

# KINGTON ST MICHAEL PARISH

Draft Minutes

## Annual Parish Meeting

held on

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

at

Kington St Michael Village Hall  
Kington St Michael - 7.30pm

**Present:** Parish Cllrs Gerry Gamble (Chair of the Parish Council), Peter Macdonald, John Newton, Will Roe, Fiona Twisse and Steve Woodhead. Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman and 8 members of the public (Margaret Pratley, Alison Greenhalgh, Andrew Fussell, Delcia Fussell, Claire Pugh, David Joy, Beth Joy and Tim Mead).

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Parish Cllrs Alex Hall, Victoria Ingham and Marie-Clare Simpson. Apologies were also received from Linda Durno.

### **MIN 1. Minutes:**

Draft Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were tabled.

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

Proposed Cllr S Woodhead, seconded Cllr John Newton 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.

The Village Newsletter continued to reflect the very many Groups and Clubs that thrive in the Village and he thanked in particular Avril and Linda for their hard work in producing the Newsletter and all the volunteers who distribute it and the School for printing our copy.

Viv Vines, Clerk to the Parish Council had 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 March 2024 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.

Rather than drag everyone through the month by month Minutes of the Council he had compiled some of the threads of Council work that had emerged throughout the year

### **1. Asset of Community Value (The Jolly Huntsman)**

During February – March 2024, the Parish Council had unanimously agreed to support the formation of a Community Pub Buyout Group. All KSM residents were invited to a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 to explain what was happening with the Pub and to encourage the formation of a “Community Pub Group”. In all, some 70 residents attended, and 5 individuals volunteered to take the buyout forward. The Core Group met formally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. The Parish Council had agreed to underwrite initial costs, which allowed the Group to formulate a plan. This included gaining membership of The Plunkett Foundation, a charity that supports rural initiatives and provided structured guidance in a step-by-step approach. The work of the Core Group was effective in bringing the Group to a place that allowed them to bid for substantial funding via the Community Opportunity Fund (COF). Sadly, at the point when an application was ready, a General Election was called and all new applications were frozen. The new Government took until the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 to formally close the COF, thus shutting the door on the most feasible way to raise the monies necessary for the buyout.

### **2. QE2 Recreation Field**

Recent RoSPA Reports had indicated that remedial work would be needed to maintain safe levels of the Playground and also the Kick Wall area. The problems identified via a visual inspection only were still within safe limits, but the Council and the QE2 Field Group were keen to add new play equipment and to restore/renovate both Play Areas. The Kick Wall area was no longer fit for purpose and work had already commenced to extend the width and height of the wall and to add a second wall at the other end of the tarmacked area. Currently the Kick Wall area had now been transformed into a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The playing surface had been resurfaced. Metal rebound fencing at 3 metres high had been installed, including customised football goals and basketball hoops. The final addition will be the line marking for those sports and also pickleball, the fastest-growing racket sport. These markings are also the same as those required for badminton. The Playground’s wooden fencing had been replaced with metal safety fencing, plus 2 self-closing gates. The swings are in the process of being replaced, and several new items of play equipment had been chosen. The Parish Council will be considering a request from the QE2 Field Group to repair/renovate the largest item of playgroup equipment soon.

### **3. Traffic Speed through the Village (SID’s, Bollards and Finger Posts)**

The Parish Council had been trying for some time now to set up a Community Speedwatch team trained to use speed guns, etc. Traffic speed surveys in the village did not trigger access to this training. We had serious issues with the placing of the survey speed tracking devices. Also, the survey was carried out during the School Holidays, thus missing the School-runs. The Council had raised issues about this and also like many other villages, is seeking a 20mph speed limit in the village. Consequently, the Council had purchased Speed Indicator Devices (SID’s) which electronically record speeds. The Police are now actively working with the Parish Councils in other villages to accept the data from SID’s to be sent directly to them. Wiltshire Highways had approved the siting of the SID’s and also bollards to prevent illegal parking in two sites in the village. Contractors had been identified to carry out the installations and we are currently awaiting quotations for this.

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 2025/2026 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 had provided a written report and reminded everyone that the Book Recycling scheme celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday this year. It takes 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. Nothing is wasted, with surplus items being passed on to local charity shops.

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 30 different organisations have received a total of 82 donations. Recipients since last year’s Annual Parish Meeting were:

- KSM Community Pub Project
- KSM School
- KSM Community Defibrillator Fund (2 donations)

Over £4,100.00 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.

**St Michael & All Angel’s Church PCC Report**

Alison Greenhalgh started her report by thanking the Parish Council for their recent financial contribution towards the upkeep of the Parish Burial Ground. She pointed out that the Church’s finance were fragile and they faced rising costs and falling income. People might not be aware that they receive no funding from the National Church or Government, so all the running, admin, Clergy, building maintenance and repair costs for the beautiful 800 year old Grade 2\* village Church needs to be covered by the congregation, grants and fundraising.

