

**Kingscote Annual Parish Meeting 2022
Held on 18 May 2022 in Kingscote Village Hall.**

Those present: Mr T Sage, Mr B McTear, Mrs P McTear, Mrs A Wooldridge, Mr P Carpenter, Mr M Challis, Mr C Alford, Mrs E Oakley (Parish clerk) Cllrs S Cooper, G Nichols, R Gale, T Wooldridge

Apologies: Cllr B Calland, County Councillor S Hirst, District Councillor R Morgan

1. Welcome

As the Chairman of the Parish Council, Sebastian Cooper took the Chair and welcomed everyone. He explained that the meeting was an opportunity for parishioners to raise any issues of concern and for parish organizations to report on their activities.

2. Confirmation of minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held 29th June 2021, Ashel Barn, Kingscote.

The Parish Meeting in 2021 had been held at Ashel Barn thanks to Graham Nichols because of concerns over corona virus infections.

Decision on the confirmation of the minutes: Proposed by Brian McTear and seconded by Angela Wooldridge. The minutes were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

**3. Report from the Parochial Church Council by Churchwarden Harry Tubbs and Chris Alford
Presented by Chris Alford**

Milestones

We have been fortunate that the covid epidemic is now reducing and we are now once again able to meet up in person for our PCC meetings, which had moved online in March 2020 in response to the pandemic. Similarly, we are once again able to hold normal services in the church and these continue to be advertised on the Lychgate as well as in the Forerunner which is available online, and also with some paper distribution across the community.

The Church Ministry

During 2021, there were times when, due to the pandemic, government restrictions meant we could not gather physically in church. However we have been very well served by the Nailsworth team with the opportunity to join online, with Revd. Caroline, now in her fourth year with us, her husband Martin, operating zoom, and the organist Paul Stephens playing for the online service. Rosemary Simms continues to play for the services at St John the Baptist. We have also benefitted from the ministry of Sue and Laurie as part of the team. We have seen the return of weddings and related services, with unrestricted numbers enabling our special church to again fulfil those functions that were constrained or curtailed by the covid epidemic.

We have tried to maintain contact with the hearts of our parishioners by restoring as soon as permitted our normal services and through the weekend church floodlighting and the Easter Cross in the churchyard. Once restrictions were lifted our team of volunteers were able to return to opening and locking the church daily, making it accessible every day rather than only on Sundays, between 9.00 am and 4.00 pm for private prayers and reflection outside of formal services, thereby offering continued support to the community during the recent troubled times of both the epidemic as well as the war in Ukraine.

Safety measures

We have been fortunate in finally obtaining approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for the planned renovations to the church floor and west entrance as well as the balustrades to improve safety in the ringing chamber and elsewhere. This has taken a long time but we received formal approval from the Diocese earlier this year. With the assistance of our architects and historic buildings advisors – Harvey Faulkner-Aston and David Arnold of Arnold Bartosch Ltd, we have approved a contractor to undertake the works and we look forward to meeting up with them in June. These works have been made possible by a donation made by Sandy Childress over 6 years ago for a balustrade, and so we are pleased that this is now moving forward. With the help of PCC members, we have also applied to The National Churches Trust for a grant to help support the wider renovation works and are waiting to hear if our application has been successful. All the approved works relate to health and safety measures and are required to maintain the normal functioning of the church.

The PCC has also instigated regular checks of the church fabric and churchyard in order to be able to keep up to date with the general condition, and instigate remedial action or repairs as required.

We are now working towards tidying the ringing chamber floor, which has been our main storage area, in order to improve safety and enable fuller use of this area following the refurbishment of the bells. We will therefore be disposing of surplus furniture as previously advertised and approved by the DAC.

The mid October Harvest Supper and Autumn Fete was made possible by the generous loan of the barn at Home Farm by the Nichols family. This was a great success with over 120 people attending and enjoying the entertainments including music from Steel Appeal. With help from volunteers were able to put on a hot meal and run a number of stalls which together with the raffle, and special auction with star auctioneer Graham Nichols raised nearly £3000. These funds are much needed to help meet the costs of the current works. There are future, including safety related, planned works to support the continued use of the church by the community, and so we are grateful for any donations and contributions either financially or through people giving their time and support.

