

ANNUAL REPORT

Kemble & Ewen Parish Council



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Welcome

Welcome to the second all digital copy of the Annual Report. Current circumstance prevent delivery to each household so please share details of where you found this with your neighbours and friends and feel free to forward it on to anyone who may be interested.

This report will give you an insight into the activities and work undertaken by the Parish Council on behalf of the electorate of Kemble, Kemble Wick and Ewen. There will be an Annual Parish Meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 4 May, 2021 at 7pm. Please contact the clerk for log in details.

Residents are welcome to contact councillors about local issues (details of how to reach us are on the final page) or to come along to council meeting to share ideas get involved in community initiatives.

It is hoped that physical meetings will resume in June in the Village Hall.

Chairman's Report

A warm welcome as ever to the Parish Council Annual report. Effective two way communication with our residents is an important feature of our approach to business so, good to be able to say that, having missed the Annual Public meeting last year, this year we are at least half way back to normal with a public meeting via Zoom scheduled for Tuesday 4th May. Perhaps not a perfect solution but significantly better than nothing.

This Report contains details of the various issues on which we have taken action, either directly or via third parties when responsibility rests elsewhere. Worth mentioning that much of the Council's activity falls into the latter category where we do not possess direct decision making capacity but rather have to pursue the best interests of our Parish by working with and persuading others to take action on our behalf. Our most frequent partners in these negotiations are CDC, GCC, the Bathurst Estate, GWR, Network Rail and Cotswold Airport. The introduction of parking controls to manage commuter parking is a case in point having been a long running saga and the subject of much debate with GCC and locally. The current position is that a scheme focussed on and around Windmill Road and Station Road, the area most obviously affected, is under joint review with the County Council. Proposals should soon be ready for final and formal consultation with residents. Also worth mentioning that activity at the Airport has been much reduced during lockdown but we have been advised that this year a noticeable increase will occur as pilots catch up with flying time etc. In this case we shall continue working together with the Airport management to achieve observance of flight paths and noise abatement controls.

Looking forward, a couple of interesting projects are on the horizon. The first of these is the Very Light Rail project which has been gathering momentum at a surprising rate in recent months. Although this would have significant impact on the Parish information available to residents has, so far, been rather limited. It is pleasing to report that Mr. Richard Gunner from the light Railway project Board has kindly agreed to make a presentation at our Annual Meeting to help correct this. Also looming on the horizon is a proposal to create a Solar Farm towards Kemble Wick and near to Kemble Wood. Details have yet to be finalised but it is noted that, in order to reduce adverse effects, the scheme sponsors have been willing to engage directly with Kemble Wick residents, who, because of the intended location would be most affected by the scheme. Our recommendation on the eventual planning application will take account of the success or otherwise achieved in these discussions together with other relevant factors.

The village appearance project continues and it has been good to see flowers lending colour and interest to many of the grass verges this Spring. Also pleasing that generally the recently planted roadside trees have taken root: exceptions will be checked and replaced as necessary as the project proceeds.

Personnel changes this year to mention are firstly that Councillor Sohrab Sohrabjee decided to stand down. Sohrab has long been a member of the team whose contribution has been much valued, both on general business, picking up and pursuing issues on behalf of residents, particularly but not exclusively in Ewen, and successfully working with the airfield management to secure best outcomes for the Parish. Our thanks to Sohrab for his significant contribution and best wishes for the future. We have also very recently been pleased to welcome David Russell as a new member of our team and wish him well in his new role.

Contained within this report under the Community Activities heading are a number of thank you acknowledgements; examples of the numerous and varied contributions which so many of our residents make towards the good health and success of our Parish. Thanks again to all who contribute to help make our Parish a great place to live.

Best Wishes, Roger Pettit

Community Activities

Playing Field & Playground

The Parish Council was pleased to reopen the playground once government guidance permitted. This is a key facility for the younger members of the community and the Parish Council works hard to ensure the facility remains in good working order. Each year, funds are dedicated to the ongoing maintenance and care of the play facilities which, due to their age, often require regularly maintenance.

The playground is inspected weekly and quarterly inspections are carried out by a professional inspection company. Parents are reminded that children should be supervised at all time whilst using the facility and that dogs are not permitted anywhere on the playing field - this is to ensure that health and safety of those people using it.

The Playing Field is leased from the Bathurst Estate, the lease for which will be due for renewal within the new few years.

Community Support during COVID-19

The Parish Council are grateful to Lisa Rawson and her volunteers for all the help they provided in the villages during the past 12 months. Volunteers assisted with grocery shopping, prescription collection and other needs during this time. Should any residents require assistance they can also contact: the Gloucestershire Community [Help Hub](#), Age UK Gloucestershire on 01452 422660 or the Thames Benefice [ASK](#) service.

Thank you to...

The Parish Council would like to thank the many residents who volunteer to give their time free of charge to run and support community activities. In particular to: Steve Marsh who runs the village website www.kemble.co.uk; the Parish News volunteer editors; Pat Ayres and Austin Hind for their co-ordination of remembrance events; Brian Ayres for maintaining the war graves; our various contractors and suppliers; Tom Barrow for organising the annual Litter Pick; the Village Hall committee; the Kemble Community Garden committee and last, but by no means least, our parish councillors themselves.



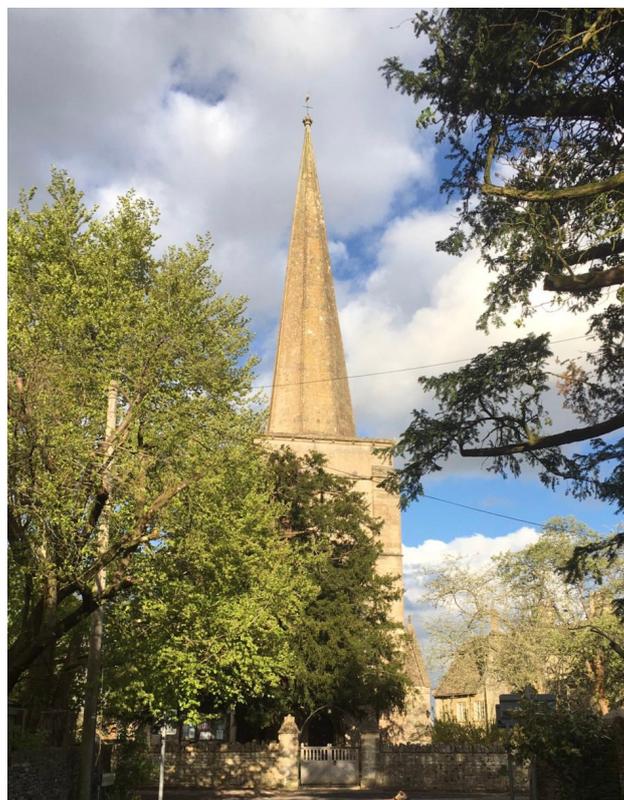
Community Activity

Cemetery

The Parish Council is responsible for the Closed Churchyard, around the Church, and owns and manages the Cemetery in Church Road. The Churchyard is closed to burials and the cemetery is nearly full. It is anticipated that the Cemetery could be forced to close to new burials within 3-5 years.

The Parish council is looking at options for the future and as part of this process is taking professional advice to identify if there are any potentially suitable sites within the village area. If any suitable sites are identified then the owners of the land would need to be contacted to determine if they were willing to sell the land and on what terms.

The Parish council will fully consult the village when we have established what is possible, outlining options and likely costs.



Village Environment - Highways & Footpaths

Despite limited activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Parish Council is pleased that the missing pedestrian link between the playing field and the station entrance has been completed by Highways this year improving pedestrian safety in this area. These essential pathways mean that people no longer have to walk in the road to access the station from Windmill Road. The Parish Council contributed towards the cost of these works.

Some progress has been made with the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) proposed residents parking scheme and an informal consultation was carried out by the Parish Council to seek residents views on using double yellow lines to address commuter parking in key areas. The feedback received was generally positive and it is hoped that GCC will commence their formal consultation with residents soon.

Community Activity

Kemble Community Garden

Kemble Community Gardens is an area of land tucked away behind Old Manor Gardens. This area has been 'cultivated' in many different ways by Kemble residents for about the past twelve years. In addition to providing eighteen allotments there are areas for walking, tables and benches for seating, a small orchard and extensive areas for wildlife.

Over the past year, and especially during lockdowns, the gardens have proved to be invaluable for exercise and recreation of all types from digging to dog walking and, recently, I met a grandad and his grandson who were busy compiling a maths trail/treasure hunt. Visitors almost always remark on how beautiful the gardens are and how well maintained they are.

The allotments are exceptionally well tended and provide plot holders with a range of produce including vegetables and flowers of all shapes and sizes. It has been noticeable over the past year that the level of care and attention given to veg plots has risen considerably. This is due in no small part to the periods of lockdown when plot holders have been able to devote more time to their gardening activities. This in turn has provided welcome opportunities for working in the outdoors as well as socially distanced meetings with other gardeners and visitors.

Such is the interest in the gardens and veg growing in general that there is now a waiting list for allotments proving just how much an area like the community gardens is a necessity in this day and age.

As well as being put to very good use by humans, the gardens provide a haven for wildlife. It is a valuable environment for slow worms, which are a protected species, and a home for all kinds of insects and birds. The sound of birdsong, especially at this time of year, is a joy to hear.

The proposed housing development of eight dwellings in the fenced off area adjoining Old Manor Gardens is making slow progress. This is due partly to the necessity to provide a suitable habitat (fenced off but yet to be completed at the rear of the site) in which to rehome the slow worm population that is well established in the development area.

In summary, this has been a very good year for Kemble Community Gardens and I look forward to its continued growth and development providing Kemble residents with a highly valued amenity.

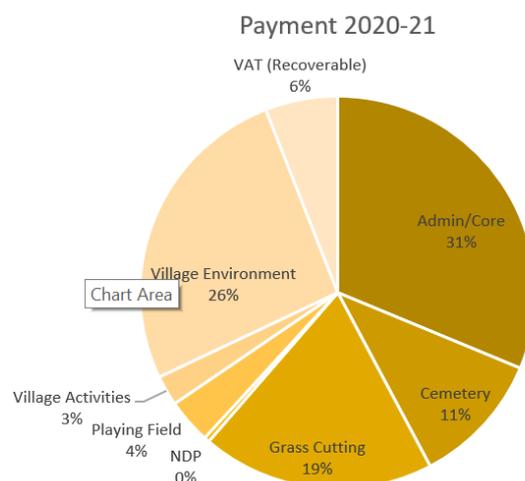
Jill Steeden - Kemble Community Garden
April 2021

Financial Summary

The Parish Council's main source of income is the local council tax, known as the precept. The precept requested for the year ending 31 March 2020 was £25,765.

For a typical Band D property, this equated to £48.49 per year. For this year, the Parish Council has asked for £26681, an increase of 4.9%. The cost for a band D property will increase by £2.61 per year. This will enable improvements to be made throughout the villages including improved pathways and visuals on the village approaches which aid traffic calming.

About one third of each year's expenses are required for 'Core services' such as insurance, salaries, training, stationery & printing, professional accounting/audit fees and subscriptions. The remainder is used within the village to provide the services and environment that make Kemble a village to enjoy. The rest of the expenses mainly relate to maintaining and improving the village for all. This year the parish council contributed towards a footpath link between the playing field and station and has invested in a new dedicated website to improve communications with residents.



Payments	Total
Admin/Core	£ 10,109.93
Cemetery	£ 3,545.00
Grass Cutting	£ 6,160.00
NDP	£ 140.00
Playing Field	£ 1,192.58
Village Activities	£ 805.00
Village Environment	£ 8,447.38
VAT (Recoverable)	£ 1,915.45
Grand Total	£ 32,315.34

Receipts	Sum of TOTAL
Agency/Burial	£ 1,453.08
Interest	£ 75.66
Precept	£ 25,765.00
VAT (Refunded)	£ 709.74
Grand Total	£ 28,003.48

The Parish Council pays for independent internal and external audits each year, to ensure it is following correct procedures for authorising payments, record keeping, and reporting its finances. A copy of the audited accounts will be available from the Parish Clerk following the completion of the external audit. Any resident may look at the Parish Council's un-audited accounts throughout the year by requesting details from the Clerk.

Meet the Parish Council

Meetings are generally held on the second Friday evenings of each month (avoiding bank holidays). For the past year, these have been held online via Zoom but it is hoped that physical meetings will resume in Kemble Village Hall soon.

Meeting dates are shown on the village website where agenda and minutes can also be found.

Residents are welcome to attend and there is time allocated at the start of each meeting where you can raise issues, ask for advice, or ask questions. The Parish Council asks that residents refer to the public participation procedure which can be found [here](#).



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