



KEMBLE & EWEN PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on May 6, 2022 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Sarah Broadley, Parish Clerk Email: clerk@kembleandewen-pc.gov.uk Tel: 01285 770758

Present:

Parish Councillors: David Ball, Michael Binks, George Collins, Lester Napper, David Russell & Eric Silk

Guest Speakers: Lisa Spivey – District Councillor, Tony Berry – Local Councillor & Nick Evans – Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner

Members of the Public: 38

1. **Chairman's Welcome** – Cllr Ball welcomed all to the meeting in Cllr Pettit's absence.
2. **To receive any apologies for absence** – Roger Pettit, Daniel Demain & Rob & Carol Smith
3. **Guest Speakers:**
 - a. Lisa Spivey – Councillor GCC – South Cerney Ward
Lisa provided a report a copy of which is attached (Appendix 1)
 - b. Tony Berry – Cotswold District Councillor – Kemble Ward
Tony provided a Ward Report a copy of which is attached (Appendix 2)
 - c. Nick Evans – Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Speedwatch – Nick thanked the parish for it's participation and advised that a new approach has been signed off in Gloucestershire with the use of permanent ANPR cameras
Volunteer PCSO – a new role has been created in Gloucestershire. It is a uniformed role to help organise communities
Kemble Station – there has been some antisocial behaviour reported - police working with GWR to resolve
Rural Crime Team – up and running. There has been an increase in rural burglaries both domestic and agricultural. All reminded to be vigilant especially with open garages etc. during the summer
Crime prevention – key strategy for the police with home office funding to create safer streets
Gloucestershire Road Safety Group – Nick is the co-chair. The aim is to Educate, Enforce & Engineer – a new strategy to making roads safer.
4. **Chairman's Report**
The Chairman's Report (Appendix 3) was read by Cllr David Ball.
5. **To receive comments and questions from residents**
Parking Scheme – GCC will be running open sessions on 11 May from 2pm & 6pm to receive feedback on the proposals ahead of a formal consultation. Concerns raised over slow progress followed by short notice of the open sessions

Chairman Signature _____ Date _____

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____

Appendix 1:

CLLr Lisa Spivey, County Councillor for the South Cerney Division, Gloucestershire County Council

Annual Report 2021/2022

Since winning the election a year ago, I have been focussing on 4 main issues which are the local issues residents spoke to me about most frequently during the election campaign and continue to get in touch with me about. They are:

1. Highway Maintenance issues
2. Road safety, especially speeding
3. River pollution
4. Flooding

Most parishes have a very good system of logging highway maintenance issues and have a working relationship with the Local Highways manager, Richard Gray. In the last year, I have had regular meetings with Richard (every few weeks) to keep abreast of these issues and to assist in seeing action on them.

To be very honest, however, I have been left very frustrated by a system which I do not think is delivering for residents, so in December last year, I brought a motion to Full Council asking for a complete overhaul of the Highway Maintenance system which is currently not fit for purpose. Residents email me on a near daily basis, telling me about road repairs either not carried out or shoddy repairs, uncut vegetation which creates safety issues, fallen down signs, abandoned road works signs cluttering the verge, debris filling gullies, potholes wreaking tyres- the list goes on.

It is clear that the Local Highways managers are not able to do all the work they would like to do and are financially constrained each year. This could be eased if the contractor, Ringway was doing a consistently good standard of work and if the maintenance schedule was overhauled.

The Lib Dem motion was not accepted by the Conservative administration, but I will continue to lobby for further change via public questions, meetings with the cabinet member and asking the Environment Scrutiny committee to consider looking at this in more detail.

I have tried to use my Highways Local funding to best effect, doing some patching work on some villages, helping with speed surveys, and contributing towards making walking and cycling safer and easier. I will be doing the same again in this coming year.

As far as speeding is concerned, again it has been a rather frustrating year, as the administration decided not to adopt the Stockholm Convention ruling that a default 20mph limit should be implemented "where cars and vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians meet" when it was proposed via a Lib Dem motion at the September Full Council meeting

The adoption of a policy on ANPR systems has also been painfully slow, and the Traffic Regulation Order team are way behind on dealing with requests due to staff shortages.

In many cases in this rural part of the County, we are just given a flat "no" when asked to look at speed reductions through our villages because we do not tick the boxes by national criteria which would necessitate a speed reduction.

This is disappointing because the speed reduction would not only make our villages safer, it would also improve health and wellbeing for residents.

KEPC Annual Parish Meeting May 2022

The new PCC has made tackling speeding a priority and has been very supportive of community speed watch initiatives and the police have been out and about with their speed guns, but they can't be everywhere and so we need to affect a culture change where speeding is seen as unacceptable.

In the coming year, I will be looking at what ways I can lobby for change to the national criteria, so that speed issues can be tackled effectively in our communities.

I will work with you to lobby both the County council and our MP to help with this issue.

I was supposed to be seconding a motion on Highway safety at the Full council meeting in March, but we ran out of time, so I will be speaking on this at the May meeting.

