

Somerford Keynes Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017

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Councillors Mike McKeown, Karen Mogridge, Ron Munroe, Michele Rigby, Sarah Powell (Chair), Roger Sleeman

Your Parish Council

The full list of Parish Councillors appears at the head of this newsletter and all are happy to listen to any comments or problems you may have – you can obtain their telephone numbers from the Clerk if you don't know them.

Councillor John Brailey

We are very sorry to record the death, in January, of Parish Councillor John Brailey. John was a valuable and active member of the Parish Council and he will be greatly missed. He was instrumental in the opening to the public of Village Lake, liaising with contractors to create the boardwalk, footpaths and picnic area.

Our sympathies go to Janice and the other members of his family.

Parish Clerk

We are pleased to welcome Wendy Cartwright as the new Parish Clerk, following the retirement of Muriel Watkins at the end of 2016. Wendy, who was chosen following a thorough selection process, commenced her duties at the beginning of the year and is now normally the first person you should contact if you have any queries on Parish Council business. Please note that the Clerk's email and telephone details have changed since the last Newsletter – they can be found at the head of this page.

Wendy is now custodian of the informal list for notifying people of upcoming events such as village coffee mornings and the Annual Parish Meeting. If you would like to have your name added to this list, please email her. You won't be bombarded with emails but it would be very useful for us to be able to contact Parishioners when there is not the time or manpower to do so by circulating a leaflet.

Annual Parish Meeting

This will take place on **Friday 28th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**. The Annual Parish Meeting is your chance to hear and comment on what the Parish Council has been doing over the past year, and to set its priorities for the future. Your County and District Councillors will also be present which will enable you to hear and question their actions, especially as this is an election year for County Councillors. Please try to come.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Although it's been a bit quiet on the NDP front of late, work continues as we move into the last stages of preparation of the final submission of the Plan. The pre-submission Consultation Draft

drew a range of responses both from the local community and from those organisations, called statutory consultees, entitled to receive and comment on all Development Plans. All of those comments must be considered and receive responses. In some cases, this will lead to amendments to the Plan document, whilst others must be given explanations or clarifications as to the actions that have been taken. The good news is that, whilst there have, indeed, been amendments to the Draft Plan which was circulated, the fundamentals remain unaltered. That means that we are able to keep faith with the views expressed by the local community through the various consultation stages over the time since this initiative was launched.

Co-option of New Parish Councillor

Following the sad death of John Brailey we have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. There having been no demand for an election, we are in the position of having to co-opt.

If you would like to be considered for co-option as a Parish Councillor, please let the Chair know.

Annual Parish Spring Clean, Saturday 1st April

This is the day to put on your wellies, bring your rakes and make a difference to the hedges and verges of the Parish. Black bags, high-vis waistcoats, 'pickers' and generic protective gloves provided. Meet at the Village Hall, 10.00am.

Please let the Clerk know you are coming by Thursday March 30th so that there will be hot dogs for you at the end.

If you would like to help but would prefer not to pick litter, could you prepare and serve the hot dogs? The shopping will be done for you, just turn up on the day. Please let Karen Mogridge know (860476) if you can help in this way.

Parish Emergency Plan

The Emergency Plan document is now on the Parish Website, together with other information which might be of use in an emergency.

We shall soon be sending out the annual letter or email confirming the details we hold about those who have registered on the Plan, either because they can help in an emergency or because they might need help, or both. Please let us know if your details have changed.

If you don't receive a letter or email it is because you are not registered. In that case,

would you consider adding your name to our list? We are looking for people who would be willing to help during an emergency with their time or with resources such as spare beds, food or chainsaws. To register, please visit the Emergency Plan section of the Parish website, or contact the Clerk, who will be able to provide you with a registration questionnaire.

An emergency is defined as something the normal emergency services cannot cope with straight away, such as a prolonged power cut or flood affecting a number of people. If you register with the Plan you will not be called upon to help just because a tree falls down!

