

# **Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting**

## **Village Hall, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Present:** Cllr G. Valentine (GV), Cllr A.Clark (AC), Cllr H. Collins (HC), Cllr John Whitwell (JW)

**Also present:** Clerk K. Holdsworth (KH), GCC Cllr L. Spivey (LS), CDC Cllr M.McKeown (MM), Rob Squizzoni LME Estate Manager, and six members of the public.

### **1.Election of Officers**

Cllr John Whitwell is co-opted onto the Parish Council.

### **2.Apologies**

Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr M.H-Oldland (MH-O), Cllr N. Hunt (NH), Mike Wilding (MW) Village Lake Committee Chair

### **3.Declaration of Interest**

GV and HC (LME)

### **4.Public Session**

The following matters were raised:

- 4.1 Questioned need to extend the public footpath to Neigh Bridge as it can already be accessed from the village by path (southern end of Mill Lane to Neigh Bridge). A new path may also cause more parking and flooding issues.
- 4.2 In relation to the planning application for bathroom/changing facilities at Lake 32, it was pointed out that a toilet block already exists.  
AC stated that the PC have objected to this application.
- 4.3 Whether the community speed camera is fixed or can be moved to other areas in the village.  
AC explained that the location was determined by Gloucestershire Constabulary and that it is fixed.
- 4.4 The high hedge before Field Farm by the Sculpture Park is overgrown and causing sight problems from Elm View, it also intrudes onto the road giving no room for vehicles to manoeuvre around each other.  
The PC will look into this.
- 4.5 Would it be possible to have a map of the village with the house names on to allow help for newcomers and emergency/delivery vehicles.  
JW has such a map and will forward to the Clerk for distribution to those who request it.

## **5.Approval of Minutes of October 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Proposed GV, seconded HC.

## **6.Report from County Cllr L. Spivey**

LS's report is in appendix one.

LS explained she has the portfolio of flooding in GCC. In terms of scale, there are over 80,000 gulleys in Gloucestershire.

She also explained funding challenges; 75% of GCC's budget is allocated for adult and childrens' care leaving little for the likes of Highways.

Since the meeting LS has attended site at the flood in Water Lane on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

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

MM's report is in appendix two.

Potential Ashlands developer have six months from the date of rejection to appeal the planning decision, thus far there has been nothing.

Mike also explained the funding challenges CDC have, leading to reviews on items such as parking charges.

## **8. Rob Squizzoni – LME Estate Manager**

Rob explained in detail the work he and the team are undertaking at Lower Mill. Key points being;

- Control of water movement to prevent flooding is a priority
- Currently there are flood alerts in place, these are being closely monitored on site and via Environment Agency reporting.
- There are ecological constraints around when they can do certain work, cut back season is currently in place.
- There is a project upcoming to resolve an issue at one of the weirs and work with Highways to unblock a drain at Swillbrook
- Soft ground is causing an issue with falling trees.
- LME have applied for a logging license to help with management of dead wood and ash dieback.
- The work at Lower Mill helps protect SK and Ashton Keynes from flooding.

The PC thanked Rob for attending and the level of detail provided.

**Action:** KH to look at subscribing to the EA flood alert service for the PC.

## **9. Completed Actions From Previous Meeting**

- 9.1 MK has written to Jason Betty at GCC regarding the Shorncote Flood Mitigation Scheme.
- 9.2 AC has put together a community survey summary which has been distributed.
- 9.3 AC confirmed that Lake 32 will offer residents of Somerford Keynes a 10% discount for membership. Just need to bring in ID to prove residence and pay in the café.
- 9.4 KH has started a central database of useful contacts, please let her know of any that are important for future use.
- 9.5 Lower Mill Twelve Month Occupancy  
Whilst this was not a completed action its probably one for the LME Home Owners Association rather than the PC as it concerns the process for the approval of this as opposed to whether it should be possible or not.

## **10. Ongoing and New Actions**

### **10.1 Finance**

GV reported that whilst the cash position of the PC is healthy there are some points to be aware of;

- Committed spend (excluding Village Lake) is around 110% of precept.
- However VAT reclaims and Parish Field rental cover the shortfall, including Village Lake budget.
- Regarding CIL money investments, we need to consider ongoing revenue/repair/upkeep implications from any capital project spend.
- We are currently entering the budget season, based on the first bullet point there may be a need to increase precept.
- The lack of online banking makes reporting more difficult.
- We have a large sum of money currently earning no interest.

**Action:** GV/KH to accelerate the move to online banking and look at interest earning accounts.

**Action:** KH to speak to Kristy to understand the budgeting process regarding precept. We will also look at some kind of framework for assessing spend decisions, especially regarding CIL money.

### **10.2 Community Speed Camera**

Still no confirmed install date from Gloucestershire Constabulary

**Action:** MHO to provide updates.

### **10.3 Cotswold Country Park & Beach Noise**

**Action:** MK to contact Ben Welbourn at Cotswold Lakes Trust.

### **10.4 Community Survey**

These actions come out of feedback from the survey.

10.4.1 MHO to engage Thames Water on the topic of mains sewerage

10.4.2 MHO to engage Gloucestershire Highways on the topic of extending footpaths, most notably to Neigh Bridge.

- 10.4.3 NH to pursue discussion on 'missing link' cycle path from SK to Ashton Keynes.  
NH had a positive meeting with LS who is supportive.  
There may be an opportunity for funding from the Active Travel Fund and also SK could be deemed an Active Neighbourhood with associated lifestyle and possible funding benefits.  
JW stated that developers of Cotswold Community site have an obligation to complete the part of this that runs over their land.  
**Action:** NH to continue to pursue and engage with AK PC and landowners.
- 10.4.4 MHO to draft 'legacy statement' as guidance as to how CIL funding might be invested.  
Whilst the legacy statement is still valid the details here are superseded by CIL investment action, see point 10.5.

## 10.5 CIL Money

The Community Survey identified an interest in having a shared green space. MHO has identified a short list of possible locations.  
**Action:** MHO to engage landowners to qualify their interest in selling and, if so, potential prices.  
There is a further discussion to be had on other project possibilities. These include a bus shelter (popular in previous survey, not so much in the recent one), village hall infrastructure, EV charging point, village lake and perhaps, based on the current situation, a water pump.  
**Action:** AC to engage Village Hall committee to get their views.  
**Action:** GV to talk to MW about possible Village Lake projects.  
**Action:** All to consider possibilities for discussion at next meeting. Parishioners are welcome to put forward views via the Parish Clerk.

## 10.6 Flooding

The PC acknowledged the huge amount of work HC has put into this so far. HC has had meetings with parishioners with deep knowledge in this area and is making good progress into compiling a document which will describe the environment in detail and identify proactive measures that can be taken for flood prevention going forwards.  
This is likely to be completed by February 2024.  
HC thanked the many parishioners who have already provided information and insight.  
**Action:** HC to continue the work and to decide whether to release an interim document for consultation or to wait until complete prior to publishing.

## 10.7 Training

JW stated that there is 'Being a Better Councillor' and 'Clerks: The Knowledge' training available.  
**Action:** Councillors and Clerk to attend if they wish and have the time to do so.

## **10.8 Rural England Prosperity Fund**

The deadline for submissions of November 10<sup>th</sup> has passed, no bids were received by the Parish Council.

**Action:** If anyone in the parish did submit anything and requires any further support MHO's offer to assist remains. Contact the Parish Clerk to engage.

## **11. Other Matters**

### **11.1 Spratsgate Lane Junction with South Cerney to Ewen Road**

MK met with Richard Grey of GCC Highways on site.

Line painters have been to site to enhance road markings but concluded that the state of the road was not good enough for the markings to remain.

An incident ticket is raised to address this, timescales are unknown.

As an interim measure 'no road markings' warning signs are in place.

