



SHIRE OF KOJONUP

# MINUTES

## ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS

9 April 2025

At the Kojonup Sporting Complex commencing 6.00pm

**1. WELCOME**

The Shire President, Cr Roger Bilney, declared the meeting open at 6.08pm and alerted the meeting to the procedures for emergencies including evacuation, designated exits and muster points and outline the procedures of the meeting.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

The Shire of Kojonup acknowledges the first nations people of Australia as the Traditional custodians of this land and, in particular, the Keneang people of the Noongar nation upon whose land we meet.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

**2. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

Cr Roger Bilney	Shire President
Cr Cindy Wieringa	Deputy Shire President
Cr Ned Radford	
Cr Mick Mathwin	
Cr Kerryn Mickle	

**STAFF**

Grant Thompson	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Tonya Pearce	Governance and Rates Officer
Darryn Watkins	Manager Works and Infrastructure
Estelle Lottering	Projects Manager and Regulatory Services
Dwayne Lottering	Property Services Manager and NRM
Jill Watkin	Manager Kodja Place, Tourism and Marketing
Jill Johnson	Manager Financial and Corporate Services
Hayley Clarke	Infrastructure and Finance Co-Ordinator
Lorreen Greeuw	Senior Library Officer and Community Wellbeing Officer

**APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Cr Egerton-Warburton

**APOLOGIES**

Cr Paul Webb, Susan Pritchard, Denise Berryman, Doreen Bignell, Chris and Robyn Evans, Roy Bailey

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Geoff Rogers, Bill Bennett, Frank Pritchard, Di Gardner, Karen Hubbard, Jillian Mathwin, Kathy Ivy, Joan O'Halloran, Robyn Potter, Maree Bilney, Ronice Blair, Kristel Thomson, Natasha Clarke, Megan Robinson, Kath Mathwin, Tristan McLachlan, Craig McVee, Robyn Farmer, Jamie McVee, Cheryline Michael, Barb Hobbs, Roberta McQuire, Laurie Prandi, Robert Sexton, Ian Robertson, Maria Bauer, Kevin Gale, Wendy Anderson, Ann Davies, Neville Matthews, Julie Fleay.

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION/ DECISION

1AEM/24 Moved Peta Zadow

Seconded Cr Wieringa

That the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors held 16 April 2024 be accepted.  
CARRIED

4. REPORTS

4.1. Shire President

The Shire President, Cr Roger Bilney, tabled his report as read, and spoke to the main points as contained within the Annual Report.

Four (4) positions are available for this years Local Government election. Encouraging people to apply for a position on Council.

Congratulations to The George Church Medical Centre Inc. for securing Livingston Medical.

Thank you to Craig McVee for 42 years of service to the Shire of Kojonup.

Welcome Darryn Watkins to the Shire of Kojonup, he is the go-to person for roads and verge side tree pruning.

Councillors are now regulated to record the audio in the Ordinary Council meetings, which are available on the Shire website. The Shire President's goal is video and livestream these meetings for the community to be able to watch the proceedings without having to attend in person. This will create a culture of involvement. This requires an upgrade of the technology in the Chamber.

Recent Local Government reforms require that an independent Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson be advertised and selected to chair and manage the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meetings.

The Shire is soon to advertise for an independent Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. Any persons interested are encouraged to apply.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION/DECISION

2AEM Moved Cr Bilney

Seconded Cr Mathwin

That the Shire of Kojonup 2023/2024 President's Report be received.

CARRIED

#### 4.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Grant Thompson, tabled the CEO's report as read.

The Shire has been focused on improving the Financial Processes and performance of the Shire:

- Purchase order framework and discipline
- Journaling
- Reset of financial controls
- Audited financials
- Audit of governance frameworks (risk identification and non financials)
- New ICT System identification and tender processes

As a result the Council is implementing a new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system, what is referred to as an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program, this covers Human Resources, Customer Service, Rates and is an integrated system that supports functions across the whole organisation. This process took close to 15 months to identify who the preferred vendor is.

