

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

## **Village Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Present:** Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr J. Whitwell (JW), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr M.H-Oldland (MH-O), Cllr N. Hunt (NH), Cllr H Collins (HC),

**Also present:** CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM), Clerk K. Holdsworth (KH),  
8 members of the public attended.

### **1. Apologies**

Cllr G. Valentine (GV), GCC Cllr L Spivey (LS)

### **2. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr H Collins (LME)

### **3. Approval of Minutes of December 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 Meeting**

Proposed JW, seconded NH.

### **4. Flooding**

AC reported on the timeline of flooding problems in Water Lane and the activities of Gloucestershire Highways (GHi) going back to the end of last October.

GHi are planning to attend site this week with CCTV equipment in order to identify the specific causes that have led to water levels not previously seen this century.

Given the importance of this topic, dialogue with members of the public was invited and the following points were raised;

- It was suggested that GHi be sent photos of Water Lane on Wednesday afternoon to demonstrate that the water levels are low enough for the CCTV work to take place. AC wrote to Gill Portlock of GHi on January 10<sup>th</sup> stating that most of the water is now gone.
- It was requested that the Parish Council (PC) be given feedback on the CCTV findings. GHi have already committed to this and Gill Portlock has agreed to meet a village representative on site.
- MHO suggested that roles and responsibilities (between for example CDC and GHi) are clearly understood and documented. LS has offered to broker a meeting involving the PC and all local authority flood groups that should assist with this, the PC has welcomed and accepted this offer.  
**Action:** HC to follow up with LS to agree a date.

- It was explained that local drainage records are currently stored in a way that is becoming unsupportable. Recording and archiving will be a part of the flood prevention work already being undertaken by the PC. It was suggested that the GRCC organisation may be able to advise on software to use.
- It was asked whether the PC knew of other villages which have pumping equipment. The answer is we don't currently though we do know LME have a pump which they had offered to the village.
- It was pointed out that there is some pumping equipment at Neigh Bridge and asked whether something similar would be possible in Water Lane. Whether to invest in pumping equipment will also be covered by the wider report.

Since the meeting GHI returned to site on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> and we thought it useful to include details of that here. They were unable to use CCTV equipment due to the volume of water. They did though identify a point of blockage which is where the drain joins the ditch on the southern side of Water Lane.

It is not possible to commence work without the permission of the landowner. At the time of writing it is not known who this is but we hope to progress early during w/c 15<sup>th</sup> and can work on next steps from there.

## **5. Public Session**

The following matters were raised;

- 5.1 A parishioner explained their objection to planning ref 23/035689/FUL. It was thought that the date by which objections need to be lodged has passed.  
**Action:** The PC will review and consider whether to pursue with CDC.
- 5.2 The Parish Council were congratulated on their work and their general communication.
- 5.3 Whilst the functional responsibilities of individual councillors was welcomed it was asked whether anyone is aligned to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, specifically around keeping it current and relevant and looking at eight particular focus areas identified.  
**Action:** AC to look at this.
- 5.4 It was suggested that decisions on CIL money expenditure be held until findings of the flooding causes are understood and resolved. AC responded agreeing with this in principle and confirmed there are no immediate plans in place for the CIL money.
- 5.5 There are new buildings at Field Farm, it was stated that the owner had committed to planting trees to screen these developments.  
**Action:** NH to talk to the Field Farm owner about this.

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

There was no report from Cllr Spivey this month but an email was received keeping us up to date on the current flooding situation.

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

The PC thanked Mike for his efforts on working with various authorities to resolve the Water Lane flood situation.

## **8. Richard Goldman – Village Hall Committee**

RG was invited to attend on behalf of the Village Hall committee as the PC are interested to see if there are village hall related projects that could be considered for investing the CIL funds.

He explained that two projects under current consideration are the renovation of the kitchen and a possible extension to provide more storage space and a smaller meeting room. Others could be considered were funding available.

**Action:** Continue dialogue, AC will attend the Village Hall committee meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **9. Precept and Parish Finances**

By the end of January we need to submit out 2024/25 precept request to Cotswold District Council (CDC). This is collected from residents as part of their Council Tax.

The current precept is £4000, in the current financial year PC spend will be around £5300.

SK has one of the lowest precepts of parishes in CDC, the average per house hold here is £9.30 per household per annum versus a Cotswold District wide average of £99.51.

A review of current costs has been undertaken and it was agreed there is no scope to cut them if the community wishes to have a functioning parish council.

The expectation is that costs will rise next year due to factors such as inflation, the CIL money meaning a higher and (more expensive) level of audit will be needed and the running costs associated with the speed camera.

It was agreed that the precept for 2024/25 should be £6,300.00

**Action:** AC to draft a note to parishioners explaining this and the rationale.

**Action:** GV/KH to submit our request to CDC.

In May there will be an annual Parish Meeting and financials will be presented in more granular detail there.

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

- 10.1** GV presented financial analysis to enable the precept to be determined.
- 10.2** Richard Goldman attended PC meeting to discuss village hall plans and CIL funding.
- 10.3** HC has spoken with Ben Welbourn on the subject of blue/green algae. Signs were put up to warn visitors to be cautious.
- 10.4** James Ponting has invited parishioners to a Winter Nature Walk at Lower Mill Estate on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Places are still available but must be booked in advance via [jponting@habitatfirstgroup.com](mailto:jponting@habitatfirstgroup.com)
- 10.5** Cotswold Brew Co was successful in its application to the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The application mainly concerns activities around sustainability.

## **11. Ongoing and New Actions**

- 11.1 Overgrown Hedge by Sculpture Park**  
KH has contacted Richard Grey of GHI and is awaiting a meeting date to progress.  
**Action:** KH to chase.
- 11.2 Shorcote Flood Mitigation**  
MK contacted Jason Betty at GCC regarding non compliance with this. He has referred the case to the Enforcement Team, we are still awaiting feedback.  
**Action:** MK to chase Jason Betty.
- 11.3 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 this once we have online banking.
- 11.4 Community Speed Camera**  
We are still waiting for the pole to be installed for the camera.  
**Action:** MHO to provide updates on confirmed dates when received.
- 11.5 Mains Sewerage**  
Interest in this was identified in the community survey.  
**Action:** MHO has confirmed the process by which to engage Thames Water and will draft a letter to send on behalf of the PC.
- 11.6 Missing Link Path (SK to Ashton Keynes)**  
This is tied in with the Active Travel Fund application which has been submitted and which we await feedback on. Success with that combined with positive feedback from stakeholders should allow progress to be made.  
**Action:** NH to continue to pursue
- 11.7 Shared Green space**  
Interest in this identified in community survey, MHO has identified a short list of possible locations.  
**Action:** MHO will draft letter to landowners to qualify their interest in selling and, if so, potential prices.
- 11.8 Flooding**  
HC is continuing to lead the work on flooding.  
**Action:** HC to issue draft document ahead of the next PC meeting.

## **12. Correspondence**

Tim Whittaker, Assistant Biodiversity Officer for CDC, wrote to ascertain interest in a ponds project in residential gardens.

**Action:** HC to contact Mike Wilding to see how SK might engage and participate

## **13. Planning Items**

### **23/02209/FUL**

Full Application for erection of bathroom/changing facility block at Lake 32 Spratsgate Lane Somerford Keynes Gloucestershire.

The PC had previously objected after a parishioner had raised the question of sewerage in a previous PC meeting. The application now confirms they will use the current system.

**Action:** MK to write to CDC expressing concerns about the capacity of this given the proposed new block is much larger than the existing facility.

### **23/03745/FUL**

Full Application for Variation of condition 4 (occupancy) to allow all year occupancy at 5 The Water Garden as a holiday home re permission 13/00838/FUL - Erection of 296 holiday units and lake with estate roads, parking provision, storage barns, play space, electricity sub station (in accordance with approved outline planning permissions) variation of condition 2 of 11/03126/FUL to substitute plans for different unit types and layout in an area north of the spa building at 5 The Water Garden Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire.

**No Objection**

## **14. Financial Matters**

### **Income**

None

### **Outgoings**

None

## **15. Any Other Business**

### **15.1 Cotswold Lakes Trust**

NH reported that the Cotswold Lakes Trust is exploring changing the name of the Cotswold Water Park and is seeking support in principle from local bodies.

**Action:** NH to confirm our support to pursue this.

### **15.2 First Aid Training**

Thank you to Marcus Gibbons for his time on this, two more dates are taking place on 13<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> January. If you wish attend please contact [skpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:skpcclerk@gmail.com)

### **15.3 Objectives**

It was agreed that the PC should agree some key objectives for the year ahead.

**Action:** AC to draft and circulate.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

**Date of next meeting: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30 pm**