Newington Bagpath Graveyard

The PCC gained approval to have the unsafe trees that had Ash Dieback disease felled and removed from the graveyard. This was successfully carried out earlier in the year, and we would like to express our gratitude to Graham Nichols who brought and operated heavy moving equipment, assisting the tree surgeons, and substantially reducing the costs to the church through his efforts.

The plan of churchyard burials at Kingscote

Thanks to fine efforts by Brian McTear and Godfrey Ainsworth we have made a big step forward in the preparation of a detailed plan of the burials which are marked with monuments. In 2021 we heard that the Church of England is working with Google maps to provide such information therefore we will await further information on this initiative before embarking on further work on the labour-intensive task of transferring the text on the monuments to an index list.

The Church Helpers

The PCC have also been fortunate in being joined by Jackie Crew to assist with our work, and we are pleased to welcome her as a new member of the PCC.

In spite of the Lockdown there has been ongoing work to maintain the church as a significant presence in the community. Soffi Bond has kept the building clean inside at all times, together with the brass cleaning and flower rota teams, and those who daily open and lock up, who have all helped make the church the special spiritual place it is. Our churchyard mowing team has maintained the beautiful appearance of the site, and Roger Lucy has managed our lovely weekend floodlighting.

The Future

This APCM marks a milestone in the community and for the PCC. Harry Tubbs arrived in Kingscote in 1986 and has long been the central pillar looking after the church and associated duties of being our churchwarden over many years. Harry is now standing down as churchwarden and member of the PCC, and he and Jutta have plans to move closer to their family. Harry will be much missed by the PCC and wider Kingscote community, and we will keep them in our thoughts for many years to come.

The PCC hopes that people will come forward to help support the PCC in continuing the diverse roles and work that Harry has undertaken so well for many years. Harry's contributions went beyond those of churchwarden, and so we need and would very much welcome support from the community to enable us to keep up with wider work of looking after the church.

Richard Gale congratulated the PCC on the well-maintained state of the church and Graham Nichols noted that the churchyard is also kept very tidy.

4. Kingscote Village Hall: Chairman's report for the year ending 31 December 2021. Presented by Brian McTear

Use of the village hall was very limited during 2021 due to the continuing Covid 19 restrictions.

The mobile Post Office was able to use the parking and toilet facilities on Monday and Thursday mornings.

Bookings were returning mid-year when Covid restrictions eased.

The band started hiring the hall twice weekly for practice sessions.

There were bookings from church weddings to use the car parking and toilet facilities. There was a mother and baby first aid course in July, a pit stop for a cyclists event passing through the village in September, a flower arranging session for a wedding in September, and a well-being/yoga day in November.

The monthly coffee mornings started again in August. These have been held in the downstairs hall to facilitate access and providing better ventilation. Thank you to all who helped and to those who provided the lovely cakes.

Film nights started in October and have also been held downstairs. I'd like to thank Paddy for organising these events and for his time and effort setting things up.

The annual Christmas lunch to be held in December was cancelled due to rising Covid numbers at that time.

Jenna Walker arranged a children's Christmas party in December and parents wanted to go ahead with this. The party was a great success and thanks to Jenna and her mother for their hard work.

There were no major maintenance items.

We are always open to suggestions from parishioners for events they would like us to hold, or if anyone would like assistance in organising a communal event, please let us know.

Seema Bowers and John Connolly have resigned from the committee due to other commitments. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank them both for their help and contributions. Seema joined the committee in 2015 and has been treasurer for the last 6 years. Thank you, Seema, for your assistance and dedication. You will be missed.

Thanks to all the members of the committee for their work in helping with the village hall activities and maintaining the village hall for the parish.

We are looking for new members for the committee and are open to volunteers. New faces and new ideas would be welcome. We have monthly meetings to discuss events, maintenance etc.

Graham Nichols congratulated the committee on the way the fabric of the village hall is maintained and the variety of the activities which are organised.

