

Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting
Village Hall, 13th April 2026

Present: Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr J Whitwell (JW), Cllr M.H-Oldland (MHO), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM),

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

1. Apologies

Cllr H.Collins (HC), Cllr G.Valentine (GV), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr N.Hunt (NH)

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Public Session

A parishioner asked about the status of the 93 bus service.

PC confirmed that we raised concerns with various parties regarding the withdrawal of this service. Wiltshire Transport Unit stated that the route is not financially sustainable given its low usage (averagely only one or two per day from SK). On demand services are available instead.

The parishioner who asked the question has used the on demand service. Despite one or two teething issues transport was provided. The PC encourages use of these (Wiltshire Connect and The Robin), feel free to share your experiences.

4. Approval of Minutes of 9th March 2026 Meeting

Proposed JW, seconded AC

5. Report from CC Lisa Spivey

CC LS's report is in Appendix One

6. Report from District Cllr M.McKeown

Cllr MM's report is in Appendix Two

7. General Matters

7.1 Parish Clerk

We are delighted that Shirin Pawlowska will be taking over the role of PC Clerk. There will be a handover period with KH who will finish officially after the AGM on 15th May. Thank you Karen for your hard work and welcome Shirin!

7.2 Finance & Governance

7.2.1` End of Year Accounts

KH has submitted last year's accounts to the internal auditor. As previously stated, with the PC having more funds than ever the audit has become a significantly more onerous task. Even with Karen's meticulous record keeping it takes a great deal of time. Thanks to her and the support from GV in getting this completed in a timely manner.

7.2.2 Insurance Renewal

This is due for payment, the cost is the same as last year so the PC voted to renew.

7.2.3 Moving Funds

There are several_CIL projects that are likely to need funding in the next few months, as such we need to move money from the high interest account to the current account to cover these costs. PC approved £20,000 being transferred.

7.3 Litter Pick

Another successful litter pick was held, the PC would like to thank those that turned up to help.

7.4 AGM

The AGM will be held on the 15th May 2026 and we will confirm guest speakers shortly. Refreshments are provided too! So please drop a line to clerk@somerfordkeynes-pc.gov.uk if you intend to come so we can get an idea of numbers to cater for

8. Community Infrastructure Levy

In this section we cover a mix of projects approved and in progress along with new suggestions. We have around £98k of CIL money though £20k is ringfenced for local primary schools (as per previous minutes) and £15k for swings at Neigh Bridge.

8.1 Potholes

Whilst Gloucestershire Highways confirmed that pothole repairs could be jointly funded (ie we pay half and they pay half) the PC voted not to pursue this. Reasons included uncertainty of total cost, the fact that many such repairs seem temporary and, given the overall state of the roads, improving those just in the parish isn't going to make a whole lot of difference in the overall scheme of things.

8.2 Swings at Neigh Bridge

The Lakes Trust have confirmed that their contractor plans to do this work in July. Given the elapsed time between now and the original estimates we have asked that they confirm costs again.

8.3 Outdoor Table Tennis Table

The PC asked for comments on this proposal following our last meeting. We received five comments in support and five against.

The PC voted to approve this proposal though we note the views of near neighbours about noise. We would want to create awareness that players need to respect that concern if this goes ahead.

Permission is now required from the Village Hall Committee prior to implementation.

Actions: AC to write to the VHC, if they are happy to progress then JW will explore options and costing for a table.

8.4 Bleed Packs

This has previously been agreed, Marcus Gibbons is looking into the most appropriate bleed packs to purchase.

Action: KH will liaise with Marcus to organise purchase.

8.5 Shorncote Parish Church

The PC received a funding request from All Saints' Church in Shorncote to carry out repairs to their coping stones. The PC voted to help fund these repairs at an approximate cost of £7k.

Action: KH to write to the requestors confirming this but stating we need them obtain three quotes for audit purposes to demonstrate best use of public funds.

8.6 Highways Signs

A parishioner highlighted a number of damaged signs. The PC saw this as a Highways issue and not one to spend CIL money on.

Action: KH to write to Highways to ask them to fix and also to remove the flood signs from Spratsgate Lane given the flooding was a few months ago.

As a reminder, anyone can report matters such as these and any Highways related items on www.fixmystreet.com

9. Planning

PL/2023/03359

Land West of Ashton Road, Ashton Keynes, Wilts, SN6 6QT

Construction and operation of anaerobic digestion facility, ancillary infrastructure and construction of new access from Ashton Road – This is to inform you that under the Council’s delegation scheme the above application will be determined at the Strategic Planning Committee at Council Chamber - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN on 21 April 2026. The meeting will commence at 10.30am.

The PC previously submitted an objection to this application.

Action: KH to contact Ashton Keynes PC (its on their patch), South Cerney PC and Beweley Homes to make sure they are aware of the meeting.

10. March 2026 Income and Expenditure

<u>Income</u>	£218.38	Interest Earned March 2026
Total Income	£218.38	
<u>Expenditure</u>		
March 2026	£84.99	Microsoft Subscription
Total Expenditure	£84.99	
Village Lake	£0.00	
VL Total Expenditure	£0.00	
CIL Expenditure	£0.00	
Total CIL Spend	£0.00	
Petty Cash Expenditure	£None	

11. Correspondance

11.1 Table Tennis Table

See section 8.3

11.2 93 Bus Service

See section 3

The PC also wrote to our MP Roz Savage to express concerns about this

11.3 Village Hall Audio Visual Equipment Upgrade

A number of people who use the village hall for presentations support this, details have been passed to the VHC.

11.4 Hedgerows & Footpath Clearing

JW has looked at a couple of areas highlighted by a parishioner. Path at Kemble Mill will need a trim shortly, Water Lane hedge can't be touched until bird nesting season is over. Lower Mill's ecologist had highlighted this a 'wildlife corridor' so aim will be to keep access and nature in balance.

Action: JW will look to engage with Kemble Mill owners and, if not successful, the Gloucestershire footpath contact. We will look at Water Lane later in the year and will most likely need to contract out a small piece of work.

11.5 Field Farm

A parishioner asked whether the new buildings at Field Farm required planning permission. It was suggested they contact CDC Planning who can clarify. The PC have written to the Field Farm owners to seek an understanding of the plans for the site following previous planning applications and what looks like changes to the camping area.

11.6 Mobile Phone Signal

The lack of coverage was highlighted when a parishioner recently attempted to make an emergency call from a mobile. The possibility of funding a mast has previously been looked at, the costs are high and its very complicated. Based on this and that most premises are likely to have access to wifi the PC is not going to pursue this.

11.7 Spring Flowers

A parishioner noted how nice neighbouring villages looked with daffodils and the like on the verges. Another parishioner will approach Bewley Homes to see if they could help with this. They have expressed a willingness to support local communities and would likely have access to resources to help with planting.

11.8 Environment Agency (EA) Kiosk at Neigh Bridge

It was pointed out that this is still in need of repair.

The PC have been in discussion with EA over this for a number of years. The latest from EA was that funding to address this was in their 2025/26 budget and the work would definitely be completed by the end of this March. But it wasn't.

Action: HC to chase EA again.

11.9 Cotswold Country Park and Beach

The Operations Manager there has left, his replacement has written to introduce herself and will hopefully join our May meeting.

12. Dates for Diary

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

13. Any Other Business

Community Support

It was felt that some kind of summer event would be a nice for the community. This is not a PC thing but the PC could provide funding. It would need a group of willing people to organise, perhaps some looking at activities for children and others for adults. If you would be interested in participating please let us know at clerk@somerfordkeynes-pc.gov.uk

On a similar note, the PC could provide funding for Christmas decorations should anyone (or group) of people wish to take ownership of such a project.

Yes, these were in previous minutes! Is a final call...

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Date of next meeting Monday 11th May 2026

Appendix 1 **CC Lisa Spivey's report**

ClIr Lisa Spivey
Gloucestershire County Council
March Update
LGR

We have worked with the districts to formalise a joint programme to prepare for Government decisions on reorganisation.

A shared pooled budget will fund the preparatory work, with GCC contributing 55% and districts sharing the remainder.

Numerous workstreams, covering people, digital, governance, property and more, will help ensure the county is ready regardless of which structural option Government ultimately selects this summer.

Foundation Strategic Authority

At Cabinet this month we responded to the Government invitation to express interest in forming a Foundation Strategic Authority. This proposal aims to address a growing “devolution deficit” that risks leaving Gloucestershire with reduced influence and more uncertain access to funding streams.

We would like to Gloucestershire to form its own strategic authority initially, with a view to join the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Gloucestershire’s strongest labour market and sectoral economic links run south into the WECA area. It has the strongest score across all assessment criteria including –

- Economic alignment
- Strategic fit
- Cultural links
- Deliverability
- Existing partnerships

Community 20s and Safer Roads

We brought a report to Cabinet that lays out planned 20mph zones and speed-limit reductions across the county for the next four years. It uses evidence-based prioritisation focusing on casualties, deprivation and active travel. And involves extensive community engagement and streamlined TRO processes.

This is what we were voted in on, and we are incredibly excited to be moving forward with a formal implementation process.

Further details on planned zones can be found in the cabinet paper -

<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g12174/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2018-Mar-2026%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

New Bus Map

We are incredibly happy to launch our countywide bus map.



This allows residents and visitors to see, at a glance, where the main bus routes go, where rail stations are located, and how services connect — making it much easier to plan journeys. The map is available to download and print in full colour. It also includes a QR code linking to TravelineSW

View the bus map here - <https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/county-bus-network-maps/>
Highways update

After a punishing winter with our teams working round the clock to keep the network open and safe, we are now turning our attention to the longer term resurfacing projects. As recognised in the budget papers, it's important that we have a strategic approach to maintenance and apply a needs-led priority to the majority of work being undertaken to ensure both a reasonable spread across the county and that our asset condition does not deteriorate faster than it should.

Major Projects Update

- A435 Cycle Link – Works completed ahead of Gold Cup Festival w/c 9th March – minor snagging now being concluded.
- Forest Road, Lydney – Geotechnical stabilisation works underway and progressing well.
- Black Dog Way/London Road Cycle Link – Works progressing well despite city centre site location.

Resurfacing

- 55 roads to be resurfaced this spring alone as part of our 'Fix our Roads' campaign
- Visit here for more information and to see which roads are planned for resurfacing - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/resurfacing/>

Commercial strategy

At last month's Cabinet meeting we passed our Commercial Strategy. This overhauls GCC's commercial operations, procurement and income generation to ensure we are acting as efficiently as possible.

We are working hard to transform the way this council works and ensure we are getting the most out of each and every pound spent.

New £20m Cheltenham special school approved by planning committee

Our planning committee approved plans on 19 March, marking a significant milestone in delivering a new 'all-through' school for pupils aged 4–16 with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD)

The school will be built on land owned by the county council to the west of Alstone Croft, accessed via Arle Road.

Find out more here - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gcc-news/news-march-2026/new-20m-cheltenham-special-school-given-the-green-light/>



New fire engines

The first of ten new fire engines for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has arrived.

This investment will help support our firefighters at Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service as they continue to protect our communities and keep people safe across the county.



New sixth form block at Henley Bank School

Cabinet members Cllr Linda Cohen and Cllr Ben Evans met with members of the student council at Henley Bank High School to visit the site of their new sixth form block.

The new two-storey teaching block will enhance the school's existing post 16 facilities and create an additional 150 places for 11 to 16-year-olds.



Sixth Annual Climate Change Report

We published our Sixth Annual Climate Change Report, setting out progress made and strengthening our long-term commitment to tackling climate change. During 2024–25, direct council emissions fell by 11 per cent compared with the previous year. Emissions from the council's electricity use remain at zero through the continued purchase of 100 per cent renewable electricity. Emissions across the whole county fell by just over five per cent. To read the full report visit <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/greener-gloucestershire-dashboard/climate-change-report-2024-2025/>

Best Start Family Hubs

We are using Government funding from the national ‘Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life Strategy’ to develop our countywide network of Family Hubs.

The first ‘Best Start Family Hub’ will be based at Bartongate Family Hub in Gloucester, with more hubs to follow across the county as part of the three-year national programme.

For more information on our current family hub network and locations please visit - <https://familyhubs.gloucestershire.gov.uk/family-hubs>

Crisis and Resilience Fund

We have received a £17.1 million grant from the Government to support vulnerable residents and strengthen local welfare and resilience services. This replaces the Household Support Fund, giving the county a multi-year approach to helping people when they need it most.

The fund will provide practical help with essentials such as food, fuel, housing-related costs and travel. As well as supporting local voluntary and community organisations delivering services such as financial advice, social and digital support, and help into work.

We are currently working through how best to implement this scheme and further details will follow.

Appendix Two
Report from Cllr Mike McKeown

Mike McKeown – April 2026 Monthly Report 1

Kemble Ward Monthly Report – April 2026

Prepared by: Mike McKeown

Councillor for the Kemble Ward

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital Services

Cotswold District Council (CDC)

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Here is my latest monthly update covering ward matters first, followed by wider district work in my role as Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Digital Services.

1. Ward matters and local casework

Planning and enforcement updates

A number of ward casework matters have continued to require active follow-up this month.

I have been liaising with CDC Planning Enforcement regarding ongoing investigations where concerns have been raised by residents and parish councils in Somerford Keynes, Rodmarton, and Kemble & Ewen.

Residents wishing to report a suspected breach of planning regulations should do so directly via the council's planning enforcement reporting page: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planningpermission/report-breach-of-planning-regulations/>

As residents will know, enforcement processes can take time. The council generally works first towards a negotiated resolution, with formal enforcement notices used where needed. This means outcomes can often take months rather than weeks.

I have continued to keep in contact with residents and parish clerks where issues have been raised and will continue to follow up where appropriate.

Mike McKeown – April 2026 Monthly Report 2

Runway Festival at Kemble Airport

The proposed **Runway Festival at Kemble Airport**, which had created significant concern locally regarding potential noise disturbance and wider disruption, has now been **withdrawn**, along with the associated licence application. I know this will be welcome news for many residents who had raised concerns.

Kemble to Cirencester Cycle Path

There has also been positive progress on the **Kemble to Cirencester cycle path**. The final routing has now been agreed with the main landowner and the relevant councils, including **CDC and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)**. This means the project can now progress towards **planning permission, likely later this year**, followed by applications for external grant funding. This is an important step forward in bringing the scheme closer to delivery.

2. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC)

I also wanted to share two updates regarding **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC)**.

For those not familiar with GRCC, it is an independent county-wide charity that supports rural communities across Gloucestershire, working with parish councils, community groups and local residents on projects ranging from community wellbeing to village services and resilience.

More information is available here:

<https://www.grcc.org.uk/>

Gloucestershire Village of the Year 2026

Parish councils and community groups may wish to consider entering the **Gloucestershire Village of the Year 2026 competition**.

This is a long-running and well-regarded competition celebrating the strength, creativity and community spirit of Gloucestershire villages, looking at areas such as community life, sustainability, heritage, inclusion and local initiative.

I'm pleased to be serving once again as one of the judges.

Further information and entry details can be found here:

<https://www.grcc.org.uk/could-your-village-be-grcc-s-gloucestershirevillage-of-the-year-2026>

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I would strongly encourage local parishes to consider taking part.

GRCC trustee role

I am also pleased to share that I will be **joining the board of GRCC as a trustee**.

This is an excellent organisation that plays an important role in supporting rural communities across the county, and I am looking forward to contributing to its work.

3. Housing, planning and the Local Plan

This has been a significant month at district level.

The government has now formally responded to CDC's third letter raising concerns that the revised housing targets for the district are unreasonably high. While the response does not change the target, it does acknowledge the very real challenges facing Cotswold.

Key points from the government's response include recognition that over 80% of the district lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape,

confirmation that great weight must be given to protecting landscape and scenic beauty, and acceptance that local constraints such as protected land, flooding risk and defence safeguarding must be properly considered through the Local Plan process. The government also confirmed that it is for CDC, through the Local Plan, to determine the most appropriate locations for development and to evidence where full housing need may not be achievable because of these constraints.

