**KEMPLEY VILLAGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**CHAIRMANS OPENING REMARKS**

**BY MARTIN BROCKLEHURST**

**Chairman Kempley Parish Council**

**30 MAY 2019**

**Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II.**

**“The next few years are probably the most important in our history”**

**The Climate Change Emergency – we need to recognising that we need to move at speed and engage people to be part of the solution**

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**”There’s climate change and people don’t talk about it much. Like, we’re just pretending it won’t happen, and we need to change that,”  15 year old.**

**”I just hope we have more time to actually live on this earth, rather than it being destroyed.” 13 year old.**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

**Firstly** may I say what an honour it is to be asked to serve as the Chairman of your Parish Council.

**Secondly** can I thank those that have gone before and put on record my thanks to those villagers who over many years have served this Parish Council. I would particularly like to put on record thanks to some of our longest serving Parish Councillors who have now stood down including:

Liz Daykin and Neil Dransfield; and our past Chairs

Simon Hanes and Glyn Bennett.

I would also like to thank all our past recent Councillors for ensuring the Council could be handed over to a complete set of new Parish Councillors in such a healthy state and with such an enthusiastic Parish Clerk in Arin Spencer.

Looking forward you have a complete new set of Councillors. They include, in addition to myself:

David Lewis;

Tom Jackson;

John Birt; and

David Spencer.

You will note we still have two vacancies. We are particularly looking for volunteers from the farming community and to balance the current councillors we would ideally like two women volunteers. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer and serve your community.

1. **Volunteering**

Although we are a small village we punch well above our weight. This is only because so many of you volunteer to make things happen in Kempley.

It is difficult to pick out individuals as so many people give their time freely. But the impact you all make is enormous and is noted by many who live outside Kempley. Tonight I want to give our warmest congratulations to the Kempley Produce Market who on its tenth anniversary are the winners of the Prince of Wales Award at the Royal Bath & Wells West Show. The Award is given to schemes where there has been a genuine attempt to move forward in a resourceful and inventive way to the benefit of a rural community. It is fitting that such energetic volunteers should receive such important recognition for their work.

1. **The Kempley Parish Council**

As the new Parish Chair I am looking forward to the year ahead. We may be very small and with a limited budget but I am determined we will do our utmost to not only deliver all our legal functions but that we will also place the Parish Council at the centre of delivering the **Kempley Community Led Plan.**

Our community led plan identified that the village has seen a 30 year decline in the services provided. This is now compounded by 8 years of severe cuts to Local Authority spending which impact every aspect of the public serves we receive. I cannot remember in over 60 years a period when Local Government and indeed all public services have been under such severe financial pressure from Government cutbacks. I hope that the KPC can be at the heart of the search for solutions to some of these issues. The first relates to the major deterioration in the condition of the road network around Kempley. Within the village we have been protected by the installation of an experimental micro–asphalt surface designed to extend the life of our roads by 10 years. That surface is now failing and it will be a major challenge to encourage the Highways Authority to ensure roads in the Parish do not deteriorate as they have done in neighbouring areas.

We also face two other major threats. We are recognising a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency. This is now recognised by the UK Government and by the Forest of Dean District Council. It is very easy to say we can do nothing to drive change but this is not the case.

We can move to a carbon free economy in the way we heat and cool our homes and in the way we gain mobility. It is my hope the Council can help with local schemes that will enable us all to make a contribution to a zero carbon Kempley and in the process save money and that we can maintain the beautiful countryside that is now so important to the protection of our local wildlife.

Two examples to finish with that give a hint at the way forward. Firstly solar energy which some in the village have adopted. The cost of solar panels has fallen by 90% in the last decade and within the next 2 years their efficiency at producing energy is set to double from15-19% to between 37-39%. The second is the switch to electric vehicles. We already see cost savings of 5% over a three year period for the cost of buying and running electric vehicles and an 80% fall in maintenance costs. We now have more recharging stations for electric vehicles than we have conventional garages and the distance these vehicles can travel is well over 200 miles between charges.

I hope the KPC can help and guide the villager in showcasing what the best options for our future might be with these and other new technologies.

But enough of my views let me hand over to Bob so that we can engage and understand your views and ideas and learn about the hopes and aspirations for everyone in our village.

**Martin Brocklehurst**

**Kempley Broadband Group**