 6 'members of the public' to allow a member of the public present to speak, this was unanimously agreed by Council.

Local resident and student from Suffolk New College was invited by Cllr Gibson to give a presentation to Council on what matters to young people in Kesgrave. The young person addressed the meeting and highlighted what young people like about the town:

- cycle/footpaths across the town allowing young people to get around the town safely,
- the appreciation of green open spaces and emphasised the importance of these for nature and recreation and for them to be maintained, and
- the 66-bus route, which they use to access Suffolk New College and Ipswich, without this service young people wouldn't be able to travel independently.

They then highlighted areas of concern/improvement:

- the lack of suitable facilities to play sport like football and basketball, mentioning there are no permanent goals at Millennium Sports ground or durable cage netting at Grange Meadow Basketball area or Cedarwood Green (MUGA). They stressed such improvements would make the town more enjoyable and reduce boredom.

Cllr Gibson thanked the student for attending and praised the presentation for being concise and interesting. Cllrs suggested they may wish to attend other council meetings like the Community & Recreation Committee meetings and or engage with the Clerk on suggested improvements in the town. They gave permission for the town

council to contact them in the future. They confirmed they wished to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

There was another member of the public present, but they didn't wish to speak.

4. Chairman's Communication – Cllr Beecroft-Smith provided the following update:

- Attended along with the Clerk and Cllr Ogden the ESC Town Council Conference on 26 February. He thanked the Clerk for her well-received presentation and advised the conference provided valuable information on security, particularly computer security protocols.
- Attended online safeguarding training with Cllrs Gibson and Athwall. He noted that all Cllrs are encouraged to complete this training.
- Represented Kesgrave at a service on 18 April at Bury St Edmunds for the retiring Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lady Clare Countess Euston, and the appointment of the new Lord Lieutenant.
- Reminded members of upcoming meetings: the Annual Town Council Meeting on 11 May, and the Annual Town Meeting on 20 April at the Community Centre, where the Town Awards will be presented.

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

- Following the last meeting, the second streetlight in Dobbs Lane has been installed, completing all installations. Invoices have been received and paid.
- Reiterated the Chairs report on attendance at the ESC Town Council Conference and her presentation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- Attended the East Suffolk Chief Exc/Town Clerk meeting via Teams on 4 March. A key topic was Suffolk recycling. East Suffolk Council is developing an app to provide residents with information on bin collection dates and recyclability of items. The Town Council will help publicise this app when launched.
- Held a meeting with the RFO, Cllr Comber and our IT provider regarding current contract including obtaining, actioning and managing 365 licences.

Cllr Lynch also noted that ESC have updated their website where residents can import their postcode and house number to check bin collection details.

6. Members of the Public – noted under item 3.

7. County and District Councillor Reports – The Clerk confirmed a written report was provided by District and County Cllr Lawson, highlighting the following; (a copy of the full report is attached to these minutes).

- Confirmed he will not be seeking re-election for the Suffolk County Council in May, having served for nine years and thanked Kesgrave Town Council staff and Cllrs for their collaboration, believing many projects have been achieved for the community's benefit.
- Funding has been secured for flooding and drainage works in Orchard Grove.
- Confirmed funding for a new bus shelter at Kesgrave Fisheries, a joint project with the Town Council.
- Supported Kesgrave High School's 'Level Up' programme for Year 12 students, focusing on employability, financial literacy, and social action.
- will continue in his District Cllr role and has committed £850 from his budget to the Kesgrave Fun Day in June.

Council requested for the Clerk to write to Cllr Lawson thanking him for his service to the Town as a County Cllr.

The Clerk provided a verbal report, received from District & County Cllr McCallum;

- will be re-standing in the Suffolk County Council elections representing Kesgrave.
- Worked to address Main Road potholes, with support of Town Council.
- Drain cover issues in Bell Lane following resurfacing are being addressed by Highways.
- Providing funding support for this year's Kesgrave Fun Day.
- Currently handling some parking queries in the Town, awaiting further resident information.
- provided funding for Heath School Nursery, dance classes and skateboarding sessions.
- Has been poorly following a fall but is recovering slowly, continuing to respond to emails, enquiries etc.

District Cllr Lynch provided the following verbal report;

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Suffolk will become 3 unitary councils, Kesgrave will sit in the Southern Unitary with Ipswich.
- Waste collection changes being rolled out, Kesgrave currently receiving new bins, the new recycling, collections are from June. Some issues with bin sizes, bin lids.
- Some parishes in ESC struggling to recruit Cllrs, some are being covered by District Cllrs in interim, however this will cease to exist with new unitary council, which needs to be addressed.
- Some concerns raised on how ESC provide large grants to voluntary organisations.
- ESC youth council has been successful, and they hope to continue this model into the unitary councils.
- Scrutiny Meeting: A recent scrutiny meeting regarding Energy and Climate Change was described as "a disaster," with the relevant Cabinet Member lacking detailed knowledge. Large amounts of funding from Sizewell C are available for green projects, but there appears to be no clear plan for their use.
- ESC's Emergency Plan is comprehensive, but there has been a lack of engagement with Town and Parish Councils to encourage them to also have an emergency plan, he has requested this be made a priority, especially given past incidents like flooding.
- Continuing to support residents in Penzance Road experiencing multiple potholes in the road.
- NHS Reorganisation: From 1 April, significant changes will occur in the NHS health service. The North Essex and South Suffolk Integrated Care Board (ICB) will cease to exist. Ipswich and Colchester hospitals will be separated, and a new Norfolk and Suffolk ICB will be led by Norwich Hospital. This will mean residents previously referred to Colchester may now go to Norwich.

8. Finance & Governance –

- a. Finance & Governance committee meeting minutes 2 March 2026 – these were received and noted. Cllr Ogden presented the following draft policies with the amendments approved by the F&G Committee.
 - i. Draft KTC Financial Regulations 2026/27
 - ii. Draft KTC Standing Orders 2026/27
 - iii. Draft KTC Terms of Reference 2026/27

All agreed, following the vote, to approve and accept these revised policies.

- b. Schedule of Accounts –

- List of Payments for the period 01/02/2026 to 28/02/2026 – all accepted and agreed following the vote. Noting the purchase of the electric van and EV charging unit.

- List of Receipts for the period 01/02/2026 to 28/02/2026 – all accepted and agreed following the vote.
- c. Transfer from Savings Account and the KTC Card Payments Account – all transfers for February 2026 were accepted and agreed following the vote.
- d. Earmarked Reserves for 2025/26 – It was agreed, following the vote, that Cllr Ogden, Cllr Gibson, The Clerk and RFO would review the current EMR's and present at the next F&G meeting.
- e. Draft Internal Audit Review and Plan for year ending 31 March 2026 – All in favour, following the vote, to accept.
- f. Draft Risk Register 2026/27 – All agreed, following the vote, for the RFO to update with the following risks then review at the next FC meeting.
 - i. 10(f) Financial package – Are the back ups tested to ensure financial data is recoverable. Risk mitigation - the backup data for the finance system has been used to move data from PC to laptop. How to recover from Cyber threats etc. Risk mitigation - to consider separate cyber insurance, anti virus software installed.
 - ii. 16 Councillor resignation – What happens if Councillor numbers fall below the quorate levels for meetings? Risk mitigation - the minimum number of Councillors are set out by the Council in the Terms of Reference Policy. It was agreed at re-election that all Councillors would be members on all committees to fulfil quorate if necessary, if not already a regular member. District/County Councillors would be contacted if there is a shortfall.
- g. Internal control checks by Councillor(s) on the financial procedures for the year ending 31 March 2026 – All agreed, following the vote, to nominate Cllr Ogden to carry out an internal control check before the accounts are audited.
- h. Draft KTC Meeting Calendar – this was presented and agreed following the vote, this will be published accordingly.

9. Planning & Development –

- a. Committee meeting minutes 19 February 2026 and 16 March 2026 – noted, no questions raised.

Cllr Gibson confirmed the following was discussed and proposed by the P&D committee at their meeting earlier this evening;

Review of current Kesgrave Neighbourhood Plan – the Committee resolved unanimously not to proceed with a review at this time due to high costs and the upcoming local government reorganisation. Cllr Ogden proposed to accept this recommendation, and Cllr Gibson seconded the motion, following the vote this was unanimously agreed.

10. Community & Recreation –

- a. Committee meeting minutes 16 March 2026 – these were noted, no questions raised.
- b. Pump Track Project – The Clerk confirmed the track and electrical work are complete with the fence and CCTV being installed this week. Currently in discussion with the benefactor to agree a date and plan for the official opening.
- c. Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership meeting, Tuesday 17 March 2026 – the report was noted, no questions raised (copy of report attached).
- d. ESC Land Adoption – The Clerk confirmed receipt of revised figures regarding the parcels of land, which they are looking to agree and for paper to be taken to ESC cabinet for sign off at their full council meeting in April. Also working alongside the EO Coordinator and the E&E Manager on how the office will map and manage the areas. The EO Coordinator and E&E Manager also met with ESSL Kesgrave grounds management team last week, which was positive in building a working relationship moving forward.

- 11. Local Council Award Scheme** – The Clerk requested for Cllrs to complete their training records. She highlighted that Cllrs Athwall, Comber, Gibson, and Beecroft-Smith had submitted theirs. She encouraged others to do so, offering assistance if needed.

(one member of the public left the meeting at this point – 8.37pm).

- 12. Community Engagement** – The Chair provided a brief update on community engagement activities, no questions raised.

- 13. Town Award / Recognition Scheme** – The Clerk confirmed the closing date is tomorrow and we have received a positive number of nominations. The Clerk and Chair are currently finalising the event details, the awards will take place around 6.30pm on 20 April prior to the Annual Town Meeting. Shortlisted nominators and nominees will be invited to attend, and winners will be announced on the evening.

- 14. Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** – The Clerk referred to the Housing Ministers letter provided to Council giving details of the Government's decision to proceed with the 'Power of 3 for Suffolk' model – 3 unitary councils in Suffolk replacing the current two-tier system. Council raised concerns of the names for the three unitary councils with Kesgrave sitting in the southern unitary, which is currently referred to as 'Ipswich and Southern Suffolk'. Council requested for the Clerk to write to the housing minister to reiterate our concerns with the naming of the 3 unitary councils, as we previously did in our response earlier this year in January to the Government's public consultation on LRG in Suffolk.

- 15. Other/Urgent Communications** – Cllr Lynch reported that residents were contacting him about alleged pet poisonings in the woods near the Speedway. He had contacted the police who were unaware of any official reports. He clarified that vets are obligated to report such incidents. The Clerk confirmed no direct reports had been received by the office.

The Clerk also confirmed she and Cllr Gibson attended the online SALC East Suffolk Area Forum on 26 March, which was also attended by the Leader and Chief Ex of ESC who both spoke about government's decision on LGR.

- 16. Date of Next Meetings** – Annual Town Meeting Monday 20 April 2026, 7.15pm, at KWMCC and the Annual Town Council Meeting Monday 11 May 2026, 7.15pm, at the Town Council office.

- 17. Agenda Items for Next Meeting** – no requests.

- 18. Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** – All in favour, resolution passed.

(The other member of the public present left the meeting at this point).

Agenda items 19a and 20a were then discussed in the CONFIDENTIAL part of this meeting.

this part of the meeting finished at 8.49pm.

Chair**Date.....**