

**Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting**  
**Village Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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

**Also present:** CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM), Clerk K. Holdsworth (KH), M Wilding (MW, Village Lake Committee Chair) and 2 members of the public attended.

**1. Apologies**

Cllr M. Keegan (MK), CC Cllr L Spivey

**2. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr G Valentine, Cllr H Collins, CDC Cllr M McKeown (all LME)

**3. Public Session**

The following matters were raised:

- 3.1 Cars going to Lower Mill Estate often try and enter via Mill Lane not realising this is a dead end.

**Action:** PC will write to LME requesting that clearer directions are provided to the estate and perhaps to look at 'no access' signage at the top of Mill Lane.

- 3.2 The residents discount for Lake 32 cannot be accessed when booking on line.

Residents need to take proof of their address to Lake 32 to benefit from this.

**4. Approval of Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 Meeting**

Proposed GV, seconded HC.

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

Cllr L Spivey's report is in Appendix One.

The Build Back Better fund was discussed as there is still time to make applications to this.

**Action:** MW to consider whether there are any possibilities for Village Lake related applications.

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

Cllr M McKeown's report is in Appendix Two.

Of most significance to us is the update on the planning application for Development on the Land To The South East Of Ashland House (20/04079/FUL) where the applicant has now appealed the decision to the National Planning Inspector.

Once a start date has been assigned to the appeal all those who previously objected will be notified and will be able to respond to the National Planning Inspector.

We need to understand the basis of the appeal. Once that information is made public it will inform the nature of our response.

**Action:** PC to look out for the formal notification. MHO will draft the PC response and will engage with those parishioners who have the deepest background knowledge on the subject to ensure the most effective objection can be made.

## **7. Report from Mike Wilding, Village Lake**

Mike Wilding's report is in Appendix Three

There are two volunteer dates planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> March. There will also be another Childrens Activity Day (date to be arranged).

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

### **8.1 Interest Earning Bank Accounts**

KH and GV have completed the move to online banking. Further details on all things finance related are in section 10.1

### **8.2 Mains Sewerage**

MHO has written to Thames Water. They have a statutory obligation to respond though timescales are not known. This item will be moved from agendas and minutes until we have that response, at which time it will be raised again.

### **8.3 Cotswold Lakes Trust Rebranding**

NH attended a community meeting hosted by Cotswold Lakes Trust. Councils and businesses were supportive of the rebranding, this process is likely to run for some time. As it's not specifically a SK initiative we will take off ongoing agendas though NH is actively engaged and will update us as required. A document produced by the Trust setting out some interesting background and reasons behind the current initiative is attached.

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

### **9.1 Shorcote Flood Mitigation**

MK has been in contact with Jason Betty. He has now written to the Enforcement Team and hopefully they have now visited.

**Action:** MK to update.

### **9.2 Community Speed Camera**

We have had no further updates. Due to changing personnel and a change of contractor, progress on Gloucestershire Constabulary's roll out is slow.

**Action:** MHO to provide updates when received.

### **9.3 Active Travel Fund & Spine Road Cycle Path Missing Link**

NH is in talks with stakeholders, there is good support from Bewley Homes and the Cotswold Lakes Trust. The range of stakeholders and land owners and the fact that the route traverses two counties make this complex but dialogue is positive.

The Active Travel fund application has been reviewed and further information to support this is being provided by NH.

**Action:** NH to continue to progress and update.

### **9.4 Shared Green Space**

Interest in this was identified in the community survey, MHO has identified a short list of possible locations.

**Action:** MHO to contact landowners to ascertain their interest in selling land.

### **9.5 Flooding**

HC has completed the draft flooding report. The PC thanked her for the significant amount of work undertaken. This will be a living document as there will always be new information and events to be considered and it's a topic that is almost impossible to set precise boundaries around.

**Action:** HC to circulate for review and comment to those parishioners who have helped with her research with a view to a general release in April.

A key part of the report is an action plan which identifies inspections which should take place periodically to identify risks and proactively prevent flooding.

**Action:** HC to contact Bledington PC, the Environment Agency and CDC for their thoughts and advice on how to achieve this.

New ways of mapping are required as current records are held in an un-editable format.

**Action:** HC to engage FWAG for advice.

### **9.6 Barriers & Signs**

These were left by the contractors after the Water Lane flooding. KH has contacted GCC Highways twice to request their removal.

**Action:** KH to continue to monitor.

## **10. Other Matters Discussed**

### **10.1 Finance**

The move to online banking is complete. This will assist with efficiency and ease of financial reporting. Thanks to Karen for driving this.

It also enables the PC to more easily benefit from interest earning accounts. The plan is to keep c£6k (around one year's normal spend) in an instant access account which currently pays 1.4% pa with the bulk going into a 95 day notice account currently paying 4.25% pa.

Interest from CIL funding will be recycled into normal PC reserves.

With the ability to transfer money electronically rather than using cheques with multiple signatories the following levels of spend approval were agreed;

Up to £50 KH

£50 to £250 KH plus one of GV or AC.

Over £250 KH, GV and AC.

As the end of the financial year approaches we need to look at audit both as business as usual and to establish whether requirements change with the additional funding we now have received.

**Action:** MHO to assist in contacting the existing auditor.

### **10.2 Community Infrastructure Levy Investments**

It is a priority to identify ways of investing this in line with agreed and previously published criteria set out. Possible options include;

Village Hall (heating, extension, audio visual enhancements; would need agreement of VH Committee)

Play Equipment (possible sites being Neigh Bridge, Village Hall, a purchased green space)

The Village Lake

Contribution to The Missing Link

Anything that may help with flood prevention (eg Kiosk at Neigh Bridge)

Suggestions from parishioners are encouraged.

### **10.3 Annual General Meeting**

The date has been set for Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The Annual Parish Meeting is Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

**Action:** AC/KH to finalise agenda.

#### **10.4 Village Litter Pick**

This will be on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> from 10.30, meeting at the Village Hall.

KH has secured access to equipment, confirmed insurance cover, is scheduling a risk assessment and has agreed means of disposing of litter collected.

**Action:** KH advertise date and confirm the number of volunteers. As a number of people highlighted litter as an issue in the Community Survey we hope there will be many!

### **11. Correspondence**

#### **11.1 CIL Spending by Local Parishes**

KH contacted neighbouring PCs to understand how they have invested such funds, these were a mixture of play equipment and heating for the local community centre.

#### **11.2 Dog Fouling**

A number of people have written to the PC concerning this being an issue in fields. As most people would understand that this is anti social and that fines can be incurred there is very little the PC can do to resolve this.

However, an e mail on the topic has been circulated and some local children have offered to produce some posters. We welcome this less formal community led approach so have gratefully accepted their offer.

**Action:** PC to laminate and distribute posters once received.

### **12. Planning Items**

#### **24/00209/LBC**

Listed Building Consent for Erection of a porch extension and alterations to Somerford Keynes House. Alteration to Kings Cottage, the Coach House and adjoining outbuildings including the erection of two rear-facing roof dormers at Somerford Keynes House  
Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DN

**No Objection**

#### **24/00208/FUL**

Full Application for Erection of a porch extension and alterations to Somerford Keynes House. Alteration to Kings Cottage, the Coach House and adjoining outbuildings including the erection of two rear-facing roof dormers at Somerford Keynes House  
Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DN

**No Objection**

## **24/00496/FUL**

Full Application for Erection of 8 detached holiday units within Copse Mere provision for new landscaping plot and visitor parking and associated infrastructure at Copse Mere Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Gloucestershire.

Whilst much of the impact of this will only be felt within Lower Mill we recognise that this is a part of the parish and many homeowners there contribute to our precept.

**Action:** GV/HC to draft a comment on this development for the PC to review and submit. This needs to be done by March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **13. Financial Matters**

### **Income**

None

### **Outgoings**

Clerks Wages (Jan-March) £827.45

Defibrillator Battery & Pads £424.20

Printer Ink £9.98

Village Lake Expenses £379.46

McAfee Subscription £79.99

## **14. Any Other Business**

### **14.1 Sewing Group**

The first meeting will be held at the Village Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> March between 10am and 12 noon. All welcome, a charge of £1.50 per person is to be used for rental of the village hall and refreshments.

Anyone who is interested in attending should contact the Parish Clerk

### **14.2 Lower Mill Estate Manager**

Rob Squizzoni has now left.

Rob came to a PC meeting last year and presented very informatively. He was also very responsive to requests for assistance with flooding. We are sorry to see him leave and wish him well.

### **14.3 Lower Mill Estate Support**

As the estate is required by its S106 Agreement to assist with ecology related community work, Alex Hughes (Head Groundsman at LME) has asked if there are such things the parish may need help with.

**Action:** PC to engage with Alex to thank him for the offer and to understand the extent of the support available.

**14.4 Thames Head Energy (THE)**

Thames Head Energy are bidding for early stage development funding from Gloucestershire CC to support further feasibility and site identification work.

To secure this THE needs to transition to a Community Benefit Society, a legal structure where the beneficiaries are the local community.

In the event that this transition doesn't take place quickly enough for THE to be able to apply for the funding a request was made for the application to be made by the PC if required. This will be a one off transaction.

The PC agreed to this, associated work will be undertaken by MHO.

**14.5 Residential Ponds Initiative**

There will be an event in SK on July 13<sup>th</sup> at the Village Hall and the Village Lake.

**Action:** HC to provide more details when available.

**14.6 Lower Mill Estate Ecologist, James Ponting**

Following the success of the Winter Nature Walk which James led he is putting together a programme for the year.

**Action:** JW to circulate once published.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

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

## **Appendix One**

### **Cllr Lisa Spivey** **GCC Report** **March 2024**

Please find a general update on areas of interest. For specific issues or casework please email me directly or give me a call.

Lisa.spivey@gloucestershire.gov.uk  
01285 653405

### **Adult Social Care Consultation**

The Council has launched a consultation on how much residents think it is fair to contribute to care costs.

The consultation is available here:

<https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk.engagemethq.com/fairer-contributions-policy>

### **Fostering**

The Council continues to have high numbers of children needing to be looked after.

If you could offer a space in your home as a foster carer then please do get in touch.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering/>

### **Build Back Better**

Final call for applications! I still have some funds left in my Build Back Better pot. The money must be spent by the end of the year, so please do get in touch if you have or know of an organisation or community group who would benefit.

Examples of projects I have backed:

- Playground refurbishments
- I-pads for digitally excluded school pupils
- Village hall solar panels
- Read with me program to support children reading
- Cotswold Lakes Trust summer program to provide experiences disadvantaged children
- Local girl guide group

### **Highways and Flooding**

I continue to be very busy with all matters highways and localised flooding. I believe that the majority of the most urgent issues are in hand, with action



planned, being taken or been taken. Please let me know if there are any flooding issues that you need some help with.

It's "pot hole" season and I am very aware of the general state of dis-repair on our local road network.

The "Fix My Street" tool is the most efficient way of reporting potholes, broken drain covers, overgrown hedges and a large number of highways related issues, including fly-tipping and pavement issues.

<https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>

It's important to log the issues as that way should an incident occur, then there is a trail to follow on when the repair was made (or not!).

I am working with the local highways manager, Richard Gray who retires at the end of March, and his successor, Gill Portlock on identifying areas where my councillor "Highways Local" funds can be best used in the new financial year, so do let me know if there are small schemes you think are relevant. I continue to lobby for more funding (and a different, non quantitative set of criteria) for our rural roads. It often feels like the big towns get all the money and we are forgotten because the numbers don't stack up.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 10am Full Council

## Appendix Two

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

### Development on the Land To The South East Of Ashland House

20/04079/FUL Land To The South East Of Ashland House

This was refused by CDC in October 2023 following strong objections by the PC, local residents and myself.

The applicant has now appealed the decision to the national planning inspector.

Once a start date has been assigned to the appeal everyone who previously objected will be notified and are encouraged to write to the national planning inspector.

### CDC Local Plan

The new local plan is now at the consultation phase.

Have your say, closes 7 April (extended): [‘Green to the Core’ Local Plan consultation begins \(cotswold.gov.uk\)](#)

### Cirencester Town Centre Master Plan

Consultation now open, closing 17 March

[From Roman to renewal - honouring our past, celebrating our present and inspiring our future \(cotswold.gov.uk\)](#)

### Car Parking and Housing Strategy Consultations

Now closed, results on feedback to come.

### Repairs to The Old Station

[Council to repair The Old Station as future for the building continues to be explored \(cotswold.gov.uk\)](#)

Funding granted to keep the building safe and serviceable

CDC is exploring how the building can be used going forward without putting a strain on public finances

### Crowdfund Cotswolds

Usual plug to use for local projects.

Kemble community garden raised over £9,000. Thames Head Community Energy over £18,000.

[From Ideas to Impact: Unleash Your Imagination with Crowdfund Cotswold](#)

### New Parliamentary Boundaries for next General Election

This is now setup. We are in the new South Cotswold constituency

Note: This does not make any differences to the Cotswold District Council or Gloucestershire County Council boundaries

<https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/changes-to-parliamentary-boundariesacross-the-cotswold-district-to-come-into-effect-for-next-general-election>

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

£296,450 has been allocated to a range of projects across the Cotswolds

[More money invested into the Cotswolds](#)

### CDC's New Corporate Plan Approved

This sets the priorities for the current term, up to the elections in 2028. It was approved at the recent cabinet meeting.

There is a strong focus on Climate Change action, which is my area of responsibility. Together with delivering good services, delivering housing , supporting communities, supporting the economy,

[Annex A - Our Cotswolds Our Plan.pdf](#)

[Annex B - Our Cotswolds Our Plan- Action Plan 2024.pdf](#)

### Thames Head Energy - Community Energy

Broadening Search for Solar farm locations - if you know of anyone who might be a willing host we are looking for sites with 25-50 acres of lower grade agricultural land that aren't too close to a community of course.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Mike Wildings Report Village Lake**

Volunteer Mornings at the Lake have been postponed due to the very wet winter weather, which saw the Lake level reaching its highest level since we installed the gauge, 2 years ago. 87.83m above Ordnance Datum (which is mean sea level measured at Newlyn Cornwall).

However work has continued:

1. TREEWORX: In January our contractor carried out the following chainsaw work:

- Removal of dead and snagged branches overhanging the path on the Spine Rd site, and also collapsed branches resting on our boundary fence in that area.
- Felling of overhanging and dead branches from trees outside our eastern boundary
- Removal of tree branches and lakeside scrub in the NW corner, opening up the vista looking SE across the Lake, and allowing more sunlight to reach the wildflower area

2. WILDFLOWER & BULB AREA:

Maintenance work was carried out by committee members, to prepare ground for overseeding in the spring

3. SPRING PLANS:

We are planning Volunteer mornings on 23 & 29 March, as advertised, & looking at repeating our successful Childrens' Activity Morning, probably in May half term week

Regards

Mike