They were extremely grateful for the brilliant supporters who organised the recent progressive supper and everyone who hosted and bought tickets raising funds towards the repairs of the Porch. They had an extensive list of repairs from their Quinquennial inspection to work through, and if there was anyone attending or in the village who would like to help out with grant applications, they would love to hear from them.

They are very keen for the Church to be part of the community and enjoyed by everyone, so they are open every day, and have a lunch group on a Mondays, averaging about 20 attending. There were a number of events lined up with Paul Barnbrugh doing 2 organ recitals in the Summer, teddy parachuting in September and they had received a grant to hold a patronal; evensong with a choir at Michaelmas followed by a Reception, so they are hoping to have a celebration of the Church and village life that day. They were very pleased with the response to their community Christmas trees last year and will be building on that this year.

Their link with the School is strong with end of term Church services, a high spot and they will be holding their Annual Good Friday All Together at Easter services in the School next week. They are an ageing congregation and would love to have some younger people and families get involved.

They had been very grateful for the work of the unpaid work team who come fortnightly to work on the Churchyard and have done an excellent job tidying and maintaining the Churchyard, particularly the new grave area. They had had some very positive feedback from people coming to visit the graves of loved ones. They are very grateful for their mowing volunteers who each have a patch to look after, along with their cleaning and flower teams, bell ringers and others who support them practically and financially. The Church could not survive without the support of the village.

They are conscious of their responsibility to act as good stewards and so are working on developing a "living Churchyard plan" to increase plant, bird and animal diversity in the Churchyard. They also have a collecting box to recycle batteries, ink cartridges and medicine packs and are having an energy audit completed this month to enable them to access £10,000.00 towards more effective and sustainable heating.

They had an average congregation of around 15-20 and 3 services a month. Everyone is always welcome to join them. St Michael & All Angels is there for the whole village. If anyone had any suggestions for things they could do or would like to get involved please get in touch with her or any of the PCC. She closed by reminding all that their Annual Vestry Meeting to elect Churchwardens and Annual Church Meeting will be held in the Church at 7.00pm on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

There were no further Reports received.

#### **MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:**

Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman reported and commented that this was his 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Report and that this has been a year of change and challenges not least because of the changes brought about by a change in Government at the General Election in July 2025. It was interesting to note the changes there had been over those 16 years.

The immediate impact of the change in Government to Wiltshire Council is the exponential proposed increase in housing targets. Wiltshire Council had secured a 4 Year Housing Land Supply over which he had personally engaged with the last Central Government, and that was a target Wiltshire Council had met. Due to recalculation of that figure however, by the Government, a recalculation he believed to be incorrect that figure was now stated to be 2.08 years. It was looking increasingly likely that the sheer numbers of housing units to be delivered would be significantly increased. He was hopeful that the Local Plan, yet to be ratified will provide some protection against this. The issue he had with this was that Wiltshire Council had issued planning consents for over 19,000 properties, which the developers had failed to deliver, preferring to 'land bank' rather than build.

There was also increasing pressure to deliver Solar Farms, and the north of the County particularly falls prey to this. Whilst accepting the need for renewable energy, there has to be a balance too with the need for food security, and the current proposal for Lime Down, which will have an impact on 2000 acres in close proximity to the Kington Division with a further 2000 acres being affected just outside of Melksham. He had spoken against this at a recent meeting in

Malmesbury Town Hall and will continue to lobby against it.

An additional pressure locally is that of the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Wiltshire, and north Wiltshire particularly due to the M4, is a particular target for the G&T community and we had a responsibility to accommodate them. However, we had also been subject to a large number of un-authorized pitches, which have as yet crept in under the radar and which he believed should be added into the number the Government require Wiltshire Council to deliver if they are policy compliant. As such he was actively resisting 'new' pitches that have been identified in unsuitable locations and will continue to do so.

The Community Community Area Parish Forum he Chairs, continued to go from strength to strength and the most recent Meeting was attended by the Wiltshire Chief Constable, who found the Meeting very invaluable. This gives the sixteen Parishes in the Chippenham Community Area an opportunity to meet in a venue, typically a Village Hall, kindly hosted by the Parishes in turn and discuss issues such as speeding which they may have in common and to share experiences and intelligence. The Neighbourhood Police Team was regular attendees too and equally finds the Forum very useful.

Wiltshire Council finances continued to be strong and are certainly better placed than most surrounding Authorities. For the 2025/26 financial year the revenue budget would be £527m against the £490m for the last financial year. Although the Government had increased social care funding by £4.8m, increases in National Insurance contributions have resulted in costs of £8m. However, unlike many authorities Wiltshire Council had contained the Council Tax increase to just 4.5%, (2.5% basic Council Tax plus 2.0% Adult Social Care Levy), against the 4.99% that was allowed by the Government. This would see an increase of £1.56 per week for those in a Band D property.

The most significant areas of spend outlined in the proposals were;

- Adult Services - £194m
- Families and Children - £75m
- Highways and Transport - £43.4m
- Highway potholes etc - £22m
- Environment (including waste) - £49.5m and
- Education and skills - £38m.

In closing, Howard gave his thanks to all Parish Councils for the hard work they do on behalf of their Parishes, and for making his job so much easier than it might otherwise be. He was standing again in the Local Government Elections on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 and hoped to be able to continue to work for all.

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

## **MIN 8. Kington St Michael Neighbourhood Plan:**

Steve Woodhead reported on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on progress made over the last 12 months, assisted by Place Studio their consultants. He reminded all of the sad loss of John Hall who had been a fountain of knowledge.

Although the Draft Plan was in a good place the Group had had to focus on the need to overcome the difficult issue of the allocated housing target for the large village status in the Wiltshire Local Plan and following a call for sites seven had come forward and these were now being assessed against a set criteria. As a result of the General Election the new Government had different priorities and a review of the NPPF was awaited that may alter previous requirements.

He pointed out that the problem now was that a situation could arise where developer-led speculative developments could be proposed, and so there was a need to move as quickly as possible to the Regulation 14 Plan Stage so that there might be some teeth to local decision making. However, his worry was that the “tilted balance” may come into play on many planning applications.

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

- a) **Recreation Ground Facilities** – Cllr Gerry Gamble provided a brief update advising that the QE2 Field Group continued to raise funds and that as mentioned earlier some projects had been completed. Attention was now turning to the possibility of an equipment storage facility this coming year.
- b) **CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2025** – There was no interest shown and the Parish Council would not enter.
- c) **Tor Hill Footpath Project** – As reported at the last APM the Council had decided not to pursue this further until after the Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in case there was another mechanism to achieve the footpath.
- d) **Community Safety/Neighbourhood Watch/Emergency Plan** – There remained a requirement for volunteers to come forward and in the interim the Council’s database is circulating information received from the Police Community Messaging, Neighbourhood Watch and the like. The database remained open to everyone to join. The Council’s Lead Member, Cllr Fiona Twisse, on the Emergency Plan had advised that although she continued to work on the Plan there was still a requirement for community volunteer’s involvement. In reality there had been no progress since the last APM.
- e) **Traffic Speeds – the provision of Autospeedwatch Tools and Speed Identification Device (SID)** – The Council had now purchased two ElanCity Evolis Vision Radar speed devices.
- f) **Community Speedwatch – the Speedwatch Team volunteers** – There had been no change in circumstances since the last APM as LHFIFG had advised that another survey would not be carried out until data was available from the Council’s SIDs. In the meantime it was hoped that the SID data would identify the need for a reduction in the speed limit.
- g) **Great British Spring Clean 2025** – It was understood that volunteers would be organising this year’s litter pick.
- h) **Village Green and other Assets** – There had been a suggestion that the Parish Council should invest further in Village Green improvements. The attendees felt that as the Council had already taken over the grass cutting previously done by volunteers this was sufficient and no further Public money should be spent.
- i) **Rights of Way/Footpath Maintenance/Community Warden** – There remained a need for volunteers to come forward to take roles. The Council’s Lead Member, Cllr Steve Woodhead, had commenced a comprehensive review of the existing conditions following the request from Wiltshire Rights of Way to improve the network.
- j) **Village Communications** – In addition to the hard copy Village Newsletters hand delivered, news was available on the [www.kingtonstmichael.com](http://www.kingtonstmichael.com) community website and Council information on the [www.kingtonstmichaelparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.kingtonstmichaelparishcouncil.gov.uk) website. The Council also circulated Community Messaging and Wiltshire News via their GDPR controlled database that all were invited to join.
- k) **Asset of Community Value – The Jolly Huntsman** – The work of the Community Buyout Group had progressed throughout the year and had been summarised in the Chair’s Report earlier. The Core Group would require continuing community support to assist them in their endeavours during the next year.

- l) **Parish Council Elections 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025** – It was understood 8 Parishioners had decided to stand for election to the Parish Council, which would mean that there would be no election as authority would be given for the new Council to co-opt someone to fill the remaining place. Anyone interested should contact the Council Clerk.

**CLOSURE OF MEETING:**

The Meeting Chair thanked all those who had provided Reports and who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting 2025.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: