

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 20th MAY 2025 AT KIN HOUSE, SWINDON ROAD, KINGTON LANGLEY**

Present: Cllr A Lawer (Chair), Cllr. C Armor, Cllr. K Harrison-Jones, Cllr. S Pattemore, Cllr. L Reynolds, Cllr. Sealy, Cllr. G Tayler, Cllr. G Watson, Mrs. Sue Hart (Clerk), Peter Giles (RFO), County Councillor Greenman and approximately 75 members of the public.

MINUTES

1.025	<p>Welcome from the Chair - Cllr Alan Lawer</p> <p>Cllr Lawer welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them all for coming. He said that last year was the first time the Parish Council had trialed a new format for the Annual Parish Meeting, where the formal part of the meeting was kept to a minimum, with the rest of the evening centred around a social gathering for people to engage in a relaxed manner with the many social clubs and organisations in the village. From the feedback received last time, the Parish Council had decided to repeat that format this year, this time in the beautiful setting of Kin House.</p> <p>Introducing himself as the current Chair, he said for those who did not know him, he had lived in the village for 20 years and had been Chair of the Parish Council for the past year. The Parish Council is legally required by the Local Government Act (1972) to hold an Annual Parish Meeting and there are some requirements and constraints about how and when it is done, for example, the meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June, and it mustn't begin before 6:00 pm.</p> <p>The Parish Council wanted the event to be something more than a routine event and saw it as an important opportunity for parishioners to contribute their thoughts about what would be good for the future of the village.</p> <p>He introduced Matt Harvey, co-owner of Kin House, and said that after the close of the meeting, Matt would be adding a welcome from all the staff at Kin House and would say a few words about the building, its history and its current activities.</p>
2.025	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
3.025	<p>Approval of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2024</p> <p>The 2024 Annual Parish Meeting minutes had been posted on the Parish Council website at www.kingtonlangley-pc.org.uk so were not read out at the meeting. No changes were proposed therefore the Chair, Cllr. Lawer, signed the Minutes as a true record.</p>
4.025	<p>Summary of the Parish Council's activities during 2024/25 – Cllr Lawer</p> <p>Cllr Lawer first covered planning for which he was the lead councillor. The Parish Council has to be consulted and its opinion sought by Wiltshire Council, which is the Planning Authority on all planning applications that affect the parish. Over the last 12 months, besides 12 proposals for work on trees that arise because much of the village is in a conservation area, the Parish Council reviewed some 36 applications for new buildings, extensions, amendments to conditions and so on. Councillors try to be as objective as possible when looking at planning applications. Whilst not against development, councillors recognise and appreciate the need to use the little influence the Parish Council has with planning applications to preserve, and possibly enhance, the character of the village.</p>

	<p>Two recent and significant applications parishioners may not be aware of were for industrial warehousing on land to the northeast of the M4 Junction 17, and an industrial unit for lorry servicing next to the eastern boundary of the Indurent distribution and warehousing site. The Parish Council had submitted detailed objections to both of those. They are both developments on land which is designated in the Wiltshire Core Strategy as open countryside, which means Wiltshire Council needs to agree that these developments are of such economic value and of such strategic importance that they outweigh any harm to the landscape or residential amenity.</p> <p>Some of the other things the Parish Council is involved with are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths and Rights of Way, which Cllr Max Sealy leads on. Cllr Sealy had a map on display showing the Rights of Way in the parish. • Grass cutting of the Registered Commons and liaising with the Parish Steward to carry out repairs, including potholes, which are led by Cllr Sue Pattemore. • Maintaining the village pond, which is looked after by Cllr Geoff Taylor. • The environment, KClimate Change initiatives and identifying No Mow areas which are led by Cllr Graham Watson. • Bulb planting and managing the defibrillators and Community Speedwatch are looked after by Cllr Lindi Reynolds. • Cllr Charlie Armor liaises with the village school on the Parish Council's behalf and looks after the Parish Council website and the village's Speed Indicator Device. <p>Cllr Lawer also thanked Cllr Armor for all his work organising the attendance of the village clubs and organisations at the evening.</p> <p>Cllr Lawer noted that a new parish councillor was attending for the first time. Cllr Kristina Harrison-Jones was elected to the parish council at the 1st of May Parish Council Elections. Cllr Lawer welcomed Cllr. Harrison-Jones to the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllr Lawer said that a lot also goes on behind the scenes. He was very grateful to the other councillors for their dedication and support and also wanted to thank the Clerk, Sue Hart, and the Responsible Financial Officer, Peter Giles, for all that they do. He said Sue and Peter were very good at guiding the Parish Council with their considerable experience and professionalism.</p> <p>To sum up, Cllr Lawer said that he thought everyone would agree they are very fortunate to live in such a beautiful village and hoped they could tell from the brief outline he had just given, and from what everyone would learn from interacting during the rest of the evening, that the Parish Council and the various village organisations do their best to support the quality of life for everyone in the parish. Everyone on the Parish Council is dedicated and he said it was a privilege to be a part of such an effective team.</p>
5.025	<p>Summary of Village Organisations Attending - Chair</p> <p>Over a dozen of the organisations and clubs that operate in the village were attending the evening, which Cllr Lawer thought was testament to the spirit and vitality of the community and thanked the representatives for their participation. He encouraged parishioners to take the opportunity to speak to the councillors as the event was a good opportunity to feedback ideas.</p> <p>In particular he asked for feedback concerning putting in place possible lighting guidelines for the village, which Cllr Graham Watson was leading on, and footpaths and Rights of Way, which Cllr Max Sealy leads on.</p>

