



Kemble & Ewen Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Friday 6 May 2016 at 7.30pm in Kemble Village Hall

Present:

Roger Pettit – Chairman of the Parish Council
Shaun Parsons – County Councillor, Gloucestershire County Council
Tony Berry – District Councillor
Liz Hall – Parish Clerk
16 members of public, plus all but one Parish Councillor

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this Annual Parish Meeting.

Apologies were noted from Julia and Jeremy Clarke

1. The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 1 May 2015 were approved and signed as a true record.

2. Report on any matters arising from the previous minutes

The Chairman said that priorities such as Community Gardens, railway parking, Neighbourhood Plan, potholes and similar matters would all to be covered during the meeting.

3. Guest Speakers

Tony Berry - District Councillor

Council Tax has not been increased this year. Savings have been able to be made without having to reduce services.

CDC is in the final stages of producing a Local Plan up until 2031. This is essential to stop developers 'walking all over' the District. We need to show there is a plan to meet housing needs. The forecast figures being put forward to the inspectorate have been increased to 8,400. However, CDC have agreed to offset 'windfall houses' (often single, infill houses) against the numbers. As Kemble is a sustainable village, the SHLAA was revisited, and now includes the K5 and K1B sites with 11 and 12 homes proposed respectively.

The plans for parking in the village will need to be approved before the new station car park is operational. CDC are attempting to tackle the problem of parking in Cirencester. The 'free after 3.00pm' scheme is being extended until April 2017 and there is Saturday parking at the CDC offices. CDC is putting money into looking at other parking plans for the town

CDC is to undertake an appraisal of the proposed 'Unitary Authority' relationship with West Oxfordshire District Council as well as considering links with Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury Councils.

The allocation for 'green items' was spent last year on cleaning signs in the village and this year will go towards provision of litter and dog poo bins. The youth fund in recent years has gone to the church, but could be used by a youth group if set up.

Questions from the floor –

a) Sustainable and unsustainable villages? TB explained that a sustainable village must have at least one of the following facilities, a shop, post office, primary school, access to nearby employment, daily transport services. A group of councillors are concerned that this policy is detrimental to smaller

villages who could do with more homes. They are working to review this policy, to allow development in smaller villages if wanted.

b) Kemble Community Gardens? In response to the two parishioners who asked that there be no development on this land, it was confirmed that the decision has already been made. With only twelve houses planned, there will be plenty of land for allotments and conservation areas.

c) What about the village's wishes for housing numbers? The numbers proposed in the Local Plan are CDC's assessment as part of its total plan. A Neighbourhood Plan is the way in which a village can have a say, as once approved, the NP has to be taken into account when applications are being considered.

d) Any details about parking plans for Cirencester? The working group are a considering multi-tier carparks, possibly at the Memorial Hospital site and Waterloo. Also 'out of town' sites.

Shaun Parsons - County Councillor

The budget for this year means that savings are having to be made and this is being achieved without disrupting services.

As part of a highways task force, he is looking at the whole length of the A429. A draft report is being prepared. A key aim is to change its status. As an 'A' rather than a trunk road, it doesn't attract the funds for top level maintenance.

The new Chesterton Development would provide additional funds for improvements to the through roads in Cirencester and additional roundabouts.

To date there has been insufficient traffic monitoring to assess traffic volumes in the area. There is to have regular monitoring in the future. Kemble has been highlighted as a bad accident spot, one of the worst in the area. GCC recognise this and will look at the road and not accept 'driver error' as the problem. A report is to be prepared and will be sent to the PC.

SP has allocated 2/3 of his highway budget to Kemble for further resurfacing in the parish. Windmill Road, the rest of Smerrill to Coates road and Church Road are to benefit. When asked about the use of 'hot/cold' filling used previously for the holes, he accepted that there were concerns about its effectiveness.

Paul Waldron – Neighbourhood Watch

Roger Pettit introduced Paul to the meeting saying how pleased he is to have a NW group in the village.

Kemble is seen as a low crime area but local awareness is key to keeping it this way. Paul explained that Kemble and Ewen is divided into 15 'watch' areas each with its own coordinator. Each coordinator receives any email communications from the police regarding incidents and initiatives, for sharing in their area. They also keep an eye out for anything unusual, reporting if necessary. NW groups have close contacts with, and come under the 'Cirencester Rural South' local police structure.

Residents were reminded that should they see anything suspicious, to call 101 and report the incident. As currently there are only 12 co-ordinators, Paul would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the group.

Roger Pettit thanked Paul and his colleagues for their efforts and urged the public to join NW if interested.

4. Chairman's address

Some disturbing news has come to light over the last week or two. You may recall an extensive process of site evaluations and public consultation a good while ago under the auspices of the CDC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. In Kemble, sites at West lane, Clayfurlong and Station Road, used as the Community Gardens, were considered. The conclusion was that partial development of the Station Road site, leaving space for the Community Gardens, was the least damaging prospect. Then, unexpectedly and when within a whisker of finalisation of the proposals along these lines, up pop the CDC to report that the numbers presently allowed for fall short of requirements by some 800 dwellings across the region.

Please don't ask me to explain the basis of calculations for these magic numbers. Could be alchemy, could be finger in the air, very unlikely to be properly statistically based assessment – how can it be when we don't even have an accurate knowledge of the number of people resident in the country, let alone in the Cotswolds, still less the number likely to be here in 5, 10 15 or 20 years' time. Look at

Spain presently disfigured with thousands of rotting half-finished new dwellings because perceived demand suddenly evaporated a few years ago.

Anyway, the outcome of all this for us is a demand for 23 additional houses, at Clayfurlong and West Lane, making our earlier work completely redundant, a complete waste of everyone's time. To use one of my favourite phrases in such circumstances, you have to conclude that these folks could not manage their way out of a brown paper bag. Speaking personally, I get severely cheesed of with nonsense of this sort. Anyway, when I finish in a couple of minutes, you can tell us what you would like us to do about it.

On a related issue, we have not heard anything further from the airport recently about their proposals for a new town. Expectation is that the Chesterton proposals will take a lead position in the queue and that the airfield new town will follow on at the next review of the local plan in a few years' time.

On matters more positive, road maintenance has been receiving better attention, albeit at a gentle pace. The lower end of Windmill Road should be repaired shortly, and also, at last, the main A429 with overnight road closures planned for June. Thanks to our County Councillor Shaun Parsons for support with the finances for this work.

Speaking of finance, I hope you noticed that the Parish Council has kept its expenditure budget unchanged once again this year, so no contribution to inflation from us.

The new station car park has received planning consent and subject to the railway company securing final financial approval, work should soon commence aiming for completion in October. A parking scheme for the village is an integral part of the scheme. The scheme will be subject to public consultation and any necessary provision for resident parking will be allowed for, so good news in prospect. The refurbished railway station including the footbridge is looking splendid, properly restored and with historic character fully retained.

The village conservation area statement is now many years old and one of our residents, Martin Kingston, has commissioned an update. This is an important initiative aimed to help protect key elements of village character from inappropriate development or alteration. Public opinion is a key aspect of the process of achieving acceptance of a revised statement and we shall be running a couple of consultation sessions shortly. I hope you will be able to come along to lodge your views.

A few personnel changes to record this year. We welcome Tony Berry who was elected District Councillor last May and keeps us in touch with CDC matters. Also, we were pleased to welcome Nicky Baber as a new councillor last May to bring our numbers up to full strength. Our village orderly Duncan Cooper moved on as a consequence of a work promotion and we welcome John Aylett to take up these duties. And last but by no means least, Liz Hall joined us in September as Parish Clerk to replace Nick Spindler on his move to Wales.

This is of course a year of significance being the Queen's 90th birthday. We have already had litter clearance and road sign clean-up projects, and thanks to all those who contributed. In addition, our village master organiser Pat Ayres has already successfully delivered on our contribution to the national chain of beacons and has also organised a special birthday party on 15 May. It will be fun and I hope you will be able to come along. Thank you once again Pat for getting things rolling.

In conclusion, thanks also to all those who organise and run the numerous clubs and organisations in the village, again to Pat Ayres for her numerous contributions to this and for the weekly newshound feature in the Standard, to Brian Ayres for tending the war graves, the various editors of the Parish Magazine, to Steve Marsh who runs the village website and of course, to fellow councillors for their hard work over the year.

5. Residents' comments and questions

Why was the name 'Phillips Lea' changed? RP said this name was for marketing purposes and the new name of 'Top Farm' reflects local usage.

7. AOB

- a) Pat Ayres thanked the Parish Council for the Community Grant Scheme, saying it was of great help to small local organisations.
- b) The parishioners congratulated the Parish Council on the great job they do.
- c) The meeting was advised that this year is the 170th anniversary of the opening of the railway.
- d) "Mac", Alan McQuillin thanked RP for taking him to Swindon, to receive the Légion d'honneur award

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.