5. Report from the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens:

Prepared by Julian Foxon and presented by Sebastian Cooper

Julian represents the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, the volunteer arm of the Cotswolds National Landscape (previously Cotswolds AONB) and has taken over as Parish Warden for the parish of Kingscote. The Wardens undertake 3 main roles:

1. Parish Wardening – where we monitor the state of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) in a specific parish, and carry out any simple remedial work needed (eg waymarking, simple stile fixes, vegetation clearance), or pass any more major work needed on to our Work Parties
2. Work Parties – groups of Wardens who perform more major remedial work (eg stile replacement, installing kissing gates, installing steps/bridges/revetment, dry-stone walling), typically on Tuesday and Thursday mornings
3. Guided walk programme – Wardens lead guided walks around the South District (roughly from Badminton up to Stroud), typically every fortnight

I have been doing this role since the start of the year, and am gradually getting to know all landowners and key contacts. The responsibility for maintaining PROWs lies with the landowner, but the Wardens can support wherever it would be helpful – our time is given for free, and most simple fixes are done free of charge; donations, needless to say, are always welcome!

Generally speaking, the quality of the Rights of Way in the parish is very high, and bears testament to some very diligent upkeep from landowners and farmers. It is noticeable at this time of year, as crops start to emerge, whether a cross-field path has been sprayed, and it is very reassuring to see that the vast majority have. I have made contact with many landowners, this is needed prior to any work commencing, and you should have noticed that waymarking is now clearer – this is where the PROW status and direction is clearly indicated, footpaths via yellow discs, bridleways via blue discs, restricted byeways via purple discs, and byeways open to all traffic via red discs. I've also been snipping back brambles before they start to take hold and race across the paths.

There are still some landowners I need to contact, and any details or introductions would be most welcome – I had a very useful meeting with Beth at the start of the year, and this helped to fill in some of the gaps in my knowledge. Once I've been able to do this, there are some minor fixes I can easily put in place.

I have listed below some of the other problem areas, although none of these strike me as too challenging.

NKS30: large holes in the surface of the path, posing potential safety risk

NKS34: when the lake is high, it can flood the path, GCC have suggested a footbridge is needed

NKS36/37: needs a post installed to waymark the footpaths clearly off the private road to Lasborough Park

Please do advise if there are any further issues you are aware of - wherever we can help we will, albeit the primary responsibility lies with the landowner. I also keep apprised of the Kingscote & Bagpath Community group on Facebook, and regularly post into there, so am aware of current matters in the parish.

6. Report on the Kingscote Climate Action Group

The Chairman asked Tony Wooldridge to explain the activities of the recently formed Climate Action Group. Tony explained that two meetings have been held to date and that the current activities focus on: ways to reduce the heat loss and improve the sustainability of old houses; sharing, repairing, and reducing waste; reducing unnecessary journeys to neighbouring towns; tree maintenance at The Matara Centre. In reply to a question from Mike Challis, Tony said that the aims of the group were to:

- Provide a forum for sharing ideas and pooling knowledge
- Encourage community activities aimed at sustainability
- Make it easier for residents to get reliable, objective advice.

7. Chairman's Report from the Parish Council Presented by Sebastian Cooper

During the past year the PC has been able to hold all meetings in person, in contrast to the previous two years, when we were obliged to hold most meetings via Zoom.

Summary of the council's main activities:

- Appointed Elizabeth Oakley as clerk to the council with effect from 1 September 2021 as the successor to Fiona Thornton. She is an experienced parish council clerk who brings valuable expertise and experience to the role. She is the council's first employee, previous clerks having been self-employed.
- Purchased a laptop computer for the clerk to use on Kingscote PC business. It is recommended that clerks who work for more than one council have separate laptops for each council so that the documents and communications relating to the different councils are stored on separate computers.
- Sent a card to the Matara Centre thanking them for allowing residents to walk in their field, which was especially welcome during lockdown and which has continued since then.
- Maintained engagement with Gigaclear on its plans to roll out fibre broadband in the parish. They have informed us that the cabling work will continue to Hazlecote and Bagpath over the next few months. Hazlecote has been done.
- Appointed a new snow plough operator to replace Phil Nicholls. He is a contractor from Uley who also acts for a couple of other parishes. Fortunately his services were not required last winter as we had no snow to speak of.
- Created a survey of the salt bins in the parish (thank you to John Calland and Tony Wooldridge). The survey showed that there are enough bins in the right places and the County Council had filled them before the winter, although some of them are not in great condition and should be replaced.