Many additional sites have also been submitted by landowners since the **Regulation 18 consultation**, with some earlier sites withdrawn or amended. In simple terms, Regulation 18 is the **early consultation stage**, where the council asks residents, landowners and stakeholders for views on the draft plan and potential development sites. Because of the scale of the Government's housing targets, the call for land supply has had to remain open so that all possible options can be properly assessed. Planning officers are now reviewing the viability of all submitted sites alongside the consultation responses received. This work will feed into the **Regulation 19 consultation** expected this summer. Regulation 19 is the **formal publication stage**, where the council publishes the proposed final version of the Local Plan before it is submitted to the national Planning Inspectorate for independent examination at the end of the year.

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I also want to highlight that **Helen Martin, CDC's Head of Communities & Place, has been recognised nationally as one of the planning profession's "Women of Influence 2026."** This is a significant and well-deserved

recognition of both Helen personally and the strength of the wider CDC planning team at a particularly important time for the district. CDC continues to make the case that the imposed target remains excessively high for a predominantly rural district with significant landscape protections, and work is continuing at pace on the updated Local Plan to ensure that any future housing growth is sustainable, proportionate and protects the character of our communities.

Further information:

<https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news>

4. Climate Change and Sustainability portfolio

Future-Proof Home

Work continues on our climate engagement programme.

CDC's **Home Energy Efficiency Officer, Justine Mallinson**, is available to visit residents' homes and provide tailored advice on how to improve energy efficiency specific to each property. This includes support on insulation, draught proofing, heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage. Given the current energy crisis, this can be an excellent way to reduce household costs as well as carbon emissions.

Residents can contact Justine directly

at **Justine.Mallinson@cotswold.gov.uk**.

Drive & Thrive

The upcoming **Drive & Thrive** event will take place on **4 June in Cirencester Market Place**.

The event will include EV test drives and vehicle displays, with a large number of local garages expected to bring both new and second-hand EVs. There will also be suppliers and talks covering home energy efficiency, solar and heat pumps, helping residents understand the practical options available for reducing both bills and emissions.

Cotswold Business Solar

I have also continued to progress work on **Cotswold Business Solar**, supporting local businesses to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.

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Officers have been exploring a viable delivery route, and I am pushing for clarity on next steps and launch timing.

5. Digital services and responsible AI

Work is continuing on our digital services and responsible AI agenda.

I have co-authored both the council's **Artificial Intelligence Policy** and its **Responsible AI Strategy**, which are due to be formally considered for adoption at the April Cabinet meeting. The Policy sets out the governance, ethical safeguards and rules for safe use of AI across council services, while the Strategy provides the roadmap for how CDC will use AI to improve resident services, support officers and create a strong digital legacy ahead of local government reorganisation.

This is particularly important as we prepare for future local government reorganisation and the need to leave a strong digital legacy.

6. Preparing for the future – Local Government Reorganisation

A major strategic priority for the council is now preparation for **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**. The Government's public consultation on this has now closed, and it is expected that Ministers will decide this summer whether Gloucestershire moves to **one or two new unitary councils**.

This work will shape the future structure of local government across Gloucestershire and it is important that Cotswold's voice, communities and priorities are strongly represented. In a strong recognition of the capability of the CDC leadership team, **three senior leaders have been given county-wide leadership roles on the LGR planning track: David Stanley** as finance lead, **Helen Martin** (Head of Communities & Place) as planning lead, and **Matt Abbott** as communications lead for LGR communications.

Alongside this, councils across Gloucestershire have also set out a preference to seek future membership of the **West of England Combined Authority (WECA)**, the regional strategic authority led by a directly elected Mayor covering areas such as transport, economic development and

regional investment. Membership of a mayoral combined authority is now a **mandatory Government requirement as part of LGR arrangements**, and this will be an important strategic decision for the county's future.

Mike McKeown – April 2026 Monthly Report 6

The council has recently begun wider engagement on this, and I will continue to ensure that climate, digital services and community priorities are protected through the transition.

For more information:

<https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news>

As always, if there are local issues you would like to raise, please do get in touch.