

Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Great & Little Kimble, including the hamlets of Marsh, Kimblewick, & Clanking

**Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 8pm
Kimble Stewart Hall**

Chairmans Report

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Good Evening Everyone and Welcome.

First, I would like to welcome you all to this Annual Parish Meeting and thank you for taking the time to attend.

I would like to remind everyone that this is not a Parish Council Meeting !

The subtle but important difference is that this is the Annual Parish Meeting held by & for the Parishioners of Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh Parish.

To open the meeting I would like to briefly review and report on the activities of the Parish Council over the past 12 months.

2. Affordable Housing

It was hoped that by this time we would be well on the way to developing a limited number of new & affordable houses for local residents and families with connections in the Parish. However, as you all know we had a false start and the process unravelled.

So in 2010 your Council decided to go right back to fundamentals and start again.

I am pleased to report that we are now well advanced on a scheme for 9 homes with a completely new team at Hastoe Housing Trust and ably advised by Community Impact Bucks. The proposal is now awaiting a Central Government decision on funding which we hope will be made by 30 June. We will keep everyone advised on progress, particularly via our Website and the Notice Boards.

3. Planning

Planning continues to be a major contributor to Parish Council work load.

Many planning applications from, new builds to total refurbishment of existing buildings, extensions, to demolitions all have been considered by the Parish Council and WDC judged against existing planning rules and Policies.

None more so than constant Planning Applications from Gypsies & Travellers wishing to put down roots in our Parish. We currently have yet another site seeking a further 8 pitches in process. This alone is more than most Parishes have in their entirety.

WDC and the new Coalition Government have, and are, developing policy guidelines to prevent abuse of the system. In particular we are acutely aware that local people feel that our Parish has contributed considerably more than our fair share as a populace in taking on new sites at the rate of approximately one a year. This is now disproportionate, particularly in the Marsh area. Representing strong local opinion the Council is representing Marsh as full, and that it would be wise to allow a considerable period of successful settling in of the existing sites before any more are even considered.

By Way Open to All Traffic (BOAT). Ably advised by R Howgate, an expert in the matter, the Council have continued to object to a green pathway becoming a racetrack for off-road vehicles.

As a Council we are supportive to sensible sustainable development that is in keeping with the beautiful countryside, villages and hamlets we live in. We will however robustly defend this rural area from those who seek to subvert the proper democratic planning process.

4. War Memorial

Refurbishment of the War Memorial was completed in time for the remembrance service in November 2009 and the Back Wall Plaque has now been installed to complete the project in 2010.

This refreshes this important symbol which serves as reminder of all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our democratic way of life.

5. Great & Little Kimble C of E School

G&LK PC were able to secure funding from the BCC for two New Flashing Amber warning lights and signs that will help protect the Children & Parents when arriving and leaving the school.

Feasibility and technical issues have slowed the actual installation. But we now finally have a proposal for one solar and one static sign and are pressing hard for them to be installed as soon as possible.

6. Kimble Stewart Hall

We are working with the Managing Committee regarding the condition of the Hall. Two professional surveys have been conducted which happily confirm the building is basically sound but needs refurbishment and insulation to make it a 21st Century asset.

So it has been agreed that to bring the building up to an acceptable standard it will require a great deal of work and additional funding. We will be developing and implementing a long term strategy, and this will be a priority for 2011/2012.

7 .Parish Officers

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our New Parish Councillors Donna Johnson, Delia Burton and John Austin. John Austin has kindly agreed to act as Vice- Chairman. I would like to thank Julia Northway for her support as outgoing Vice-Chairman. She does a huge amount for the community.

Chris Arnold retired as Clerk after highly active and long service to the people of the parish. We gave him a good send off.

Chris managed his succession well. He identified his successor, Julie Bunker and acted as a mentor during the handover. Julie is a hard working and is doing a great job, such that we sometimes forget that she only started in the role a year ago.

Terry Mackintosh, our former Chairman also retired during the year and we would like to thank him for his dynamic contribution to improving and protecting the area. In particular he was a driving, but fair, force behind the Gypsy & Traveller issue, and in securing the Speed Limits that now protect our residents.

8. Web Site

We commend the website to you, www.kimblecouncil.org – which now always gets over a hundred pages visits per week. It is particularly useful for Planning and News.

9. Tax or Precept

Tight control means we have been able to reduce the tax burden on residents by this Council from £21,000 to £17,000 which is a 19% reduction without cutting back on any significant needs in the parish. We will continue to plan significant projects in a cost effective way.

10. HS2

Consultation under way, if you missed the exhibition in Stoke Mandeville it is in Great Missenden tomorrow.

The Business Case for this vanity project is very poor. There is no clever City money going into it. It will cost the whole country as funds are sucked out of other rail projects and commuter lines. So if you can each get 6 friends or relatives in other parts of the country to look at the plans and object, this will prevent it just being seen as locals trying to protect their own backyard...beautiful as it is.

Visit our website for more details.

11. Village Spirit and Events

There were a number of parties to celebrate the Royal Wedding. The Council supported the largest, of over 200 people, at and outside the Swan. David Lidington MP and Chairman of Wycombe, Bill Bendyshe-Brown attended too. Thanks go to Sue Howgate, Kirsty Warwick, Bill Brown and our own Delia Burton for their great spirit in organizing the event, which will be memorable for the children involved for years to come.

12. Bus Shelters

We have rejuvenated the long standing plans to install 2 bus shelters and these will go near the War Memorial for the Wycombe bound buses and outside St Nicholas Church for the Aylesbury bound buses, subject to location approval from Bucks County Council.

Conclusion

Overall the past year has been relatively successful in so far as we have moved along to completion some long standing local projects and have secured funding for others including the Bus Shelters.

However new challenges are always around the corner and our rural Parish and its way of life are constantly under threat.

We actively welcome suggestions for significant projects that the Council can help with toward protecting and enhancing this wonderful area.

We must not be adverse to constructive change, but must also be ready to fight for our Parish and the people who live here, their dreams and aspirations and their right to live the peaceful rural life they have chosen.

Thank you.

D R Williams
Chairman