- Engaged a contractor to repaint the phone box in Kingscote. The job was completed last month and was done to a high standard.
- Agreed to make a financial contribution towards the costs of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations to be held on Sunday 5th June at Whiteladies in Kingscote.
- Liaised with the local Footpaths Officer on the state of some of the footpaths in Bagpath, resulting in a meeting with Footpath Officer last autumn. This led to a further meeting in January with Julian Foxon, the Cotswold Warden in charge of footpaths in this area. He made notes of areas for improvements and has been in touch with some landowners to discuss these. Particular thanks are due to Charles and Louise Ziar of Bagpath Court Barn, and Bob Davison of Bagpath Court for some waymarking which has made the footpaths in the valley much easier to follow. If anyone has any concerns about a footpath please get in touch with the parish council to discuss.
- Submitted comments to CDC on two planning applications: the land southwest of the Hunter's Hall and Jandacott in Bagpath.
- Cleared the covers of the drains near the village hall - February 2022
- Repaired the lid of the salt bin by the phone box in Kingscote – March 2022
- Displayed the old Kingscote road sign from the A4135 in the village hall – March 2022

We have liaised with Glos Highways on various issues, including:

- A large pothole at Viper's Lane junction in Bagpath - reported January 2021 – repaired July 2021
- The ash dieback at Bagpath Common is scheduled to be dealt with in February 2023.
- We are still awaiting progress on other items: jetting of drains in Hazlecote valley and signage at Ashel Barn.

Financial Report

- The PC set its precept for FY 2022-23 at £4,200. This is an increase of 5% on the previous year, which is mainly to cover the increase in costs due to the employment of the PC clerk.
- Income for the FY 2021-22 was £4,298.20 and expenditure was £1,892.46.
- More details will soon be available on the PC website when the financial statements have been completed.

Volunteers to Thank

Many people in the community carry out valuable voluntary activities. This is not an exhaustive list, but we would particularly like to thank:

1. The village hall committee, especially Brian and Pauline McTear. They are looking for volunteers to join the committee as two members have recently resigned, so please consider helping the community by giving some of your time to help with the running of the hall

2. Volunteer litter-pickers for their work during the past year, including in Bagpath Ann Giddings, Paddy Carpenter and John Calland
3. Paddy Carpenter, who acts as tree warden for Bagpath Common
4. Stephen Alder, for mowing the grass around Windy Corner

As there were no reports available from County or District councillors, the meeting moved on to general matters for discussion.

8. Open Forum

- Mike Challis asked what was happening about the barn behind Hunter's Hall which has recently received planning approval for use as a storage facility. He believed that any increase in traffic was undesirable on the narrow lane, that the access to the storage was on a blind bend, and that access onto the A4135 was potentially dangerous for large vehicles because of the restricted access. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had raised these points with the Planning Dept during the consultation, but permission for change of use had nevertheless been granted. The possibility of reducing the speed limit on the A4135 was raised but it was recognised that this was unlikely to be achievable.
- Mike Challis also raised a question about servicing of the defibrillators in the parish and suggested that the ambulance service should pay for this. He said that the defibrillators were a part solution, initially made by SW Ambulance Service throughout their region, to address their recognised inability to meet Red 1 ambulance attendance targets. The Chairman explained that servicing is arranged and paid for by the Parish Council.
- We have experienced a spate of fly tipping incidents on BarnHill Lane. CDC have arranged for these to be moved. In the first instance these should be logged on the CDC website. It does appear that the council is more responsive to the Parish Council so please report these to the council and we will follow up.
- Burning of brushwood in Ozleworth Park because of ash dieback work has caused some breathing difficulties in Bagpath. Issues were raised with councillors last summer about the smoke pollution. The estate office was contacted and they said they were keen to work with local people to alleviate any issues. The local weather conditions can create problems for the houses in Bagpath making it difficult to be outside on some days. Burning has begun again so this is something to watch. Paddy Carpenter believed that such burning should only occur when the wind is in the right direction and he was concerned that this practice should be adhered to.
- Concerns have continued to be raised by local residents about the deterioration of the church. Beth Calland has contacted the Historic Churches Trust but they are unable to do anything as it is in private ownership. Beth has noticed that just recently the historic porch has had some work done to repair and preserve it.

The meeting concluded at 8.25pm

AB Wildridge
16/5/23