



Kemble and Ewen Parish Council

## **Annual Report 2014-15**

You are invited to the Annual Public  
Parish Meeting

Friday 1 May 2015 at 7.30pm

in Kemble Village Hall

This report is a summary of the Parish Council's activities over the last year.  
We aim to deliver a copy to households in Kemble, Kemble Wick and Ewen.

It is also available to view at [www.kemble.co.uk](http://www.kemble.co.uk)

## **Agenda for Annual Parish Meeting: 1 May 2015, 7.30pm**

- AGM for the Village Hall committee
- Apologies for absence
- Approve the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 16 May 2014
- Matters arising and public Q&A
- Address: Roger Pettit – Chairman, Kemble and Ewen Parish Council
- Finance - a brief summary of the past 12 months
- Any other business

### **Chairman's Address**

The date for your diary is Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. It's your particular opportunity to let us know about your hopes and aspirations for our Parish, to review events and give a public airing to anything you may have on your mind.

Plainly, a critical aspect of Parish Council activity is being aware of local opinion – influenced not just by those who make the most noise but forming a properly balanced appraisal from as wide a cross section as possible. A guiding principle in all of our actions, we work hard to achieve this. On major issues we hold special public meetings, the opportunity for public contribution is open at any of our meetings, all Councillors are readily accessible, and through the Kemble website and the Parish Magazine we aim to make sure that information about what is going on is readily available to all.

Current issues are many as I am sure you will have noticed. Top Farm Development, Station car parking, Airport development proposals, the District Council's Local Plan with housing development land allocation, Green Space Designation, road maintenance, maintenance of the station buildings and water tower and the production of our own Neighbourhood Plan to mention but a few. Information about these and other issues is included in the following pages.

You may wish to express a view on one or several of these issues, or indeed on something I have not mentioned. Perhaps your preference might be to listen to the reports and hear the views of others. Either way, the opportunity is yours to take and your participation is warmly invited.

I do hope you can join us and look forward to seeing you on 1st May.

**Roger Pettit, Chairman, Kemble & Ewen Parish Council - April 2015**

## **Summary of the year's activities to 31 March 2015**

**Our nine parish councillors represent the electorate of Kemble and Ewen across a variety of topics and issues. Discussions in council meetings are often lively and occasionally controversial. Each councillor has an area of 'special interest', such as local policing, the play area, the cemetery, financial matters, highways, planning, footpaths, and so on.**

**Residents are welcome to contact councillors about local issues – details of how to reach us are on the back page.**

### **Finance**

The council's main source of income is the local council tax, known as the precept. The Precept was £20,000 in the year ending 31 March 2015, having increased for the first time in many years for 2013-14. For a typical Band D property, this equated to £42.85 per year, or less than 12p per day. The precept is unchanged for the coming year, though due to slight change in the number of residents, it is now equivalent to £42.82 for a typical Band D property.

The budgets of the Cotswold District Council (CDC) and Gloucestershire County Council have been reduced so as to cut our total Council Tax bills, and the CDC has made savings by working jointly with other councils, which they are exploring further. You have probably noticed an impact on some of the services they provide on our behalf to Kemble and Ewen – particularly matters such as road repairs and cleaning, maintenance of drains, pavements, and lighting. This

season, the grass-cutting contract was retendered and following a competitive process a contract was awarded for three years.

### **Planning**

The Parish Council has again responded to numerous planning applications this year, (including tree orders; listed building consents and multiple applications for the same premises). The vast majority of these are supported, though account is taken of residents' views where possible, and some are objected to. In this last year, we consulted you over three potential sites for possible future housing allocation, as well as defining certain 'green spaces' - such as the Windmill Road playing field. Both the site allocations and green spaces have been included in the CDC's Local Plan, currently under consultation with an aim to finalise it this year.

It was the lack of just such a long-term plan of housing requirements that led to the Top Farm development proceeding on appeal at the planning inquiry late in 2012. It is therefore to be welcomed that belatedly a plan is imminent, and we were pleased for our community that only a further 12 dwellings have been defined for Kemble over the next 15 years, once the 50 at Top Farm and several individual plans are accounted for.

We now know that Bovis are developing the Top Farm site at a pace, and have provisionally named the development *Phillips Lea*, apparently in reference to the Phillips family who once owned the farm, and who bequeathed the Village

Hall to Kemble amongst several notably altruistic gestures, the like of which we are unlikely to see again.

We continue to explore the relatively untested ground of a Neighbourhood Plan, which has met with mixed reviews from those Parishes and Towns currently progressing them. These define preferred development in not just housing, but other services and characteristics, such as recreation, transport and facilities. It is important to stress that this does not empower the PC or residents to prevent future development, but it does describe what is preferred in the way of styles and designs. And Kemble does most certainly have its own style, distinct from other Cotswold locations. We welcome any volunteers to assist in this task.

### **Highways and Parking**

Car parking as a consequence of station overflow or the opportunity to park for 24 hours or longer without paying, led to a stream of complaints in the last two years, particularly from residents of Windmill Road, Station Road and adjoining roads. Driveways blocked, abuse from drivers, and dangerous parking near junctions and the shop have provoked outcry. Having secured support from our local MP and District Councillor to press for an increase in station car parking capacity we were pleased to agree plans for an increased capacity at the station car park but these were not progressed. However, after many months of negotiation, a further 333 spaces have just been proposed on land

adjacent to The Tavern pub, leading up to the A429. Once this is in place Gloucestershire Highways and local Police will be able to reconsider introducing a restricted parking regime, though that again requires extensive consultation, and the new car park may change the picture entirely. Potholes, and their inadequate repair, have been the source of many complaints. We have recently secured a commitment from the Highways team to make more substantial repairs along the road to Ewen and towards Cirencester, though we would prefer to see entire resurfacing carried out, as can be seen when driving into Wiltshire.

We have been able to facilitate the training of several Speed Watch volunteers, and they have carried out their first assessments to monitor and record speeds. We expect the focus for attention to be the A429, especially near the pedestrian crossing, as well as the school area, and through Ewen, as these are the most often mentioned as of concern.

### **Cemetery**

We remain aware that additional cemetery space remains a long-term issue without an obvious solution, and tentative enquiries of landowners are being made.

### **Community Emergency Plan**

We have put in place a plan based on guidelines issued by Glos CC and with helpful input from residents.

### **Kemble Airfield / Cotswold Airport**

Cotswold Airport has reduced its flying activities and has been more aware of public concerns, after some years of close monitoring. This last year has seen few significant complaints, beyond the odd isolated incident of late night flying or noisy aircraft. We are now hosting quarterly meetings with CDC and neighbouring parishes, and are pleased to report that relationships with the airport management are on a positive footing. An unexpected turn of events occurred recently when the airport came up with a 'vision' for a new housing development of around 2000 homes, and it remains to be seen if this is incorporated in the CDC Local Plan.

### **Kemble Community Gardens**

The Parish Council has a lease on the Station Road site until early 2016, although the CDC has retained the right to use the land for its own purposes, as has always been known. The land has been designated both as a 'green space' and as suitable for development of 12 dwellings, and it is unclear how these apparently conflicting requirements might be resolved. The Parish Council has been a strong supporter of the Gardens and appreciates that many in the community will feel a significant loss if any development comes to fruition.

### **Policing and neighbourhood watch**

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme remains important following 2013's shocking increase in crime, mainly property thefts and attempted break-ins.

Fortunately 2014 was improved, though disturbing incidents still occurred almost at random, without much success in identifying those responsible. We have

supported NW's initiatives in leafleting the parish. It remains a concern that those from outside target our villages and we urge every resident to think carefully about their own security and their neighbours. The Police are always willing to advise you individually, and they sell security equipment in the Cirencester police station

### **The Railway station**

The opportunity of regular meetings with Network Rail and First Great Western consequent on the track re-doubling project was seized upon to draw attention to long overdue maintenance of our attractive, historic and listed railway station. However, nothing of note has been achieved since the reopening of the improved toilets, and we will continue to press for restoration of the footbridge, repairs to guttering and damaged stonework, and replacement of rotten windows and woodwork.

We have renewed efforts to see a restoration of the water tower, which is also listed.

### **Community Grants**

This year the Parish Council awarded the following grants to local groups:-

Little Fishes	£150
Kemble & District Playgroup	£288
Open the Book	£150

The PC has also supported the provision of defibrillators at the village hall, railway station and Ewen bus shelter with contributions totalling £2000. To support well-being in the community, posture

classes have been offered weekly in the village hall, and renewal of First Aid training is underway.

### **Code of Conduct**

Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, we adopted the CDC's revised Code of Conduct. This means that all our Councillors are bound by the same standards as those applying at District level. New rules on Transparency and the filming or recording of Council meetings have been adopted, along with the latest practices of financial management and operating procedures

### **Internal Audit**

The Parish Council pays for an independent 'internal audit' each year to ensure it is following correct procedures for authorising payments, record keeping, and reporting its finances. This is due again shortly.

### **People**

Carol Dougill became a Councillor in March, and many will know her as Head Teacher of Kemble and Siddington Primary Schools. We warmly welcome her return to the Council.

Duncan Cooper joined us as Playground Orderly, carrying out regular checks on Windmill Park. He has recently achieved a promotion in his 'day job', and will soon be moving to another county, so this role is now vacant. We thank him for his

contribution to the Parish and wish him well. We are seeking a replacement, so anyone who can spare an hour a week to inspect the Windmill Park play area is welcome to contact the Clerk for more details. The village orderly is a paid position.

Nick Spindler has resigned as Clerk after three and a half years, and we are grateful for his professionalism and support. Anyone interested in taking on the role, which is a salaried position of 6 hours a week @ £9.69/hr, please contact Nick for more info or a chat (see back page for contact details).

John Birch has just retired as District Councillor, and we were pleased to acknowledge his great service to the Parish at our April meeting; we wish him all the very best.

### **Special thanks to...**

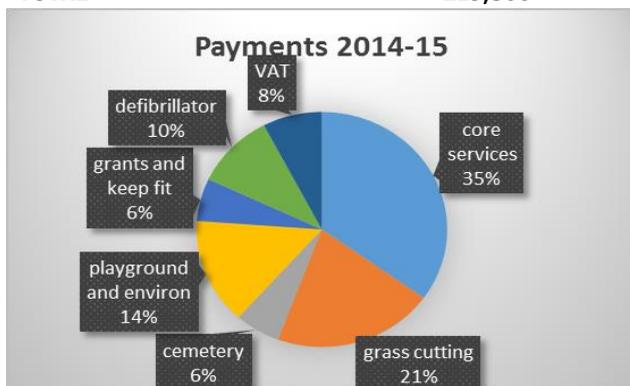
Steve Marsh who runs the village website [www.kemble.co.uk](http://www.kemble.co.uk); the Parish News volunteer editors; Pat Ayres for her communications on many matters; Brian Ayres for maintaining the war graves; our various contractors and suppliers; the Village Hall committee and all those many others who volunteer to give their time free of charge to run and support community activities. And last, but by no means least, our parish councillors themselves.

## **Financial Summary**

Any resident may look at the Parish Council's unaudited accounts by asking the Clerk. A copy of the audited accounts will be available from the Parish Clerk following the completion of the external audit in July 2015.

### Payments (for year ending 31 March 2015)

core services	£6,755
grass cutting	£4,030
cemetery	£1,136
playground and environment	£2,823
grants and keep fit	£1,134
defibrillator	£2,000
VAT	£1,482
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£19,360</b>



### Receipts (for year ending 31 March 2015)

precept	£20,000
grants	£500
agency and cemetery	£1,387
interest	£11
misc	£155
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£22,053</b>

### Finance commentary:

We ideally keep around 3 to 6 months' precept in reserve for contingencies. One off items were less significant in this period as we rebuilt our reserves following the large outgoings on legal advice for the Cotswold Airport planning applications and a specialist report for the Top Farm planning inquiry in the 2012-13 business year. 'Core services' includes: insurance, wages and salaries, training, stationery & printing, RoSPA inspections, professional accounting/audit fees, village hall hire, PAYE and subscriptions.

## **Kemble and Ewen Parish Councillors**

Roger Pettit (Chairman)	01285 770133
David Ball (Vice Chairman)	07827 885882
Nicky Baber	(joins after the May election)
Michael Binks	01285 770114
George Collins	01285 770698
Carol Dougill	01285 770909
Lester Napper	07977 910605
Eric Silk	01285 770979
Sohrab Sorabjee	01285 770515
Nick Spindler (Parish Clerk)	07801 472495

### **Parish Council Meetings**

Meetings are usually held on Friday evenings, ten times a year, in Kemble Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Dates are shown on the noticeboards in each village and on the village website. Minutes are on the village website too.

Any resident is welcome to come along to any of these meetings. You can raise issues, ask for advice, or ask questions at the start of the meeting.

#### **How to contact us**

Use the Contact section of the Village website [www.kemble.co.uk](http://www.kemble.co.uk)

Email the Clerk: [kpcclerk@kemble.co.uk](mailto:kpcclerk@kemble.co.uk)

Come to a meeting

Phone a councillor (numbers above)

Write to us c/o 18 Old Manor Gardens, Kemble, GL7 6FF