

Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall, 14th July 2025

Present: Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr H.Collins (HC), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr N.Hunt (NH), Cllr J Whitwell (JW), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM),

Also present: Three members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllr G.Valentine, Cllr M.H-Oldland (MHO), Clerk K.Holdsworth (KH)

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr N.Hunt

3. Approval of Minutes of 9th June 2025 Meeting

Proposed HC, seconded NH

4. Report from District Cllr M.McKeown

Mike's report is in appendix one.

5. Actions from Previous Meeting

5.1 Overgrown Footpath Entrance from Spine Road

Frank Dorrington-Ward of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has confirmed that the clearance work will be undertaken though the individual who will do it is off until the end of July.

5.2 Footpath Map

This is now on the noticeboard.

5.3 Tree Debris on Verge Between Mill Lane and Neigh Bridge

GCC have confirmed this is the responsibility of the landowners to clear.

Action: NH to ask whether Cotswold Lakes Trust are interested in taking the debris for conservation/ecology purposes.

6. Matters Discussed

6.1 Finance and Governance

We are informed that the PC must have a Risk Management plan. Will probably seek an example from elsewhere as a template.

Action: Specific ownership and timeline to be agreed at next meeting.

We are also informed the Parish Clerk must have .gov e-mail address. Research concludes best value and solution will cost £4.60 plus VAT per month.

Action: KH to take actions to set this up.

6.2 Flooding

6.2.1 Shorncote

Little progress on work by Hills. CDC had previously talked about possible formal enforcement measures.

Action: MK to again contact to Sam Carrier at CDC, copying MM to escalate.

6.2.2 Mapping

New software has been purchased, now looking at how to move data onto this.

Action: HC to progress.

6.2.3 Spine Road and Neigh Bridge Kiosk

No news on these.

Action: HC to chase Highways and Environment Agency respectively.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy Projects

7.1 Village Hall EV Chargers

All necessary paperwork signed by all parties so will be made live shortly.

7.2 Swings at Neigh Bridge

We await confirmation from the Lakes Trust on timings based on the availability of their contractor.

7.3 Church Staircase

The PCC are awaiting feedback from the latest survey.

7.4 Village Lake

MW progressing quotes for a cover for one of the benches and boardwalk repair work.

7.5 North of Village Footpath Extension

It seems the application to the Active Travel Fund has been successful resulting in a £25k grant being awarded.

One quotation has been received for the work to build a path from Elm View to Field Farm, others are still being sought.

As covered in previous minutes, GCC Highways are happy for this project to proceed so long as a suitably accredited provider is selected.

It is likely that the PC will vote on whether to go ahead with this project at a future meeting. As it is a significant project we invite parishioners to submit their views in order that they can be taken into account.

Actions: NH to continue to seek quotations. MHO to update on the details of the award. Parishioners to submit their views if wished

8. Planning

25/01705/TCONR

Works to trees in conservation areas for 1 - Snakesbark Maple - 1.5m overall crown reduction. Cut back trees behind to give 3.0m clearance. 2 - Cherry - reduce crown back to previous pruning points at West Manor Barn Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DL

No Objection

25/01181/FUL

Full Application for Installation of a Fujitsu 10KW wall-mounted air-conditioning unit to exterior wall of north elevation. at 4 The Somerford Lodges Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

No Objection

25/01623/FUL

Full Application for Installation of solar farm, associated infrastructure, ancillary battery storage units and grid connection cable run at Land At Grid Reference 401975 198339 Spratsgate Lane Siddington Gloucestershire

Objection

The basis of the objection are;

- Such installations should not be built on such high grade land.
- There will be an increased flood risk to proven vulnerable areas (Shorncote).
- Low level of proposed screening from road and properties in comparison to similar installations.

Action: MK and HC to draft objection for submission by July 16th.

25/01902/LBC

Listed Building Consent for Replacement windows and doors to Coach House and Garage at Somerford Keynes House Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DN

No Objection

9. Correspondence

9.1 Parish Field

A parishioner asked if, rather than renting this out, it could be used as a community space for children to play in.

Whilst the current lease to Lake 32 still has a couple of years to run the PC are happy to discuss this. Considerations need to include access, the fact that the current rental income covers the cost of Village Lake maintenance and that the field would need to be actively managed in a similar way to Mike Wilding and his committee manage the Village Lake.

Action: Parishioners who wish to pursue this to contact the Parish Clerk. If there is interest it will be an agenda item at a future PC meeting.

9.2 Litter at Neigh Bridge

The PC have engaged with the Cotswold Lakes Trust who have confirmed they have no plans to change the policy on having no bins at Neigh Bridge. This is after three years evidence showing that having no bins does not result in visitors taking their litter home with them. They do conduct a clearance every Monday (sometimes more frequently during busy periods) and this is their preferred approach.

Nearby resident William Ireland did some litter clearing there after finishing his GCSEs. His and the efforts of other parishioners who often pick up litter whilst on their regular walks are much appreciated. However, following the very hot weather and high visitor numbers most people are now understandably not willing to deal with the volume and sometimes unpleasant nature of the debris there.

Given the Lakes Trust's policy the PC discussed the possibility of the PC paying for CDC or a private contractor to install bin and collect rubbish at least during peak season. This probably will not completely resolve the issue but it would hopefully improve it. We would need the approval of the Lakes Trust to proceed.

Action: NH to engage with the Lakes Trust to ascertain their level of interest and support for such an initiative.

10. June Income and Expenditure

Income Interest Earned June 25 £261.44

Total Income £261.44

Expenditure NIL

Total Expenditure NIL

Village Lake

Brackets/Equipment for Shed £73.44

VL Total Expenditure £73.44

CIL Expenditure

Church Staircase Survey £2940.00

Total CIL Spend £2940.00

Transfers None

Petty Cash Expenditure None

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 NH shared notice of a potential planning application for padel courts on the land at the western side of Minety Lane at the Spine Road crossroads. Applicants were keen to attend a PC meeting to share details, given there is no meeting in August they may do this via e-mail depending on the speed of planning progress.
- 11.2 HC suggested the possibility of compostable toilets at Neigh Bridge funded by the PC. We are fortunate to live somewhere very pleasant, as such it is understandable that others will wish to visit. It would be appreciated if they can be respectful of the environment when here. Without excusing poor behavior, it may encourage them to do so if there were facilities such as bins and toilets in the most public places.
Action: NH to ascertain Lakes Trust level of interest in this.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Date of next meeting Monday 8th September 2025

Appendix One

Monthly Report: July 2025

Prepared by Mike McKeown (mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk)

Councillor for the Kemble Ward

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital

Cotswold District Council (CDC)

Kemble Ward Update

Kemble Wick Flooding CDC has secured £4,000 in funding from the Gloucestershire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority to commission Rappor to carry out a feasibility study into flooding issues at Kemble Wick. It is important to note that this funding is specifically for the study phase—there is no commitment at this stage to fund the construction of any flood defences. CDC will contract Rappor to deliver the study, which is expected to result in a proposed solution involving a mix of swales, bunds, and ditches. Rappor have been asked to liaise with both Aura Power and Bathurst Estate and residents during the process. Once the design is complete, we will work with all parties to explore how best to implement it—potentially with support from Aura and Bathurst, who may be able to assist with equipment and labour. Aura have already expressed willingness to help.

EV Chargers at Somerford Keynes Village Hall The new 2 x 7kW EV chargers are now installed and due to go live shortly, with final insurance and DNO connection steps completed. This was delivered by Thames Head Community Energy, with great support from the village hall committee and parish council.

Bledisloe Barn Planning Objection I submitted a formal objection to the proposed barn conversion at Bledisloe Barn in Coates, working closely with Coates Parish Council and local residents. Significant concerns were also raised by statutory consultees, consultees, including Landscape and Conservation officers. The application is currently on hold awaiting a response from the applicant. Once that response is received, the planning officer will prepare a report recommending either permission or refusal. If the recommendation is to permit, I will formally request that it goes to the Planning Committee, given the level of public concern and the presence of valid planning objections.

Climate Change Portfolio

Climate Action Scorecard CDC made one of the largest improvements in the country in the updated 2025 UK Climate Action Scorecard, rising from 24% in 2023 to 45%—moving from the lower third to the top sixth of district councils nationally. This progress reflects targeted action across governance, buildings, waste, biodiversity, and community engagement. Notable achievements include retrofitting our leisure centres and council buildings, installing EV chargers, improving recycling and food waste services, eliminating peat use, and adopting wildlife-friendly management on council land.

We also launched the Cotswold Climate Action Network and published a SMART-targeted action plan. While our Transport and Planning scores have risen, there remains scope to go further—particularly by embedding stronger climate policies in the new Local Plan and deepening resident engagement. The scorecard is a powerful endorsement of our practical, whole-council approach to climate leadership.

Waste Fleet Decarbonisation We've begun work on a transition plan for moving our Ubico-operated waste fleet from diesel to electric vehicles by the next fleet replacement cycle. Options for depot charging infrastructure, solar power, and HVO interim fuels are being explored. This is likely to be the biggest single contributor to cutting the council's own carbon footprint.

Home Energy Efficiency We'll be holding a major public event on home energy efficiency in the evening of 18 September. It will offer guidance on insulation, clean heating solutions such as heat pumps, solar panels, battery storage, and how to access grants. Alongside practical advice, we'll also highlight the co-benefits of energy efficiency—lower energy bills, warmer and healthier homes, reduced emissions, and increased property value.

CDC Climate Board The new internal Climate Board has now been set up, bringing together cabinet members and senior officers to embed climate across all portfolios. Its initial focus includes driving forward action on waste fleet, buildings, and reporting against our net zero commitments. This was a recommendation from the UK100 Climate Academy and should improve portfolio alignment.

Village of the Year Judge I was honoured to be a judge for the Gloucestershire Village of the Year awards, visiting communities across the county and learning about their inspiring local climate, nature, community engagement, and digital innovation projects. It was a great reminder of the creativity and passion in our rural areas.

Rural England Prosperity Fund I supported the successful application for £19,000 for rooftop solar panels at Tetbury Goods Shed. Somerford Keynes Parish Council were awarded £25,000 to improve footpaths and enhance access to nature in the village. This national fund has provided vital support for small-scale rural improvements with climate and community benefits across our district.

Digital Portfolio

This is a new portfolio created in May 2025, and I'm honoured to be the first cabinet lead. My priority is to help make the council more efficient and effective in how we work and how we serve residents, by embracing the potential of digital tools and artificial intelligence. These technologies can help simplify services, cut duplication, support our staff, and deliver better outcomes for our communities.

I bring to this work my experience leading the AI adoption strategy for my own employer in the private sector—giving me a practical insight into the opportunities and challenges of modernising through AI. While it's still early days, my focus is on laying the groundwork for a thoughtful, responsible, and ambitious approach that can deliver real benefits for Cotswold residents and the council alike.

CDC-Wide Updates

New Interim Chief Executive Jane Portman has joined CDC as Interim CEO, following Robert Weaver's departure. Jane brings deep experience as a council leader and has a strong track record in change management and staff engagement. I look forward to working with her to continue our delivery agenda. <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/jane-portman-appointed-as-interim-ceo-at-cotswold-district-council>

Shared Prosperity Fund Awards Nine community projects have received over £120,000 in new funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. I'm particularly pleased to see grants supporting solar, biodiversity, and inclusive facilities in villages across the district. <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/local-initiatives-across-the-cotswolds-to-receive-over-gbp-120k-in-funding>

Local Plan Update The May Housing Land Supply Report confirms CDC's five-year housing land supply is now just 1.8 years under the new national methodology. This underlines the urgency of progressing our new Local Plan.

Public consultation closed in April and call for land supply late 2024, officers are now analysing responses. Further consultation is expected in Autumn 2025.

Appendix 2

Lisa Spivey Summer 2025 GCC Report

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Work continues apace with various workstreams looking at different aspects of the process. This includes, Vision and Ambition, Devolution Options, Locality Model, Council Tax Equalisation, and Democracy.

GCC Is working in partnership with all of the district, borough and city councils on all 3 of the options put to government in the interim proposals in March.

In the end the decision on which option will be implemented in Gloucestershire is one which will be made by Ministers in Westminster, so the council leaders of Gloucestershire are closely aligned on making sure that any option chose by government is implementable and will allow for the continued delivery of services across the county.

As part of the data gathering process, there is an engagement piece of work being carried out on behalf of all 7 councils at the moment and is live until the 9th August.

You can take part in the survey here: [County-wide local government reorganisation survey | Have Your Say Gloucestershire](#)

Fairer Funding Review

Government published its consultation on the proposed Fairer Funding Review. For Gloucestershire early modelling suggests that the council could lose up to 10% of its overall budget as government attempts to move money from the South, up to the North of the country where there are areas of deeper deprivation. This means that as the council begins its budget setting process for the next financial year, we are looking at potentially looking at finding up to £50million of savings in order to balance our budget.

Community 20s

One of the priorities I set out in my opening speech to council on the 21st May was beginning the process of consulting with town and parish councils on their support or otherwise for speed reductions in their area. A letter was sent out to town and parish councils across the county and we will be using that to inform the next steps. Please bear in mind that this will be a lengthy process, but there is commitment to get it done where the community wants it.

Ofsted

There was a full Ofsted inspection of Children's services, held over 3 weeks in June. Results will be published at the end of this month.