Council has chosen ReadyTech as its preferred vendor, the evolution of the current system the Shire uses. The payroll module is the first component and will be implemented shortly.

Thank you to the team for their efforts in 23/24, Jill Johnson, Jill Watkin and Estelle Lottering. Welcome new members to the team, Darryn Watkins and Dwayne Lottering.

The Team has achieved many things in the past year with a lot of internal work that is not visible to the public.

Katanning Road subdivision is the Shires priority to open titled blocks for development. Industrial precinct needs the Thornbury Close extension and access on to Stock Road finalised.

Start to look at planning of major projects required to be shovel ready in the next two/three year period, in the next year the Shire will be limited in significant capital investment but it can start the planning process.

Shire operated the Black Cockatoo Café for the reporting Year (17th July). The operating surplus in this reporting (23/24) year was a modest \$14,455.

The Council targeted goal is to create a Community Return on Capital (C-ROC) through a positive operating surplus. The Council has set objectives to:

- Ensure it returns value to KP Precinct.
- Provide a good service to visitors and community alike (Means Good Coffee and Food).
- Integrate the workings of the Café into the KP.
- Roster effectively and manage the labour cost component.

- Focus on efficient food preparation, menu management, costing of meals and pricing of food.
- Understand each meal cost in its entirety and ensure pricing is aligned.
- Culture, training ground for Team Members and customer service is essential.

Performance for the Shire in the coming year will remain focused on the following;

- Review of road Processes ensuring the governance around roads is improving.
- Continue to implement the Corporate Business Plan (CBP) initiatives to improve livability.
- Improving stakeholder and Community relations.
- Finalising the current phases of the Industrial precinct and housing growth, subdivisions.
- Governance and processes on regulatory frameworks.
- Start to look at planning for new projects in the coming phase of the CBP.
- Continue to Build capability in key functional areas e.g. roads tech officer, roads Supervisor, engineering etc.

5. 2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION/DECISION

3AEM Moved Cathy Ivey

Seconded Kevin Gale

That the Shire of Kojonup 2023/2024 Annual Report, as circulated, be received.

CARRIED

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/OTHER BUSINESS OF A GENERAL NATURE

6.1 Questions Taken on Notice

Nil

6.2 An Opportunity for Questions, Feedback or Items to be raised from the floor

**Public Comment:**

Thank you to our Councillors and appreciate the Councillors have made themselves available for Community members to approach them. Thank you to Grant Thompson for the leadership he has given and to Cr Bilney for doing a great job.

**Public Question:**

Thank you for the kind words to The George Church Community Medical Centre Inc. (GCCMC). Is the Shire going to contribute over the five (5) year term?

**Response:** The Shire have signed a five (5) year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This request has to be allocated in the budget on an annual basis.

**Public Comment:** Comments around town regarding this, tourists can't believe the doctors have been locally funded. GCCMC does not want the funds to fade away.

**Response:** The Shire is invested in this project, including supporting growth. It is possible that a Council can say no to future requests. The CEO has not received any negative comment about the Shire funding the medical centre. It is clear the community supports this transaction and whilst that is the case it is more than likely the Council will continue to support the funding.

**Public Comment:** Livingstons has just undergone reaccreditation they are in the top 25% of patient satisfaction. Thank you to the Shire and group for helping GCCMC.

**Response:** The Shire is lobbying for funding from Federal and State government Frameworks for rural specialists.

Six Shires (including Kojonup) have created an alliance and produced an advocacy paper, to demonstrate the costs that Local Government is contributing to these services. Once finalized, this paper should be available and published for all to read.

The Financial Assistance Grants framework offers some relief for medical expenditure but is capped at \$100,000. There is also a cap on the total amount available for Shires to access and this limits the ability of all Shires to receive that amount of funding. The Financial Assistance Grants medical facilitators adjuster depends how much you have spent on medical services in the previous year. Some of the six (6) shires are already receiving the \$100,000 cap.

The provision of a house, car, loan costs and operating costs can be approved in the adjuster. This year Kojonup have applied for the house income in the Grant process.

Fund pays up to a maximum of 82% of claims up to a cap of \$100,000. Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is seeking the Federal Government to put more funds into this budget.

**Public Question:** Is it possible to put a proposal to Council, that 2-3% of rates go towards the GCCMC. This would take the worry out of the situation. Could this sit on the rates notice as a levy? Like the emergency services levy?

**Response:** The Shire endeavours to be financially sustainable and at the same time not escalate the rates to where some people cannot afford the rate rise. We have sought internal cost savings and with Springhaven being moved off the books we are looking to use these savings to fund the attraction of a rural specialist without having to increase rates. The Council may look at a half a percent additional to required rates to fund these specialist areas.

**Public Question:** Should be 1-2% not half a percent, people would complain if there was no medical services available in Kojonup.

**Response:** The Council is always open to suggestions from the Community. The premise of the half a percent is to fund reserves to build a financial buffer. Accruing too much reserves can lead to lazy capital and the Council believes that businesses would do better at investing it if it stayed in your hands. A lot of people would agree that they don't want their rates to go up too high. We have to find an optimal solution that caters for the whole community and if we can fund it within the current budget parameters the Council should endeavor to do so

**Public Question:** Thank you for your efforts on a hard day, Roger. Would like to understand the impact on the CCTV cameras around the shire and who monitors the cameras?

**Response:** It is too early to tell of the full value the cameras will have in the community as they are only just established. The access is with the police, they are monitoring the alerts. However anecdotally there have been a couple incidents in town and these crimes have been picked up on camera and police have been able to act.

**Public Question:** Where are the cameras, are they in the main street? Trucks are flying through town at night.

**Response:** Cameras are not in the main street, they are targeting the entrances to town, they are not speed cameras, more about number plate recognition. The cameras alert police to any cars without number plates or number plates that have been flagged. The Shire does not have access to these alerts, only the police. If there is an incident, the Shire can gain access to video footage but not the police data.

**Response:** Importance of the cameras to the police, is more than what happens in Kojonup. Located on four (4) main roads, to trace people moving through town. There are now tracking devices in Shire vehicles, mainly for safety and incident reasons.

**Public Question:** When are more houses going to be built in Kojonup, for working class and families?

**Response:** Once the Katanning Road subdivision has been finalised, more titled blocks will become available for sale for people to buy and build. The subdivision has taken time to complete. Need to engage others in the community to open up their properties for subdivision, not just rely on the Shire, as private investment will be a faster pathway.

There is a housing shortage putting pressure on prices. A key initiative in the Corporate Business Plan is working with Great Southern Development Corporation, to open up the market in the Great Southern. Money for Shire and community to open up the housing market.

The Shire spent \$20,000 on an advocacy report, an economist has undertaken this work to demonstrate the supply and demand for housing in the GS and Kojonup is a critical part of this analysis. This report has only just been finalized in recent weeks and once the report is published it will be available publicly. The Shires intend to use this briefing paper to then apply for grants and lobby Governments to release more funds into the Great Southern. Landgate have a backlog and we are seeing it can take up to 9-12 months to achieve results.

**Public Question:** what is the timeframe of the subdivisions in conjunction with head works, storm water etc. Is there sufficient water supply at that end of town? Will it take longer for the release of the blocks? What is the timeframe for the blocks to be usable? Landgate definitely take a long time.

**Response:** Funding for headworks is the biggest constraint. It has cost approximately \$660,000 for sewerage and drainage alone on Katanning subdivision. The Shire still requires up to \$275,000 for the power network and one (1) transformer to be upgraded.

**Public Question:** Is there funding available?

**Response:** At this stage there is limited funding available just for headworks associated with worker accommodation. Headworks are the biggest constraint right now for all local governments and we do need funding, thus the reason for the advocacy paper as mentioned. Building houses shouldn't just be left to Local Governments. Land available is currently Katanning Road and Soldier Road.

**Public Question:** Where is the Katanning Road subdivision?

**Response:** The old drive in location.

**Public Question:** How many blocks on Katanning Road?

**Response:** Approximately 27 total including the current houses but 10 additional could be available for higher density builds.

**Public Comment:** There could be 9-12 readily available if they were 1000sqm blocks. There is deep granite on Soldier Road, which constricts sewerage.

**Response:** In a gazetted town site, there are limitations for septic use.

**Public Question:** What powers do council have to develop?

**Response:** The new regulations allow the fast tracking to place granny flats onto properties.

**Public Question:** The five (5) acre blocks that are on the sides of town, will they be cut in half?

**Response:** Private owners of land have the ability to apply for their titled properties to be subdivided through the Western Australian Planning Commission. Landowners have

the ability to subdivide their properties. The application for subdivision goes to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and then comes to council seeking its opinion, however the decision rests with the WAPC.

**Public Question:** Are there any restrictions on the blocks?

**Response:** Restrictions come from the town planning scheme and the deemed planning provisions i.e. sewage connections, power, water access etc. The scheme is required to be reviewed now and this process could take up to three (3) years. On the main street there is both commercial and residential. Advised not to call it commercial, suggested to call it the town centre. So you could support higher density living above businesses. The State Government wants high density living. Multiple people living on the one (1) block.

**Public Question:** Has there been any further talks on the heavy vehicle bypass? More and more traffic and incidents on the main street. May have to stop people parking in the main street, it is becoming dangerous.

**Response:** If we asked the community about an alternative heavy vehicle freight route, you would get a lot of different answers. The Shire is going through a process of considering an alternative freight route. Main Roads preferred option is to go to the east of town. This discussion is to come up as a part of the town planning scheme.

**Public Question:** Could we put signage around town? To show parking behind the Memorial Hall and behind the IGA, etc.

**Response:** This has been in the budget, but keeps being removed; however, this does need to be done. Current theory, don't let trucks go around the town, don't want cars to deviate if an alternate freight route is put in.

**Public Comment:** During covid, 65% of visitors just evaporated could be similar with an alternative route.

**Response:** Other Shires say be careful undertaking a bypass, as it has a detrimental economic impact on the town. Aim is to make the town safe, whatever happens. Safety verses retail.

**Public Comment:** There are five (5) entry and exit points in Kojonup, the alternate freight route is not going to catch all trucks. Remove parking from main street and move parking behind shops.

**Response:** Water Corporation and Western Power have a lot of infrastructure under the main street which needs consideration.

### 6.3 Council - Kodja Place Community Discussion

The Council would like to discuss the future plans and how to ensure The Kodja Place (KP) is sustainable.

The issue is that there is a significant cost to the community to keep the facility running. The park, toilets, café and museum are great attractions.

Not looking to make significant changes to Kodja Place just small tweaks to attract more numbers of community members to KP.

Community resident numbers demonstrate it is only used for ad hoc purposes.

The Kodja Place is an iconic asset, which is shire owned.

The gallery is a valuable asset. Currently it is externally focused, with those gallery visitors and community numbers dwindling.

Costs are increasing as expenses inflate.

Retail is doing ok but has a minimal impact on the revenue.

The retail floor space inside KP is a strength.

Strategic questions asked at Council, why does KP exist?

Define who is the target primary beneficiary of KP?

What is it and what does it do? Recognisable feature, client functions, bus stop, visitors but limited for locals.

Why does It exist? Culture, heritage, Storytelling.

KP as we know it, is a cultural centre. Has events and is a tourist organiser.

Community are investing \$654,000 into KP. The Shire puts in \$593,000 of cash toward ensuring the place operates effectively. Depreciation is coming down due to the asset getting older therefore capital will be required in the near future for asset renewal. CEO presented a graph of the Operating costs and trends.

What should the council do?

It can't sell the asset/ don't want to sell. It is located on government crown land.

It will not close KP as this an important asset to retain. The gallery is to stay there with the story telling.

We can rephrase the role of KP to be more community attractive. Looking to make it a central point for the community.

There is a compelling reason for Council to consider moving the library to KP;

Library can remain open seven (7) days a week for community use.

Connect and merge the current library activities to the storytelling culture at KP;

Increase the Community visitation through providing community services at KP enhancing the asset usage across more community members.

Reduce the size of the retail section, not remove, just reduce and still have community events as per normal operations;

Spread fixed administration costs over the provision of more services and numbers of Community members visiting KP.

Secondary to all this, and not the reason to move the Library, the Council can utilise the space for the library as a repository for records. The Shire is compelled to find a location to move current records, as the Broomehill repository is closing in 2026. This move could allow the Shire to use the current library space for other amenities as well.

**Public Question:** What is the cost of hiring the meeting rooms?

**Response:** The price depends on the time used, what for, equipment to use etc. Can cost up to \$150 to use the meeting rooms.

**Public Comment:** I agree with moving the library to KP.

**Public Comment:** There are two (2) rooms available at KP, why not clear them out and use as an office.

**Response:** A skip bin has arrived this week to have a clear out and to redecorate the rooms.

**Public Comment:** First thing to do, the Shire should get a consultant in, an expert in the field. Community has to own it as it has divided the community. It is not an Aboriginal Cultural Centre. It needs passionate people to run it.

**Response:** Community development is different to marketing and tourism. There needs to be a hook for community members that is focused on relevant services.

**Public Comment:** Personally doesn't think the library will fit at KP. Why would you change something, that has a good feeling. KP is costing money but the marketing hasn't been done correctly. Brochures should be in hotels in Perth.

**Public Comment:** Should change the retail space.

**Public Comment:** Books will be no longer in 10-15 years.

**Public Comment:** In tourism, a brochure is something that people collect and would put in a map book etc. It is a different sort of marketing. There are three (3) railways for tourism in Western Australia. Kojonup tourist railway is one (1) of them, this should be developed and showcase what KP has to offer. Need to think bigger outside of the box. Kojonup is a unique place. Is there potential to build a repository on the railway reserve?

**Public Comment:** It is not just KP and the railway line. Elverds Cottage is only one of two (2) or three (3) in the State and the Barracks.

The state of Elverds cottage and the Barracks need repairs but due to lack of funds it makes things hard. Tourists always comment on Kojonup.

In favour of bringing the library down to KP. There have been 27 major events, 46 school events, 18 workshops, 32 strictly community activities and other workshops.

As well as 9 Noongar events. The Shire does not receive a huge amount of grant funds, the grants that are received are still support for works being done. Total of 111 events in three (3) years. There has been better support by people outside of the community. There is a very loyal band of volunteers. Lions Club are helping with the historical quarters. Need to pull together to make it work as a community. Would like more

involvement from the Keneang community. The Aboriginal Corporation room has sat empty for the last three (3) years.

**Response:** The Council spends a lot of funds on Marketing and networking on social media, and pays for the services of Australia Southwest (ASW), tourist bureau, to help market the KP Statewide and Nationally. Agree to continue to focus on marketing, but KP also needs more community members as well as tourists. The community can also fully utilise the courtyard and café.

**Response:** The library will go into the retail section, on the back wall. The retail section will be made smaller. There will be couches and bean bags to read books.

**Public Comment:** There are touch screens that have stories, you can listen to local interviews. No decent internet at KP. Other rooms could be used if there was better internet.

**Public Comment:** Entrance to KP with Black Cockatoo to change how people can go from café to KP. Would like break down of the \$650,000 that the community puts into KP

**Response:** It can be provided, but the break down is in the financial yearly budget report.

**Public Question:** Combining of assets to be displayed there. Any consideration to expanding the facility instead of changing?

**Response:** Building Better regions grant applied for. This is unfortunately a co-funded grant which the applied funding was approx. \$2 million; however, the shire would need to put in an additional circa \$2 million. This would require the \$2 million dollars to be borrowed. The Shire is focused on smaller changes until the shire is in a position to borrow more money for major works. Lottery West will not provide funding for asset enhancement. With current debt levels the Shire is limited in what it can do to expand the asset and that is why we are seeking other smaller funded solutions to encourage community to attend the KP.

**Public Comment:** Advertising is done on Facebook, which is great; but a lot of community members don't use Facebook.

**Response:** We have a resource that undertakes social media. Community may consider co-funding grants. Trying to add value to what is already there.

**Public Comment:** The library is not just about a stack of books, a lot of community connections there.

**Public Comment:** The library links in with the whole story telling purpose of Kodja Place. The shelves will be made out of a local wood, this will not change the ambiance in the retail centre. Retail could be expanded, with local oils and jams etc. and we could also sell stock in the café. More local art on walls, to also sell. This could get them from the café into the shop. Making entrance at KP more attractive, designs of animal prints, should be in car park and café, up the street etc.

**Public Comment:** The Senior Library Officer is in a very privileged position. Feels could give more to the community and has had a taster at KP, which was so dynamic. Felt exhausted from the chaos, which was a good thing.

Putting the library to KP will be a great value. Currently run an after school project with really good turn outs including help from parents of children and volunteers and staff. Received a small \$1,000 grant to bring activities to KP. Let's love it and make it a community hub that the library can help create. Love that could be put back into Kojonup.

**Public Comment:** Was there not renovations done at KP in the retail space to create more space?

**Response:** It was not for more space as such, but it created a better layout for retail.

**Public Comment:** Consultants should go in there before any decisions are made.

**Public Comment:** I support the suggestion to move the library to KP. Should go to Williams and look at the cultural centre and café there for ideas. Maybe the shire is too cheap, could put the fees up by 10%.

**Public Comment:** The deficit will not be resolved solely by putting fees up by 10%. A number of different solutions need to be employed.

**Public Comment:** KP is not a business, it's a community centre.

**Public Question:** Does the shire have the money, to replicate the library at KP?

**Response:** Yes money has been isolated in the cashflow budget and can be utilised if approved by Council. This discussion has been to Council, and they asked similar/same questions as have been asked tonight.

**Public Comment:** There should be support for other community buses. Significant player for economic benefit could be the Commonwealth bank, NAB and Enel that make money out of the community. Suggest asking them for money.

**Response:** The shire canvases for money. Lottery west, would not commit. Received \$40,000 from Enel. Grants are applied for but not always successful. Other grants that only community can apply for but no one came forward to apply. Working on a group to apply for these grants.

**Public Comment:** No point in blaming the community for not turning up. Quite often forget when things are happening. Need to review how the advertising is out there in the community. Fantastic things happening, but a lot of things aren't being communicated.

**Public Comment:** There should be a concept plan made up.

**Public Question:** Suggested to have a look at the railway reserves again.

**Response:** The shire has a Trails Master Plan which has been costed recently. A lot of standards and regulations. Youth precinct and street scape take priority for funding. This library solution is a small cost to create a community cultural hub.

Community and Council have identified KP is currently not operating optimally and small, lower cost changes can make a big difference to the efficacy of the story of Kojonup.

The President thanked everyone for their questions and input.


**7. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

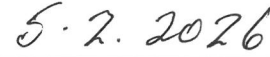
There being no further business the Shire President declared the meeting closed at 8.36pm.

**8. ATTACHMENTS**

- 3. Unconfirmed Minutes of an Annual Electors Meeting held 16 April 2024
- 5. Annual Report and Annual Financial Report 2023/2024

Confirmed as a true record –

  
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Presiding Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date