

Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall, 13th October 2025

Present: Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr H.Collins (HC), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr N.Hunt (NH), Cllr G.Valentine, Cllr M.H-Oldland (MHO), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM)

Also present: Clerk K.Holdsworth (KH) and two members of the public

1. Apologies

GCC Cllr Lisa Sprivey, Cllr J Whitwell (JW),

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Public Session

3.1 CIL Balance

Current CIL funds are £89,607

As detailed in section 9, we have committed to around £25k of spend from this.

3.2 Status of North of Village Footpath Extension

This was covered in September's minutes. A general footpath update is in section 9.3.

3.3 Newsletter

Suggestion that the Parish Council (PC) publishes a newsletter on its activities.

These are already detailed in meeting minutes so we will not be doing this.

Outside of the PC there is an active community WhatsApp group, a Facebook page and Muriel's excellent Chronicle newsletter. So the view is that for those who wish to participate we have a quite well-informed community.

3.4 Communication

On a similar topic it was suggested that as the PC knows who is on its mailing it also knows who isn't and should look to engage with those who aren't.

This isn't correct as whilst we have e mail addresses we can't correlate those to physical addresses. As well the e-mail distribution, meeting minutes are put on the noticeboard and SK website so there are multiple ways to access them.

If anyone would like to be added to the distribution list (or knows of anyone who is not on it and would like to join) please contact skpcclerk@gmail.com

We do appreciate that there will be people who can't receive electronic communication though we can't distinguish between those who choose not to and those who can't. If you know of someone who cannot but you feel that there is something of interest to them we would ask that you share details with them. It doesn't all have to come directly from the PC!

3.5 Highways Signs

A number of Highways signs have been left after the recent footpath works and there also a few signs around and about that have been there for a while.

Action: KH to report these to Highways. Remember also that anyone can report such things on fixmystreet.com

As an update and to prove the process works, subsequent to the meeting the parishioner who reported this has received confirmation that Highways have instructed their contractors to collect these.

As you will see in LS's report this was a priority for the new GCC Leader and good to see it is being acted upon.

4. Approval of Minutes of 14th July 2025 Meeting

Proposed NH, seconded HC

5. Report from CC Lisa Spivey

A report from CC Lisa Sprivey is in appendix one.

6. Report from District Cllr M.McKeown

MM confirmed that the rumble strips on the junction and 'slow' markings on the road have now been completed on the Ewen to South Cerney road where it crosses Spratsgate Lane.

Highways have looked at the area of the Spine Road between the entrance to Lower Mill and The Cotswold Range which is prone to flooding. They concluded proper drains are needed. It may be possible to address this in 2026.

CDC have called out for more Flood Wardens, Hilary Collins has stepped up on behalf of our community. Hilary (with the help of her husband) has done much work on this topic over the past couple of years so we thank her for her efforts and for stepping up into this.

7. Actions from Previous Meeting

7.1 Proposed Fishing Club at the Village Lake

Much correspondence was received on this topic with none in favour. As such, the PC will not be seeking the approval to allow fishing.

We would point out that the parishioner whose idea this was presented a considered and quite detailed proposal and did so in a professional and respectful way, simply asking for fishing to be considered as an activity on the lake whilst proposing rules to protect the other priorities there.

7.2 New Fence Adjacent to Shorncote Village Green

MK has engaged with Highways who have confirmed they own the first 1.5m from the road and the fence should be at least 0.5m from their boundary. They will therefore be writing to the owners to request it is moved to a compliant position.

7.3 Uneven Footpath on Water Lane

KH has sent photos of the footpath in question to Highways who will take a look when next in the area.

8. Matters Discussed

8.1 Finance and Governance

8.1.1 Half Yearly Financial Summary

This will be distributed ahead of November's meeting.

Action: AC to write.

8.1.2 Audit

We are awaiting the final report from the external auditors which we believe has been completed. The Notice of Right to Inspect and External Audit Report was posted on the website at the end of last month.

8.1.3 Risk Management Policy

The increased funds that the PC now have push us into a higher level of audit and scrutiny. One of the implications is that a Risk Management Policy is required, this mainly covers PC continuity measures.

Thanks to GV for producing a first draft, this will be developed with the aim of publishing before the end of 2025

Action: GV & KH to progress.

8.2 Flooding

8.2.1 Shorncote

MK reported the Environment Agency have not responded to her many attempts to contact them in relation to work needed to clear the areas they are responsible for around Shorncote.

Action – MK to continue to chase.

8.2.2 General Flooding

HC will be the Flood Warden for the community.

8.2.3 Mapping

The request for someone to assist the PC in inputting the flooding data online has not been successful. The PC will now investigate to see if someone can be employed to do this.

Again, if anyone feels they could assist the PC with this (it would involve online tutorials on the software and then adding in local data) then please contact

skpcclerk@gmail.com

Action – HC to investigate.

9. Community Infrastructure Levy Projects

9.1 Swings at Neigh Bridge

The Cotswold Lakes Trust has confirmed that these works should start early next spring assuming that we do not have an especially wet winter.

9.2 Church Staircase

Following a lengthy approval process the go ahead for this has been given. Whilst the PC approved this project some time ago it was felt that a new vote should be taken given the elapsed time and slight increased cost (of c£500) to £9310 plus VAT.

The PC voted to approve this spend though it was not a unanimous agreement as it was pointed out that the wealth of the Church of England could easily fund such projects.

Action: KH to work with PCC to place orders so that work can be scheduled.

