

KINGTON ST MICHAEL PARISH

Draft Minutes

Annual Parish Meeting

held on

Thursday 6th April 2023

at

Kington St Michael Village Hall

Kington St Michael - 7.30pm

Present: Parish Cllrs Gerry Gamble (Chairman of the Parish Council), Alex Hall, Victoria Ingham, Peter Macdonald, William Roe and Fiona Twisse. Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman and 6 members of the public, being Anne Smith, Stewart Smith, Margaret Pratley, Louise Williams, Andrew Fussell and Delcia Fussell.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Cllrs John Newton and Elizabeth Allen.

MIN 1. Minutes:

Draft Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 7th April 2022 were tabled.

It was agreed that the Minutes should be accepted and signed by Cllr G Gamble, the Chairman of the Meeting.

Proposed Cllr Peter Macdonald, seconded Cllr Alex Hall and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

MIN 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

There were no matters raised that were not covered by later Agenda items.

MIN 3. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Gerry Gamble, commented that it was his pleasure to be able to welcome all present to OUR Annual Parish Meeting and advised that it was always worth stating that this was NOT a Parish Council Meeting but our own Kington St Michael Community Meeting. It provided everyone with an opportunity to reflect on the previous year and to outline future developments and planned community activities.

He reminded all that he had commented last year that we all had come through a period of considerable change and that adapting to rapid change seemed to have become the new 'norm'. That was still the case.

A year ago we had been preparing to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee and, also coming to terms with the reality of the war in Ukraine, the impact of which had spread across Europe and indeed much of the rest of the world.

Twelve months on we were now preparing to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles 111. The Coronation was of course expected but had perhaps arrived sooner than anticipated.

Despite the impact of these national and international events village life had continued. The wide range of clubs that existed in the village, some represented here tonight, either in person or through their reports, demonstrated the strengths within our community.

The current edition of the Parish Council funded Village Newsletter was a 5-page edition packed with "Village Life" clubs, activities and events all organised and delivered by volunteers for our mutual benefit. He hoped they all knew how much their efforts were appreciated and applauded.

He concluded by advising that the Parish Precept for last year 2022/2023 was set to reflect inflation. The Precept for 2023/24 had been kept at a similar level rather than one that reflected the currently high levels of inflation impacting us all.

There were no questions raised.

MIN 4. Finance:

Copies of the Budget proposals for the year 2023/2024 were circulated to those in attendance.

There were no questions raised.

MIN 5. Reports from Parish Council Sub Groups and Committees:

The Parish Council had no Sub Groups or Committees during the past 12 months.

MIN 6. Reports from Local Organisations:

There were no Reports received.

MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:

Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman was pleased to attend and advised that it was good to be able to report on this, his 14th Annual Parish Report.

He commented that we seemed to be gradually emerging from the grip of Covid19 although there could be no doubt a dark era that has left its' mark. That together with the continuing war in the Ukraine and recent industrial unrest had faced Wiltshire Council with some challenges on a number of fronts. He would deal with a couple of them; the first one coming with an invitation too.

There was little doubt that the NHS had experienced considerable pressures on their capacity and waiting times across the spectrum of health provision had suffered as a consequence. One area in which necessary support could be given was that of providing a safe environment for those well enough to leave hospital, but not yet ready to return home. This may be because they were waiting for adaptations to be made for their home, or simply because they need time to recover or gain confidence. Wiltshire Council were working closely with the NHS then to launch a new service, the 'Shared Lives Home from Hospital Service'. Wiltshire Council were looking for Shared Lives Carers to help deliver this very important service for periods of up to 12 weeks. Shared Lives Carers were paid £850 per week per person, for the Home from Hospital service. Carers were self-employed and eligible for tax breaks and could claim mileage, and have access to a range of other Wiltshire Council benefits.

He posed the questions. Could you help ensure that our hospitals run more efficiently and that our doctors and nurses were not run ragged, and additionally that patients were able to recuperate well? More information was available at 'Becoming a carer-Wiltshire Council'. Thank you.

He advised that Wiltshire Council's budgets were under pressure too although happily Wiltshire Council were not suffering the budgetary difficulties some neighbouring authorities were, with external auditors and responsible finance officers alike refusing to sign off the budgets. There was no room for complacency though, although their budget of £465m was well placed to ensure a balanced operating budget for the next few years. Budgetary spend and increases of particular note were;

- Whole Life pathway (mental health, autism, learning disabilities) £96m, an increase of £11m.
- Living and Ageing well (adult care) £83m, an increase of £15m.
- Families and Children, £63m, an increase of £2m.
- Environment which includes waste and recycling, £48m, an increase of £4m.
- Highways and Transport £41m, an increase of £3m.
- Education and skills £29m, an increase of £6m.

On another note he had received a number of emails reference waste and recycling over the last year, and was conscious of some areas of concern and in fact complaint too. It had been suggested to him that Wiltshire Council needed to be more focused on food waste recycling and

he agreed, although it was an expensive service to implement. He was hopeful though that by his next report Wiltshire Council will have a food recycling program in place. In the meantime he asked for people to please note that Wiltshire Council were offering discounted food composters called a Green Johanna for £60 (normally £129.99). More information was online at 'Reducing your waste and composting- Wiltshire Council.'

There had been some complaints too about refuse collectors investigating the contents of bins to ensure the contents were in the correct bin. Wiltshire Council received £2.24m in the first six months of this year for recycling commodity. However this sum was very much reduced if there was contamination so by way of reminder he asked people to please note the following:

- Only recyclables are put in blue bins, not general waste or nappies.
- Flexible or soft plastics such as bread bags and packaging film or carrier bags should be placed in residual waste.
- Polystyrene and non-paper wrapping paper to be put into residual waste.
- Scrap metals such as biscuit tins can be recycled but car parts cannot.

And finally, Wiltshire Council had now introduced a kerbside battery collection service. Batteries such as DC, AA, AAA, 9V and button-type batteries could now be recycled. Please put them in a sealed transparent plastic bag on top of the blue lined bin.

On a personal note he continued to serve on the Health Select Committee hence his passion for the Shared Lives Home from Hospital service above, and he remained Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee which had seen a number of challenges from planning applications over the last year from Waste Incinerators and Solar Farms to large scale house build programs.

As an authority they continued to be under the cosh with an apparent shortfall in the five year housing land supply, which was a government set target for housing delivery. He had made a number of representations to central government including writing directly to Michael Gove MP over this unfair metric, which did force in his view house build programs in communities where it would be inappropriate. Correspondence he had received from The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities assured him that planning policy was changing in this regard. However, what it also made clear was the continued need to have a Neighbourhood Plan in place. He was pleased to report that although greater weight had been given in the past to Neighbourhood Plans of less than two years old, that would be dispensed with, and more authority given to the decision maker, that being Wiltshire Council. In his view then Neighbourhood Plan Teams have everything to play for and must continue to secure their own Neighbourhood Plan for their own communities particularly where there was not one in place at the present time.

In conclusion he thanked all once again for their time and support too over the last year. The Parishes he represented once again had proved a delight to work with, and made his job a lot easier and more pleasant in the process. Should anyone need his help or advice please contact him on his Wiltshire Council email address.

Question. The issue of the additional £3.6million government support for filling potholes was raised in the hope that some of it would find its way to the Parish.

The Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillor Greenman for his advice, continued involvement and assistance during the past year.

MIN 8. Kington St Michael Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr Will Roe reported on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on progress made over the last 12 months, assisted by Place Studio their consultants.

The initial Draft Plan had been submitted to Wiltshire Council as part of a screening process. A response was still awaited on whether there was a need for Strategic Environmental and Habitat Assessments. Following this hurdle a Draft Plan could be presented to the Parish Council for their approval to proceed with the Regulation 14 Consultation stage, when all Parishioners will be able to comment.

Things were progressing well but the procedure was a relatively slow process and various stages had to be followed before the production of a draft Neighbourhood Plan containing recommendations could be consulted upon.

Question. In response to a question on timescale, Will Roe felt that there was still a year to 18 months to go before a Referendum was likely.

MIN 9. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish Issues:

- a) **Recreation Ground Facilities** – Cllr Gerry Gamble provided an update advising that the QE2 Field Group continued to raise funds and to consider the future possibilities that included the possibility of an equipment storage facility. The Community Orchard project was progressing well with trees now ordered and delivery expected soon.
- b) **King Charles III Coronation Celebrations** – Cllr Elizabeth Allen, community volunteer co-ordinator, had provided a written report that was read to attendees. She advised that the road closure had not entirely been agreed yet, so she was awaiting Wiltshire Council authorisation. Until she had received this, she couldn't advertise it. This was the plan so far:
 - The road closure would be the same place as the Jubilee Celebrations last year. The road would be closed on Saturday 6th May from 11am to 5pm to allow time to put tables out.
 - The bus would be allowed access so the picnic tables would be placed carefully. The picnic tables needed to remain together opposite the Pub and outside the Club; where the cars were usually parked.
 - This was the same vicinity as last time but we do need to ensure vehicle access on this occasion.
 - The Club were happy to screen the televised Coronation Ceremony. No one knew the exact TV scheduling yet but The Queen's Coronation started at 11:15, so the assumption was that it would be a similar time.
 - The Jolly Huntsman Pub planned to do food (exact food - to be confirmed)
 - The Kington Cafe would possibly do cream teas (to be confirmed)
 - There would be an opportunity to get Kington St Michael Coronation Mugs at a much reduced price of £3/mug, which could be purchased on the day. She could take orders after the event and get more if the supply runs out.
 - Adrian Cole would be providing the picnic tables and King's throne for selfies.
 - Volunteers were needed to hold a long ladder on Thursday 4th so she could erect the bunting. Choosing a Thursday should avoid annoying the bin men.
 - Volunteers were needed on the day to load/unload picnic tables at 11am & 5pm.
 - Posters with exact details were to be put up very soon advertising what food & drink will be available, and timings.
 - Road closure notification posters would be put up once she had received authorisation
 - Posters would also be erected at bus stops to tell people they were running as usual.
 - Residents in the road closed area would be kindly requested to move their cars for the duration. This had worked well last time and really made a difference.

- She had yet to ask Brian about alternative parking. Not sure whether it was needed, as the Village Hall should suffice.
- The Village Hall would be available that day for facilities although the Club/Cafe/Pub could all be used if you use their bar etc.

She had spoken to the Pub about their guests staying and going to Badminton and they were ok with the arrangements.

Question. Margaret Pratley asked a question in regard to whether the Parish Council was considering gifting a King Charles III Coronation Memorial Mug to all children in the Village/Parish or at least those attending the Primary School. Gerry Gamble suggested that this would be worthy of consideration.

- c) **Tor Hill Footpath Project** – Cllr Gerry Gamble provided a brief overview on the history of the project, including the historic land and building purchases dating back to the 1960's and 1980's. Consultants had been employed to produce a feasibility study to enable potential costs to be considered. The project now included improvements to the existing footpath to improve access and gradients. There had been some misunderstandings on what the scheme was and whether it was still required, including the funding aspects. The scheme was still at the discussion stage and no decisions made. There was still the intention to consult the community before any decisions were finally made.

Cllr Peter Macdonald reminded all that the Tor Hill pedestrian link with Kington Langley was severely compromised resulting from the A350 carriageway improvements. The Council had supported Kington Langley PC in their LHFIFG request to improve the pedestrian crossing arrangements.

- d) **Community Safety/Neighbourhood Watch/Emergency Plan** – Cllr Victoria Ingham advised that the response received from Parishioners in regards to the Newsletter article asking for Neighbourhood Watch volunteers had been very poor. In the interim the Council's database, circulating information would need to suffice. This remained open to everyone to join. Cllr Fiona Twisse the Lead Member on the Emergency Plan advised that she continued to work on the Plan using the Wiltshire Council Plan template. This covered skills, equipment, vehicles and safe places but there was still a requirement for community volunteer's involvement. Cllr Peter Macdonald suggested that the use of What3Words could be the simplest way to provide locations.

National Emergency Alert. Those in attendance were reminded that this would take place on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at 3.00pm. All mobile phone users should receive the test alert.

