

Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall, 9th February 2026

Present: Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr M.H-Oldland (MHO), Cllr G.Valentine (GV), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM),

Also present: Clerk K.Holdsworth (KH)

1. Apologies

Cllr H.Collins (HC), Cllr N.Hunt (NH), Cllr J Whitwell (JW),

2. Declaration of Interest

MHO

3. Public Session

There were no questions asked in the public session.

4. Approval of Minutes of 12th January 2026 Meeting

Proposed MHO, seconded AC

5. Report from CC Lisa Spivey

There is no report from CC Lisa Spivey this month.

6. Report from District Cllr M.McKeown

Cllr MM's report is in Appendix One

7. Follow up from January's Meeting

This mainly concerned potholes, around which there were a few items.

- 7.1 County Council Leader Lisa Spivey noted our surprise that Gloucestershire (GCC) was one of only 16 authorities rated green in relation to dealing with potholes. She acknowledged that whilst this is a priority for the council under her leadership it is still very much work in progress. As such, in the budget setting process GCC has proposed an additional £15m investment in Highways over the next three years.
- 7.2 KH wrote to Highways concerning some significant and potentially dangerous potholes on Spratsgate Lane. Good to see on the day of the meeting contractors were working on repairing them.

- 7.3 A parishioner sent photos of damage at the Sculpture Park end of the road to Ewen. These have been forwarded to Highways. An increased number of heavy lorries using this road has been noted.
- 7.4 Another parishioner suggested that CIL money be used to repair pothole damage within the parish. The Parish Council will ask Joe Harris (GCC councillor with Highways brief) whether this type of thing is possible. If it is we will look at potential costs and process prior to making any commitment.
Action: AC to draft note to Joe Harris.

8. Finance and Governance

In addition to all the policies and documents referred to in January's minutes the PC's asset register will also be added to the website following a review of it. Once again, thanks to KH and GV for managing this increased burden in bureaucracy.

9. CIL Projects and Expenditure

9.1 Church Staircase

Installation is now complete, the PC thanks Dave Crofts for all his hard work in getting this done.

9.2 Primary Schools

The PC is keen that as many groups as possible across the community benefit from CIL money. Completed projects include the Village Hall kitchen (averagely mostly used by more senior members of the community) and the bus shelter (used by many but built at the request of secondary school children). We want to do something for primary school children and the following was (not unanimously) agreed;

- The PC will provide up to £5,000.00 for each primary school for which the parish is in the catchment area for. These are Ashton Keynes, Kemble, Oaksey and South Cerney.
- Contributions will only be made towards infrastructure projects.
- Whilst contributions can be allocated to as many projects as each school wishes we will contribute a maximum of 50% of the total cost of any individual initiative.
- The trigger to transfer funds is the school confirming a project is fully funded and demonstrating orders being placed as evidence.
- The closing date for the provision of this funding is the end of December 2027.

Prior to informing schools of this we need to confirm with CDC that CIL funds can be used in this way. The key things to check concern the awarding of grants (having asked about this for the potential of an award to Cotswold Lakes Trust for swings at Neigh Bridge we are confident this should be ok) and passing funds to organisations outside our parish (given we have school children in the parish but no school we hope that this will be fine too).

The total cost of this initiative should all funds be claimed is £20k, this will still leave us with c£70k of CIL money so further suggestions are still welcome.

9.3 Potholes

See 7.4.

10. Flooding

Without wishing to tempt fate, despite nobody being able to remember a time when it wasn't raining neither SK or Shorncote have been badly affected by flooding. Clearance work has been undertaken by Hills which should have helped things in Shorncote which has suffered most in recent times.

11. Dates for Diary

Village Litter Pick Saturday 28th March

PC AGM will be held on Friday 15th May in the Village Hall

12. Planning

25/04064/FUL

Full Application for Variation of condition 6 (Jan occupancy) of permission 16/04527/FUL - Application for full planning permission for works to the water mill, conversion of the attached stable annexe to two holiday units, the conversion of single storey outbuildings to 8 holiday units, the formation of 1 independent residential unit, the formation of a manager's dwelling at Farmhouse Barn, the erection of 9 new holiday units, the conversion of 2 other buildings to a farm shop and fisheries office, the reinstatement of a fowl house, the installation of a swimming pool and children's play area, and associated works (Variation of condition 3 of permission CT.6641/G to allow for the holiday occupancy of 14 Mill Village all year round) at The Kingfishers 16 Mill Village Lower Mill Estate Somerford Keynes Cirencester

No Objection

26/00089/FUL

Full Application for Partial conversion of roof terrace to habitable space at 12 Spinney Lake Lower Mill Estate Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire

No Objection

26/00068/FUL

Full Application for Erection of extension to existing agricultural machinery storage and repair building and associated area of hardstanding (part-retrospective) at Southleaze Farm Ewen Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BZ

No Objection

26/00314/FUL

Full Application for Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of permission 24/00208/FUL - (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) to include a change to a porch extension design, a reduction in the number of proposed rooflights and alterations to the approved layouts at Somerford Keynes House Somerford Keynes Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6DN

No Objection

26/00315/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

26/00328/FUL

Full Application for Extension to existing deck, installation of hot tub and associated works at Milly Cottage 72 Mill Village Lower Mill Estate Somerford Keynes Cirencester

No Objection

As has been previously stated, unless there is conflict with the Neighbourhood Development Plan this PC tends not to comment on residential applications unless adjacent or affected neighbours ask us to.

There was an application at a Lower Mill Estate property last month which MK visited with MM to take a look. As LME had approved the application the PC decided not to comment. Over the past year or two MK has made a few such visits which have always been appreciated by correspondents.

13. January 2026 Income and Expenditure

<u>Income</u>	£203.85	Interest Earned January 2026
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Total Income	£203.85	
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Expenditure

January 2026	£55.67	Website Software
	£916.56	Clerks Salary (Oct/Nov/Dec 25)
	£26.00	First Aid Course Village Hall Heating

Total Expenditure	£998.23	
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Village Lake

	£43.74	Sundries
VL Total Expenditure	£43.74	

CIL Expenditure November

Church Staircase 2 nd Payment	£3351.60	
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Total CIL Spend	£3351.60	
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Transfers	£None	
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Petty Cash Expenditure	£4.00	VH Heating (PC Meeting)
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14. Correspondance

- 13.1 Damage at junction on road to Ewen, See 7.3
- 13.1 CIL funding for potholes, see 7.4
- 13.3 Potential funding for Ashton Keynes school projects, see 9.2
- 13.4 KH wrote to Cotswold Country Park & Beach asking if they would like to attend a future meeting to discuss their plans. They agreed to join us in March.

15. Any Other Business

- 15.1 KH proposed buying some bleed packs to be stored with the defibrillators in the village. They cost around £100 each and would be paid for from CIL money. It was agreed that this is a good idea.
Action: KH to engage with defibrillators 'owners' to check that storage capacity is sufficient and to look at arranging training.
- 15.2 The anti-virus software for the PC's laptop is now due for renewal. The amount due is £29.99, the PC passed this for payment.
- 15.3 MHO asked on behalf of Thames Head Energy whether there would be support for potentially using part of the parish field for green energy purposes. Whilst there is no specific project in mind the PC agreed that this is something that could be discussed, with the caveat that we would also need to involve Lake 32 as they are paying rent for the field.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Date of next meeting Monday 9th March 2026

Appendix 1

Kemble Ward Monthly Report – January 2026

Prepared by: Mike McKeown
Councillor for the Kemble Ward
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital Services
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Kemble Ward–Related Updates

Bledisloe Barns (Coates) – Planning Application Refused

The planning application for the conversion of buildings at Bledisloe Barns into tourist accommodation has been refused by Cotswold District Council. This decision aligns with the concerns raised by Coates Parish Council, local residents, and myself.

The key reasons for refusal were:

- Harm to the setting of the Grade II listed manor house and its historic curtilage. Several of the buildings were judged to be curtilage-listed, and the proposed extensions were considered poorly designed and harmful to the historic character of the site.
 - Insufficient evidence that the development would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
 - Failure to adequately address impacts on the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, including the absence of required mitigation contributions.
- Taken together, officers concluded that the harm identified was not outweighed by public benefits and that the proposal conflicted with both national planning policy and the adopted Local Plan. I am pleased that the

strength of local and parish-level objections was reflected in the final decision.

Bledisloe Walled Garden (Coates)

A related application for a walled garden adjacent to Bledisloe Barns remains under consideration. I am currently awaiting further feedback from the planning officer. While the principle of a garden use is less contentious, I remain concerned about how it could be used in practice in connection with the refused barns scheme, and I will continue to monitor this closely.

Kemble to Cirencester Cycle Path

Work has continued on developing a safe, dedicated cycle route between Kemble and Cirencester. The preferred route, with a small number of remaining options, has now been identified and is being confirmed with the principal landowner and Kemble & Ewen parish council.

