

KINGTON ST MICHAEL PARISH

Draft Minutes

Annual Parish Meeting

held on

Thursday 11th April 2024

at

Kington St Michael Village Hall
Kington St Michael - 7.30pm

Present: Parish Cllrs Gerry Gamble (Chair of the Parish Council), Victoria Ingham, Peter Macdonald, Marie-Clare Simpson, Fiona Twisse and Steve Woodhead. Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman and 7 members of the public, being Alison Curran, John Hall, Alistair Morrelli, Linda Durno, Rob Durno, Dominic Jones, and Elizabeth Jones.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Cllrs Alex Hall, John Newton and Will Roe.

MIN 1. Minutes:

Draft Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 6th April 2023 were tabled.

It was agreed that the Minutes should be accepted and signed by Cllr G Gamble, the Chairman of the Meeting.

Proposed Cllr Marie - Clare Simpson, seconded Cllr Victoria Ingham and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

MIN 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

There were no matters raised that were not covered by later Agenda items.

MIN 3. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Gerry Gamble, commented that it was his pleasure to be able to welcome all present to Kington St Michael's Annual Parish Meeting and advised that it was worth stating that this was not a Parish Council Meeting. It was instead a Kington St Michael Community Meeting and, as such it was an opportunity for us all to reflect on the previous year and to discuss future developments.

At this time last year we were planning for the Coronation of King Charles 111 and now we can look back on a very damp day that, nonetheless, proved to be successful.

The Village Newsletter continues to reflect the very many Groups and Clubs that thrive in the Village. Many thanks in particular to Avril and Linda for their hard work in producing the Newsletter and all the volunteers who distribute it and not least to the School for printing our copy.

On the theme of distributing the news, I think a special thank you should go to a pillar of our community, Mervyn Singer. Whether or not he delivered a paper to you. He carried the papers around through Kington St Michael and several other local villages for 50 years until he retired from that task a few months ago. Well done and thank you Merv.

Viv Vines, Clerk to the Parish Council has drafted an Agenda for tonight's Meeting in order to

give some structure to the Meeting. Items 1 - 9 follow the usual format. Item 10 Public Questions and General Discussions of Parish Issues - some ideas listed as A – L are suggestions only, of matters, that residents may wish to discuss. On this occasion I have looked back through the Parish Council Minutes from January 2023 to date, and have picked out some topics that have been raised in Parish Council Meetings, not all of which are included in your Agenda items A – L.

Parish Council Meeting 19th January 2023

Assets of Community Value. This is very topical now but refers to the efforts by a community group to have The Plough Inn be given that status. Kington St Michael PC supported the group's efforts which Kington Langley Parish Council did NOT. The new owners of The Plough had wasted no time in stripping the Pub externally and internally of all signage, fixtures and fittings that had served the building as a Pub.

Parish Council Meeting 18th May 2023

May 16-17th, Eden renewables held two consultation days with Kington St Michael residents in the Village Community Club regarding their proposals to build a substantial solar farm, Red Barn, either side of the A350 within the Parishes of Kington Langley and Kington St Michael. This was followed up by a further day on 26th June 2023 when their amended proposals were put to residents.

Parish Council Meeting 20th July 2023

Proposals had been made to write a history of Kington St Michael which the Parish Council supported. The Parish Council subsequently agreed to fund the initiative and became custodians of the copyright in perpetuity. At the January 2024 Parish Council Meeting it was agreed to include Kington Langley in the project and sharing some of the costs.

Parish Council Meeting 19th October 2023

Eden Renewables Red Barn proposals were discussed. At the same meeting the Parish Council noted that a Permission in Principle planning application for 9 dwellings had been made for a site on Stanton Lane. This application was rejected by the Wilts Council Planning Officer as it was outside of the village boundary. The Parish Council had objected to the development.

The landowners appealed against Wiltshire Council's decision and the Parish Council reiterated its position of opposition to the planning application.

Parish Council Meeting 23rd November 2023

The planning application for Red Barn Solar Farm having been submitted to Wiltshire Council the Parish Council resolved to register STRONG objections to the planning application. As far as I am aware a decision is yet to be given by Wiltshire Council Planning Committee.

At the same Meeting a new grounds maintenance contractor was also appointed to maintain all public areas that the Parish Council is responsible for. These should not be confused with areas maintained by Wiltshire Highways.

Parish Council Meeting 18th January 2024

Council Member Vacancies. The Parish Council had two vacancies and two eligible applicants (Steve Woodhead and Marie-Clare Simpson), who were duly co-opted on to the Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting 15th February 2024

GE2 Field. Replacement fencing for the play area and MUGA (kick wall area) ordered. Contract for installation was also agreed with a local provider.

Asset Of Community Value -The Jolly Huntsman.

The Parish Council agreed to become involved in facilitating a community group in the acquisition of the pub through a community buy out. It was agreed to invite residents to a rescheduled PC meeting on 21st March at 7.00 pm to explain what was happening and to encourage a community group to form and investigate the feasibility of a community buy out. Five people present volunteered for form a Core Group to commence a feasibility study to map out how this might be achieved. April 2nd 2024 would be the first meeting of the Core Group with key tasks identified.

He concluded by thanking all for listening to his Report and advising that he was willing to answer any questions that were not included as later Agenda items. There were no questions raised.

MIN 4. Finance:

Copies of the Budget proposals for the year 2024/2025 were circulated to those in attendance

There were no questions raised.

MIN 5. Reports from Parish Council Sub Groups and Committees:

The Parish Council had no Sub Groups or Committees during the past 12 months.

MIN 6. Reports from Local Organisations:

Book Recycling Scheme

Linda Durno reminded everyone that the Book Recycling scheme had run from the village shop foyer for the past 20 years, taking donations of adult fiction and autobiographies which are then sold on for 50p each, with occasional special offers. Revenue from the notice board goes into the same pot.

Once takings reach £50 a donation is made to a village organisation and all beneficiaries are encouraged to "Pay it Forward", by doing something kind or supportive for another village organisation, rather than simply accepting the donation – it's entirely voluntary, but examples are donating surplus fruit, vegetables or flowers to the village shop or offering some time to mow the Churchyard or help in the School.

So far 29 different organisations have received a total of 78 donations. Recipients since last year's Annual Parish Meeting were:

- The village shop (towards the hot drinks machine)
- The village hall (towards roof repairs)
- Plants for the build-out, maintained by Jessica Puddy and Kim Perryman

Over £3,900.00 had been raised since the scheme's inception, and Linda thanked all those who supported it, reporting that there was almost enough money for the next £50 donation, so if any organisation would like to be considered, please contact her.

Kington St Michael Club

Vicki Ingham provided a brief report on behalf of the Club Chairman.

The Club remained inclusive and welcoming and was in a stable financial position with 299 members, a 30% increase on the previous year. This had allowed for continuing investment in the building with renovation projects and new chairs and tables had been recently purchased.

The Events Committee had been very active throughout the year and there was already plenty in the diary for the forthcoming year.

There were still a huge number of positives and the Club hoped that they would continue to be well-supported by the local community.

There were no further Reports received.

MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:

Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman reported and commented that this was his 15th Annual Parish Report and that it was interesting to note the changes there have been over those years.

There was no doubt that there had been both Political and economic challenges over the last year which have taken some imaginative managing. He was pleased to report though that unlike many surrounding authorities Wiltshire Council have reported an underspend of £634k which correspondingly enables the Council to enhance our spending commitment in local services. One can always argue that it is never enough, but I think given the cost pressures all local authorities are under the level of spend is both prudent and necessary.

The net budget therefore for 2024/25 stands at £485.772m with a further Capital budget of £255.667m. That together with their Housing Revenue account (our Council Housing south of the County) gives Wiltshire Council a total budget of £1.1bn. There have been a few additions too such as being able to benefit from the extra £500m given by central government nationally to underpin Social Care, and closer to home Wiltshire Council have also received a further and my view very necessary £10m for highways maintenance with a particular focus on pothole repairs etc. An additional £1m has also been secured specifically for highways flood preventative work.

For every £100 of our revenue budget spent therefore the picture looks something like this; -

- £38 on caring for vulnerable adults,
- £9 on managing waste,
- £9 on Wiltshire Highways and bus services,
- £4 on maintaining our property assets,
- £1 on leisure and libraries,
- £21 on supporting and safeguarding children and young people,
- £8 on investment on schools, roads and housing,
- £6 on running the council including environment,
- £3 on online and digital services, and
- £1 on improving Wiltshire's economy.

On this last point it's worth noting that this money is being well spent on helping revitalise our town centres including supporting local businesses and the re-use of empty shops.

On other news, and for the first time since Wiltshire became a Unitary Authority we have received an " Outstanding" rating for Children's Social Care, which is a huge testament to all involved.

He advised that he continued to sit on the Northern Area Planning Committee as Deputy Chair, Health Select Committee and since his last Annual Parish Report, Audit and Governance Committee too. My particular specialism if you like though is as Chair of the Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee, which has seen a few changes over the last year.

Howard suggested that attendees may recall his remarks within my last Report when he had complained within correspondence with Michael Gove MP reference the unfair Five-Year-Housing-

Land supply (5YHLS) which he believed to be forcing unsuitable development in unsuitable locations. Planning was becoming more developer driven than plan-led which he was resisting. He was very pleased to report that this unfair metric was abolished on the 19th December 2023, and that we now worked to a Four-Year-Housing-Land supply (4YHLS). The 5% buffer has been removed too, and maximum weight given to Neighbourhood Plans to five years instead of the current two. Those of you in the process of Neighbourhood Plans then still have everything to play for! The huge benefit of this 4YHLS is that Wiltshire Council have already met or planned the housing requirement which means that once again new planning applications can be plan-led rather than developer driven.

In closing he advised that he often reflected on how much easier his task was in representing the Parishes he covered due to the hard work and commitment of their Parish Councils. They are a delightful bunch to work with, and I haven't always been so able to say that. Certainly I both hear and experience some real horror stories across the County so I need to give my thanks and appreciation to our Parish Councils, their Chairs and Clerks too. As always, if anyone needed to contact him over any issue, and he'd had some interesting ones over the last year, please do contact me on my Wiltshire Council email address.

The Chair of the Meeting thanked Councillor Greenman for his advice, continued involvement and assistance during the past year.

MIN 8. Kington St Michael Neighbourhood Plan:

John Hall reported on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on progress made over the last 12 months, assisted by Place Studio their consultants.

The initial Draft Plan was substantially complete and consideration was being given on how to satisfy the land supply issue of some 35-40 dwellings to comply with Local Plan requirements.

He pointed out that the problem was that this was a linear village and tightly packed and so to accommodate the required figure there could be a need to break the natural physical boundary.

Although it would be welcomed, as a large village with a growth requirement in the Local Plan, it was unlikely that Strategic Planning would change the village status. The Steering Group and their consultants hoped that they could reach a Regulation 16 submission in early 2025.

Question. What happens if the Neighbourhood Plan does not designate any land?

Answer. Unless land was designated in the Neighbourhood Plan it was likely that Wiltshire Council would not accept it as being in conformation with the Local Plan. Also it would be open for developers to propose sites and win on the basis that houses were needed according to the Local Plan.

MIN 9. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish Issues:

- a) **Recreation Ground Facilities** – Cllr Gerry Gamble provided an update advising that the QE2 Field Group continued to raise funds and that the MUGA (kick wall area) including fencing would proceed soon and also the replacement of the play area fencing. Future possibilities included the possibility of an equipment storage facility.
- b) **CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2024** – There was no interest shown and the Parish Council would not enter.
- c) **Tor Hill Footpath Project** – The Council had decided not to pursue this further until after the Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in case there was another mechanism in achieving the footpath.
- d) **Community Safety/Neighbourhood Watch/Emergency Plan** – Cllr Vicki Ingham advised that responses received from Parishioners when seeking volunteers had been very poor. In the interim the Council's database, circulating information would need to suffice. This remained open to everyone to join. Cllr Fiona Twisse who remained the Lead Member on the Emergency Plan advised that although she continued to work on the Plan there was still a requirement for community volunteer's involvement.
- e) **Traffic Speeds – the provision of Autospeedwatch Tools and Speed Identification**

Device (SID) – The Council confirmed that they intended to proceed with the purchase and installation of the ElanCity Evolis Vision Radar speed sign.

- f) **Community Speedwatch – the Speedwatch Team volunteers** – There had been no change in circumstances since last year as LHFIG had advised that another survey would not be carried out until data was available from the Council's SIDs.
- g) **Rights of Way/Footpath Maintenance/Community Warden** – There remained a need for volunteers to come forward to take roles.
- h) **Asset of Community Value – The Jolly Huntsman** – Alex Hall had been unable to attend but had provided a comprehensive Briefing Paper on the KSM Community Pub Project. This was circulated to attendees and covered:
 - The History So Far
 - Financial Viability
 - Financing
 - Support Available for the Project
 - Looking Forward-Managing the Asset
 - Next Steps

The Core Group had arrived at recommendations for a Constituted Body. These included:

- To avail of Plunkett membership and ask the Council to fund in the interim
- To adopt a legal structure of a community benefit society, which should be called the Kington St Michael Community Pub
- To issue community shares with a minimum value of £50
- Shareholders to be a minimum age of 18 years
- A managing committee to consist of a maximum of 20 members
- To undertake a community survey as soon as practical and have it widely distributed
- To ask the Parish council to hold funds while the banking arrangements are set up
- To identify grant funding timetables
- To consult with the Parish Clerk on availing of Public Works Board Loans
- To make further enquiries of the books, to appoint a building surveyor, and to identify the full inventory of sale particulars
- To examine in further detail how the Pub might be used for the benefit of the community

The Core Group requested community support to assist them in their endeavours.

CLOSURE OF MEETING:

The Meeting Chair thanked all those who had provided Reports and who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting 2024.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: