

# KEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk: Teresa Griffin, Winterwood, Whelford, Fairford, Glos. GL7 4EB*  
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## DRAFT

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

**Held Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 via Zoom Video Conferencing Software – 8pm**

#### **Present:**

Parish Councillors -	Tony Williams (Chairman), Mark Strange, Christine Nugent, Jerry Stokes, Karen Saunders, Phil Nickson and John O'Connell
Teresa Griffin	Parish Council Clerk
Stephen Andrews	Cotswold District Councillor & Community First Responder
Steve Trotter	Cotswold District Councillor
Ray Theodoulou	Gloucestershire County Councillor
Mr J Greenhalgh	Resident & 4x4 Response Team
Stuart Lindsell	RAFCTE
Lt Col Joe Knothe	RAF Fairford
Sq.Ldr Jayne Robertson	RAF Fairford
Jenny Collyer	RAF Fairford
Ann O'Hara	Kempsford School Governors & Resident
Hannah Dickens	Kempsford Village Hall
Sue Griffin	Whelford Village Hall

#### *Residents:*

Gill Northen  
Alistair & Celia Kennedy  
Ian Webber  
John Bagshaw

#### **1. Apologies –**

Elizabeth Emberson  
PC Neil Lightfoot  
Philippa Griffin  
Rosemary Andrews

#### **2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019 – approved to be signed by Chair.**

#### **3. Kempsford Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report – Chairman Tony Williams gave his report –**

1. A very warm welcome to all. Nice to see you all, especially as you have made the effort to attend in these unusual times.
2. The last year or so has been a really trying and difficult period for all of us within the Community, indeed throughout the world, due to the Covid pandemic. The Parish Council would like to express their sincere condolences to all the family and friends of those whose lives have passed away either through the influences of Coronavirus or through other health issues. Our thoughts are with them.
3. We would also like to express our grateful thanks to all those in the Parish who put their names forward as volunteered, right from the start of the lockdown last March, to help others during this very difficult time, particularly those helping those with underlying health issues.
4. The regenerate of Cross Tree Crescent and Oakley Flats is well underway. Oakley Flats are no more and the ground prepared for redevelopment. Clearing of houses in Cross Tree Crescent has begun with rehousing of its occupants and house furnishings being removed.
5. Yet again I have to report that we are still waiting on Persimmons to complete various bits and pieces before we formally accept the community facilities at Hazel View. We are frustrated, as I'm sure you are, but we will not be accepting anything until the whole development has been fully completed. The standard of the field and car park is not acceptable as it is and needs to be upgraded before we accept. Solicitors are working on

this. It is however pleasing to see that the school, as well as others in the community, are making good use of the field and play areas, now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

6. Aggregate Industries have extracted minerals in the fields around the landing lights and are transporting sand and gravel to sites throughout the region. We are now seeing a large number of lorry movements as inert material is brought in. We as a Council have met with AI representatives and Gloucestershire County Council representatives in video meetings and have exchanged with the quarry representatives. We have expressed our concerns over a number of issues, especially the amount of water that is being stored on their site. Swans, Geese and other wildfowl have been attracted and although there is a wildlife management process there is a definite increase in the number of these birds. MOD safeguarding is well aware of this. Due to a shortage of inert materials, clay based material has been brought in to replace the extracted gravel. We have expressed our concern on this too. I have written to Sir Geoffrey Clifton- Brown on this. Chairmen of Communities in the Upper Thames Valley namely Castle Eaton, Marston Meysey, Down Ampney, Latton and Cricklade as well as Kempsford have expressed our concerns to both Wiltshire and Gloucestershire County Councils on all the extractions taking place along the C124. Concerns were expressed not only on the number of extraction sites but the combination of these sites and the resulting issues such water storage, change in ground and surface water flow, flooding, lack of complete restoration the resulting blots on the landscape and of course increased lorry movements on a C road and through villages.
7. As some of the quarry sites start to be infilled, the route of the footpaths that existed prior to the digging have been a discussion point. The routes of the paths are not necessarily now fit for purpose and rerouting of these paths are being negotiated with landowners, the quarry people, MOD and Public Rights of Way officers. An example is that a path from Whelford KF 34 finishes at the boundary of Site 16 on Washpool Lane. Another is the Footpath alongside the quarry "Lakes" KF18 finishes at the Plank which serves as a bridge, beyond that is not an official footpath. We are therefore trying to agree a new circular route between Kempsford and Whelford without using Washpool Lane which is now a quarry lorry route and will be until 2040. We are also looking to realign other footpaths such as the one to Dudgrove. Although Lake 104 is in Fairford the paths around it are well used by Kempsford and Whelford residents, however some of these are to be temporarily closed due to yet another Fairford housing development. The Parish Council has met with the developers and the PROW to discuss possible routes. We have also been in discussion with regard to linking footpaths with Lechlade, Fairford and Lakes by Yoo in an attempt to find off road country routes to and from Lechlade and Fairford.
8. Under normal conditions Parish Councillors would meet regularly with other local Councillors in the RAF Fairford Community Liaison group. We have had an annual Community meeting by Zoom but regular meetings this past year have been replaced by Newsletters and emails. All issues relating to the airfield and the surrounding villages, towns and communities are discussed at this meeting. The redeployment of RC135's and the projected 530 military personnel and their families has been revised and will not now take place. However there will be an increase in activity on the base with exercises involving bombers as well as other aircraft continuing. Bomber deployment always causes an issue on the Whelford Rd with many plane spotters and the increase in noise levels causes disturbances particularly in Dunfield and Marston Meysey. Meetings have been held on each issue in an attempt to resolve these issues. The MOD has bought an area of land just north of the base. This land was a quarry site and was left as a lake. The lake could have become an area of Site of Special Scientific Interest or SSSI and would have allowed the conservation of wildlife including birds. Not a good idea next to an airfield. This land will now be within the RAF Fairford boundaries. Further infrastructure will also begin in this area as well, with hangers and standing areas being increased. The Council would like to thank Lt Col "Chaps" Knothe for his services here at RAF Fairford and wish him well in the future. We would now like to welcome Lt Col Jeremy Stover to England and RAF Fairford and wish him well in his new post.
9. As I'm sure you are all aware this year's Air Tattoo has, once again, has been cancelled. We normally meet with them before and after each Tattoo, to talk through the readjusted plans for the following year but due to the coronavirus no meeting has been held with them this year.
10. Yet again potholes and speeding are the main highway concerns. Some major road resurfacing took place on the High Street between the Chapel Road junction and Mount Pleasant but the request for a safer junction at the top of Mount Pleasant and Top Road leading to Dunfield has not been completed even though we have met with the new Highways representative. The road outside the Parsonage has been very poor for a number of years now and the Council is persistently asking for that to be repaired properly and not just with a Minor repair. Good news on that front, we have heard that this area of road is to be resurfaced in November this year....about time. If you are aware of Potholes please go online and report them, if they aren't they are not dealt with. The more people who complete the online form with the location the better.

11. Traffic Speed Surveys have been operated in Whelford, both officially and unofficially by residents, with the official results not surprisingly showing an unacceptably high number of speeding vehicles of all kinds. Speeding on Top Road has also been reported. The Council is looking to buy another Vehicle Activated Sign. The type we buy will depend on the result of a second speeding survey in Whelford and one on Top Road that we have asked for. The Speed Watch volunteers who have monitored speeding in the past is looking for new volunteers to help track speeding. In the meantime residents are asked to report speeding vehicles, with their registration number and cars description, to either neighbourhood watch or the none emergency police number.
12. Blocked sewers, again, raised issues over the winter. Unfortunately it was not just problems due to the high water table and the flooding outside the Parsonage. The pumps at the Thames Water station have been damaged because of fatbergs which had formed as a result of fats, oils, wet wipes and other materials containing plastic which have been discarded down either the sink or the toilet. This caused problems to a number of households in the Holford Crescent and Lancaster Road area of the village. Thames Water have had to use tankers to remove some of the deposits from the Pumping station before they could repair the pumps. I am in weekly contact with them and they have now issued leaflets to reinforce the information published in the Parish Newsletter regarding what not to and what can be disposed in sinks and toilets. They are also planning a camera survey but no date has been set for this yet.
13. Although The Kempsford Village Hall has been closed, apart from the Post Office, the committee continue to meet to do a much valued work in preparing the hall for reopening and its improvements. They are continuing to raising money for more development and although they have had a number of new volunteers, they are always looking for more people to help out.
14. Whelford Village Hall committee continues to operate in preparation for the future.
15. I would like to thank a number of people who have retired from their posts within the community. Firstly Sue Griffin who has retired from Council after 30 plus years, and Alison Ward who has served as a Councillor for nearly 20 years. I would like to welcome Karen Saunders and John O'Connell who have replaced them. A Thank You also to Ray Theodoulou who has retired as our County Councillor. Ray has been a good supporter of Kempsford causes throughout his years as a County Councillor. Many Thanks also go to John and Terry Chesterman who have reduced their grass cutting schedules and to Richard Caswell who is retiring from his role as "odd job man".
16. Finally but by no means least, my thanks to everybody who has contributed to any function or activity which has supported this Parish community, The Parish Councillors for their hard work, Teresa Griffin for her tremendous work as Clerk, Parish newsletter editor, and website manager, County and District Councillors, the Village Hall committee and everybody who gives of their time to run Clubs and Societies in the Community.

#### 4. **County Councillor's Annual Report** – Ray Theodoulou reported –

- This has been the second year I have been Chairman of the County council and it has been a very strange year. Holding meetings remotely has been very strange but worked well despite a few issues with broadband. Throughout the year the County Council has been carrying on as usual, as far as possible. The most difficult areas have remained care of vulnerable children and elderly adults. It is amazing that tragically the County Council has only lost one member of staff to Covid.
- The budget for 2021/22 has been approved. The increase in Council Tax of 4.75% is split between 1.99% for the council and 2.76% ring-fenced for adult care. The adult care budget is still the largest by far. The council's total revenue budget is £483 million compared to £460 million last year. The adult care budget is £156 million and the children's budget £126 million. There has been a corresponding increase in services, together with a substantial increase in the capital budget, which goes to schools, roads and cycleways. I am aware of the problem with the road outside the Parsonage in Kempsford and attended a meeting with the Highways Manager. It is budgeted to be repaired this year.
- Grants have been received from the Government to cover the loss of revenues due to Covid. For the first three months of this year we are expecting to receive £11.5 million. The County Council does have adequate reserves to cope with any other adverse issues it should suffer.
- We have had dialogue with RAF Fairford about signage on roads when leaving the base to ensure they keep on the correct side of the road.
- After 20 years, I would like to take the opportunity of thanking everyone in Kempsford for the courtesy and friendship they have shown to me.

5. **District Councillors Annual Report** - Stephen Andrews provided a report from both Ward Councillors on the year April 2020 – April 2021 –

- The year has of course been dominated by the Covid Pandemic, and whilst we don't plan to spend much time talking of this, we would like to say how impressed and encouraged we've been by the way Kempsford has pulled together to ensure that everyone was looked after and the needy helped. You might wonder sometimes about the state of our society, but when the chips are down there is always a tremendously heart-warming response – 'Community' is alive and active here!
- March 2020 saw a change in the refuse and recycling operations with the roll-out of new bins, a weekly food waste collection and a reduction of garden waste collection to every other week. The permit is increasing by 33per cent (£30 to £40). Replacement bins/bags will also be chargeable at £5 per container from now on.
- Following on from the previous year's increase in parking charges (+30%), this year brought the news that the option to pay cash at Cotswolds car parks was to be removed (in stages through this coming year) and payment could only be made through an 'app' on a smart phone or by card. Given that some 9,000 adults in the Cotswolds don't have a smart phone and 72% of all payments in 2019 were cash, this doesn't seem rational. We have (and will continue to) challenge this decision; so far the only change has been to drop the 'cost' argument and replace it with a 'green' reason for the change.
- During the year there have been major changes in the senior management at the Council, with Nigel Adams (Head of Paid Service with 28 year's service) and Bhavna Patel (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services) both leaving (at a cost of £330,000) to be replaced with a new Chief Executive – Robert Weaver and an interim Monitoring Officer. An additional 8 people have been recruited to fill various positions to deliver manifesto promises.
- A number of Strategies and Reports have been proposed at Council, covering:-
  - Ecological Emergency declared (July 2020)
  - The Climate Emergency (Sept 2020)
  - Corporate Strategy and Plan (Sept 2020)
- In addition there have been a number of other changes:-
- - A number of changes have been made to the Council's Constitution.
- - The Community Grant scheme has been replaced by 'Spacehive', a crowd funding platform (costing £30,000 p.a.).
- - Removal of the Ward Member's ability to automatically refer planning applications to the Planning Committee where considered appropriate. (This particular decision is causing a considerable amount of annoyance to effected Parishes and is the subject of ongoing discussion.) We have established that 60% of Ward Councillors requests to refer to Planning Committee are now rejected by a sub-committee .
- - A new additional crest for the Council, designed for use on social media and new road signage including the crest and the parish's name. These being part of a £200,000 'Civic Pride' scheme.
- - A new fly-tipping reporting tool has made this a much easier process and there has been a substantive increase in the numbers being reported. We presented a motion to Council to increase the spending on this bane and we believe this has been given through the 'Civic Pride' scheme (to be confirmed).
- In February, the revised budget for 2021/2 was presented to and approved by Council. We were not able to support this vote due to lack of detail on the £65 million borrowing proposed.
- It has been necessary to support the CDC Leisure Centres during the pandemic (circa £650k), some of which we will get back as and when normality resumes.
- The Planning Department is currently suffering from large workloads and a lack of Officers – recruitment is currently taking place and we would ask for your patience whilst these matters are being resolved.

6. **Report from Gloucestershire Police** – not present

## 7. Reports from Representatives of Local Organisations

a) **Kempsford School** – not present.

b) **Report from Chair of School Governors** - Read by Ann O'Hara -

The last 12 months has certainly brought unprecedented times and challenges to the school. The resilience, drive and dedication of Mr Mendum and all staff has been outstanding, ensuring that all children have had access to educational opportunities throughout both Lockdowns. The school has also gone to great lengths to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of the children, staff and our school families. This was most evident during Lockdown restrictions which brought hardship to us all, but with significant hardship to a few. I am proud to be able to say, in conjunction with the PCC, the school supported some families in the village with additional vouchers for food. When our school was allowed to partially re-open in June 2020 our parents told us "The children have been really happy"; "It's gone really well."; "The school's been amazing".

In September, we built on this, and saw a harmonious transition of the children back into the classroom environment. The Autumn school data highlighted how successfully the schools 'Catch up Curriculum' had been.

The 2nd Lockdown brought along a whole set of new challenges, with the requirement to deliver a Remote Learning education. The biggest challenge was ensuring all children could have full access to the Remote Learning. Although the Government indicated they would be supplying IT, Kempsford was unable to access any such support from the LA. The school was supporting 22 Key worker/Vulnerable children in 2 bubbles. The school had another 12 children unable to access home learning, with our risk assessment indicating attending school was an undue risk to take. Thankfully, with the support of the Friends of Fairford and Lechlade Communities Charity Donation £3600, the school purchased 12 laptops to support these children to access the learning we could provide.

Although only 1 term back from the 2nd Lockdown, the children are again showing their resilience and have settled back into school life seamlessly. Once again, our staff have supported the emotional well-being of our children as well as their learning. The effectiveness of what we have provided can be seen in what the children have achieved so far - The most recent Standardised scores, this April, were better than when they returned in September. This is indicating a small but positive impact from our Remote Learning provision, at a time when many schools are seeing a dip.

Unfortunately, with a budget planning meeting for the year ahead, the Chairs need to offer their apologies for not attending this meeting. However, our school has much more to celebrate over the last 12 months, and we would like to share these successes with you. Our vision is to recognise children's differences and talents and to work in partnership with our church and community and we hope you can see this in the successes above and listed here:

- A Year 6 pupil has been selected as Diocesan Young Leader.
- The amazing quantity of mileage being recorded in the Travel to Tokyo fitness challenge
- Valuing and supporting well-being - Embracing World mental health day with activities that help the children to understand their own mental health and learning strategies to improve them
- Working in partnership with our church - In October 2020 the Prayer Space team brought much joy to the children and staff at Kempsford school by planning and delivering a virtual Prayer Space around the theme of Communication. Members of St Mary's church working with our school, enabled the children explore and reflect around this theme.
- Charity fund raising, with Children in Need, the Poppy Appeal and Christmas Jumper day.
- In partnership with our community, embracing Community events such as Scarecrow festival, Remembrance Day, Advent window lighting.

JOINING OUR SCHOOL : As always, if anyone would like information, or a chat, about applying for their child to join our school, please contact the school.

GOVERNOR VACANCIES : We do have a couple of Governor vacancies that we are keen to fill ready for September. If anyone is interested in becoming part of our thriving team, with the purpose of ensuring a nurturing and enquiring environment for our children to learn and develop, please contact the Chairs via the school.

c) **Church** –

**Written report from Rev. Kim Brown, read by Christine Nugent –**

## Brief Summary Report of Activity at St. Mary's and St. Anne's Churches in 2020 - 2021

### Worship Services

Due to the lockdowns many services were unable to be held in person in our churches. From mid March 2021, a recorded 'Worship at Home' service was offered on behalf of all the churches in the South Cotswold Team, along with a Morning Prayer booklet to accompany Morning Prayer being said live each day on The 5 Villages Facebook page. Once the first Covid national lockdown was eased, our worship resumed in church from 12th July 2020 and carried on until the second lockdown in November. From November onwards The 5 Villages' churches gathered for worship via Zoom each Sunday with between 20 – 35 people attending each time. We held outdoor services for Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. From July onwards, Kempsford Church was open for private prayer on Wednesday and Saturdays. St Anne's Whelford was opened on Fridays.

We were able to gather to celebrate Harvest Festival in person and Remembrance Sunday was held outside and was well attended. We celebrated both festivals at St Mary's one class at a time with our school children, and each class group attended a Christingle service before school ended for Christmas. Due to a sharp rise in the number of local cases of Covid 19, we held our Christmas carol services, Crib service and Christmas morning service outdoors.

We have celebrated 2 baptisms and 1 wedding, held 2 funerals and several interring of ashes this year, but others have been rescheduled into next year due to the restrictions of Covid-19.