### **11.2 Blue Green Algae**

HC noted there is blue green algae at Cokes Pit and questioned whether there is a wider issue with this.

**Action:** HC to contact Ben Welbourn at Cotswold Lakes Trust to seek further information.

## **12. Correspondence**

12.1 An email setting out the challenges of having mains sewage for the village.

12.2 LME Ecologist James Ponting wrote to discuss the possibility of walks around Lower Mill, SK and surrounding areas.

JW had a positive meeting with James who will now be meeting with Mike Wilding to discuss possibilities as this aligns with Village Lake activities.

**Action:** JW to report back on next steps.

12.3 A first aid/defibrillator Course has been offered by Marcus Gibbons who has recently moved into the village. The first course is being held on 25<sup>th</sup> November and has been oversubscribed.

Another course will be held in the New Year. KH is helping to co-ordinate this, please email [skpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:skpcclerk@gmail.com) if you are interested in a future course.

The PC thanks Marcus and his wife Diane for this excellent initiative.

12.4 Though some of this was received slightly after the meeting, in the interests of topicality we should mention there has been correspondence on the subject of flooding in Water Lane.

The PC are looking to use CDC and GCC relationships to help address this.

Thanks to those who have provided useful information and to the parishioners who are also working hard to help the situation.

## **13. Planning Items**

### **23/03004/FUL**

Full Application for Installation of roof top solar panels at Skylark Lodge 24 Howells Mere  
Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester

**No Objection**

### **23/03172/FUL**

Full application for demolition of the existing conservatory & chimney and construction of  
new two storey side extension at Little Stedham Somerford Keynes Cirencester  
Gloucestershire GL7 6DR

**No Objection**

### **23/03000/FUL**

Full Application for change of use from agriculture to use as a secure dog exercise area  
(sui generis) with associated fencing and car parking area to connect with improved  
access at Land At South Leaze Farm Ewen Road Shorncote Cirencester

**No Objection**

### **23/03291/FUL**

Full Application for removal of condition 9 (external lighting) of permission 21/04036/FUL -  
Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and removal of condition 4 (occupancy) of the  
change of permitted unit type on plot 50 of Minety Lake West and removal of occupancy  
condition) re permission 11/03126/FUL at 50 Minety Lake Lower Mill Estate Somerford  
Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

**No Objection**

### **3/03276/FUL**

Full Application for Erection of single storey side extension and associated works at Mill  
Race Cottage 14 Mill Village Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester

**No Objection**

## **14. Financial Matters**

### **Income**

CIL money received £8344.89

### **Outgoings**

Cotswold Estates & Garden Ltd £147.60 – Village Lake

Cotswold Estates & Garden Ltd £122.40 – Village Lake

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

**Date of next meeting: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30 pm**

## **Appendix One – Report from County Cllr L Spivey**

Councillor Lisa Spivey  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Report November 2023

### **1. Spotlight on Fostering**

Last week (23 - 29 October) the Family Link Plus team at Gloucestershire County Council staged a takeover of the fostering service's marketing channels! Family Link Plus (FLP) is a specialist team within the GCC fostering service that provides daytime or overnight support for families across Gloucestershire with children who have complex health needs or disabilities.

During the week, FLP featured radio adverts and an event at Sainsbury's in Stroud, as well as profiles of its short break foster carers and staff, a blog post, and launched its [new short film](#) which proudly promotes this popular service.

Fantastic bonds are formed between Family Link Plus carers, the children and their families. Many carers support the same people for years, watching them grow from children to young adults. One parent says of the service, "Having a family link plus carer is a huge weight off my shoulders. I know my child is safe, I can go out and do something myself and she's going to be having fun whilst I'm doing it. It gives us time as a family to do what others take for granted – just normal stuff like shopping!"

FLP's motto is 'Give a little time, make a big difference' and they would like to hear from anyone who thinks they could embrace the opportunity to become a short break carer. Get in touch on 01452 426860 or check out the Takeover page at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering/familylinkplustakeover](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering/familylinkplustakeover)

### **2. Build Back Better Fund**

I still have funds available for community projects and each councillor has been awarded a top-up of £10,000. Funds have to be spent by January 2025, so please do get in touch if you have a project that is ready to go. This can be a wide range of projects, including digital inclusion for school children, community activities or one off events, wildflower planting, nature information boards, etc.

Information can be found here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/business-property-and-economy/finance-funding-and-grants/build-back-better-grant-scheme/>

### **3. Fix My Street**

Fix My Street has replaced the Report It function on our website. The introduction of Fix My Street is one of the key innovations of the Highways Transformation Programme to improve

customer experience and boost efficiency as the customer friendly app makes it easier to report highways issues and stay up to date with repairs.

A wide range of issues can be reported; from potholes and blocked drains to faulty street lights, damaged pavements and flytipping.

Some of the benefits and features of Fix My Street include:

- Being able to use the map to see which issues have already been reported or add a new report.
- Anyone can sign-up to receive updates about the work being done.
- Download the Fix My Street app to make reports from your phone.
- Reducing duplication of reports and administrative work.



## **Appendix 2 – Report from District Cllr Mike McKeown**

### Somerford Keynes Parish Council Monthly Report - November 2023

Dear Residents of Somerford Keynes,  
October & November has been a dynamic month for our parish and the wider Cotswold District.

Let me share with you the key initiatives and developments that are shaping our community.

#### **Land to the South East of Ashland House**

- 20/04079/FUL - 4 Homes
- This was refused on 5 October

Note that the applicant has up to six months to lodge an appeal with the national planning inspector

#### **• District-Wide Initiatives through Crowdfund Cotswold**

Cotswold District Council has pledged £24,000 to local community projects through Crowdfund Cotswold. This includes the Ampney Crucis Village Hall Solar Panels project, the Cotswold School 'Save our Pitch' Appeal, the Moreton Cinemarsh project, and the Kemble Community Gardens Wildlife Haven project.

- Crowdfund Cotswolds is open for any projects in Somerford Keynes..

#### **Financial Challenges and Strategic Planning**

Cotswold District Council, like many others, is facing severe financial pressures. Over the past

decade, we've seen a 50% reduction in core Government funding, and the recent inflation surge has significantly increased the cost of delivering council services.

- The council is focusing on efficiency savings and enhancing discretionary income to navigate

these challenges. Car park charges, being our largest source of discretionary income, are under review.

- Additionally, the proposed budget includes recommendations like increasing the cost of the garden waste service to ensure they fully cover their cost to delivery and changes to waste collection days to improve cost efficiency.

- The restructuring of Cotswold, Forest of Dean, and West Oxfordshire district councils' services is part of this broader strategy to ensure long-term financial sustainability. The move to bring many services in-house vs outsourced to Publica, is driven by the need to control costs and improve service delivery. The details are being finalised, but it is likely most services will move back to CDC, except for IT, HR and customer services. Waste services will remain with UBICO. CDC will likely share services with West Oxfordshire, similar to how they were shared prior to the formation of Publica.

- We are inviting community feedback through the budget consultation until 8 December. This is crucial as we consider tough decisions to avoid a financial crisis similar to what other councils, including Birmingham, have faced.

- It's essential we stop dipping into our reserves and focus on maintaining our financial health for the future. This is a challenging time, but with careful planning and community support, we can navigate these hurdles.

- **Reducing Food Waste with Halloween Pumpkins - On a lighter note!**

As your cabinet member for climate change and sustainability, I've been advocating for the efficient use of Halloween pumpkins to reduce food waste.

- If we all ate our pumpkins it would save 125,000 across the Cotswolds

You might have even caught me on the BBC radio discussing this – yes, I'm getting quite "famous" for my pumpkin talks!

- I even used AI to create a couple of receipts using local produce!

For any inquiries or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at

[Mike.McKeown@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:Mike.McKeown@cotswold.gov.uk).

Warm regards,

Councillor Mike McKeown

Cotswold District Council