

Clerk's report (March 2023)

Countdown has begun to the Kempley Parish Council and Forest of Dean District Council **elections on 4th May 2023**.

- **Nomination papers** are now available and have already been distributed to existing councillors.
- The **Notice of Election** and **Notice of Poll** will be displayed by the clerk within the electoral area in accordance with the election timetable.
- The Returning Officer must publish a **Statement of Persons Nominated** by Wednesday 5th April.
- Should there be insufficient candidates to fill all vacant seats, the election will be deemed **uncontested** and candidates advised by the Returning Officer that they have been elected to serve. A Notice giving the names of all those elected will be sent to the clerk.
- Councillors take up office on the fourth day after the election day, due to the bank holiday this will be **Tuesday 9th May 2023**.
- The Parish Council, provided there is a quorum of members elected, may then **co-opt members to fill any remaining vacant seats**.

The elections may necessitate additional hours and travel which the clerk will keep a record of and if necessary, request the payment of overtime charged to the elections earmarked reserve (Agenda item #180).

Four of the new **parish boundary road signs** were installed on 14th February in time for the 2023 Daffodil Weekend. At the time of writing, the clerk has received no formal feedback on these however there were comments made on social media both positive and negative. The signs are fixed to existing poles, a further 3 (or 4) sites need either new poles due to damage/rusting or to be re-sighted. (Agenda item #173)

Statements have been released to the press ahead of the Daffodil Weekend regarding the installation of kissing gates on the Daffodil Way and on the installation of the parish boundary road signs. The BBC have confirmed reported attendance at/prior to the Daffodil Weekend. Photographs of the kissing gates have been requested and shared with The Forester newspaper.

The clerk has created an email distribution list for press releases that includes the following:

- BBC - Midlands Today & Points West
- The Forester/Forest Review
- Glos Live/Gloucester Citizen
- Ledbury reporter
- Radio Gloucester
- Hereford Times
- Punchline Gloucester Business News

Amendments or additions should be notified to the clerk.

At time of writing, no requests have been received to use the Village Green for a **King Charles III Coronation** event, no road closure request has been made and no Temporary Events Notice applied for. The clerk would appreciate confirmation that these are not required.

Cllr Reynolds has been successfully added as a **signatory for the Council's bank account** and has also received online banking access. Approval of payments by CHAPS or BACS is permitted within adopted Financial Regulations (Agenda item #182).

The Council's **Risk Assessment Policy** has been updated to include a 'New Risk Assessment Template' and is included on the agenda for adoption (item #179).

Kempley Parish Council's details have been updated on the **Parish UK Network** website supported by GAPTC. Individual councillor details are not currently included. The network was recently launched to provide a consistent and recognisable framework on which to display open-source data about parishes across England and Wales. Data includes information about the Parish Council demographic, electoral results, details on education establishments, a directory of local businesses, recent planning applications, local property data, historical precept amounts, plus links to CQC and IOPC reviews.

Charlotte Vincent, **Severn Treescapes Trees and Woodland Adviser** for the north west part of Gloucestershire has advised of a new project hosted by [Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#) which looks to help farmers and landowners plant trees, hedges and small woodlands on their farms in areas not affecting farm productivity. A forerunner of the project was the *Ourboretum* project supported by BBC Gloucestershire where-by members of the public were shown how to gather local tree seed, sow and nurture them to sapling stage so that they can be planted out in the local area.

Trees supplied with stakes/canes and guards are available free to local farmers/landowners to plant up in corners, hedges and by rivers and streams. These are also available to Parishes and the public. Charlotte invites interested people to contact her by email: charlotte.vincent@gloucestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk or phone: 07464 486004 regarding potential planting sites this year and in 2024 and 2025.

Since this information was posted on the website and Kempley 'Keep in touch' WhatsApp group, Charlotte has emailed to say she has received several responses from the parish.

Noticeboard project – Build Back Better Councillors' Fund – A £950 grant for a new noticeboard has been approved and the money received. Conditions of the grant include that the project must proceed within 12 months and when complete, be evaluated. There are guidelines on promotion of activities receiving County Council funding support and the use of GCC logos for websites, posters or leaflets and/or county council quotes for any press releases.

Following the disappointing response from Herefordshire County Council regarding the use of Ledbury and Ross recycling centres, **FoDDC's Bulky Waste Collection Service** have stated that they are unable to offer a multiple site pick up or to collect more than 6 items per booking. The cost for up to 3 items is £25, the cost for 4 to 6 items is £50.

Regarding **First aid training**, the British Heart Foundation offer free online training on the use of **Automated external defibrillators** whilst one day courses with St Johns Ambulance Trainers costs in the region of £359.00+VAT per delegate or £130+ VAT for just AED training. Quotes are also available for First Aid or AED and life support training in-situ from the Red Cross. Due to significant cost, it is suggested that an appetite for such training is assessed at the Annual Parish Meeting (Agenda item #177)

Scribe Accounts offer a "**Year End Health Check**" service by their qualified accountants, which would ensure the accounts are all in order ahead of the new financial year. The cost of this would be £39+VAT. The Clerk/RFO is confident that these matters are all in order and does not think this is necessary unless Councillors are keen for the additional checks to be made.

Upcoming GAPTC Training opportunities for Councillors:

Online:

Being a Better Councillor part 1 June 1st

Being a Better Councillor part 2 June 8th

Chairmanship skills June 14th

[February Councillors' networking](#): 23th Feb 6pm on Health & Wellbeing, with a focus on food pantries and community fridges

In-person:

Being a Better Councillor part 1 & 2 full day March 25th and June 10th

Chairmanship skills, 3-hour, June 17th

Self-guided, e-learning modules £14 per person (per course for GAPTC members).

Raising the standard of civility in public life by improving the knowledge and competence of councillors and clerks. Four components:

- Standards in Public Life
- Respectful and Positive Social Media
- Personal Resilience
- Leadership in Challenging Situations

GAPTC supports the **Civility & Respect agenda** and highly recommends these courses for all members.

To book, email training@gaptc.org.uk stating: full name, position in council, email address and course name.

Review of Actions:

Actions from Ordinary Meeting 16th January 2023	Date Set	Status
Clerk to request precept from FoDDC	16/01/23	Done
Clerk to send letter of thanks and flowers to Mary Bennion for arranging Village Green Christmas Tree	16/01/23	Done
Clerk to send a picture and location map to Cllr. Moseley of dilapidated road boundary in Fishpool	16/01/23	Done
Councillors to consider possible projects for Highways Local funding	16/01/23	Ongoing
Facilitate meeting of GCC PROW officer, Windcross Walking Group and volunteers regarding footpath maintenance	16/01/23	Arranged 21/03/23
Request estimate for installation of road signs	16/01/23	Done
Investigate FoDDC bulky waste collection services	16/01/23	Done
Send letter of thanks to Mary Bennion for her work to support the Village Green Christmas Tree and send flowers.	16/01/23	Done
First Aid training availability and cost	16/01/23	Done
Actions from previous meetings still outstanding		
Defibrillators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore why defibs aren't appearing online with the Community Heartbeat Trust• Put location information in the village welcome pack (item 112)	21/11/22	Ongoing
Cllr Howson will co-ordinate a volunteer working party for installation of parish boundary road signs	26/09/22	Ongoing
Clerk to arrange environmentally friendly and GDPR compliant disposal of the old laptop.	18/07/22	To be arranged
Internal Audit - Update ROI and Cllrs details on website	15/05/22	Ongoing
Internal Audit actions: - Asset Register <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include: dates last inspected• Do Cllrs inspect assets?	15/05/22	Requires attention
Use Parish Online software to record the location of existing and new carbon reduction initiatives identified through planning applications	21/03/22	Volunteer sought