	<p>He said a Parish Council does not have much authority and has limited resources, which means it has to rely on the authority and resources of Wiltshire Council for problems with things like potholes and drains.</p> <p>Finally, the Parish Council was always pleased to see people from the community at the monthly Parish Council meetings. People come for a variety of reasons - occasionally just to observe but sometimes to say something about a planning application or to alert the Parish Council to something that needs the council's attention. If people did come along, they would be pleased to know that the councillors are a very friendly bunch and people don't have to sit through the whole meeting.</p>
6.024	<p>Close of Formal Meeting - Chair</p> <p>In closing the formal part of the evening, Cllr Lawer hoped that everyone would find the Annual Parish Meeting format both enjoyable and informative.</p> <p>On behalf of the Parish Council, he thanked Matt Harvey of Kin House for so generously offering such a wonderful venue for the evening's meeting. Everyone could agree that Kin House is a real asset to the village. The staff at Kin House had put a great deal of effort into preparing for the event so everyone present joined Cllr Lawer in showing their appreciation to Matt and the staff.</p>
<p>Matt Harvey then spoke briefly adding his welcome and explained that he was pleased to ensure Kin House continued to be an asset to the village.</p>	

THE FORMAL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CLOSED AT 19:50 PM

REPORT FOR THE PARISH FROM YOUR WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR, CLLR. HOWARD GREENMAN

Submitted to the Parish Council prior to the meeting

This is my 16th Annual Report. This has been a year of change and challenges not least because of the changes brought about by a change in government at the general election in July 2025.

The immediate impact of the change in government to Wiltshire Council is the exponential proposed increase in housing targets. Wiltshire Council had secured a 4 Year Housing Land Supply over which I had personally engaged with the last central government, and that was a target we had met. Due to recalculation of that figure however by government, a recalculation I believe to be incorrect, that figure is now stated to be 2.08 years. It is looking increasingly likely that the sheer numbers of housing units to be delivered will be significantly increased. I am hopeful that the Local Plan, yet to be ratified will provide some protection against this. The issue I have with this is that Wiltshire Council have issued planning consents for over 19000 properties which the developers have failed to deliver, preferring to 'land bank' rather than build.

There is also increasing pressure to deliver Solar Farms, and the north of the county particularly falls prey to this. Whilst accepting the need for renewable energy, there has to be a balance too with the need for food security, and the current proposal for Lime Down which will have an impact on 2000 acres in close proximity to the Kington division with a further 2000 acres being affected just outside of Melksham. I have spoken against this at a recent meeting in Malmesbury town hall and will continue to lobby against it.

An additional pressure locally is that of the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Wiltshire, and north Wiltshire particularly due to the M4 is a particular target for the G&T community and we have a responsibility to accommodate them. However, we have also been subject to a large number of unauthorised pitches which have as yet crept in under the radar and which I believe should be added into the number government require Wiltshire Council to deliver if they are policy compliant. As such I am actively resisting 'new' pitches that have been identified in unsuitable locations and will continue to do so.

The Rural Parish Forum I chair continues to go from strength to strength, and the most recent meeting was attended by the Chief Constable who found the meeting very invaluable. This gives the sixteen villages in the Chippenham community area an opportunity to meet in a venue typically a village hall, kindly hosted by the villages in turn and discuss issues such as speeding which they may have in common and to share experiences and intelligence. The Neighbourhood Police team are regular attendees too and equally find the forum very useful.

Wiltshire Council finances continue to be strong and are certainly better placed than most surrounding authorities. For the 2025/26 financial year the revenue budget will be £527m against the £490m for the last financial year. Although the government has increased social care funding by £4.8m, increases in national insurance contributions have resulted in costs of £8m. However, unlike many authorities Wiltshire Council have contained the council tax increase to just 4.5%, (2.5% basic council tax plus 2.0% adult social care levy), against the 4.99% that allowed by government. This would see an increase of £1.56 per week for those in a Band D property.

The most significant areas of spend outlined in the proposals are:

- Adult Services - £194m,
- Families and Children - £75m,
- Highways and Transport - £43.4m,
- Environment (including waste) - £49.5m, and
- Education and skills - £38m.

As before, I would like to give my thanks to the parish councils for the hard work they do on behalf of their parishes, and for making my job so much easier than it might otherwise be. Of course, as always, I hope to be able to continue to work with you all even after the local government elections on the 1st May.

Thanking you,

Howard (Councillor Howard Greenman).
Howard.Greenman@wiltshire.gov.uk

DRAFT