MINUTES OF MEETING OF KEDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY, 21 MAY 2007
PARISH OFFICE, THE PARADE, WESTWARD DEALS, KEDINGTON

Present: Cllr Terry Wheeler (Chairman)
Cllr John Cahill (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Brian Cann
Cllr Peter Donoghue
Cllr Gloria Double
Cllr Peter Garner
Cllr Peter Rowsell

In attendance: Ms Marion Farrant (Clerk)

ACTION

1 Adoption of 2007 Model Code of Conduct for Parish and Town Councils.

The Chairman welcomed all Councillors and thanked them for coming. He confirmed with all Councillors that they had received a copy of The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007, together with Register of Members' Interests form.

The Chairman reported that the revised code of conduct was a government initiative undertook in consultation with bodies such as NALC, SALC and the Standards Board. The revised code delivers the commitment given in the Local Government White Paper to introduce:

- A clearer, simpler and more proportionate code
- Amended rules on personal and prejudicial interest to remove the current barriers to Councillors speaking up for their constituents, for example on planning and licensing issues, and for public bodies on which they have been appointed to serve.

Parish Councils will have until 1st October 2007 to adopt the new code, but the Chairman stated that SALC and NALC recommended Parish Councils to adopt the Model Code in its entirety. SALC and the Standards Board also advised early adoption of the Standard Board's "Model Code of Conduct for Parish and Town Councils". The Chairman also extracted information from SALC's 2007 Code of Conduct Checklist and Recommended Procedure for Adoption.

Paragraph 12(2), has been included in the Model Code for Parish and Town Councils. It relaxes the rules governing participation of members at certain meetings where their prejudicial interest would previously have excluded them from making representations on the matter where the interest had arisen. The Standards Board for England gives the following relevant guidance in respect of paragraph 12(2):

"Paragraph 12(2) is not mandatory for all authorities"
Paragraph 12(2) gives members with a prejudicial interest in a matter the same rights as members of the public to speak to a meeting on the matter, and then leave before the main discussion and vote.

Practical issues in relation to paragraph (12(2)
If paragraph 12(2) is included in your authority's code, the Standards Board recommends that, in order to provide clarity, standing orders or procedural rules should be in place which clearly set out the circumstances whereby members of the public can attend meetings of the authority for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions. If your authority does not provide members of the public with any right to speak, paragraph 12(2) will have no effect at your authority. This means that members with a prejudicial interest would have to continue to leave the meeting after declaring the nature and extent of their interest".

After discussion a resolution was passed to adopt the new Model Code of Conduct for Town and Parish Councils in it's entirety. Proposed by Cllr Double and seconded by Cllr Donoghue. Unanimous decision.

It was also decided to add Paragraph 12(2) to Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr Cahill and seconded by Cllr Rowsell. Unanimous decision.

The Chairman requested that the Clerk inform Joy Bowes at St Edmundsbury Borough Council of the Parish Council's decision before Friday 25 May 2007 and request the inclusion of Kedington Parish Council within the Borough's advert of Councils adopting the new Model Code. MF

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Signed: …….. Date: ……