The legal dumping of raw sewage into our local rivers and waterways is a scandal which is gathering national attention. According to recent figures there were over 2000 incidents of raw sewage being poured out into Cotswold rivers in 2020 and there are no rivers deemed to be healthy in the whole of England. This must stop and I have been actively campaigning on this issue, bringing a motion to the Council in May this year, and getting a good amount of media coverage on the issue.

I will continue to campaign for this practise to be disallowed, for water companies to be made to increase infrastructure funding and for the Environment Agency to be built back up to be equipped to deal with this terrible situation.

Flooding in this area was (fortunately) very localised and small scale this year, but it continues to be a risk as we face the effects of climate change and changed weather patterns, including flash storms and large amounts of rainfall.

Clearly, good gully maintenance is required to ensure that the sewers can deal with excessive rainfall and I will continue to lobby that this happens on a yearly basis, without the need for inspection (surely better just to do it rather than see whether it needs doing and then either do it or delay it?), and to work closely with landowners and other stakeholders to ensure that flood defences and mitigation work is happening.

The Council continues to support post pandemic recovery in communities via the Build Back Better fund which is open until 2025, please get in touch if you have a project you think appropriate for funding.

Brexit and the pandemic has had a very big impact on care home staffing, and this remains an issue for concern, with the proposed closure of 4 homes in the County.

Ambulance response times have been alarming at times with unacceptable delays. This is being closely monitored and improvements have been made.

Children's services finally moved out of Special measures after the inspection in February. There is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of the county are adequately looked after.

Home to school transport is still not as widely available as it should be in the division and this is another issue I will be looking at more closely in the coming year.

As ever, if there are particular issues you would like to discuss, I am available on the phone or email.

Lisa

Tel: 01285 653405

email: lisa.spivey@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____

Appendix 2:

KEMBLE WARD: DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2

It's been a very busy year, not least because of Covid, which continued to have a big impact on everyone until the very successful vaccination project enabled us to work our way out of lockdown and into a freer society, but one that is still not 'normal' with people talking about a 'new normal' – watch this space!

I continue to attend your Parish Council meetings to help where possible or answer any queries on CDC issues and have been involved in various activities outside my normal role on your behalf. These include my continuing involvement in the Light Railway Project, assessing the viability of getting Government funding to re-open a line linking the main line station at Kemble to the centre of Cirencester, and chairing a council team looking into the issue of short term lettings and more specifically so called 'Party Houses'. I am also Deputy Chairman of the 'Friends of the Corinium Museum'.

District Council

I have been involved in a number of motions to Council in relation to:-

- Catching fly tippers (this activity has increased by 25% over the last couple of years) - voted down.
- Funding for the Queen's Jubilee – voted down.
- Increasing the dog bins service in response to increased dog ownership – voted down.
- A motion to alter the reasons for referring an application to the planning Committee – voted down

Major issues through the year:-

PLANNING

Debate and concerns (raised by more than 60 town and parish councils) over the Planning Committee Protocol and Scheme of Delegation introduced in November 2020 continues. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown recently met with the CDC CEO, Rob Weaver, planning officers, the CDC legal advisor and representative Parish Council members. It is hoped this will lead to the introduction of improved democratic processes and some proposals being put forward to make the process clearer and more inclusive for the Parish Councils.

BUDGET

I was yet again not able to support this year's budget, mostly owing to lack of detail on the proposed borrowing and high level of proposed spending. I have concerns as other Councils around the country have been seriously financially damaged by the strategy of borrowing to invest. District Councils have little or no experience in such activities and in my opinion shouldn't get involved. I also have concerns on this Council's continuing high spending on Consultants, new staff and unnecessary projects (such as putting the Council's crest on road signs). Most households reduce their spending when faced with higher costs – not this administration.

Of concern are the increased costs to residents: The maximum Council Tax increase (2% or £5 - whichever is the higher) was imposed - a Council Tax increase of £5 for a Band D property.

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____

Green Bin licences increased to £47 each. An additional income of £264,000 will be generated from charges on a full cost recovery basis.

On top of last year's 30% increase, a further 5% increase in car park fees and charges, including scrapping 'Free after Three'.

PLANNED SPENDING:

£350,000 to fund the Investment Strategy.

£400,000 for investment in feasibility studies and other work to support the provision of social housing built to carbon zero.

Over £900,000 has been spent on consultations so far, another £629,000 is planned for this year.

Contrary to regular announcements suggesting otherwise, the forecast of Government funding has improved by £913,000.

REFRESH OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY:

On 4 April 2022 the CDC Cabinet voted to adopt the Capital Programme Investment Strategy, to borrow £75 million for investments to deliver green infrastructure that will have a positive impact on the climate emergency declaration. No additional money was to be spent on social housing which we had been led to believe was one of the main reasons for this enormous amount of borrowing

Given that the risk of Government underfunding the Council is the same as it was previously this represents an unexplained increase of £10 million borrowing.

Since none of this borrowing was in the 'budget consultation', we believe that because of the size of the proposed debt the Council should hold a referendum on this before making any commitments. Especially because there are warnings littered throughout the Cabinet papers about the risks involved.

