

# MINUTES OF THE KEMPLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 7:30pm in Kempley Village Hall

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Present: Chairman Martin Brocklehurst, Cllr Kim O'Rourke, Cllr Stafford Cruse, Cllr Edward Lewis

In attendance: Mark Glover (Senior Project Manager – Fastershire) – first part of meeting only  
Tim Dain (Clerk)  
22 parishioners

## 1. Introduction and Welcome by Chairman Martin Brocklehurst

## 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jenne Goulding, Ruth Newman, Ian Mitchell-Innes, Cllr Robert Howson, GCC Cllr Gill Mosely.

## 3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Minutes were approved and can be found on the Parish Council website.

## 4. Fastershire – Kempley Community Broadband Scheme

Mark Glover introduced himself as Senior Project Manager for Fastershire, a partnership between Gloucester County Council and Hereford County Council to deliver Broadband where the commercial market is failing to.

Mark informed the meeting that the Kempley Community Broadband Scheme will officially launch via a letter this week, inviting attendance at an online meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June (minimal Broadband speed required to join). Properties that have already signed up to the scheme will get an email inviting them to the same meeting.

Mark explained that as Broadband was rolled out historically, commercial operators did not invest to deliver infrastructure in unprofitable areas. Consequently Superfast broadband, i.e. connections with download speeds of at least 30 megabits per second, is not available to many rural properties and businesses - just 0.6% of customers in Herefordshire and 40% in Gloucestershire in 2011. This improved to 96% (both counties) over the next decade through public funding initiatives from central Government and the EU. Fastershire's purpose is to reach the remaining 4% through a grant scheme.

The costs of providing a rural Broadband connection averages approx. £5,000 per residential property and £20,000 per business property, directly linked to remoteness. Fastershire is identifying viable project areas where, once the network is built, Fastershire will pay individual installation costs through a grant scheme.

Kempley is covered by one such scheme but it will only proceed if there is sufficient sign up from the approx. 260 properties covered by the Kempley Project. Only 120 or so of these lie in Kempley Parish itself, with the rest neighbouring it. For the Kempley Community Broadband Scheme to progress, 75% of these 260 properties need to register interest and contractually commit to taking a service. In return they will be able to access this one-time only offer to have the infrastructure installation costs covered to their property. Contracts will be made between Fastershire and individual homeowners, who must commit to actively participate in the scheme, tell Fastershire when the infrastructure is in place and commit to taking a service for a minimum of 18 months from the end of any existing contract. Expressions of interest need to be made via the Fastershire website 'Expressions of Interest' form.

Once 75% take up is achieved, a second online meeting will trigger a 28 day procurement process. Fastershire has pre-vetted potential suppliers who will bid for the contract to install the infrastructure. The anticipated time-frame for this bidding process is from mid July 2022, at the end of which, Fastershire will make a recommendation on who is best placed to fulfil the contract and a majority decision will be required to instruct installation to begin.

Once the procurement process has started, it will not be possible for additional properties to join the scheme. If too many properties express interest but subsequently drop out, there is a risk that the cost per property will rise to a level that makes the whole scheme unviable.

This process will be explained further at the launch meeting. Also see slides at Appendix I.

**Question:** How many potential suppliers are there?

**Answer:** Four, namely Airband, Gigaclear, Full Fibre Ltd, Posisoft. All of which offer 'open access networks', i.e. multiple Internet Service Providers will be able to offer a services via the installed network.

**Question:** Is decent 'back hall' infrastructure available?

**Answer:** Yes, Airband is close by and Gigaclear also. Both are Gigabit capable (1,000 megabits per second)

**Question:** What is meant by 'Back hall'?

**Answer:** The data centres that the fibre network connects to at the other end of the line to each property.

**Question:** Are satellite solutions more cost effective?

**Answer:** Currently the market is acknowledging fixed infrastructure as the correct area for investment.

**Question:** Will Gigabit speeds be available from day one of provision?

**Answer:** No - 900 megabits maximum is currently available with an expectation that speeds will increase in future.

**Question:** What is the smallest project that has proceeded?

**Answer:** 8 residences.

**Question:** Are expressions of interest counted per property or per person?

**Answer:** Per property. So far of the 260 Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) in the Kempley Scheme, there have been 50 expressions of interest.

**Question:** Is the project area the same as that which previously failed for Gigaclear?

**Answer:** There is some overlap but the previous Gigaclear contract was for 600 UPRNs.

**Question:** How do you know if your property is included in the current project?

**Answer:** Use the address checker on the Fastershire website. This is also where expressions of interest can be made but please only one per property.

**Question:** Is the allocation of grant funding higher for businesses?

**Answer:** This scheme is for residential connections. Hereford has developed a bespoke business plan, Gloucestershire has not yet committed.

**Question:** Does 'business' include farms?

**Answer:** This is still being decided.

**Question:** What is the contractual commitment?

**Answer:** To take 18 months of Broadband service from any ISP that the installer offers. (Information can be found on the websites of the installation companies. For context, Openreach offer 6 ISPs. As the networks grow, more choice is likely to become available).

**Question:** What about new properties currently being built?

**Answer:** These cannot join the grant scheme but developers can request a quotation document from the installation companies. It's possible that they will be able to get connections set up incidentally.

**Question:** Is the connection to the property or to a box in the road?

**Answer:** To the property.

**Question:** Will future owners of property be able to join the scheme in due course?

**Answer:** No, it is a one off chance to apply for the grant now.

Discussion ensued that Superfast connections enhance the value and sale-ability of properties. Mark was thanked with an enthusiastic round of applause.

## 5. Group Discussions

Round table discussions – see Appendix I

## 6. Feedback on Group Discussions

This interactive session was used to identify key issues for the Parish Council and Kempley community to focus on:

6.1 - Actively collaborate more across the village groups to increase cohesiveness.

6.2 - Lobby for road repairs. Cllr Brocklehurst advised that the County Council has no budget to re-tarmac C class roads. The Parish Council and the community need to work together to log specific issues such as the collapsing road haunches by Parkfields (on the C class road to St Mary's Church) where a drain has been repaired but the tarmac is failing. Road repairs are contracted out so only specifically identified issues will be addressed, there is no contractual scope for the repair teams to use any initiative and fill nearby potholes not identified for action.

6.3 - Protect local services such as milk, paper, food deliveries.

- Kempley's current milkman retiring in September with no replacement.
- Two Newent newsagents: one won't deliver, the other possibly will if there's enough interest.
- Milk vending machines have been set up at some Dairy Farms (KPC to explore local views).

6.4 - St Edward's Church:

- Villagers work hard to raise funding for both St Edwards Church and the Parish Hall through the Daffodil Weekend event.
- Could the Church building be used for more village activities in ways that other churches have adopted and in the process secure its future as a centre for village events?

Cllr Brocklehurst suggested that the Parish Council take these matters up with the Parochial Church Council and the Vicar.

6.5 - Refresh the Community-Led Plan 2017 to reflect the impact of the Covid pandemic.

6.6 - Bethel Baptist Church – what happens if it falls down or unsightly scaffolding goes up?

Cllr Brocklehurst advised that the building has been sold to a private developer who has been unable to obtain the land adjacent, with Planning Permission being refused on the grounds there is no garden or parking. The developer has not therefore been able to proceed. The Parish Council has no

enforcement powers but can highlight concerns to Forest of Dean District Council and seek to facilitate a solution.

6.7 – Intensity of heavy farm traffic.

6.8 – Community Schemes to reduce Utility Bills:

- Make thermal imaging devices available to identify heat loss and improve thermal efficiency of properties. The Parish Council has a device that can be loaned out. Forest of Dean District Council also offer this.
- Investigate the availability of grants for Solar Panels, Heat Pumps etc.
- Group together to bulk purchase heating oil.

6.9 – A noticeboard for the ‘top end’ of the village.

6.10 - Bus Services and Dog fouling were not felt to be areas requiring specific focus.

6.11 - The clerk requested expressions of interest to be an Emergency Response Plan volunteer for Fishpool, also for Defib checkers. The Defibrillators need checking at least every month and there is an online logging process to ensure they are ready for use if needed. The Fishpool Defib’s pads are currently out of date however there is a national shortage and these will be replaced as soon as new pads become available. Robin Bennion volunteered to check a defibrillator.

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

Police Crime report (Appendix II)

**8. To receive reports from local community groups.**

8.1. Kempley Walking Group – Liz Daykin presented her report (Appendix III)

8.2. Dymock Forest Rural Action – DyFRA (Appendix IV) Cllr Brocklehurst encouraged everyone to read the report and commended the work done by DyFRA.

8.3. Kempley Climate Conversations – Bob Earl presented his report (Appendix V) advising that so far he’s had 6 highly informative conversations with 8 residents. There is already a wealth of local knowledge with as aspiration to hold a log of installations so local knowledge can be shared.

Cllr Brocklehurst advised that FoDDC has signed up as a Partner on the AURORA Citizen Science Climate Change Project. This brings 500,000 Euros of funding to, amongst other things, launch an app that will allow users to understand their carbon emissions, reduce them and save money. There is also potential to join a community funded investment scheme based at Lydney where solar panels on the school will being used to supply power to the Leisure Centre next door, with income back to individual investors. Further information can be found on the website: <https://www.aurora-h2020.eu/fod-home/>

**9. Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman, Kempley Parish Council**

Cllr Brocklehurst presented his report (Appendix VI)

The meeting closed at 21.05.

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Signed (Chairman)

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Date