

KEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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DRAFT

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held Tuesday 31st May 2022

Present:

Parish Councillors -	Mark Strange (Chairman), Tony Williams, Christine Nugent, John O'Connell and Neil Green
Teresa Griffin	Parish Council Clerk
Stephen Andrews	Cotswold District Councillor & Community First Responder
Mr J Greenhalgh	Resident & 4x4 Response Team
Stuart Lindsell	RAFCTE
Nick Cook	RAFCTE
Lt Col Stover	RAF Fairford
Thomas Krenik	RAF Fairford
Jenny Collyer	RAF Fairford
Hannah Dickens	Kempsford Village Hall
Sue Griffin	Whelford Village Hall
Gill Northen	Resident
Rosemary Andrews	Resident

1. Apologies –

Karen Saunders
Phil Nickson
Dom Morris
Steve Trotter
Philippa Griffin
Ann O'Hara
Richard Mendum

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 4th May 2021 – approved and signed by Chair.

3. Kempsford Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report – Chairman Mark Strange gave his report –

Welcome to the Annual Parish meeting – the first face to face Annual Parish meeting since 2019 because of the pandemic. The more eagle eyed of you may have noticed that I am not Tony Williams. No, I am Mark Strange and I took over as Chairman of the Parish Council just over a year ago now, as Tony asked to stand down. We reluctantly agreed to this as Tony had served as Chairman for over 20 years! This is no small effort and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Tony for all his hard work over this period. I would also like to take the opportunity to note the retirement of 3 Parish councillors – Sue Griffin, Alison Ward and Jerry Stokes who have all given many years of service to this community. In their place we have Karen Saunders, John O'Connell and Neil Green – thank you for giving your time for the benefit of the community. I would like you all to note that Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers – something that is perhaps sometimes forgotten when people complain about things in the Parish. We give our time freely to try and make a difference – please try and remember that.

In a few weeks time it will be my 58th Birthday – yes I know, it has been a hard life! I have lived all those 58 years as a resident of Kempsford and I have seen much change. When I was but a small boy, Kempsford had three shops, a baker, and two pubs. If you had told the people of Kempsford then that the population of the village would increase significantly but we would lose all the shops and the bakers and one of the pubs they would of thought you mad. It just goes to show how things can change in ways which we might, as it stands now, think impossible or highly unlikely. I believe that we are about to go through a time of sudden change. The need to move away from Petro Chemicals as a means of fuel could produce radical change and that could

impact upon us. There quite a few solar farms around us already and I have already seen planning applications in Wiltshire for what are in effect massive batteries. These take excess power from the grid in times of low usage and then feeds it back in when demand is high. This could happen here and because of this and other factors, the Parish Council tried to get help with creating a Community development plan to try and control what might go where. This plan would include future housing which, given the longer life expectancy of people and the increasing population, will almost certainly happen eventually. However we did not get much response to our plea for help. For now we have parked this item but we feel that we will need to return to it in the future.

Similarly we have the threat of Climate change – we have had flooding events in the past within our Parish most notably Whelford in 2007 but also at Reevey bend in the 1960's. We asked for people to be volunteer flood wardens to help if flooding should happen again – we had zero response to this!?! It seems that the idea of volunteering to do something for the common good has gone out of fashion!?

It is difficult to live here and not notice mineral extraction. Gravel and sand has been quarried in this area for many decades. Parish Council representatives meet regularly with Aggregate Industries to discuss gravel extraction from Manor Farm.

This will obviously continue for many years to come and there are already planning applications in or about to go in for new quarries along the C124. The largest of these applications is at Down Ampney airfield – it will dwarf anything that is being worked on currently. Our concern on this is two fold:-

1. The impact on the roads locally and in particular the C124. Parish Council now meet regularly with the local Glos Highways manager.

2. The cumulative effect of all the gravel extraction and infill locally on the water table.

We can only express our concerns to the planning authorities and hope that we are being overly cautious. To try and get a louder voice on this we are join other Parish meetings and Councils along the C124 (Castle Eaton, Marston Meysey, Down Ampney, Cricklade and Latton) who also share our concerns on this front. This is not as easy as you might think – recently the whole of Castle Eaton Parish Council resigned on block (they now have 5 new Councillors but it will take time for them to settle in) and we know the Clerk and Chairman of Marston Meysey Parish Meeting are both standing down.

Earlier in the year we paid for a traffic survey in both Kempsford and Whelford. This was after many complaints about speeding. The results backed up the complaints and we are now trying to use the data gained to justify the citing of two cameras. These cameras can pass their data onto the police and fines can be issued. However we may struggle to gain permission to get these cameras sited as one of the requirements is for an Active Speed watch group in the area!?

It is looking like the transfer of land from Persimmon homes to Glos CC and us will finally take place. This has been a long and tortious process and has taken much time and energy from the Parish Council. Once we are part owners we want to set up a management committee to run and look after the whole area.

We look forward to Bromford housing finishing the redeveloped Oakley Flats site and then they will turn their attention to Cross Tree Crescent. The development was somewhat stalled by the Pandemic but it is underway now.

We will shortly hear from our District Councillors and County Councillor – I would like to thank them for their time and help that they give us – without them it would be a much more difficult job trying to work out what is going on locally and who to contact about things.

I would also like to thank all of you who volunteer to help run things in the Parish – the two village halls, the Churches, groups like the Brownies, not least the Village Hall and its cafe and others all need people to run them. The Parish would not be the same without these institutions and groups.

4. **County Councillor's Annual Report** – Not Present

5. **District Councillors Annual Report** - Stephen Andrews provided a report from both Ward Councillors on the year April 2021 – April 2022 –

- Unfortunately Cllr Steve Trotter is unable to attend this evening. Between us we cover Lechlade, Kempsford and Fairford South. Steve is on the Planning Committee and is leading on improvements to the footpath network between Fairford and Lechlade.
- I am the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which is charged with holding the executive of the District Council to account and I have previously served on the Audit Committee. I am the representative on the Gloucestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which tries to hold the County NHS to account.
- Planning is one of the major things the District Council is responsible for and takes up considerable time. Applications that have received objections are reported to myself and Steve together with the Planning Officer's view on whether it should be permitted. We can refer it to the Planning Committee if there are good grounds for doing so.
- The District is currently undertaking a 'Local Plan Refresh'. Some of you may remember when the District didn't have a local plan which left us open to developer's schemes. Fortunately the Local Plan was in place when Pye Homes submitted their application a few years ago for Kempsford and also some key elements from the Parish Plan. Another application is likely to come in, and it is important that we do try to obtain a view on what housing is wanted by the community and where.
- Other matters the District is involved in includes –
 - Heritage
 - Affordable housing
 - Highways
- The next elections will take place in May 2023.

6. **Reports from Representatives of Local Organisations**

a) **RAF Fairford** – Report from Lt Col Stover –

I am the Base Commander at RAF Fairford and am here to talk about a couple of things, people, projects and mission. All three are changing and growing at Fairford.

A reminder that the USAF had left by 2010 and didn't start coming back until 2018. Initially it started with 12 active military personnel and since last summer when we started getting new missions, we are starting to see growth. Currently we have 30 people and it is expected to grow to 130 by this time next year, plus 70 civilian contractors and family members of the total 200 staff. Certainly not the growth that we would have seen if Mildenhall had closed down, but still significant.

Some of you may have attended the information briefings we held back in March when we talked about the new multi-bay hanger that is currently being constructed. Approximately 100 of the military staff will be coming for that. In addition to that is the approval to relocate the Wing. Currently we have the base at Fairford as squadron which belongs to a larger entity of an air base group at Croughton, which in turn belongs to the 501st Combat Support Wing at RAF Alconbury. That Wing Commander is the installation commander for 8 different locations, including one in Norway, and has been approved to relocate to RAF Fairford which will add a further 30 staff.

With regards to missions, some air operations are growing too. The base was just starting to get busy again when Covid shut everything down. It wasn't until last summer that we saw an increase again in operations. It is now the busiest it has been in 12 years. I don't see it spiking, but more of a slow increase.

In terms of projects, as the base had partially closed down we are now spending \$60 million in renovation projects. We are also building warehouses and expanding some of the weapons storage. In total there is \$400 million dollars being invested over 5 years.

b) **RAFCTE** - Report by Stuart Lindsell -

I am the Operations Director for the Royal Air Force's Charitable Trust Enterprise and joined here by Nick Cook, our Emergency Services Manager to provide an update on this years' RIAT.

Having had to cancel the last 2 years shows it has been a very difficult couple of years. We have a fantastic line up for this year's show which takes place on the 15th -17th July, and has a similar format to previous years.

It was very heartening towards the end of last year when we were speaking to Embassies and Nations about who would be interested, given it was still a very uncertain time, to receive their encouragement and promise to be here. Currently we have more aircraft, less concrete and more people (170,000 expected over the weekend).

Gate G will open on the 20th June for contractors. We open for aircraft on Wednesday 13th July. Previously we have opened at 8am for aircraft, this year it will be 9am from the Wednesday to Sunday, and 8am on the Monday.

The one-way loop in Kempsford village will operate from Friday, with the other one-way systems put in place for the weekend.

By the end of July everything will be removed and handed back to Col Stover's team. I would like to thank Col Stover, Tom and Jenny with whom we work very closely.

The resident's ticket offer is still open so if you would like to 2 half-price tickets for the Friday or Sunday, please come and see us at Douglas Bader House with proof of address.

Questions:

1. In the past you have opened on the Thursday in special areas to allow people to watch the planes. Will this be happening this year? Yes it is. The Park and View will operate at both ends on the Wednesday, Thursday and Monday, with the prime purpose of getting as many vehicles off the road as possible. We have been given permission this year not to divert the footpath in to the fields and will use two sets of fencing to keep the footpath/cycle way between Whelford and Kempsford open.
2. Has everything been more difficult because the Base is still operational? Yes, it is more challenging. Also, due to the reduced concrete we have additional off-site parking.

Nick Cook advised that the Park and View Car Parks will open at 6am on Wednesday 13th July. The bin collection scheduled for Friday 15th has been changed to Thursday 14th. This will be publicised in due course.

c) **Gloucestershire Police** – not present.

d) **School** – not present.

e) **School Governors** – not present.

f) **Churches** – Report from Rev Kim Brown –

2021 was a year of recovery from the pandemic, with services resuming indoors, moving outside and at times being temporarily suspended, as Covid cases ebbed and flowed in our villages. By the end of 2021, everyone had fully returned to church in both our villages, our choir were singing again and the bells were being rung. We celebrated all the major festivals, plus caught up a backlog of weddings, christenings and interring of ashes. We have a well-attended outdoor family service and are greening the graveyard, asking people to reduce the plastic items there for the sake of wildlife.

Our income was very badly affected by the reduced number of services and occasional offices, and people no longer carrying cash after the pandemic. Most people are unaware that the local church receives no funding from the central church of England or the government for the upkeep of our buildings, and we have to pay around £20k a year from both our churches to the Diocese to pay for having a Vicar. We are trying to build back our finances.

We started a youth club last year in the village hall which runs every Wednesday evening in term time from 5.20pm to 6.30pm and is attended by around 18 children from our villages each week. It came as a result of a report that showed many children had lost their confidence and social skills as a result of the extended time at home. Thank you to the Parish Council for a grant to pay for the hall hire, a grant from the Friends of Fairford & Lechlade for grants for activities and the cost of the youth worker, and to those who volunteer.

Plans for the future:

We have work to do to repair the porch at St. Anne's this year. We are also planning major works at St. Mary's, to install a toilet and kitchenette in the West End. Some pews will be removed in that section, but the pews in

the main body of the church will remain as they are. We will make the plans available to the village and consult before any work begins.

We have been asked to pull together a community hub this autumn and winter to support people who might struggle financially when the energy price rises again. The school have offered the school hall for this purpose and we hope to open the hall twice a week to serve a hot meal for families and anyone who would like to come and be together in a warm place with others. More details to follow – if anyone would like to volunteer for this, please give me your details.

I arrived here in May 2020 in the lockdown and have loved living and working here in these wonderful villages.

Ann O'Hara produced a report back in April on the fundraising and works in the community. This is available to view on the Parish Council website.

The Calendar Photo Competition is still open and looking for more entries on autumn and winter, plus entries from young photographers.

g) **Youth Group** – covered in item (f) above.

h) **Community First Responder** –

When on duty, volunteer Community First Responders (CFR) are called by the Ambulance Control to incidents within their rural area. Originally, the focus was upon immediate life critical events, such as Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Now CFRs are trained to deal with just about anything that an Ambulance may be called to – except Road Traffic Collisions and pub fights!

With the Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020 we were initially stopped by the Ambulance Service from responding whilst they worked out what our new working protocols would be and made sure that we had the right protective equipment. It took two or three weeks before we were given clearance to do so. We did of course deploy to incidents that included heart attacks, but also those who, but for the Pandemic, might have gone out to the Doctor, Pharmacist or taken themselves to a Minor Injuries Unit. The problems we saw evolved and, with the support of a clinician at Ambulance Control we were often able to help prioritise incidents or ensure a patient was dealt with without the need for an Ambulance attending.

Members of the Group also helped in other ways over the months following that first lockdown. One trained to drive an Ambulance operationally, another helped with the issue to crews and fitting of specialist protective equipment, Ambulances were redeployed, Community Defibrillators regularly checked as “rescue ready” and crew welfare stations manned at the Emergency Departments of our Hospitals.

Improvement in our capability has continued. Over the last year, we have all been trained and have achieved a new National Ambulance Responder qualification. Things are returning to a “new normal” with our “normal” monthly training meeting moving back from Zoom to a “more normal” training session. Inevitably, some find that they can no longer respond or move out of the area and the Pandemic did not stop that. However, we now have four new CFRs (two each in Fairford and Lechlade) who have recently qualified and, after completing a couple of training shifts, will soon become active in our communities. That will mean that we should soon be back to having a team of 10 responders across the Fairford and Lechlade area, including two in Kempsford.

I am sure though that things will continue to move on. The Ambulance Service have plans to further improve our capability and equipment, and we will still need new volunteers to train up to add to the Group or replace those who may need to retire as things change for them.

If you are interested in joining us, get in touch. We would love to see you.

Questions:

1. How are you funded for training etc.? Training is provided by the Ambulance Service. Some equipment comes from charitable giving and consumables is provided by the Ambulance Service, or paid for by the Ambulance Service Charity.

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

It's nice to be back open. It's been a tricky year and even though things are open people have been reluctant to come out. We are not getting the numbers that we had previously.

The Café has restarted and numbers are returning slowly. The other events such as film nights and live music are yet to restart.

Several long-standing committee members have stood down, so apart from myself, we have a whole new committee. There are currently 8 members including Rev Kim as the Church Representative and Karen Saunders as Parish Council Representative. There are 4 roles that have to be filled, so with only 6 non-representative members we do desperately need more volunteers.

The Hall has been decorated and blinds fitted. We continue to fundraise as new doors and roof are needed. The only regular income is from the Café and hirers. Our biggest donation this year came from the Beer Festival, and a Cider Festival is being planned by the Church for October.

We were fortunate to receive some good grants during the pandemic.

The good news is that the old play equipment behind the hall has been removed and we are looking to do something with the garden. A sub-committee has been set up to look at this and plans are to re-develop in to a community garden which could be used by various groups such as Men's Shed, School, Mums, social prescribing and wellbeing.

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

Last summer we had a successful BBQ event at Jenner's Barn by kind permission of BJ Arkell & Partners which raised £300.

Our January event had to be cancelled due to Covid.

We received a 'Build back better' grant of £1000 for a marquee, which we now have.

The British American Committee has donated £250 towards the Jubilee Tea Party Event taking place on Friday.

The event has been organized jointly by the Village Hall Committee and the Whelford Women. The Whelford Women has made 300 metres of bunting and approximately 100 people are attending.

k) **Whelford Women** – covered in (j) above.

l) **Kempsford Brownies** – written report from Philippa Griffin, read by Tony Williams –

Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support of Kempsford Brownies. The money was spent on a trip to Gloucestershire Girlguiding HQ in Cowley near Cheltenham where the girls spent an evening geocaching, grass sledging, and having fun outdoors.

We currently have 15 girls with most of them living in the village. I am the main Leader with another lady from the village helping each week but I am always on the lookout for new volunteers.

We went on pack holiday to Macaroni Woods last September and have another stay booked for this year. We spend the weekend in a lodge-style chalet and enjoy the outdoors as much as we can and do our best not to go to bed early and have a good night's sleep! This is from the brownie's point of view and not the adults.

The girls will be attending an event at Cirencester Outdoor Pool in July where the Division has hired out the pool solely for Brownies for the evening. Hopefully, a number of brownies will be in attendance at the annual village litter pick in June.

Thank you once again for the support of the Parish Council.

m) **Kempsford Bell Ringers** – No report, but anyone interested in joining please come along.

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

There are 2 members in the village and the group is one of 30+ teams covering the whole of the UK. Members are volunteers that use their own vehicles. The primary function is transporting NHS staff during adverse weather. We have expanded the role by signing agreements with Fairford, Lechlade and other local authorities.

o) **Classic Car & Motorcycle Club** – Not present.

7. **Parishioner's questions** –

1. If there are insufficient volunteers to help produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), where does this leave us if more developers come back?

Stephen Andrews advised –

- The District Local Plan is being refreshed. Kempford will remain as an ‘unsustainable community’. During the last application by Pye Homes we were fortunate to have evidence from the recent Housing Survey as to what housing is needed which was significantly lower.
 - A NDP involves thinking ahead about what we would like the village to look like if things happen, for example if the canal was restored.
 - NDP’s are taken in to account at Planning, compared to Parish Plans which carry little or no weight. They also provide more money through Community Infrastructure Levies.
 - NDP’s is a proper process in considering things, documenting them, consulting with parishioners, and eventually taking it to a referendum. So not a simple process, but there is money to help.
2. Following the RAF Fairford information briefing in March there is confusion regarding communication between the Parish Council and the community.

Jenny Collyer advised that all Community Newsletter information is passed on to residents through the Parish News. Details of works and events that may specifically affect Whelford are emailed to the Parish Clerk, who circulates it through the village WhatsApp Group.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.