CLIMATE CHANGE

I voted for the climate emergency and I voted to support the Climate Change report which was commissioned last year, and which gave a national overview rather than specific Cotswold policies. A more "bottom up" approach, encouraging and supporting individuals and communities to take a large number of small actions would, in my view, be achievable, affordable and practical, rather than competing with the Government and GCC on their "top down" approach. I will however continue to support (and widen) the objectives of this project.

PARKING

As already mentioned, car parking charges have been raised by a further 5% (over and above the 30% increase last year). In addition the popular 'Free after Three' scheme has been binned and cash will no longer be an acceptable method of payment (this not yet fully introduced with no explanation). Not a good year for either shoppers or shopkeepers.

OTHER MATTERS

Staff turnover at the Council has continued apace. In all, 63 people have resigned. The whole Democratic Services team left in the same month which has caused problems with Council meetings and communications as there was no proper hand over.

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____

CDC Leisure Centre is closed for refurbishment. The Leisure Centre was also closed for much of last year's lockdown.

The Planning Department continues to suffer from a lack of staffing and heavy workloads. A recruitment drive is being implemented, however service remains slow.

There has been a considerable amount of talk and consultation about various changes to the structure and management of the Cotswold District including:-

- Possible change to a unitary authority.
- The 'Levelling up Plan'.
- The possible change from an AONB to a National Park.
- Boundary changes to Parliamentary constituencies.

Parish specific issues I've been involved with:-

- Setting up your Neighbourhood Plan.
- Large and/or controversial planning applications.
- The light railway link project.
- Planning enforcement issues.
- Local activities.
- Parking restrictions

Appendix 3:

Chairman's Annual Report

Well, at last we seem to be slowly resuming a degree of post pandemic normality. This year, for the first time since 2019 we shall have a real Annual Public meeting at the village hall, an event much valued by the Council where we can listen to our residents' views and aspirations, explain what's going on and receive reports from our District and County Councillors.

Reflecting on events over the last year, inevitably, the first item to mention is the proposed parking scheme. Having been grappling with the County Council for what feels like a lifetime, we seem to be moving toward a conclusion but keep fingers crossed as arrangements are yet to be finalized! Open sessions have been booked at the village hall for the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 11th May (2.00pm to 6.30pm when residents can review and comment on the proposals with a GCC representative. This will be followed by a formal consultation. Still on the subject of Highways we continue to pursue road maintenance issues, residents' concerns about speeding, particularly on the A429 and through Ewen, and achieving adherence to the HGV Weight limit.

Another ongoing project is replacement of the footbridge at Parker's bridge. The good news in this case is that by the time you read this, the new bridge should be in place and constructed to a design which should safely serve its purpose for very many years. Our thanks (in anticipation!) to the Bathurst Estate for financially supporting this project. Following several successful years of litter picking by Tom Barrow's award winning team, a new scheme has now been established with monthly picking and based at the Tavern. Our grateful thanks to our volunteers for their support, and to Dan and the team at the Tavern for enthusiastically supporting the project and providing welcome hospitality at each "pick". Other elements of our village appearance project continue to progress, including tree planting and maintenance, also bulb planting at selected locations which again this Spring added a pleasing dash of colour to the grass verges. Looking forward, celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee is fast approaching and a weekend of events is planned for the enjoyment of our residents. Thanks again to Dan and the team at the Tavern, the Church, the school and other members of our community for taking an active interest in this. A leaflet giving full details of the planned events will shortly be widely circulated.

It is a concern that activity levels on the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme have declined over recent times. Regenerating this valued scheme is very much part of our ongoing action plan and something you will hear more about as events progress. Good to report that the airport users are continuing to adhere to the noise abatement requirements and that complaints from residents about flying activities have been minimal. Our thanks to the airport management for working with us and keeping this under control. Ensuring easy access to the countryside for our residents is also a key objective. Under recent legislation it will not be possible after January 2026 to use historical evidence to add historical Rights of Way to the definitive map. We are keen to save the historic but presently discontinued paths which are most beneficial for countryside access. Working with the Ramblers Association two formal applications for the recording of disused paths have already been made. A further six applications are believed to be justifiable.

The Light Railway project continues to receive enthusiastic support from various local groups. We have reserved our position on this until there is at least a properly authoritative survey of user

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____

KEPC Annual Parish Meeting May 2022

demand. There are also other concerns including the problem of the line crossing Windmill Road, impact of a bridge across the A419 and consideration of other alternative schemes which might also meet objectives.

Hot off the press and evidence, if any were needed, of the kindness and generosity of our community lies in the fact that several families have offered accommodation to refugees from Ukraine. The first families are already here with more to follow. We anticipate that they will be warmly welcomed and made to feel as much at home as possible.

As ever, thanks to fellow Councillors and all those public spirited residents who contribute to the on-going success of our community and make it a great place to live.. Details of many of these are acknowledged within the main body of this report.

Apologies for missing the meeting this year which will now be chaired by David Ball.

Roger Pettit

Chairman Initial _____ Date _____