

Minutes of Somerford Keynes Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall, 14th October 2024

Present: Cllr A. Clark (AC), Cllr J. Whitwell (JW), Cllr N. Hunt (NH), Cllr G. Valentine (GV), Cllr M. Keegan (MK), Cllr Hilary Collins (HC)

Also present: Clerk K. Holdsworth (KH)

1. Apologies

Cllr M.H-Oldland (MHO), CC Cllr L Spivey (LS), Mike Wilding (MW Village Lake), CDC Cllr M McKeown (MM), Rob Abraham (Flood Warden)

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Hilary Collins, Cllr G Valentine

3. Public Session

There were no matters raised in the public session.

4. Approval of Minutes of September 11th 2024 Meeting

Proposed JW, seconded AC.

5. Report from County Cllr L. Spivey

There is no report from Cllr L Spivey this month.

6. Report from District Cllr M.McKeown

The is no report from Cllr M McKeown this month.

7. Completed Actions from Previous Meeting

- 7.1 HC has engaged with Lower Mill Estates (LME) and the Environment Agency regarding the spillway clearance. LME have undertaken some work and EA have some scheduled so this should be resolved.
- 7.2 A sign has been obtained from LME to try to divert their visitors away from Mill Lane. GV will collect and pass to NH/MW to erect.
- 7.3 AC has written to Cotswold Lakes Brew Co, they have confirmed they have commissioned an Acoustic Assessment which should be completed in the coming weeks.

- 7.4 KH has replaced the Clerk's laptop as the previous one was broken and outdated.
- 7.5 KH looked into considering a .Gov email address for the PC. This comes with quite an expensive monthly expenditure and the PC felt no need to change.

8. Ongoing and New Actions

8.1 Enhanced Speed Warnings

NH has engaged with Cllr L Spivey regarding the potential provision of enhanced speed warnings at the northern end of the village. She will be seeing Gill Portlock of Gloucestershire CC Highways with the expectation of a subsequent meeting on site about the feasibility of enhancing/moving the signage.

Action: NH to continue to progress.

8.2 Flooding

The flooding report is now on the parish website.

Whilst the report is important in documenting a baseline of core information, its ongoing value is to provide and sign post a series of measures and activities to proactively prevent flooding. This is covered in the workplan section and an update of current activities is detailed in appendix one.

The PC thanked HC for her ongoing hard work on this topic. As with all things though, the best solutions are achieved when the whole community contributes. We are aware of and grateful for the fact that a number of parishioners monitor water courses and appreciate any observations being shared with the PC.

9. Community Investment Levy

The PC has £87,797 of funds with another £33,125 arriving shortly.

It is positive that we have this amount of funding and a number of possible projects have been identified. It was suggested that we review our investment criteria at the next PC meeting as we have money to look at additional opportunities.

Action: KH to add this to November's agenda.

The following projects are in various states of progress;

9.1 Village Hall Kitchen

This is now complete.

9.2 Village Hall Other Projects

The Village Hall Committee have been successful in being awarded a £10k grant for energy related investments. They are currently doing due diligence on various options around heating, lighting and EV chargers.

The village hall is an important community asset so the PC will continue to work closely with the village hall committee.

9.3 Church Staircase

As per previous minutes, quotes have been obtained and a survey completed. The PCC awaits approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, feedback is expected by the end of October.

9.4 Neigh Bridge Swings

Play equipment, in particular swings, for children were a popular request in the most recent community survey. Given there is nowhere to site them in the village the PC approached Cotswold Lakes Trust to ask if some could be situated at Neigh Bridge if the PC funds the purchase and installation.

Indicative pricing of around £15k has been received. The PC agreed to progress, the next steps being due diligence to ensure best value.

Action: AC to ask Cotswold Lakes Trust to provide copies of quotations and explain their process of supplier selection.

Action: KH/MHO to get benchmarking data from similar installations by Ashton Keynes PC and at Kemble School respectively.

9.5 Bus Shelter/Notice Board

JW has obtained a quotation from Made In Oak for a bus shelter of £6834, this doesn't include a notice board.

Gloucestershire CC have agreed to pay for the hard standing area preparation.

Next step is a site survey to confirm the feasibility of possibility installation sites. Once feasibility is confirmed the PC will engage with residents of neighbouring properties.

Action: JW to continue to progress

9.6 Missing Link Cycle Path

Engagement continues, in particular with LS but no notable progress.

Accepted that this is difficult and one of the interested parties (Ashton Keynes PC) is especially focussed on a quarrying matter currently.

Action: NH to continue to progress.

10. Financials

The External Audit report has been finalised and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24 are now on the website.

The PC have completed a half year financial update and this can be viewed in appendix two.

Key points are that the precept was increased to ensure guaranteed income of £7,894 (precept plus parish field rental) covered all expenses and provided some contingency.

Essential spend in half one (April to September) of 2024/25 was £3742.

In half two we expect to spend less on 'essential items' (given largest ones of audit, insurance and subscriptions have already been paid); the same again on Clerk salary (the CIL activity in particular is creating much more administrative work); and more on the village lake up to the budget and typical annual spend level of £1,200.

Current year end forecast for spend is £7,300, in line with planned projections.

Given we are also receiving interest on our holdings and have significant grant funds the PC finances are in excellent shape.

The PC thanks KH for her work on this. Moving to online banking, opening interest paying accounts and detailed record keeping enable a close and accurate view to be taken at all times.

11. Planning

No planning applications received this month.

12. Correspondence

12.1 Ash Die Back Trees

An email was received asking if any landowners want to replace trees after the cutting of Ash trees. There is still time to do this but priority comes on a first come first served basis, please contact the PC if you are interested.

12.2 Wheatleys Farm Gravel Extraction

Email for information received, no action required.

12.3 First Aid Course

Having run some courses for residents which have been extremely well received, Marcus Gibbons is offering another opportunity to attend a certificated first aid course.

Action: KH to distribute an email with details to parishioners. The PC have agreed to cover the cost of the heating of the village hall whilst the course is taking place.

13. September Income and Expenditure

<u>Income</u>	Interest Earned September 24 £273.04 Precept 2 nd Installment £1575.00 Build Back Better Grant £1994.00 (Village Lake)
Total Income	£3842.04
<u>Spend</u>	Clerks Training £45.00 Plants (Village Lake) £20.00 Defibrillator pads £76.74 Replacement Laptop (Parish Clerk) £399.96 Lake Strimming £100.00
CIL Spend	Village Hall Kitchen Fitter £3738.80
Total Spend	£4380.50
Transfers	None

14. Any Other Business

None

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Date of next meeting Monday 11th November 2024

Appendix One – Flooding Update

Hilary Collins' Report Update on Flooding – October 2024

1. Flooding Report

The flooding report (May 2024 version) has been uploaded to the SKPC website.

2. **SKPC Website.** Mike McKeown provided me with training on editing the SKPC website so that I can add flooding updates, etc.
3. **Concerns recently raised by John Whitwell.** John's concerns regarding the standing water in the fields next to the north bund are valid. Due to recent storms, groundwater levels are obviously already high as we head into the winter. If we have another long, wet winter, it is possible that the village's flood defence system could be challenged. It might be good to have a discussion with EA to ask if our flood defenses are adequate.

Note: In 2023/2024 England had its wettest 18 months since records began in 1836, and this is a consequence of our warming world. Source – Financial times.

11/10/24 Flooding west of the bund, water levels already very high!



4. Annual Flood Workplan

a. **Bund Maintenance** – James Spicer reported that both bunds were mown by Environment Agency (EA) crew in August. The next formal inspection/maintenance of the bund is planned for autumn 2025, however, he has walked the bunds, and checked the pumps, etc., several times this year. All seemed well (kiosk condition aside) the last time he was there. He plans to visit the site again soon and is happy to meet on site if needed.

b. **Pump Station and Kiosk**

i. Operation and Maintenance – Currently, the kiosk has been chained closed, presumably to keep secure (to stop it falling apart).



ii. James Spicer said EA are due to receive funding to replace and reposition the kiosk in the next financial year, subject to final confirmation from Defra. Although similar hopes have been raised before, the way this funding has been (provisionally) awarded gives him greater confidence.

c. **Spine Road River Gauge** – James Thomson prepared a report showing on-line anomalies and this was sent to James Spicer in August.

- d. **Spillway** – LME reported work on the spillway over the summer. In September James Spicer reported that the spillway is due to be cleared shortly by EA team. He complimented LME on the clearance of the concrete sill area and noted that EA's team will clear the section between Thames and the sill. He noted that EA's original schedule was disrupted this year due to water flowing over the site for much longer than expected.



Looking south from bridge on Spine Road

e. **Water Lane Drains**

- i. Level of water in street drains – **Please can Water Lane residents keep an eye on this and let the parish council know if the levels in the drains start to get higher. With early warning, we may be able to avoid a repeat of last winter's flooding.** It would be helpful if leaves and other debris were not washed into the drains. Perhaps we should investigate whether screen could be added to these drains?
- ii. Routine pumping/jetting - I emailed Gill Portlock, Highways in August. She responded that these drains are cleaned out once a year, however she will monitor through the Winter and if necessary, will request an additional clean.
- iii. Mack's Farm ditch clearance – Malcolm Poole emailed in August to say that clearance would happen when the harvest has been completed. Need to follow up to check.

f. **Ditches and culverts**

- i. Residents – I am aware that several residents keep an eye on various sections of ditch, culverts, waterways, as they are out walking around the Somerford Keynes, Shorncote, etc. **Please can residents inform the**

parish council if they are aware of any ditch or culvert in the parish that is blocked or badly overgrown. Thank you!

- ii. Highways – I need to consult with highways to find out more about the ditches in the parish that they are responsible for.
- iii. Farmers – This winter I hope to contact our local farmers to thank them for the ditch clearing work they have done, and if needed, to ask them about any sections of ditch that need attention.
- iv. Other landowners – ditto

g. Spine Road Channels

- i. Channels are needed along the roadside to stop flooding on Spine Road south of Mill Lane? I heard back from Gill Portlock and she said she will look at this. She asked if the channels (or grips) are there already? If so, these will be redug when the grip cutter is in our area. The grip cutting is carried out annually. If there are no grips, she will need to raise a works ticket to get some dug.

5. Action Items from the Flooding Report. I am following up on several action items identified in the report. To date, I can report that:

- a. Local resident and volunteer flood warden, Rob Abraham is meeting with us tonight.
- b. Parish Councillor, Mandy Keegan walked the Ewan ditch that runs through the Hills quarry east of Shorncote with the quarry operator. Some clearance has been done on the ditch by Hills, which has helped, but not resolved flooding of a barn on her property.
- c. Mandy also reported that the Shorncote mitigation scheme has been approved by CDC, completed, and no further action is needed on this installation.
- d. I requested a Product 4 flood map from the EA, but the map received was just for the LME area of the parish. Based on the level of detail provided by this mapping, I will need to request a series of maps. Further requests to EA will be made until I better understand the capacity and utility of the information that we can get.
- e. Following the spring 2024 County flood meeting, I talked to a representative of Thames Water and then emailed him to request information on the expansion of the Cirencester Treatment Plant, and where this facility discharges to. No response was received. I will follow up again.

6. New items – Has anyone noticed any new areas of concern for flooding?

- a. One area I thought we might want to look at is the River Thames between Neigh Bridge and Spine Road – It looks somewhat overgrown at the northern end with overhanging trees. Would it be possible to contact the riparian owner(s) and request a walk through for a better look?



Looking north from the bridge at Spine Road.

Appendix Two

Somerford Keynes Parish Council H1 2024/25 Financial Summary

<u>Income</u>		
<u>General Funds</u>		
Precept	6300	
Interest	1396	
VAT Reclaim	198	
Total		7894
<u>Grants</u>		
CIL	34640	
Build Back Better	1994	
Total Grants		36634
Total Income		44528

<u>Expenditure</u>		
<u>From General Funds</u>		
Essential Spend		
Audit	378	
Insurance	257	
HMRC	197	
Subscriptions	173	
Other	278	
Total Essential		1283
Clerk Salary		1845
Village Lake		215
One Offs		
Laptop		399
Total H1 Expenditure		3742
<u>From Grants</u>		
CIL		
Village Hall Kitchen	12671	
Church Stairs	234	
Total CIL		12905
Build Back Better		
Village Lake		350
Total H1 Expenditure		13255
Overall Total Expenditure		16997

Includes defibrillator

Total Funds At End September 2024

General Funds	10426
CIL	87797
Build Back Better	1644
Overall Total	99867