### Supporting our School

From July to November, Rev'd Kim was able to lead class-based Collective Worship each week in Kempsford Church of England Primary School, and after November recorded an assembly, and a bedtime story and prayers from home which the children view through their home learning portal.

A team of volunteers have recorded Bible stories for our school regularly as part of Open the Book Scheme, and assisted the school staff in creating an online Prayer Space. Two PCC members plus the Vicar have continued to serve as School Governors and as members of the Ethos Committee and we have supported the school financially and with emotional support and care this year.

### Supporting Families

During the first lockdown, when parents were juggling work and home schooling, we offered a range of gift bags containing crafts, booklets and prayers to keep the children busy. In October half term, the church helped organise a Scarecrow Festival and supplied Autumn bags with a Bible story and activities for families; at Advent, we helped organise an Advent window trail, so families could come out together and look around the village at the decorated windows telling the Christmas story. This was followed just after Christmas with an Epiphany Trail through the churchyard which led families around the story of the wise men, organised by the Family Service team, which was walked by 50 people.

The churches contributed to the funding of the Deanery Youth Worker, Chris Saunders, whose work is more needed than ever. He has continued to support young people who attend Farmors school from our villages, meeting on-line and in person when permitted. Plans are being made for him to resume the weekly youth club in the Village Hall very soon.

Our monthly Family Service has grown this year and benefited from being based in the churchyard and focusing on God revealed to us in creation and nature. New families have begun to attend regularly and build good bonds of trust with the members of the Family Service planning team.

### Financial Support

We were able to provide financial support to families in need during Covid 19, identified through the school, offering supermarket gift vouchers and Christmas meals. We also provided vouchers for families whose children would normally receive free school meals when they were home learning.

At Christmas we supplied 13 Christmas meals to families in need identified by the School; these were supplied by The Long Table, a charity based in Stroud that works with the Diocese of Gloucester to alleviate food

poverty and isolation. We were able to apply to other local charities on behalf of some residents in financial need and make a contribution to assist with their welfare. Funds for these were provided from the William Battersby and John Hampson-Jones Charitable Trusts.

We packed 15 shoe boxes to go to children in Eastern Europe at Christmas via Teams4You and the Church donated £250 to Cirencester Food bank.

#### Projects

As you may have read in the Parish Newsletter recently, we have plans to complete some pointing and other repair works to St. Mary's and hope to repair the porch at St. Anne's soon. We also hope to make the churchyard and graveyard more friendly for wildlife.

#### Finances

In line with many organisations, we have had a difficult year financially. Hopefully we will be able to resume fundraising activities in the latter half of the year and hope the village will support us in this.

#### **Written report from the Elizabeth Emberson on behalf of the Church Wardens, read by John O'Connell –**

2020 proved to be a very challenging year for St Mary's in all sorts of ways due to Covid19, but all in all, I think that we faced the challenge with optimism and a greater belief in the power of healing, and an understanding that to survive you need to be adaptable!

This certainly proved to be the case as we faced two periods in Lockdown, over the course of the last twelve months. Happily, there is light at the end of this particular tunnel, and hopefully, and by the Grace of God, we will soon be able to worship together in person again.

Last year, we were very fortunate to be able to welcome Rev. Kim Brown as our Vicar, not just for Kempsford and Whelford, but also for the villages of Castle Eaton and the Meyseys. She has certainly hit the ground running, and has jumped straight in to raising the profile of the Church in our villages. I am happy to say that Kim has certainly made an impact on everyone, and has impressed everyone that she has come into contact with since she arrived in April last year. We look forward to many years of her presence with us, and count ourselves blessed that she has come to live and work with us in our villages.

Due to Covid, it was necessary to 'mothball' the Church buildings in Kempsford and Whelford for most of last year, and this has meant that Worship has largely taken place online. However, we did manage some 'face to face' worship in Church for most of the Autumn, and even managed to have some socially distanced choral singing to enhance our services.

An outdoor Service of Remembrance was held in the graveyard on Remembrance Sunday. This was really well attended. However, due to rising numbers of cases in the area at Christmas time, it was decided to hold the Crib Service outdoors on Christmas Eve and a service of The Word outside on Christmas Day, instead of the traditional Communion Service inside. Both services were well attended, despite the freezing weather!

In consultation with Kim and Keith, it was decided that it would be inappropriate to open up the Church for communal worship after Christmas, and so services have again taken place online since then. This has had the positive effect of everyone from all of the five villages getting to know each other better! Hopefully we will all be able to meet up soon in person as things ease. However, St Mary's and St Anne's continue to be opened up for private prayers during the week on separate days.

Despite Covid, the work of the Church has continued, and at half term last Autumn we made money available to the school in Kempsford to enable the donation of supermarket vouchers for several needy families in the village. We did this again at Christmas, as well as donating frozen meals from the Long Table charity. We also made several donations to the food bank in Cirencester and the gifts of biscuits to the lonely and bereaved. It is at this point that I would like to say a huge 'Thank You' to my fellow Church Warden, Keith Howlett. Keith has overseen the ongoing maintenance of our lovely church buildings, and has been instrumental in getting some large sums of money in grants towards paying for vital repairs at Kempsford. It is mainly down to his sterling efforts that we are going to be able to make repairs to roofs, renew lightning conductors and other essential things to make sure that our buildings are safe for people to worship in for the foreseeable future. I would also like to thank Jacqui, our Church Treasurer, for all of the invaluable work that she does to keep our books balanced.

Here's to the next twelve months!

d) **Youth Group** – not present.

e) **Community First Responder** – Report from Stephen Andrews (member of Fairford & Lechlade CFR Group):

It has been an unusual year for all of us. We have all had our lives changed in some way. But for the volunteer Community First Responders there have been changes for our patients, for the Ambulance Service crews that we work with and in the way that we have had to work.

When on duty, CFRs provide immediate medical assistance to those in our communities by being called out by the Ambulance Control in response to a 999 call. As we are local, we tend to get to the patient first, often by tens of minutes. When we do, we are able to help the Ambulance Control make an assessment by acting as their “eyes and ears” – providing basic medical observations and context to the primary incident that has provoked the 999 call. In some cases, such as non-injury falls, the special chairs that 3 of us have mean that we can lift the elderly and frail from their fall safely and can often, working with Ambulance Control, leave the patient discharged at home without the need for a crewed Ambulance.

We are also there for those more difficult occasions such as heart attacks and strokes. Providing valuable initial medical support before the arrival of a crewed Ambulance – normally much sooner than our routine calls.

In some ways, none of that changed. Before the first lock down we were being more careful, looking for COVID-19 symptoms. But very soon, we were suspended from being called, even though the Ambulance Service was getting busier. In that time, we were given new protocols or “safeguards” to work to and issued with PPE. Once that was all in place, which took a couple of weeks, those of us who were able to, began to respond again.

Since then, we have been called to the “normal” range of falls, strokes and heart attacks. We have received our vaccinations as part of the National Programme and some of us volunteered and were trained as standby Ambulance Drivers. We have also assisted with Ambulance crew welfare at Gloucester Royal Hospital.

Although we adopted Zoom early on in order to share experience and for training, we have not been able to meet face to face. We are now, like other volunteer groups looking forward to doing just that. Not least, so that we can recruit other volunteers to join our group. We expect recruiting and training to start in the Autumn. If you would like to know more, and perhaps come along to a group meeting to meet the other members of the group then please contact me at [andrews@btinternet.com](mailto:andrews@btinternet.com) or on 07795 915902.

f) **RAF Fairford** – Report from Lt. Col. Joseph Knothe :

- It has been well documented that RAF Mildenhall is to remain open which means that the RC135's will not be moving to RAF Fairford. At our last update in April 2019, we were expecting quite a few people to move to Fairford. That is not happening at the volume we were expecting, but Fairford is still going to grow. Since the last meeting we have added approximately 130 US military personnel in addition to three U2 aircraft. Over the next three years we expect a further 250 – 300 military members to be on base and a few major construction projects to be completed.
- Currently we are working on a hanger complex which consists of 4 large hangers on the north side of the base and we expect it to be completed around 2023/24
- Construction will start on the north-east parking ramp in July/August and it should take a year to complete.
- We are happy to continue supporting RIAT despite the growth on base.
- RAF Brize Norton residents that live in Fairford housing are nearing completion of their move-out phase. Of the 106 houses on base only 30 are still occupied and it is expected by September the remaining residents will have found alternative accommodation. The houses will then be returned to the USAF.
- This is my last meeting as I will be returning to the US in two weeks following a change of command. Hopefully I will return to the Cotswolds on a vacation.

g) **RAFCTE** – Report from Stuart Lindsell, Operations Director, Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Enterprises Organisers of the Royal International Air Tattoo -



We are in our second year of cancellation due to Covid. It has been a difficult decision but one we had to make. It is devastating for us and our parent charity as we have lost two years of income. The majority of staff are furloughed.

We have received great support from members of the public in respect of tickets being rolled over, and also from our corporate sponsors.

Last year we went on-line with the 'Virtual Air Tattoo' which was very successful. We plan to do the same again this year, most likely on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support, and a personal/team thank you to Col. Joe Knothe.

We look forward to working with the Parish Council going forward. RIAT 2022 will be the first show in three years and there may be many people who have moved to the area and not experienced the show before.

h) **Kempsford Bell Ringers** - Not present.

i) **Kempsford Village Hall** - Report from Hannah Dickens –

As with all community centres and charities it has been a particularly difficult year for the village hall. We continue to follow all Government guidance on the use of community spaces and after closing for most of the spring and summer 2020 we were able to reopen late summer to our regular hirers for a short period.

Although we had periods of closure we were fortunate to keep the hall open once a week for the Post Office. We invested a lot of time and consideration before reopening the hall to ensure it was Covid safe. Following guidance we made changes which include signage, hand sanitising areas and enhancing our cleaning facilities. To the best of our knowledge, these changes were successful in enabling us to continue using the hall in the safest possible way.

I would like to say thank you to all the committee members and the additional hours that they put in. We are in a good position this year regarding our committee members. We have 9 members including a Parish Council representative, a new treasurer, booking secretary and health and safety representative.

The refurbishment on the hall was completed in February 2019, and during the lockdown we took the opportunity to finish the internal painting. When we reopen in a few weeks' time I am sure you will agree it has made a huge difference. We are confident that the changes have made a more attractive and versatile space for hirers to use.

We know there is a lot more to do to bring the hall up to modern standards, and the intention is to continue fundraising to achieve this. We would like to start making plans to remove the old park equipment behind the hall in the garden area and change it to a space that all hirers can use.

Sadly over the last year we have been unable to put on the one-off activities that we have done so in the past, however when possible we plan to restart with film nights, family cafes and music nights.

Regular bookings continue to be Pilates, Zumba, the Cotswold Chippy, the youth group, brownies, Post Office and Parish Council. We have some new regular bookings including a yoga class, which has sessions for both adults and children and is very welcome, and hope that the other one-off bookings such as parties will restart as soon as possible as they provide vital income for the hall.

We successfully applied for grants, including the Covid support from Friends of Fairford and Lechlade, 2 business grants and a community grant from Cotswold District Council. This money has enabled us to keep the hall running whilst not raising any income and we are very grateful to these organisations.

Finally, we are always looking for new and eager people to join the committee. After 10 years, Joy Cross will be resigning in the coming months as secretary, a font of all knowledge and very valuable member. She will be very sorely missed. If anyone is interested in this position please get in touch.

The committee is looking forward to reopening the hall and bringing some communities events back to the village.

j) **Whelford Village Hall** – Sue Griffin reported -

During the lockdown in 2020 we decided it was a good time to decorate the hall throughout. With volunteers, the hall, porch, kitchen and men's toilet was repainted. Donated curtains were altered by ladies in the village and cleaned. They look great. New carpet tiles were purchased and put down by volunteers.

With the help of the Clerk, 2 maps (one from the 1800's and the other current) were enlarged and put on the wall. A collage of old photographs of Whelford was put on to canvas and fitted to the wall, together with one of Concorde.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank the Parish Council for the grant they gave us to pay for the paint and tiles etc. I would also like to thank you all for the support and help you give the Parish. Hopefully you will soon be able to come and see the work that has been done at Whelford Village Hall.

k) **Whelford Women** – No report as the group has been unable to meet.

l) **Kempsford Brownies** – written report from Philippa Griffin, read by Karen Saunders –

Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for considering the Brownies application to receive a grant each year. This is very generous and the girls appreciate it very much.

Obviously this last year has been a tricky one, but Kempsford Brownies have kept on Guiding regardless. We had to stop meeting face to face in March 2020 but switched over to Zoom meetings in May. In September we started meeting outdoors and then back indoors in October but then another break due to lockdown 2.0. Although, we did manage to hold one last indoor meeting before Christmas. Lockdown 3.0 stopped us meeting F2F again so we switched to Zoom once more. The girls have been very adaptable and have enjoyed the meetings over zoom where they had lots of fun and different activities. We had a visitor from The Blue Cross teaching us all about animal welfare, another visitor taught us how to paint a ceramic mug. They also enjoyed making microwave mug cakes and chocolate chip cookies. One of the girls favourite activities was the interactive white board where they could share their screen and the other girls could see what they were drawing and had to guess what it was. We're back meeting outdoors and are busy working through the brownie program to earn some badges. Next month we are visiting Gloucestershire Girlguiding HQ and activity centre where the girls will be having a go at grass sledging and geocaching.

In October we welcomed a new adult volunteer Louise Edwards who has recently moved to Kempsford. Our numbers are currently at ten girls with nine of them attending Kempsford school. We have room for new girls and advertise on Facebook to get the word out about our unit.

m) **1<sup>st</sup> Kempsford Rainbows** – not present.

n) **Kempsford Cricket Club** – not present.

o) **GW 4x4 Response Team** – Report from Jerry Greenhalgh -

Gloucestershire & Worcestershire 4x4 Response is a self funded Registered Charity formed of volunteers who use their own 4x4 vehicles to provide logistical support to the community, primarily in times of adverse weather, but also in any other civil emergency. We are part of a national network of 30 plus 4x4 Response Teams under the umbrella of 4x4 Response UK.

All our members are DBS checked and undertake compulsory BORDA Standard off road driver training and assessment to demonstrate competence in the use of their vehicles.

We raise funds to cover the costs of uniform, training, DBS checks, insurance, communications equipment etc by assisting at local events and shows, undertaking traffic management, car parking, stewarding, marshaling and a host of other tasks.

Due to the Covid crisis most events were cancelled last year and so our income was reduced to almost zero. Some events have now been scheduled for this year.

Our main users with whom we have agreements are NHS Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, WRVS, and several Care Homes and Town Councils.

We were deployed at the end of last year and beginning of this year in snow and flood events, where several Responders, ably managed by our team of Controllers, assisted Local Authority manning road closures due to floods, and transporting NHS and Care Home staff to and from work locations.

All deployments are undertaken after a thorough Risk Assessment by our Controllers and Response Drivers aided by our links to the Environment Agency and Highways Agency to ascertain road conditions.

Further information can be obtained via our web site at < [www.gw4x4r.co.uk](http://www.gw4x4r.co.uk)

p) **Classic Car & Motorcycle Club** – Alastair Kennedy reported-

The group is hoping to spring back in to life when the George reopens, which is where meetings are held.

**8. Parishioner's questions –**

1. Ian Webber – I want people to be aware of the waste water system problems that we have in Kempford, although I believe the problem is mainly related to Holford Crescent, Tuckwell Road, Lancaster Road and Ham Lane. Yes, there was a problem the other week with the pumping station by the Parsonage but that is not actually the main problem. The main problem is whenever we have had persistent heavy rain over a couple of days then an abnormal amount of storm water enters the sewer system. Thames Water is aware and admits that this is not a general issue and it is not necessarily unique to Kempford. But in terms of Kempford, the wet wells at the pumping station fill up, reach full capacity, and the pumps then can't cope with the volume, hence the system starts to back up through the sewer pipes. This has happened several times over the years with at least one instance every year over the last 3 years. The last time was in February this year and several phone calls were made to Thames Water who eventually sent an engineer to site. He reported that the wet wells were full and the 2 pumps were working flat out, but could not cope with the volume of water.

The High Street copes due to the extra capacity chamber that was installed a few years ago. The first spur off the mains into Ham Lane and Holford Crescent fills up very quickly leaving residents unable to use toilets and washing machines. Downstairs toilets have been very close to overflowing.

In February, the Thames Water engineer arranged for 16,000 gallons to be tankered away from the wet wells, and this provided enough breathing space for the pumps to catch up and for residents to begin using facilities. The time taken from reporting the problem to getting back to normal was a week which was difficult and stressful.

I am aware that the Parish Council has been in discussion with Thames Water regarding sorting the drainage out around the vicarage, but I think they need to do specific investigations. If this doesn't identify anything, then extra capacity chambers are needed in Ham Lane and Holford Crescent or the pumping station needs larger pumping capacity. I am not aware of any upgrades to the pumping station in 20 years.

Unfortunately, Thames Water prioritises work on risk and the number of properties affected. I am looking for reassurance from the Parish Council that you will continue your dialogue with Thames Water and continue to battle for a lasting solution.

I was pleased to see something in the Parish Newsletter and on the website advising people to be responsible for what they flush, but it did read to me that the problems are caused by residents, when in fact there is this bigger problem. I am aware that Thames Water reacts to number of telephone calls, so it would be helpful if something could be put in the Newsletter advising residents to report problems individually.

Tony Williams advised that he is in weekly communication with Thames Water. They have arranged for leaflets to be distributed to residents and have agreed to undertake a camera survey of the system from the pumping station working back. No date has been set for this yet. I think the problem was exacerbated by the flooding outside the Parsonage and we are grateful to Ray for getting the drains cleared. The road has been scheduled for resurfacing in November and proper drainage linkage.

Jerry Greenhalgh advised that at the top of Swynford Close they are not connected to storm drains and individual properties have soakaways. This may also be the case for the whole of Swynford Close and Tuckwell House estate. Tony Williams to ask Thames Water, but his initial thought is that John of Gaunt and Swynford Close are on a separate system.

Stephen Andrews will note this at District level and pointed out that Ian Webber has expertise in these matters having worked for Thames Water for 14 years.

**Meeting closed at 9.30pm.**