

Somerford Keynes Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Clerk: Wendy Cartwright 861517

www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk

skpcclerk@gmail.com

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

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.

Somerford Keynes Commemorates the End of WW1

Along with many communities throughout the country we will be remembering the Great War and commemorating the final signing of the Armistice 100 years ago.

On **11th November 2018** there will be a Remembrance Service at All Saints Church Somerford Keynes **commencing at 10.45am**. Those lost from this village will be remembered. A display with their details will be on show, and a Remembrance garden will be available for placement of your small wooden crosses.

In the evening come to the churchyard and join the Nation's Tribute with the last post at **6.55pm**, lighting of the beacon at **7pm** and the pealing of bells at **7.05pm**. BBQ and mulled wine will be available from **6.00pm**. There will be no charge for this, but for catering purposes please let Karen Mogridge know if you are coming: karen@somerfordconsulting.co.uk, 860476.

Thanks to the Village Hall Committee and CDC (via our District Councillor) for helping to fund this.

Karen would also be very happy to hear from you if you are able to staff the barbecues for half an hour, or help with setting up beforehand.

Keynes Country Park

In our last Parish Newsletter we told you about the failure, on a legal point, of our long-running application to have the footpaths around Keynes Country Park designated as Public Rights of Way. A legal ruling, made some time after the submission of our application, had deemed that the way in which members of the public gain entry to a Country Park means that they are not committing acts of trespass – and it is necessary to prove unopposed trespass in order to have a PRoW declared in this way.

However, in the intervening time we have been in regular contact with officers of Gloucestershire County Council, the landowner; and GCC has now exercised its power under the Localism Act to dedicate all the footpaths around the Park, including the footpath between the two lakes, as

Public Rights of Way. Signs to this effect have been posted around the Park.

When a PRoW is dedicated by a landowner, the dedication can carry certain conditions. In this case, the condition is that the footpaths in the Park can be closed on up to 20 days in a year on Health and Safety grounds when large numbers of visitors are expected. There are still some questions about how this will be implemented, but we hope it will allay the concerns of the site operators about overcrowding on busy days.

Our goal has always been to secure Keynes Country Park for access by walkers far into the future, when the current operators, and even the Cotswold Water Park Trust, may no longer be in the picture. We are extremely grateful to officers at GCC for championing this cause, for which so many local people have worked hard, and for bringing it to what we hope is a satisfactory and permanent conclusion.

Car Parking

We have had complaints from Parishioners about summer visitors who park on the roads around Keynes Country Park and Neigh Bridge.

In the case of KCP, the whole area is marked with double yellow lines, and parking on or even within these lines is illegal. Our Clerk has been in touch with GCC Highways about parking here, and we understand that on several occasions this year GCC's agents have been out ticketing offenders. The Clerk has been proactive in making GCC aware of potential problems, and we hope that in time this will lead to a change in visitors' behaviour.

Neigh Bridge is different in that there are no restrictions on parking on the highway, as long as access to drives and public footpaths is not blocked. The Parish Council has no authority at all in this matter, and we regret we cannot act for individuals in notifying GCC about inconsiderate parking. However we understand that the Cotswold Water Park Trust has letters and notices from Gloucestershire Police about inconsiderate parking on the verges by Neigh Bridge, which its wardens, and the fishing bailiffs, are putting on windscreens when on site. We are intending to ask for some of these to be made available to Parishioners who walk by Neigh Bridge. Please ask the Clerk if you would like some.

Neigh Bridge

In addition to the nuisance of parking, Neigh Bridge has been a cause for further concern this summer. On hot days, especially when Keynes Country Park has closed its gates, visitors have

flooded into Neigh Bridge (and also into adjoining private land), burning the ground with portable barbecues, creating noise and generally causing a nuisance. One group of people appeared to have set up camp there, and caused quite a lot of damage before leaving. Some of these visitors have been both rude and aggressive to the wardens of the Cotswold Water Park Trust, which has a long-term lease on the land, and have completely ignored warning notices put up at the lake.

This is not a problem with an easy solution. Many members of the public (including local dog walkers, leisure walkers and Thames Path users) visit Neigh Bridge without causing any concerns and it is difficult to see how antisocial behaviour in the Park can be prevented whilst at the same time protecting the rights of these legitimate users. The Parish Council has been in regular contact with the CWPT over the summer; our County Councillor has also been involved. We know that the Trust employed a private security company to monitor the Park at busy times, and enlisted volunteers, as well as its own wardens, for litter-picking following busy weekends. It has also been exploring the possibility of creating byelaws at Neigh Bridge, which would enable police to issue fixed penalty notices against the use of fires, swimming, camping etc. However we understand that this is likely to be a complicated process with no guarantee of success.

The Cotswold Water Park Trust, as leaseholder, has responsibility for Neigh Bridge and we continue to remind it of this. However we need to be realistic. Preventing and repairing damage and nuisance by antisocial members of the public requires both money and time, especially if we want law-abiding visitors to continue to enjoy their rights. And we need to be aware that only a few hundred metres from Neigh Bridge is a beautiful lake which belongs to the Parish and might itself prove a target for antisocial visitors in future years.

Parish Council Elections, 2019

It might seem a long way away, but we are asking you to consider now whether you would like to be a Parish Councillor for the term beginning May, 2019. This is something we shall be asking in every Newsletter until the election has passed.

Several of our Councillors are likely to be retiring at the end of the current term – and even if they were all intending to stand again, in the interests of democracy we would like to see more than seven candidates for the seven places available. In particular, it would be great to see some younger people standing for election, and some candidates from Shorncote.

Our monthly Parish Council meetings are open to everyone. If you would like to learn more about being a Parish Councillor please come to one of these meetings, or speak to any of the people whose names appear at the head of this newsletter.

Telephone Box

We hoped, at the beginning of the summer, that we had found a tradesperson with the knowledge and experience to refurbish the telephone kiosk on The Street so that a defibrillator could be installed. Unfortunately this has fallen through, and a small group of volunteers is now about to undertake the job, all the time hoping that the winter weather will not prevent its completion.

We have heard (thank you!) from some volunteers willing to make brief weekly and monthly checks of the defibrillator (no servicing required!), but more would always be welcome. Please let the Clerk know if you are willing to help.

Hedges and Ditches

Please can we remind everyone (as we do every year!) that it is only neighbourly to keep your hedges trimmed back off the pavements; and it is a legal requirement for all riparian landowners to keep their ditches in good shape. Our flood defences and the efforts of the land management team at Lower Mill Estate have all helped to keep the Thames flowing smoothly over recent years. However, groundwater is still an issue in some areas of the Parish, and well-kept ditches are crucial in maintaining good drainage.

Dates for your diary

Quiz Saturday November 10th 7pm for 7.30 in the Village Hall – eat beforehand and bring a pudding to share in the interval. Info from Muriel 861614.

Commemoration of the end of WW1 Sunday 11th November (see above).

Christmas Fair Saturday November 24th 10.00am – 1.00pm in the Village Hall. Home-crafted items, raffle and refreshments. Free entry. In aid of Church funds.

Somerford Keynes and Shorncote History Group Monday, 26th November at 7.15pm for browsing and 7.30pm start in the Village Hall. The meeting will celebrate 100 years of the Royal Air Force and the end of WW1. Everyone welcome! Info from Judy 861292



Karen Mogridge, Chair

Email:

karen.mogridge@somerfordconsulting.co.uk

Tel: 860476

*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 5th November in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.*