

MINUTES OF THE KEMPLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on 31 July 2021 at 7:30pm in Kempley Village Hall

Present: Chairman Martin Brocklehurst, Cllr Tom Jackson, Cllr Stafford Cruse

In attendance: GCC Cllr Gill Moseley, Arin Spencer (Clerk), Howell Rees (FoKC), Naomi Cryer (KVHT), Liz Daykin (Kempley Walking Group), and 17 parishioners

1. **Introduction and Welcome by Chairman Martin Brocklehurst** (Chairman's report appended)

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Kevin and Jenne Goulding, Jon and Katie Osmond, and Paul and Anne Underwood.

3. **To approve the minutes of the annual parish meeting held on 30 May 2019**

Minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting were approved and signed.

Proposed by Howell Rees, seconded by Liz Daykin.

4. **Gigaclear – update on rollout**

Gigaclear could not attend the meeting so Cllr Martin Brocklehurst gave a brief report on progress to date:

The core broadband service to the main village (down copper cables) is currently around 0.5mbps download speed, at which a film will take about 25 hours to download.

Airband is available to several businesses in the village but requires line of sight to the aerial on Chibblers Hill, this offers speeds of between 20 – 40mbps.

Airband has also installed fibre optic cables direct to the premises in the north of the village. This was achieved through EU funding to a consortium of businesses and has allowed residential properties on the route to also benefit. Speeds of 150 – 250mbps are being achieved. These are properties which would not have been covered by Gigaclear.

Airband is not allowed to come through the main village because there is a contract with Gigaclear to do this.

The Gigaclear rollout will bring fibre optic up to the premises (rather than to the nearest cabinet). Gigaclear are scheduled to bring the service in Q3 2021 but have not yet started. They have, however, completed a design and started sending out letters to landowners regarding wayleaves.

When they get started, the cable will be trenched down the road using a 'slit trench' and will bring fibre optic cable to every house in the village. Nobody will be missed. Residents can then decide whether to take the connection or not.

Like water, it is a trunk main coming in but any service provider can sell you the connection. However, as Kempley is a small village, fewer companies may be interested. The final connection is what residents pay for. Though it is likely Gigaclear will just lay the cables to connect properties as part of the deal.

Estimated start time is now end September 2021 but it is more likely to be Q4 2021. Realistically connections will probably go in during summer 2022.

Gigaclear is proposing a community meeting in September. If that goes ahead it will be an opportunity to ask questions about the rollout, schemes offered, packages, costs, etc.

In the meantime, some other options are:

Service Provider	Speeds	Cost	Requirements
Airband	20 – 40mbps		Line of sight to the aerial on Chibblers Hill.
EE 4G	40 – 80mbps (slows down at peak times)		Line of sight to one of the transmitters.
Starlink (Elon Musk)		£400 connection then £90/month	

Question:

Aren't Gigaclear renegeing on their contract with the constant delays? What are the consequences of that for Gigaclear?

Answer:

They lost the contract in Somerset and Devon but if Gloucestershire was to cancel the contract there would be contractual implications, likely litigation from Gigaclear, and the contract would have to go out to tender again all of which would take a lot of time.

It was noted that some of the delay has been caused by Gigaclear negotiating with landowners over wayleaves. It was suggested that we could all help each other by cooperating and allowing the rollout to go ahead. Residents were cautioned, however, to ensure they get what they would like in terms of reinstatement written into their wayleave contracts.

Bob Earll took this opportunity to thank Martin Brocklehurst for persisting over the last 8 years on this important issue where most would have given up.

5. To receive reports from County / District Councillors and Gloucester Constabulary (if available)

GCC Cllr Gill Mosely (Newent Division) gave the following report:

There are ten parishes in Newent Division with Newent being the biggest, followed by Dymock, Redmarley with Kempley next in terms of population. Gloucester County Council is currently made up of 28 conservatives, 16 Liberal Democrats, 4 Greens, 5 Labour, and no independents. So it is quite a finely balanced group with the ruling majority forming a cabinet, with some of the Chair and Vice-Chair roles given to the opposition parties. Non Conservative members also get involved through membership of Scrutiny Committees which provide input to the Cabinet. Glos has more scrutiny committees than most county councils.

Gill has been appointed to the Environment Committee, the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee.

Keeping in touch with the electorate is a priority of Gill and her fellow Liberal Democrat Councillors. Although the division is large with 4500 households, Gill will try to attend as many parish council meetings as possible, also community events.

Question:

It seems incomprehensible why highways is filling part of a hole instead of the whole of the hole, there is a lack of joined up thinking.

Answer:

This has been raised several times but it *"takes a long time to stop the ship and turn it round"*. The way Highways works is entrenched and is overdue change. Gill aspires to having a crew that is local to the area, proud of what it does and has some initiative to do more than just the job given. Gill and her group is trying to change working practices in this direction.

Cllr Brocklehurst added that GCC Highways is £80m short of what they need just to fix the pot-holes. The more people that get engaged to document the problems and drive change, the more likely we are to get success.

This problem was highlighted to the Highways area manager two years ago but nothing was done and now we are seeing the consequences. The system is short of money and therefore priority is given to A and B roads, rather than to the C roads running through Kempley.

Dymock Parish brought a motion to introduce 20mph speed limits. The Stockholm Declaration: item 11 is a global initiative to create an acceptance that communities need to register their wish to have 20mph restrictions within their local authority. GCC is part way to signing up to the Stockholm Declaration and following the Dymock proposal, this was taken forward to the first full Council meeting where it was accepted in principle but deferred to the Scrutiny Committee who will be looking at it in detail in September. Hopefully it will be accepted by Cabinet in due course.

6. To receive reports from local community groups.

6.1. Friends of Kempley Churches – Howell Rees (report)

A talk on social and religious histories is to take place in August with a history society from Fownhope.

A history event for locals will be advertised – a walk and talk between the two churches starting at St Ed's, to St Marys and back to village hall for tea and cake.

Appeal for donations towards maintaining and improving the frescoes in St Marys. This appeal is much wider than the local area as St Mary's importance is deemed to be in the top four of properties managed by English Heritage. Anyone who has visited recently will note the chancel has been closed off for the work to be carried out on the frescoes, currently there are bits flaking off and they need to be protected. Also English Heritage are going to take away the parish chest in the tower for woodworm treatment, this problem is also in the organ and some of the pews.

The Friends of Kempley Churches was set up initially to tackle such problems and has fought to maintain the interior of the building rather than it becoming just a shell.

Robin Bennion was welcomed as a trustee.

6.2. Kempley Walking Group – Liz Daykin (report)

6.3. Dymock Forest Rural Action – DyFRA (report)

6.4. Kempley Village Hall Trust – Naomi Cryer (report)

7. Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman, Kempley Parish Council and a Statement on the Parish Council accounts for Year ending 31 March 2021 by the Lead member for finance, Stafford Cruse.

Cllr Martin Brocklehurst – report.

Cllr Stafford Cruse – brief report.

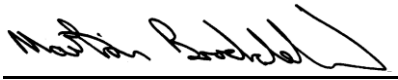
8. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest.

Bob Earl – plan for volunteers to have conversations with people about climate change and what people are doing to remedy it. This is proving to be very insightful with a remarkable amount going on in Kempley already. The hope is to find out who is doing what with a view of helping people do

more.

Naomi Cryer – Concern raised about cyclists and speed they come through village. There have been some near misses of pedestrians with cyclists. Also concern that there will be a nasty accident on the blind bends.

There is a new hospital being built in Cinderford to open Summer 2023. There is a website inviting people to have their say in the design of it. There will be new services there that don't exist in the FoD at the moment. Dilke and Lydney Hospitals will subsequently close.



Signed (Chairman)

7th June 2022 _____

Date

KEMPLEY VILLAGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

CHAIRMANS OPENING REMARKS

BY MARTIN BROCKLEHURST

Chairman Kempley Parish Council

31 July 2021

INTRODUCTION

I could not have known what was about to hit us all in May 2019 when we last had a Parish Meeting. COVID-19, like a tsunami, wrecked all our plans and put huge pressure on everyone in our community.

But your Parish was prepared thanks to the work of Louise Earll a former Parish Cllr and a group of volunteers who had put together an emergency plan for the village that envisaged just such an event.

The Council activated this plan as soon as the scale of the emergency was clear. We added to it with two community wide mobile phone Whats App groups, and Mailchimp newsletters as we all moved on-line and became experts in Zoom meetings. With no medical facilities, shops, pubs or restaurants in the Parish and at a time when hypermarket supply chains were strained, we secured local food delivery systems for the Parish. We worked with food suppliers such as the Mid-Shires Co-operative, Forest Bake House, Little Marcle Farm Shop the Newent Friday Market and others to ensure everyone in the Parish had access to services for fresh food and publicised how everyone could take advantage. We also set up prescription collection services until a time when the Newent Practise commenced home delivery.

The WhatsApp groups were an immediate success. The first designed to connect members of the community in need of assistance and to share important information. The second to keep the community connected and to provide encouragement and support to maintain moral through difficult times. We followed this up with an internet ZOOM community platform to allow the Parish Council, the Emergency response group and other community groups to meet on-line free of charge. Virtual Book Cubs, Coffee Mornings, Quiz Events and other social activities used this platform.

In 2020 we also lightened the gloom of a COVID-Winter and for the first time arranged for a village Christmas Tree and carols on the green, a real community event in the depths of the pandemic. So many people made this possible, but I particularly want to thank former Councillor Ricky Goodwin who took on the role of sorting out the logistics and arranged power and lighting for the Christmas Tree which we hope will be a permanent feature for our community

Our community worked together, people volunteered, Parish Councillors supported you our community and Arin Spencer our Clerk went far beyond anything we could have expected so that we pulled through the worst of the pandemic . What we did was admired and copied by others and included in a UK wide National Association of Local Councils (NALC) series of best practice case studies. Who would have thought Kempley would be showing others how to weather the storm of covid-19.

1. Other Issues

But the two years since we last met has not just been about the pandemic. You Council followed through on the other issues we raised with you in May 2019.

Highways

Your Council predicted in 2019 that public spending cuts would place our highway network at risk. We argued that the experimental micro-asphalt surface installed in Kempley had reached the end of its economic life. We said then that the surface was failing and that it would be a major challenge to encourage the Highways Authority to re-invest in our roads. We have been relentless in our efforts to get the County Council to recognise this problem and spend money in Kempley. We are making progress but we still need your help to increase the pressure on the Highway Authority to repair and re-install sections of the micro asphalt surface in our Parish. Further details on our campaign will follow on our website.

Broadband

We still do not have superfast broadband for all our village, years after it was promised. But it is coming and we continue to liaise with Fastershire & Gigaclear over the details of installation. The plans are complete, wayleaves are being negotiated and community meetings are expected in September when full details will be unveiled and yes we might just get the system operational over the winter of 2021/22.

But we have not just waited for Gigaclear. We secured over £100,000 of investment for the Kempley Combined Solution from both European Union and UK sources. Using this funding Airband have installed superfast fibre optic broadband to the remotest parts of Kempley near to St Mary's, originally excluded from the Gigaclear role out. This investment coupled with the earlier wireless broadband services for small businesses operating in Kempley has been worth over a quarter of a million pounds value to our community. We stand out as a Parish prepared to find solutions to problems of living in a remote rural area.

Climate Change

Whilst the pandemic raged Climate Change has not gone away, nor has the biodiversity emergency. We have just experienced the highest ever temperatures in the UK with a heat dome over northern Europe to match the one that recently affected the North-West Coast of the USA. With rain bomb storms causing devastation in China, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium we need to play our part in reducing carbon emissions and putting in place measures to reduce the local impact of our changing weather patterns. As a Parish Council we can mitigate the impact of climate change on our daily lives and we can reduce our carbon footprint and save hard earned cash. We have put our plans in place, identified our local carbon footprint and we are now clear where local reductions are required. We are working with Town and Parish Councils across the Forest of Dean to support the Forest of Dean District Council to achieve massive carbon reductions in all our communities. We have also supported successful bids to the European Union Horizon Europe research fund for a project "Achieving a new European Energy Awareness (AURORA)". This project will bring over half a million euros into the Forest of Dean to provide support for efforts to reduce carbon emissions and usher in a new fossil fuel free era for our community. The Forest of Dean District Council are the only Local Authority in the UK to take part in this research project which is 100% funded by the EU and they are only engaged through the activities of local volunteers in Kempley and the leadership of key individuals on the District Council. Details on this 3.5 years scheme, which starts in December 2021 will follow on the Parish Council website.

Conclusion

I am immensely proud of the work that the Parish Council has undertaken since May 2019 and I want to put on record my thanks to the current Councillors still serving you:

Tom Jackson; and

Stafford Cruse.

I would also like to thank David Lewis, John Birt, David Spencer and Ricky Goodwin who also served and have since stood down.

The pressure on Councillors during this two-year period and on our Clerk have been immense and I owe them all a huge vote of thanks. The work they have done illustrates why our Parish Council matters, how it can and does support you our community through difficult times and why we need volunteers to serve this community. Organisations listen to your Parish Council, they allow a small village to have a voice and influence events and outcomes that affect all our lives.

But today we are short of 4 Parish Councillors and urgently need people to step forward. We are starting an appeal and will leaflet everyone in the village for volunteers willing to join the Council so that we can build on the reputation we have established during the pandemic. So please step forward and take part, let Arin Spencer know you are interested and we will co-opt you onto the Council.

You have now heard enough from me and it is time we heard your thoughts on what you see as priorities for the year ahead.

Martin Brocklehurst

Chair Kempley Parish Council

31st July 2021