

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

## **Village Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Present:** Cllr G. Valentine (GV), Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr J. Whitwell (JW)

**Also present:** Clerk K. Holdsworth (KH), M. Wilding (MW, Village Lake Committee Chair),  
No members of the public attended.

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

None

### **2.Apologies**

Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr M.H-Oldland (MH-O), Cllr N. Hunt (NH), Cllr H Collins (HC), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM), GCC Cllr L Spivey (LS)

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

GV (LME)

### **4.Approval of Minutes of November 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Proposed GV, seconded JW.

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

There was no report from Cllr Spivey but over the past month she has been working on the flooding on Water Lane.

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

MM's full report is in appendix one, of particular interest will be that;

Plans are underway for the Highways team to address the persistent flooding issue in Water Lane by jetting the drains on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>. We are hopeful that this intervention will bring much needed relief to the affected areas.

### **7. Mike Wilding – Village Lake Finances**

MW's report is in appendix two.

MW presented a comprehensive breakdown of Village Lake spending.

- Whilst the lake is a good asset, as a public right of way and a place to be enjoyed it does bring upkeep and maintenance responsibilities which incur significant ongoing costs.
- It was previously agreed the rent from the parish field would be allocated to the Village Lake.
- There has been an uplift in this rent, it was agreed this should be split between the Village Lake and the Parish Council (PC).

- Therefore the Village Lake budget is now £1250 pa, the Village Lake Committee have authority on the allocation of this.
- No further funding is available from the PC though there may be some activities for which CIL funding can be used.

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

- 8.1 JW sent house name map to Clerk, please contact KH if you would like a copy.
- 8.2 KH has subscribed to the Environment Agency Flood Alert for Somerford Keynes, Ashton Keynes and Ewen.
- 8.3 GV/KH have started the application for online banking.
- 8.4 KH has spoken to the previous Clerk to better understand precept and budgeting process.
- 8.5 When looking at investment decisions, specifically for CIL funding, priority would be given based on;
  - Number of parishioners who would benefit.
  - Whether it benefits currently under served groups.
  - Where there are no ongoing maintenance costs and obligations.
  - A low level of ongoing management/volunteer input required.
- 8.6 MK had a positive meeting with Ben Welbourn and Paul Hazel of Cotswold Lakes Trust and covered a number of local matters.

## **9. Ongoing and New Actions**

- 9.1 **Overgrown Hedge by Sculpture Park**  
KH had a constructive meeting with the Sculpture Park land owner to discuss this.  
**Action:** KH will now contact Richard Gray of GCC Highways.
- 9.2 **Shorcote Flood Mitigation**  
MK contacted Jason Betty at GCC regarding non compliance with this. He has referred the case to the Enforcement Team.  
**Action:** MK to follow up to confirm site inspection date and outcome.
- 9.3 **Interest on Parish Council Funds**  
Given the value (with the CIL money) of funds held we should look at interest earning accounts.  
**Action:** GV/KH to pursue.
- 9.4 **Community Speed Camera**  
The pole for this should be installed early in the new year. The PC will be sent the camera to install. The PC will then be seeking volunteers to help administer the scheme.  
**Action:** MHO to provide updates on confirmed dates when received.
- 9.5 **Mains Sewerage**  
Interest in this was identified in the community survey.  
**Action:** MHO to engage Thames Water
- 9.6 **Missing Link Path (SK to Ashton Keynes)**  
Good progress made by NH, enthusiastic responses from Bewley Homes and Cotswold Lakes Trust.  
**Action:** NH to continue to pursue

### **9.7 Active Travel Fund**

NH submitted an application for funding, should hear outcome in the new year.

**Action:** NH to update once feedback on application received.

### **9.8 Finance**

GV presented a comprehensive report on the PC financial position.

- In 2023/24 PC costs will be significantly higher than its income (income being precept and parish field rental, CIL funding is not included as income due to restrictions on its use).
- Costs are likely to rise next year. CIL money will lead to higher audit costs, likely inflationary pay increase for Clerk.
- Will try to protect reserves, so an increase in precept will be needed.
- Agreed to set up petty cash float for consumables (stamps, ink and so on) purchased by Clerk.

**Action:** GV to present proposal on precept for 2024/25. This needs to be submitted by the end of January.

The following actions (to 9.10) relate to CIL money

### **9.8 Village Hall**

AC has engaged VH committee, they have some funds of their own and some identified projects.

**Action:** AC to invite a VH representative to a future PC meeting to discuss options and opportunities.

### **9.9 Shared Green space**

Interest in this identified in community survey, MHO has identified a short list of possible locations, NH also has a possibility.

**Action:** MHO to engage landowners to qualify their interest in selling and, if so, potential prices.

### **9.10 Legacy Statement**

**Action:** MHO to draft something that could act as a further guide for investment decisions.

### **9.11 Flooding**

HC is continuing her work on flooding and will release a document in the new year.

**Action:** HC to continue the positive progress on this.

### **9.12 Rural England Prosperity Fund**

Cotswold Brew Co made an application and have requested the support of the PC.

**Action:** NH to circulate application, PC to establish how best to support.

### **9.13 Blue Green Algae**

Noted that this is at both Cokes Pit and Neighbridge.

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

### **9.14 Lower Mill Estate Ecologist**

JW has met with James Ponting of LME. In the new year an invite will be issued for a winter nature walk around the Lower Mill Estate to take place in late January.

**Action:** JW to confirm date once confirmed.

## **10. Other Matters**

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

It appears that some of the white lines have been enhanced on this junction.

## **11. Correspondence**

11.1 Update on flooding on Water Lane was received from Cllr L Spivey.

11.2 The broken water meter cover outside the Little Rectory has now been repaired.

11.3 The first of the first aid/defibrillator Course has now been held and was a great success. Another two courses 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. Planning Items**

### **23/03284/FUL**

Full Application for Erection of a single storey rear extension at Chedcliffe Lodge Water Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

**No Objection**

### **23/03569/LBC**

Listed Building Consent for Erection of single storey extension, internal and external alterations, and partial conversion of outbuilding at Old School House Neighbidge Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

**No Objection**

### **23/03568/FUL**

Full Application for Erection of single storey extension, internal and external alterations, and partial conversion of outbuilding at Old School House Neighbidge Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

**No Objection**

### **23/03698/COMPLY**

Compliance with conditions application for Compliance with 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**

### **13. Financial Matters**

#### **Income**

None

#### **Outgoings**

Refreshments for First Aid Course £7.00

Clerks Wages £827.45

Village Lake purchase of rake & hire of Scarifier £83.99

Village Lake Mower Service £111.20

Petty Cash Float £50.00

Parish Website Hosting £9.54

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

**Date of next meeting: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30 pm**

## Appendix One

Somerford Keynes Parish Council Report  
Councillor Mike McKeown  
Cotswold District Council, Kemble Ward

### Highways and Flooding

Plans are underway for the Highways team to address the persistent flooding issue in Water Lane by jetting the drains this coming Thursday. We are hopeful that this intervention will bring much-needed relief to the affected areas.

### Community Infrastructure Grant

The Cotswold District Council Community Infrastructure Grant is now open. This initiative targets local village halls, aiming to bolster communal spaces. The application deadlines are set for 8 January 2023/4 and 12 July 2024/25. For more details and to apply, visit the GRCC website at <https://www.grcc.org.uk/news-events/news-events/post/273-cotswold-district-councilcommunity-infrastructure-grants-now-open>).

### Budget Consultation

The recent CDC budget consultation phase has concluded. With the announcement of results anticipated in the spring, the council is bracing for a three-year financial challenge brought on by diminishing government funds and rising costs. Strategies to balance the budget are a priority and will be outlined in the forthcoming Budget to be released in the spring.

### [Budget consultation 2024/25 - Cotswold District Council](#)

#### [Increased Penalties for Waste Offences](#)

In adherence to government guidelines, CDC is imposing stricter penalties for environmental offences, including fly-tipping, littering, graffiti, and the unauthorised distribution of printed materials. A notable increase in fines will also apply to households whose waste is improperly managed by unlicensed contractors, resulting in fly-tipping. This measure is part of our commitment to maintaining the district's cleanliness and safety.

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Existing Fine</b>	<b>Fine with Discount for early payment</b>	<b>New fine (Payment within 14 days)</b>	<b>Fine with proposed discount (Payment within 14 days)</b>
Fly-tipping	£400	£200*	£1,000	£750
Duty of Care	£400	£200*	£600	£450
Littering and graffiti	£75	£50 **	£500	£375
Distribution of printed matter	£75	£50**	£150	£112

#### [Climate Leadership Academy Participation](#)

I am pleased to report the completion of a three-weekend Climate Leadership Academy, attended by myself and 19 other cabinet leads for climate change from councils nationwide. The program has been instrumental in offering innovative and actionable insights. These learnings will be instrumental in shaping CDC's climate priorities.

## **Appendix Two – Village Lake Report**

### **SOMERFORD KEYNES VILLAGE LAKE**

#### **MANAGEMENT REPORT for DECEMBER 11th 2023 SKPC MEETING**

**This Report covers a brief history of the Lake, and in particular its development and management over the past 10 years. Also included are details of past and planned expenditures.**

#### **Contents.**

- 1. SKPC Lake Assets and Responsibilities, & Insurance**
- 2. Details of Calor Rural Communities Fund Grant 2018**
- 3. Annual expenditure details for past 3 years**
- 4. Lake expenditure budget for 2023/24**

#### **History:**

2003: Land was promised to the village, in lieu of not objecting to gravel extraction from an old planning permission granted some years ago. Gravel extraction took place & landscaped (shaped) afterwards, and a few trees planted in isolated copses. Villagers helped with this. ARC, who had bought a large acreage of the old Somerford Keynes Estate in the 1960s, were bought out by Hanson around this time.

2013: Land legally transferred to SKPC by Hanson, except housing plot on Mill Lane (now Meadow House)

2013 -2016: Lake managed directly by SKPC. Footpath round lake offered to GCC as a Public Right of Way (accepted)

2017: SKPC formed Lake Management subcommittee to manage the Lake

2020, based on experience of the past two years, the annual budget was set by the SKPC, at around £1050 per annum. This also approximated to the income from the Parish Field.



## 1: SKPC Lake Assets and Responsibilities, & Insurance

**Terms of Reference for the Village Lake subcommittee:** Regular inspections of all equipment, fences, gates, trees etc. are required. To this end, monthly inspections are carried out by subcommittee members, problems found put right and records kept.

**Natural England SSSI:** As our lake, like the rest of the Water Park is an SSSI area, we have agreed usage with Natural England, for example we are allowed a bonfire a year.

**Public Footpath:** As landowners, with a public right of way over our land, we are obliged to keep the path clear of obstructions and in reasonable condition for the public to walk safely.

### Table of SKPC Assets & Responsibilities:

Asset	Date Constructed	Notes
S. Boundary Fence: Spine Rd Stockproof timber fence	c. 1978	Design life of Highways timber structures is 60 years, which takes us to 2038. SKPC does not need a stockproof fence, so falling into disrepair is not an issue. Damage is likely to be from fallen GCC Highways trees, from whom SKPC could claim repair costs
SW: Post and wire boundary with Meadow House		The fence has been agreed as shared responsibility, as neither deeds or Land Registry maps mention the fence. One rotted post has been replaced by MW and NH
Boardwalk	c 2013	Estimated life 30yrs, providing decking recoated with preservative every 5 yrs, and any rotten support timbers replaced
Boardwalk handrail (Donated by Mrs Helen Sweet). Cost c. £1700 (materials) Oak posts and Synthetic Hemp	Sept 2020	The odd post replacement maybe, but expected to last as long as the boardwalk itself
Benches and picnic tables	2014, one added 2022	Likely 20 years life, with one preservative coating if need be. Treated timber
Shed, mower and various tools	2018 - 2023	Shed likely 25-year life, with periodic coats of preservative. Mower is 20 years old (donated) but in good order (servicing every 2 years) Battery hedge trimmer (new). Useful life 20 years
QE11 Time Capsule Plaque (oak/stone)	2022	Will last 30 years until excavated in 2052

## **SKPC Insurance matters:**

Public Footpath: We have a landowner's duty to keep open a 1.5m path, clear of obstructions. The public have a right of way to use the path, but not the facilities (difficult to enforce, of course)

Detailed questions were asked of our insurers by the Subcommittee, through the Parish Clerk at the time particularly concerning the public and working volunteers. As a result of these clarifications, we do not allow our volunteers to use chainsaws, only normal gardening and woodland maintenance equipment. We record attendance, what tools they are using and whether they are "experienced users" or need training.