Fibre Super-Fast Broadband

Only half a dozen households expressed to us an interest in the Gigaclear broadband initiative described in the last Newsletter. As this falls far short of the number required we shall not be pursuing this further at present.

Neigh Bridge Car Parking

A number of Parishioners have expressed concerns to us about the new car parking arrangements at Neigh Bridge. The Cotswold Water Park Trust has engaged a specialist company to manage car parking at all its sites, using number plate recognition, with a heavy fine for non-compliance. The charge for daily use has been set quite high at £3 (although it is free for members of the Trust). Parking for extended periods (several days) is also covered, possibly encouraging the parking of camper vans. We feel that drivers will park on the verges around Neigh Bridge, and in the village, rather than pay the charges or face the fine. This already appears to be happening, with more cars parked on the verges than in the car park on some occasions.

We shall be arranging to meet with the Trust about this, and it would be helpful if we could present them with some evidence for our concerns. If you happen to be passing through Neigh Bridge and have a notebook (or a good memory!) handy, please could you make a note of the numbers of cars both inside and immediately outside the site, and let the Clerk or a Parish Councillor know. Photographs of cars on the verges would also be useful.

Keynes Country Park

Many of you will have noticed that KCP has been shut to cars since the end of last year, when Watermark's lease with the Cotswold Water Park Trust terminated. The lavatories and children's play areas are also closed, although the footpaths are open. We understand that the Trust is currently finalising arrangements with a new operator, and that a certain amount of groundwork and 'tidying up' will need to be done before it can reopen. This could be by the Spring Bank Holiday.

The Water Park Parishes have a long connection with KCP. The site was dedicated as a Country Park during the 1980s and was originally operated by a Joint Committee of Local Authorities, who provided funding for its use. Later, for practical reasons, it was put into the

hands of the Cotswold Water Park Society. Local people (including our own Councillor Sleeman) had important roles in its management, or simply volunteered with the Rangers to manage the site. And of course during all that time many of us have walked there, swum in the lake and enjoyed the wildlife.

The whole ethos of the Local Authority assets in the CWP, as originally set up, was to provide an exemplar of how the Water Park area could be developed after gravel for the benefit of everybody. The Water Park Parish Councils have consistently fought, often in the face of opposition, to maintain this ethos: first by agitating for Parish representation on the joint committee; then by questioning and challenging decisions about KCP and other sites which did not appear to be in local interests; and finally by helping to bring to light the financial and management irregularities which led to the arrest for fraud of the Society's Chief Executive and put KCP into the position it is in today.

In the light of the CWP Trust's current financial worries, and the depredations done to KCP by Watermark, the original ethos appears to be a diminishing vision. Nevertheless we still intend to be involved in what happens at KCP. This means that we are still pushing our application for the footpaths around the Park to be made Public Rights of Way; and we will be watching with great interest, and making our voices heard if necessary, when the new operator takes over the Park later this year.

A Polite Reminder to all Landowners...

... to keep ditches clear and hedges trimmed (whilst respecting nesting birds and other animals) so as not to cause a nuisance to others.

The church needs churchwardens!

Please speak with David Crofts (861658).

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 1st April Annual Parish Spring Clean 10am at the Village Hall (further details above)

Sunday 2nd April Annual Parochial Church Meeting in the Church at 11.45am following Morning Prayer at 11.00am

Friday 21st April Village Hall AGM, 7.30pm in the Village Hall (wine and nibbles will be served afterwards)

Friday 28th April Annual Parish Meeting, 7.30pm in the Village Hall (further details above)



Sarah Powell, Chair

Email: sarah.powell.sk@gmail.com

Tel: 860150

*The unadopted minutes of the Parish Council are displayed on the Parish Notice Board together with bus and mobile library timetables. The agenda for the next meeting is also displayed some days before each meeting. **Parish Council meetings are always open to the public.** The next Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 3rd April in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.*