The next stage will be to prepare a planning application later this year.

Construction will be dependent on securing a combination of external grant funding and developer contributions. Once delivered, this route would provide a continuous, safe cycling connection from Kemble village and Kemble Station, through The Steadings development, and into Cirencester town centre.

Climate Change and Environment (Cabinet Portfolio)

Decarbonising the Waste Fleet

Cotswold District Council has approved plans for its largest ever carbon-cutting project: replacing the council's waste and recycling vehicle fleet. The waste fleet is currently the single biggest source of carbon emissions directly under the council's control, accounting for nearly half of CDC's operational footprint.

The new fleet will improve the reliability of waste and recycling collections while significantly reducing emissions. A key part of the transition is the move to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for most vehicles. HVO is a low-carbon fuel made from waste cooking oil and other by-products, and can reduce lifecycle carbon emissions by up to 90% compared with

conventional diesel. One electric refuse vehicle will also be introduced to test performance in local conditions.

As the existing vehicles are reaching the end of their working life, replacing them now avoids rising maintenance costs and reliability issues, while delivering a substantial environmental benefit. Thanks to prudent financial management over a number of years, this multi-million-pound investment can be made without the council needing to borrow, while still representing a major step forward in meeting the council's climate commitments. [More information.](#)

Digital Services (Cabinet Portfolio)

Developing Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

Alongside my climate role, I am leading work on digital services and the responsible use of new technologies. This includes developing a clear framework for how the council can use tools such as artificial intelligence safely and transparently.

The focus is on supporting officers and councillors with tasks like research, drafting and summarising information, while ensuring that decisions remain under human control and that data protection and ethical standards are upheld. We are also looking at how AI can be used to improve services to residents directly, for example by making information easier to access and responses clearer and more consistent. To support this, the council will shortly be adopting a Responsible AI Policy, setting clear guardrails around transparency, data protection, ethics and human oversight. This work is still at an early stage, but it is aimed at improving efficiency and service quality as the council prepares for Local Government Reorganisation.

Cotswold District Council – General News

Local Plan Update and Housing Targets

As previously reported, the Regulation 18 consultation on the new Local Plan closed in early January, with around 2,000 responses received. Officers are now analysing those responses.

The next steps are:

- Publication of information on additional land submissions that were received from landowners towards the end of the consultation period.
- Progression to Regulation 19 consultation in summer 2026. Regulation 19 is the formal stage where residents and organisations are asked to comment on whether the draft Local Plan is legally compliant and sound, before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. By this stage the plan includes much more detailed site proposals, and a key part of the process is formal consultation with statutory and local organisations to ensure the infrastructure needed to support development is properly taken into account, including highways, schools, water and wastewater, healthcare and NHS provision, and other essential services.

In parallel, the council continues to lobby central government about the scale of housing targets being imposed on districts like the Cotswolds. Over 80% of the district is designated National Landscape, which severely limits where development can go. The current targets risk forcing unsustainable development patterns and undermining local planning. The council has formally set out these concerns to government, reflecting the strength of local feeling on this issue. [Read more.](#)

Local Government Reorganisation – Public Consultation

The government has now launched a national consultation on proposals to reorganise local government in Gloucestershire. Residents are being asked for their views on three options:

- A single county-wide unitary council.
- Two unitary councils split east and west.
- Two unitary councils based around a Greater Gloucester authority and a wider Gloucestershire authority.

The consultation is open for seven weeks and will inform the government's decision, which is expected in summer 2026. Any new council structure would not be implemented before April 2028. I would encourage parish councils and residents to engage with this consultation, as it will shape how local services are delivered in the future. [Read more.](#)

District Council By-Election

Following the by-election in The Rissingtons Ward, Liberal Democrat candidate Craig Thurling has been elected as a district councillor. This slightly increases the Liberal Democrat majority on the council. While not directly affecting the Kemble Ward, it provides additional stability as the council works through major issues such as the Local Plan and Local Government Reorganisation.

Crowdfund Cotswolds

Crowdfund Cotswolds continues to be a valuable route for parish councils and community groups to bring forward local projects. Recent successes include Rodmarton Parish Council, which raised funding to refurbish and relocate a historic phone box for community use.

Parish councils with ideas for community improvements are encouraged to explore this scheme, which can combine public pledges with council support to help projects get off the ground. [Read more.](#)

As always, please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss any of the above or raise local issues affecting your parish.