Clerk’s report (May 2023)

Regarding **planning application** **P0399/23/TCA** for works to trees in the conservation area, information provided to the clerk was incorrect, the application relates to The Old Ann Cam School which is in Dymock Parish and not Kempley.

**Parish Council election outcome:** Three nominations were received for the seven seats to be contested on May 4th. All three candidates were therefore elected (uncontested) and there will be four vacancies when the new council forms on May 9th, these are available for co-option.

A reminder about the importance of all councillors signing **Declarations of Acceptance of Office** in accordance with section 83 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972. The clerk will bring acceptance forms to the May meeting, the clerk must keep these declaration records for 10 years on behalf of the PC.

**District Council elections:** at the time of writing, there are two candidates standing to represent Dymock Ward, Forest of Dean District Council. Notices were posted in accordance with elections protocol for the poll on 4th May.

The clerk acting as Responsible Financial Officer submitted a **VAT126 claim** on 17th April 2023 in accordance with the rules for organisations not registered for VAT. Such a claim has not been made on behalf of the Parish Council for the last three years with a total sum of £901.44 claimable. The RFO needed to go back three years for relevant information requiring the electronic accounts to be re-opened and some information (invoice dates) to be added, this took 5 hours to complete, these additional hours are requested as overtime. The refund was received in full on 24th April.

A press release regarding the new ‘**Welcome to Kempley’ road signs** was sent to the usual circulation list. This was delayed until after the Daffodil Weekend as GCC Highways and GCC Comms Team approval was required. Punchline put out an article on 19th April. A fifth **parish boundary road sign** was installed on the existing pole near St. Mary’s Church on 30th March.

The clerk has written to Jeff Manns Garden Services confirming continuation of their contract to maintain the **Village Green**. To avoid any confusion and in accordance with minute 95 of the September 2022 meeting, the following paragraph is included as a written instruction:

*“a 30cm band directly around the Centenary Stone, bus shelter and along the northern boundary of the green will be left uncut until seeds have set if wild daffodils are present. All remaining areas will be cut and kept tidy throughout the year”.*

Regarding **Automated External Defibrillators** and their appearing in online searches, having checked with Webnos, who administer the Kempley Defibs on behalf of the village, and the Community Heartbeat Trust, registration with SWAST is as it currently should be. ‘The Circuit’ website is considered to not have an adequate secure, audit trail so we have been advised against adding the Kempley Defibs to this currently. Changes are in progress and defibs should appear in online searched in due course, in the meantime anyone calling 999 will be told where the nearest defibs are. The location of defibs has also recently been communicated via the ‘Kempley Keep In Touch’ WhatsApp group. Offering defib training in the village is to be discussed as Agenda item #25.

**Levelling up Project:** The Chief Finance Officer of FoDDC has issued information regarding two emails in circulation *“containing erroneous and damaging claims that the Council has acted improperly in relation to its bid for funding from the Levelling-Up fund. We believe this email has been circulated with the aim of deliberately damaging the Council’s reputation.”* They go on to give further detail relating to total of £5.6M funding allocated to three projects in Cinderford Town Centre, at Five Acres and at Hartpury University, concluding that *“the Council has shown transparency at every stage of the process and progress with all three projects is being regularly and publicly reported”.*

April and May are a particularly busy time for the clerk as there are the end of financial year accounts to complete, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the annual Internal Audit and the Parish Meeting. Additionally, this year there has been work generated by the four-yearly election cycle. The clerk has therefore been required to work **additional hours** and will submit an overtime timesheet for consideration at the Annual Parish Council Meeting. Hours will be allocated to the relevant budget, income stream or earmarked reserve.

**Upcoming GAPTC Training opportunities for Councillors:**

A reminder that all GAPTC councillor training can be booked online at: <https://www.gaptc.org.uk/training-and-events>. Please seek Chairman approval prior to booking and ask GAPTC to send invoices to clerk@kempleyparishcouncil.org.

There are no networking sessions in May due to the elections, the next session will be on emergency planning. Networking sessions are free.

**Review of Actions:**

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| **Actions from Ordinary Meeting 20th March 2023** | **Date Set** | **Status** |
| clerk to write to the Village Hall Committee and offer the Parish Council’s support to organise and promote an event on Sunday 7th May | 20/3/23 | Done |
| clerk to establish whether there are any existing First Aiders or willing volunteers via WhatsApp group and add to the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| clerk to re-send details of dilapidated road boundary in Fishpool to Cllr. Gill Moseley for consideration for repairs through her ‘Highways Local’ budget. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| In accordance with election protocol, clerk to hand deliver completed nomination papers to the Forest of Dean District Council Offices before the close of nominations on 4th April 2023.  | 20/3/23 | Done |
| clerk to distribute draft version of welcome pack for public comment. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| All to consider whether the welcome pack should incorporate more information from the 2017 Community-Led Plan. | 20/3/23 | Requires attention |
| councillors to identify additional potential sites on the Daffodil Way for upgrade/improvement.  | 20/3/23 | Done |
| clerk and Cllr. Howson to erect sign on existing post near St. Mary’s Church and identify/finalise suitable sites for agreement with Andrew Middlecote.  | 20/3/23 | Done |
| Clerk to contact Forestry Commission and fact find about boom access | 20/3/23 | ongoing |
| clerk to investigate Dog fouling signage options in use locally and cost additional signage. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| encourage responsible dog ownership and reporting through existing channels. | 20/3/23 | ongoing |
| clerk to amend 04 Risk Assessment Policy for agreement at a future meeting. | 20/3/23 | Requires attention |
| Cllr. Reynolds to review The Kempley Emergency Plan and identify areas requiring updates. | 20/3/23 | Agenda item |
| include the Kempley Emergency Plan for discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| clerk to organise online banking access for Cllr. Brocklehurst. | 20/3/23 | Done |
| Cllr. Reynolds to set up online banking access to the Council’s account. | 20/3/23 | TBC |
| **Actions from previous meetings still outstanding** |  |  |
| Defibrillators: Put location information in the village welcome pack | 21/11/22 | Ongoing |
| Internal Audit actions: - Asset Register* 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 |