Answers had been received in May, from Zurich via the SKPC Clerk:

*"A exclusion clause in policy refers to work being carried out such as on woodlands, nature reserves etc where tasks require the use of tools such as chainsaws, so activities such as tree felling, volunteers not covered by insurance. It was confirmed that this exclusion does not apply to general day to day maintenance of verges or greens for example. Other answers were as follows:*

- *The council is covered for all assets up to the value of £10k, which will include the shed and contents. Standard perils include fire, theft, flood, etc. Please note however with theft, there is an exclusion on theft that is not as a result of forcible or violent entry. This means moveable items that are left lying around in the open unattended would not be covered.*
- *Please do keep risk assessments, records of any training, maintenance checks on any equipment owned by the parish council that is used by volunteers. In the event of a claim, this acts as proof you had procedures in place to minimise any incidents occurring.*
- *If an injury occurs to a member of the public on areas for which the council are responsible, cover would be in place if the council had been deemed negligent and legally liable, for example if the council had not properly maintained the area, and that was the direct result of the incident. The insurance would defend you at a court trial and pay the legal fees involved up to the limit of indemnity. If it's a pure accident and no negligence involved, a claim cannot be made against the council."*

## 2: Details of Expenditure of Calor Rural Communities Grant

Financial years 20/21, 21/22, 22/23

Item	Cost (exc VAT)	VAT	Notes
SHED Bearers, broom, rake etc... Delivery & Erection Shed shelving. Window shutter	£520 £108 £130 £19	£128 £22 zero £4	Completed & paid (Challenge Fencing) (MJW) Wicks, Spear & J, Gardiners, Tye (MJW) Mark Stevens Completed & paid (Gardiners) Paid by MJW (Committee donation)
POND DIPPING EQUIPMENT	£123	zero	Completed & paid (Wildforms -paid by MR)
TREE SURGERY (vistas and wildfowl fly-in openings) Stakes, ties, compost	£900 £12	Zero £3	Completed & paid (Danny Isaacs)  Paid to MJW (Austins receipt for £14.98 inc VAT)
POND DIPPING PLATFORM Supply: Marmax Installation: JHC	£719 £465	£144 zero	Completed and paid Completed and paid
FLOATING ISLAND	£790	£158	Completed and paid
OWL BOX & CAMERA Owl Box supplied by GBOT Visit by Glos Barn Owl Trust Camera & accessories	£110 £75 £130	£37	Paid directly to GBOT by Wendy Paid directly to GBOT by Wendy Invoice from HandyKam for £166.90 paid by MJW
BAT BOXES	nil		No cost as we have fixed Nick Cartwright's bat box
BEE HOUSE materials	£32	£6	Paid to MJW (Wicks receipts for £38.68 inc VAT)
WOOD ANEMONES 200 rhizomes	£37	£8	Paid to MJW (Naturescape receipt for £49.99 inc VAT)
BOLTS & CLIPS for OWLBOX	£4	£1	£5.27 paid to MJW
GAUGE BOARD	£83	£16.60	Cheque for £99.60 to Shelley Signs Ltd
2 Please Shut the Gate signs	£14.98	£3.00	Cheque for £17.98 to MJW (already paid by MJW card)
OD level Survey	£100	£20	Cheque for £120 to Brunel Surveys
6ft bench for pond dipping area	£200	£40	Cheque issued payable to Hailey Wood Sawmills 7 Feb 22
<i>Remaining in Calor FUND after above expenditure</i>	<b>£428</b>		

### 3: Summary of Lake expenditure budgets for past 3 years

Financial Year	Items	Annual Total
2020/21	4 wheeled trolley First Aid Kit Boardwalk Decking maintenance Mower service & petrol 40 Anti slip strips for Boardwalk	£1126
2021/22	40 anti slip strips for boardwalk Sundries 1 day tree work Battery hedge trimming equipment	£1006
2022/23	QE11 Plaque Owlbox electrical check Shed preservative, brushes Replacement of rotted gate posts & rehang gate Cleaning boardwalk & fixing 28 anti-slip strips	£1053
2023/24 (year so far)	<i>Wildflower meadow "hay cut" and initial raking</i> <i>Purchase of replacement rake for general use</i> <i>Hire of scarifier</i>	£295

## 4: Lake Expenditure Budget for 23/24

Item	Description	Amount (exc VAT)	Spent so far This year	Maintenance	Project
1	Tree Work, removing dead & overhanging branches. Keeping open lake vistas	£500		✓	
2	Autumn work on Wildflower areas	£270	£270		✓
3	Servicing mower	£130		✓	
4	Electrical repairs to wildlife camera in owl box	£50		✓	
5	Spring overseeding of wild flower areas	£180			✓
6	Shed maintenance and storage brackets	£50		✓	
7	Replacement of pond dipping insect identification chart	£20		✓	
8	Reed trimming	£150		✓	
9	General maintenance, repairs, tool replacements	£50	£25	✓	
Total		£1400			

Note: Items 2 & 5 are Pt 2 of the Wildflower project, and can be considered for CIL grant inclusion