9.3 North of Village Footpath Extension

Whilst we voted in September not to pursue the development of a path to the north of the village there was an action to check with CDC whether the grant obtained for this could be used for other potential paths. The answer was yes, though as the timescale to do so was short and we have no specific plans for other paths currently we will be not be taking up this grant.

9.4 Village Lake Boardwalk Maintenance

Minor maintenance work costing £200 has been completed.

10. Planning

25/02895/TPO

Works to trees with a TPO for 1 - Yew - clear back from house by 0.5m at Yew Tree Farm Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DT

No Objection

5/02819/FUL

Full Application for Variation of condition 19 (Occupation of holiday units) of permission 19/04109/FUL. - Variation of condition 19 (occupancy restriction) of application ref. 19/02395/FUL to allow all year round holiday use for Clearwater plot 88 at Nuthatch 104 Clearwater Village Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester

No Objection

25/02807/FUL

Full Application for Retrospective extension of the existing decking to rear and side elevations, including an extension of existing decking area to the landing stage on Jetty at 46 Minety Lake Lower Mill Estate Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

No Objection

25/03011/FUL

Full Application for Variation of condition 9 (Occupancy) of permission 21/04046/FUL Variation of condition 9 of permission 16/02241/FUL- Revised site layout for permitted plots 29-46 and layout and design details for Plots 47-86 together with communal barns, refuse stores, access road and two foot bridges - Variation of condition 20 of 07/01037/FUL to allow for the holiday occupancy to allow Howells Mere Plot 54 to be used as a holiday home all year round at Nightingale House 58 Howells Mere Lower Mill Lane Somerford Keynes Cirencester

No Objection

25/03034/FUL

Full Application for Installation of 4 Padel Courts with sports canopy, clubhouse and associated landscaping and engineering works at Land North East Of Lake 63 Somerford Keynes Gloucestershire

Whilst the installation of a local facility for a sport rapidly growing in popularity may have attractions considerations are likely to be noise and potential light impacts.

The closing date for comments is November 7th, the PC will use this time to investigate the details further prior to making any decision. Feel free to share your views with the PC as well as with CDC.

Actions: NH to ask applicant to provide details of noise mitigation measures, PC members to visit other Padel locations to assess noise levels.

11. Correspondence

11.1 Proposed Fishing Club

Covered in 7.1

11.2 Speed Limits

GCC are looking at areas which may wish to implement 20mph speed limits. We chose not to participate given the lack of a history of accidents in the village and the fact that bends in the road, narrow points and parked cars tend to act as a means of slowing traffic.

12. September Income and Expenditure

Income

Interest Earned September 25 £253.14
2nd Precept Payment £1575.00

Total Income £3564.58

Expenditure

Total Expenditure £0.00

Village Lake J Uncles £80.00

VL Total Expenditure £80.00

Appendix 1

Cllr Lisa Spivey
GCC Report
September 2025

Here are a few highlights from GCC.
Community 20s/ Safer Roads

When I became the leader of the Council in May, I made road safety and speed limits a key priority. We have created our Community 20s offer and have written out to all 269 town and parish councils across Gloucestershire to ask for expressions of interest for reducing speed limits to 20mph and also looking at other speeds within communities eg 60mph to 50mph or 40mph to 30mph. This has had an overwhelmingly positive response and now officers will begin mapping the request with accident data. This is not a “blanket” approach, it’s about working with communities. The implementation will take several years, but we have allocated in year funding of £300k to begin the process

Clean Sweep

My second priority was on tidier streets and verges and making sure that signs, barriers and cones etc are picked up after roadworks are completed. To do this we have enhanced the functionality of Fix my Street so that left over signs and graffiti can be reported. Teams will be focussing on making our streets and verges look tidy again.

Fostering

My 3rd priority was on reducing the number of children in care being placed out of county and encouraging fostering. WE have created an information pack with resources to encourage foster carers. WE have also brought forward a motion to support Kinship Carers. The best start for all children is in a loving family environment and we want to do what we can to promote that.

Ofsted – Children’s Services

In June the council had a full Ofsted inspection in its Children’s services. Following a 2017 report saying our services were Inadequate and 2 subsequent inspections finding the service as Require Improvement, I am delighted to report that the latest inspection found 3 categories to be Good and 2 to be Outstanding. This is an excellent result for staff and children and families.

Fire Service

Following mediation over the summer, avoiding industrial action, the firefighter shift patterns will now change in January 2026. The remaining “Cause for Concern” identified by

His Majesty's Inspectorate has also been removed which is great news for our fire service. Do remember that our fire teams also carry out Safe and Well checks making sure that homes are protected from fire risk. This is especially valuable where people may be vulnerable.

LGR/Devolution

Local Government Reorganisation is still taking up a huge amount of time. All 7 councils in Gloucestershire are currently finalising the business cases for a 1 unitary option and a 2 unitary option and each council will take the options through their council's decision making process over the next 2 months before options are submitted to government on the 28th November. Government will then consult on any options they believe are viable. It is important to note that whilst councils may express a preference, the final decision on what model to adopt for Gloucestershire will be a ministerial decision made in Westminster, not a local choice. For Town and Parish Councils, there will be a dialogue about service delivery and how the "neighbourhood" model will work. All 7 councils are committed to ensuring that whatever the decision on options, that the role of town and parish councils is well defined and that the voice of communities is enhanced.

There are many, many, many more things going on at the council, so if you would like an update on any particular service, please do get in touch.