- e) **Traffic Speeds – the provision of Autospeedwatch Tools and Speed Identification Device (SID)** – The Council confirmed that they were to proceed with the purchase and installation of the ElanCity Evolis Vision Radar speed sign.
- f) **Community Speedwatch – the Speedwatch Team volunteers** – The Council had sufficient volunteers to form a Community Speedwatch Team that would need to take the necessary Police Training. But unfortunately the recent traffic survey had indicated that C154 High Street position chosen did not meet the eligibility criteria for CSW. The Council had agreed that the matter would be taken up at the next LHFIFG Meeting.

Cllr Fiona Twisse advised that the upgrade works to the Advisory Pedestrian Crossing was scheduled to commence on the 14th April 2023.

- g) **Highway Fingerpost Signs Project** – The Council had completed the replacement Stanton Lane fingerpost using the Queen's Platinum Jubilee finial. The intention now was to provide a Tor Hill crossroads replacement using the King Charles III Coronation finial.
- h) **Lych Gate Project – Upgrade of Footpath KSM 12 (part) – Byway Open to All Traffic** – After considerable effort, particularly by former Councillor Sandra Eaton, the

request had failed. However, a small success had been that the Wiltshire Highways had agreed to include the tarmac surface outside of the Village Hall/Shop/Car Park as maintainable highway in future surfacing programmes.

- i) **Village Entrance Gates Project** – The Council had recently considered the provision of Village Entrance Gates to improve the appearance to the entrances and also act as a traffic calming measure. There was little support from attendees. In fact some attendees felt that existing calming works within the High Street were not working and had been ill planned and that in future before any further calming works were planned local people should be consulted.
- j) **Rights of Way/Footpath Maintenance/Community Warden** – There was no discussion on this topic.
- k) **Honey Knob Hill – Postal Address Complications** – Parishioners and the Council had been concerned for a number of years, possibly since the nationwide Planning Portal submission system had been available for public use, that numerous planning applications were now including Honey Knob Hill in the postal address as a result of the automatic addressing availability. This had also impacted on other auto-infill databases resulting in misdirected emergency services, postal services and general inconvenience. Consideration needed to be given to resolving the matter as it appeared that this may be more than a local issue and needed resolving countywide and perhaps nationally. The Council had recently agreed to approach James Gray MP to intervene and seek changes through Government Agencies. Locally, Parishioners could assist by responding to correspondence received advising them of the error and also ensuring that auto-fill was not used with online transactions.
- l) **Climate Action Plan** – Cllr Elizabeth Allen had recently reported to Council on her attendance at the Chippenham Climate and Ecological Emergency Forum (CCEEF) held on the 9th March 2023. Resulting from Forum discussions she had recommended that the Council should consider a Climate Action Plan. The Council would be considering this further. In addition she had highlighted ways that some were moving forward with encouragement for other forms of transport by installing free cycle racks and also free water butts for properties. Both matters would require further investigation in regards to need and costs.
- m) **Tree Nursery Scheme** – As a climate change action the possibility of promoting a mini-tree nursery scheme within the Parish could be considered. With the loss of native trees (Elms and Ash in particular) the potential exists for Parishioners to be encouraged to pot up natural seedlings found in their gardens and grow on and to donate to local landowners to plant to replace lost trees or to plant in public areas such as the local woods and recreation ground.
- n) **Parish Database - Communications** – The Parish Council held a database (GDPR controlled) that allowed Community Messaging, Community Area News, Wiltshire News, Police and Neighbourhood Watch News to be circulated. All Parishioners could be included by simply emailing the Clerk and asking to be included.
- o) **Fly-tipping** – Stewart Smith raised his concerns in regards to local fly-tipping and lack of action by Authorities. Wiltshire Cllr Howard Greenman responded highlighting the huge cost to Wiltshire Council (and the Tax Payer) of clearing illegal dumping of waste and rubbish each year and the need for constant vigilance including the provision of CCTV cameras in tipping hot-spots.

CLOSURE OF MEETING:

The Meeting Chairman thanked all those who had provided Reports and who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting 2023.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: