

## Responsible Financial Officer's Report

End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter financial summary:

Bank account balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022: **£12,782.42**

Financial commitments before ends of Financial Year (figures are approximate):

-	BBF reserves for road signage:	£4,000
-	Staff salaries & expenses:	£1,800
-	PROW Kissing Gates:	£1,250
-	GAPTC Internal audit	£177
-	Defib pads (Village Green)	£100
-	Defib pads (Village Hall)	£100
-	Maintenance contract	£660
-	Village Hall hire	£170
-	Christmas tree	<u>£250</u>

Projected end of year balance: **£4,300**

Council should aim to hold a sum approximately equivalent to the annual precept in reserve, any further discretionary spend is therefore strongly advised against.

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## Clerks Report – September 2022

- Operation London Bridge refers to preparations in place for the death of Queen Elizabeth which sadly have now been enacted. In Kempley this required specific actions for Flag flying, website appearance and scheduling of meetings.
  - Thanks go to all those involved regarding the flag on the Village Green observing protocol for both the late Queen and new King's proclamation.
  - Whilst there was some conflicting legal advice, meetings must be correctly advertised for any business to be legally transacted and the PCM scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> was therefore delayed.
  - The Church provided a book of condolence and links to the online book were placed on the website.
  - Most small Parishes were not anticipated to read the King's proclamation. This was posted online, on the noticeboard and via WhatsApp
  - Councillors are recommended to consider plans for the upcoming coronation event
- The Parish Council's website provider report has regularly shown failed log-in attempts by persons unknown, these hacking attempts were particularly frequent on 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of August. The clerk has discussed this with Ionos who are going to update the website to maximise its security.
- The Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Team at GCC have sought information on use of the Build Back Better Fund Grant for re-establishing the Daffodil Weekend. In response, the report produced by Arin Spencer has been shared along with relevant minutes from the May and July Parish Council meetings, making it clear that the road signage issue remains outstanding with part of the grant held in reserve to fund these. The EEI Team have come back to say: *"Many thanks for your comprehensive and helpful response to my request. I look forward to hearing from you when you have resolved matters over the signage costs with your contact within GCC Highways"*
- A request has been made for the area around the Centenary Stone to be mowed earlier in the season as this year it was felt to look untidy and disrespectful to the memory of the 9 Sons of Kempley. The report from 2020 following a public consultation exercise has been reviewed and shared, along with the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st September 2020 which read as follows:

#### Item 56 - Village Green Maintenance

- Resolved (*nem con*) that the village green continue to be managed as a formal public open space suitable for community events and that the current mowing regime be maintained.
- Resolved (*nem con*) that permission be granted for wild daffodils to be introduced by volunteers in a 30cm band directly around the Centenary Stone and Bus Shelter and along the northern boundary of the village green (post the installation of Gigaclear fibre optic cables in autumn 2021) and that such areas be left uncut until end July to encourage their establishment.

The maintenance protocol has been discussed with the Council's contractor who unfortunately gets lobbied by residents both for and against the current regime when he attends to carry out his work. It appears that this year, a larger area than a 30cm strip was left uncut until August, which is in accordance with the plan suggested by DyFRA (see area B in Fig 2. Of the 2020 report).

It appears that confusion has arisen; this alternative plan was proposed but there is no record in minutes of it being adopted. It would therefore be helpful to clarify precisely what is expected of the contractor, so this confusion is not repeated next year, a resolution to confirm Council's position has therefore been added to the September meeting agenda.

The maintenance of road verges has also been raised as an issue. The Parish Council's existing contractor does not get involved with this and does not have access to the necessary equipment. He believes that Mssrs. Langstone may carry out some work on behalf of GCC. A parishioner has volunteered to maintain the verge running from Wantridge to the Village Hall. Council will need to consider any changes it wishes to make considering its obligations to GCC and the current financial climate, this has therefore also been added to the September Meetings agenda for further discussion.

- The FoDDC Local Plan 2041 has now been published and is available on their website. The public consultation went live on 1<sup>st</sup> August and runs to 26<sup>th</sup> September. Information has been added to the Parish Council's website and Mail Chimp and WhatsApp communications went out to subscribing parishioners.
- A reminder that Parish Council Elections are due to take place in May 2023.
- Under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, the organisation known as: Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities. SAAA set the terms of appointment for the Limited Assurance Reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms. The next 5-year appointing period runs from 2022-23 until 2026-27 and SAAA has undertaken a procurement process to appoint the external auditors to each County area from 1 April 2022. KPC has been advised that it has the option to opt out of this centralised process and appoint its own external auditor for the next 5-year period should it wish to do so. This would be complicated and costly, so there is no plan for KPC to opt out unless Councillors expressly wish to do so. A resolution to remain opted-in has been added to the September meeting agenda.
- The book: **Local Council Administration** by Arnold-Baker will be issued in an updated version after November 2022, this is why SLCC are currently not holding any stock. Purchase of this will be deferred until the new financial year and a provision made for it when budget setting.
- Councillors are reminded of the key outcomes identified at the Annual Parish Meeting, shown below:
  - Actively collaborate more across the village groups to increase cohesiveness (*The Officer Responsibility Policy has been updated with a named councillor now linked to KVHT and Parochial Church Council*)
  - Lobby for road repairs
  - Protect local services such as milk, paper, food deliveries. (*The milk round has apparently been 'bought' by a new operator*)
  - Use of St Edward's Church (*As 6.1. Rev Mephram has agreed to attend November PC meeting*)

- Refresh the Community-Led Plan 2017 to reflect the impact of the Covid pandemic.
- Condition of Bethel Baptist Church
- Intensity of heavy farm traffic.
- Community Schemes to reduce Utility Bills
- A noticeboard for the 'top end' of the village.
- Volunteers to regularly check Fishpool and Village Hall defibrillators.

#### Review of Outstanding Actions:

Actions from Ordinary Meeting 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2022		Date Set	Status
Clerk to invite DyFRA to offer their guidance and advice for the September meeting and to seek confirmation from the County Highways that the agreement and all its obligations on the Parish Council are still current.		18/07/22	Needs further discussion
Clerk to add Gill Mosely to the Kempley Keep in Touch WhatsApp group		18/07/22	Done
Clerk to write to The Friends of Kempley Churches about managing the Centenary Stone and if the suggestion is received favourably, to draft a contract for approval at the September meeting.		18/07/22	Done N/A
Clerk to share the original BBF Grant application with Chris Bligh.		18/07/22	Done
Clerk to report open inspection hatch outside Parkfields Cottages to the police as a safety issue.		18/07/22	Done
Clerk to alert parishioners via website, email (Mail Chimp) and WhatsApp when the <i>Local Plan 2041</i> public consultation goes live.		18/07/22	Done 04/08/22
Clerk to link with the Facebook <i>Kempley Noticeboard</i> 'admins' if it is felt appropriate to promote events via Facebook		18/07/22	Done
Clerk to arrange environmentally friendly and GDPR compliant disposal of the old laptop.		18/07/22	To be arranged
Clerk to write to Kempley Village Hall Trust and the Parochial Church Council to advise them that Cllr Howson will be their primary link to the Parish Council.		18/07/22	Done
Clerk to confirm re-appointment of Elizabeth Pindar Charity Trustees with the Charity's correspondent.		18/07/22	Done
Prior Actions still outstanding		Date Set	Status
Internal Audit	Add website accessibility statement Update ROI and Cllrs on website Check PCs position with Pensions regulator Locate Grant Policy and put on website Asset Register <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include: dates last inspected</li> <li>• Defibs - Regime of inspection &amp; where report held (Webnos)</li> <li>• Do Cllrs inspect assets?</li> </ul>	15/05/22	Ongoing
Open discussions with CSE and FODDC on a standard system that can be used to record carbon reduction works undertaken in Kempley as part of the FOD Aurora pilot.		21/03/22	No capacity currently
Use Parish Online software to record the location of existing and new carbon reduction initiatives identified through planning applications		21/03/22	No capacity currently
Facilitate a seminar in the village hall on ground source heat pumps and the Government's grant scheme.		21/03/22	No capacity currently