**Minutes of the Meeting of Somerford Keynes Annual Parish Council Meeting 12th June 2023**

**7.30pm - Held at the Village Hall**

Present: Cllr G. Valentine (GV), Cllr M. Keegan (MK) Cllr N.Hunt, Cllr R.Roffe, Cllr S.Esmond-Rees, Cllr A.Clark

Also present: Clerk K. Josey (KJ), and 5 members of the public

**1.Election of Officers** – Cllr G.Valentine agreed to Chair this meeting. The newly co-opted councillors were welcomed to the Parish Council and all PC memebers introduced themselves. The elcetion of officers was postponed to later in the meeting in the hope that Cllr M.Hastie-Oldland would be in attendance by then.

**2.Apologies:** -Cllr L. Spivey (LS) Cllr M. McKeown (M.M),

**3.Declaration of interest: GV (LME),**

**4.Public Session –**

Member of the public No1 raised the issue of Lake 65 and informed the PC that all of the freedom of information requests regarding any planning permission requests by the landowner had been sent to CDC, GCC and Natural England. It appears that no further work has been carried out. CDC had responded and other responses are imminent. KJ stated that the landowner had responded to the reuqest to attend this meeting saying that he was unavailable on this date. Action- ongoing.

Member of the public No2 reuqested that the Parish Council consider making an objection to the planning application for anaerobic digester(see planning applications below) which is not within SK parish but will have impacts not least of all on traffic and the already dangerous North End junction. Action – discussion later in meeting.

Member of the public No3 requested that the PC send out an email highlighting the concerns around dogs being allowed off lead by their owners in the farm fields (Old Mill Farm) where there are sheep. These fields are clearly signposted to maintain any dogs on leads due to livestock. Action- KJ to send email.

**5.Approval of Minutes** of the meeting held on 9th May Proposed GV Seconded MK

**6.Report from County Cllr L. Spivey –** nothing in addition to recent Annual May report.

**7.Report from District Cllr M. McKeown.**

Councillor Mike McKeown – June 2023 Report for Somerford Keynes Parish Council

 Following the elections in May the new CDC cabinet has been formed. I have joined the cabinet as the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability responsible for:

* Climate and biodiversity emergency response
* Community energy
* Sustainable transport
* Retrofit
* Council sustainability

The rest of the cabinet are:

* Leader - Joe Harris
* Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance - Mike Evemy
* Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation - Tony Dale
* Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services - Juliet Layton
* Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture - Paul Hodgkinson
* Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Safety - Lisa Spivey
* Cabinet Member for Cost of Living and Inclusion - Claire Bloomer

Ashland's House development

The Ashlands House development project (20/04079/FUL), involving the construction of four homes, is under consideration. An update from the planning officer reveals that multiple factors are influencing the decision process. Further statements, surveys, and plans are awaited from the agent, and the approval of the Cricklade and North Meadow SAC Mitigation Strategy is also pending.

On May 11, 2023, the case officer and the agent held a meeting to discuss the project's progress. The agent will submit a S.111 agreement post the adoption of the SAC mitigation strategy. There are ongoing updated reptile surveys and the agent is expected to submit a Sustainability/Energy Statement and additional design details in response to the Conservation Officer's comments. The agent is also tasked with drafting a Heads of Terms (S106/UU) to formally offer amenity land to the Parish Council and garden land to neighboring dwellings.

While the planning officer agrees with the Sequential Test and Highways' comments, the proposal will go to the planning committee for further scrutiny. At this committee meeting, I will speak to highlight the local objections, concerns of the Parish Council, and my own reservations, including the project's contradiction to the Neighborhood Development Plan (NPD), but this can’t happen until Cricklade and North Meadow SAC Mitigation Strategy is finished and the timescales for this are unclear.

 Construction and operation of anaerobic digestion facility, ancillary infrastructure and construction of new access from Ashton Road

PL/2023/03359

<https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning-application/a0i3z00001AaVEoAAN/pl202303359>

This application is in Wiltshire but is close to Somerford Keynes Parish and hence I wanted to draw the PCs attention to this, it is currently open for comment.

While I appreciate it positive impact on climate change I am concerned about:

1. The risk of odours from the site, while the wind direction is generally away from Somerford Keynes this is still a risk and there are several news articles of this issue with anaerobic digestion.
2. The site operation requires a large amount of HGV traffic and this peaks during the busy summer months which are already busy with holiday traffic.

 Lake 65 Anti-Otter Fence

At time of writing, I am awaiting more information on this. It has been referred to CDC Planning enforcement who are looking into this. I will report as I learn more.

 Thames Head Community Energy

The installation of the first 11 homes should begin soon, after a very long delay waiting for for Scottish and South Electric Network (SSEN) who own the physical electricity network in the area and who must give permission for larger scale installations.

We have thirteen potential locations for the community solar farm coming from the feasibility study report, and we are starting to engage with landowners to assess the potential for each. Avoiding impact on the community being a key criterion.

Thanks to the hard to the hard work of Mark Hastie-Oldland we have secured an additional £2,500 from the Build Back Better fund.

 CDC Development Management Service (DM)

The CDC Development Management Service (DM) has confronted a series of challenges over recent years, with the pandemic significantly escalating the demand for their services. This increase in demand resulted in heightened workloads and a competitive recruitment market, while also imposing restrictions on working processes, which complicated communication with customers and application processing. Pre-existing challenges, such as recruitment issues, data accuracy, and an interim management structure, added to the difficulties faced by the DM Service.

To address these issues, the DM Service embarked on several improvement initiatives. They increased capacity and introduced Career Grades to provide clear advancement paths. They refined the recruitment process and made alterations to management roles for better efficiency. The formation of a Validation Shared Service team, the introduction of customer contact touchpoints, and the creation of additional data sets were other significant enhancements. A review by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) was also commissioned to identify further areas of potential improvement. As a consequence of these initiatives, the DM Service's performance showed marked improvement. This is evidenced by a significant rise in the percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed Extension of Time, which grew from 61.68% in Q1 2021/22 to 78.1% in Q4 2022/23.

Cotswold Development Management Strategy

The Cotswold Development Management Strategy is a plan to improve the economy and quality of life in the Cotswolds. The Council has made significant progress in implementing the strategy in recent months. For example, the RAU Innovation Village project is progressing well, and ZeroAvia, a hydrogen-powered aircraft company, has expanded its operations at Cotswold Airport. The Council is also working to promote the Cotswolds as a destination for sustainable businesses.

However, there are some challenges that the Council faces. The cost-of-living crisis is putting pressure on businesses and households, and the lack of broadband access in some areas is holding back economic growth. The Council is committed to working with partners to overcome these challenges and create a thriving economy in the Cotswolds.

Cllr Keegan requested that District and County councilors are asked to attend PC meetings at least 6monthly.

**8. Clerks Report and Matters Arising.**

KJ has resigned from the role as Parish Clerk and her final working day will be 18th August. It was agreed that Cllr A.Clark will start the process of recruitment. It is hoped that someone will take over the role a.s.a.p in order for KJ to give a handover to the new Clerk. Anyone interested in the position can email PC website SKPCClerk@gmail.com – to discuss or have a chat. Action- AC/KJ

KJ confirmed that she had invited the Lake 65 landowner to the meeting, he was unavailable.

KJ confirmed that she had met with R.Gray and G.Portlock Highways regarding the hedge at Elm View. R.Gray agreed to cut this back and this was done very promptly. KJ has thanked R.Gray for his help in this matter.

**9. Village Lake**

**Report from Mike Wilding**

**The SKPC may like to consider writing to Zurich Insurance**, to rationalise the requirement when we set up the Lake Management committee, for the ratio of Parish Councillors to Lake Subcommittee members.  The relevant text relating to Insurance is to be found in our VILLAGE LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN

 *The Management Committee will comprise a minimum of THREE members, one of whom will be a Member or nominated representative of the Parish Council who will not be Chairman. The current site insurer states that 50% of the members of the Management Committee must be Somerford Keynes Parish Councillors. In the event of an odd number of Management Committee members, the required number of Parish Councillors is obtained by rounding down 50% of the number of Management Committee members to the nearest whole number. Members of the Management Committee who are also Parish Councillors will not be Chairman*

I believe this came from a verbal conversation between the SKPC clerk at the time (Wendy) and a representative of Zurich insurance, but not sure if it was ever in writing.

From experience over the past 5 years, the sensible number of non SKPC committee members (including myself as Chairman) is 4, plus one SKPC councillor representative, and I would be happy to draft a letter accordingly to Zurich, for SKPC to send if if they think it appropriate, to Zurich that the management of the Lake includes:

* Regular monthly inspections
* Register of volunteers attending volunteer mornings
* Appropriate training in the use of normal "gardening" tools such as loppers, secateurs, mowers etc ..,

If agreed by Zurich, this should help in allowing Councillors' time to be available for other duties, as currently our elected Councillors amount to only three

3. **Grass cutting at the Lake:**  Over the past two weeks, the gass has been cut by a non SKPC body, presumably LME. This was without any prior notification to SKPC.  While we are grateful for their efforts, unfortunately the width of cut on the path has mowed out the majority of orchids in flower at the time, and the cow parsley etc .. between the gate and the cycle path, which we do not cut deliberately, to keep the entrance secluded.  Perhaps contact could be made with LME to request they ask prior agreement if they intend to offer their services for future such work.

**Report From Mike Wilding – the report had only just come into the clerk. KJ agreed to forward it to all councillors.**

**10.Planning Items**

Updates on outstanding planning applications

Ashlands – still pending a decision – although it was noted that there have been some new documents added to the application on the planning website.

Cllr M.Keegan stated that there had been no progress/update with regards to the Cullimore flood mitigation scheme. Action MK/KJ to chase Cllr L.Spivey

Details of new planning applications

**23/01425/FUL** - Relocation of Air Source Heat Pump from roof to ground level side

elevation at 3 The Water Garden Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester – no objection

**23/01650/FUL -** for Change of Use of land from agricultural use to facilitate alteration of

existing access and the creation of HGV access and track to business premises (Class B2 and B8) at Southleaze Farm Ewen Cirencester – no objection

**LME**

**23/01341/FUL** - Erection of a single storey rear extension at Thames House Lower MillLane Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire – no objection

**Wiltshire/Border**

**23/01552/NEI** - Neighbouring Authority Consultation for Construction and operation of anaerobic digestion facility, ancillary infrastructure and construction of new access from Ashton Road at Land West Of Ashton Road Ashton Keynes Wiltshire - the PC agreed to submit an objection to this planning application. Action MK/RR

**11.** **Correspondence.**

The PC had received a response to invite from the Lake 65 landowner.KJ confirmed that she had received a concern regarding the noise levels/camping from the land adj to field farm during the DB Max triathlon event weekend. It was noted that the PC was unable to confirm location.

**12**. **Financial Matters** –Clerk Salary £254.60, Zurich Insurance £257.60, Stamps £12, prop G.V Seconded M.K

**13.** The PC returned to the election of officers. There was no councillor who would accept the role of Chair for the PC and KJ informed the PC that they would be required to elect a chair for the following meeting and subsequent meetings until this can be resolved.

The following responsibilites were agreed :-

Vice-Chair – Cllr N.Hunt Footpaths – Cllr A.Clark, Cllr S.E-Rees

Clerk Employment – Cllr M.Keegan Flooding – Cllr R.Roffe

Village Hall – Cllr A.Clark Defibrilators – Cllr N.Hunt

Parish Field – Cllr A.Clark, Cllr M.Keegan

Village Lake – Cllr G.Valentine, Cllr M.Keegan

**10. Any other business for discussion, not requiring a decision, subject to the Chairman’s approval.**

Cllr A.Clark raised the planning for the new houses on the land of the old Cotswold Community – this matter has already been given planning approval by CDC.

Cllr A Clark also suggested that a new survey to see what the residents would like the PC to work towards would be useful especially with the new CIL Monies which the PC has received. A.C agreed to liase with Mr John Whitwell with regards to the previous village survey.

Cllr G. Valentine agreed to contact residents on LME for any additions to the PC distribution list.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

**Date of next meeting: Monday 24th July 7.30pm**