

# Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Great and Little Kimble cum Marsh held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at Kimble Stewart Hall at 8pm

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**Attendance:** Cllr John Austin, Cllr Alun Jones, Cllr David Williams, Cllr Delia Burton, Cllr Harvey Alison, Cllr Joanne Bourke and Pauline McBride (Clerk). In addition, Sue Howgate was in attendance in her capacity as the chair of the Kimble Stewart Hall Committee and a number of residents were also in attendance.

1. **Welcome by the Chairman of Parish Council:** Councillor Austin opened the meeting

## 2. Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report:

1. **Welcome** - It is again that time of the year, when we convene the Annual Parish Meeting.

### 2. New Houses – New Families

We now have four new neighbourhoods—Hayfield, Cala, Bonnet Close, and Pippin Place. It is hoped that the new arrivals have been made to feel welcome and that they will add new life, energy and diversity to our community.

### 3. Future Housing

Our County Council have been working on their new Local Plan (LP), in which they are recognising the ever pressure for more new housing. Your PC has reinforced its view that our Neighbourhood Plan (NP), which was fully endorsed and democratically approved remains our benchmark. However, we would be remiss if we did not recognise that this may not remain valid once other legislation and the County LP are fully approved. Therefore, we have started preparing the ground to launch the drafting of a new NP for the parish.

### 4. Planning Applications

In the meantime, our Planning Sub-committee continue to review all new planning applications that are submitted for our Parish. These are then further reviewed at a Council Meeting from which either an objection or supporting comment is submitted to the County planning authority. These comments carry all the more strength due to the principles laid out in our NP.

### 5. Kimble Stuart Stewart Hall

This hall remains a very essential hub in our community, but to remain the committee that runs it does need more support. At present a small but very loyal group of volunteers keep the doors open, managing bookings, upkeep and maintenance. More people are needed to help spread the load, and I'd call on anyone that could spare a few hours a week to get in touch with them. Details can be found on the PC's website.

### 6. Sensory Garden and Coronation Project

After a large hiatus, when the site developers found themselves in difficulty, and with numerous changes in personnel, we appear to be moving forward again with this ambitious project. Without wishing to jinx anything, and definitely not putting a date out there I hope that we will be able to enjoy a wonderful addition to our parish before the end of the summer. Mine and your thanks for the enduring passion and perseverance on this project go to Councillors Burton and Alison.

### 7. Village Furniture

Councillor Burton, as always takes great care in ensuring that the Playground, which has as always been a very popular, is available to us and manages the maintenance, insurance and upkeep.

Regrettably we have again this year had to deal with a number of the bus shelters being vandalised. We will need to treat this as Criminal Damage if it continues. Through witness reports and CCTV we will be gathering sufficient evidence to legally identify the culprits. It appears to be younger elements of our community using them for their evening soirees, from the evidence of alcohol and cigarettes. Thanks this time to Councillor Jones for keeping these promptly repaired and maintained.

The village gates got a sprucing up this last year and looked very fine with the newly planted spring bulbs bursting out in the last few months. Thanks to Julie Bunker and Cllr Jones.

### 8. Finances

For those of you that monitor the PC minutes, you will have noticed that the Parish is relatively strongly solvent. This is down to the investment discipline of your Councillors, the excellent financial management of

our Clerk, and the fact that with each new housing development under The Neighbourhood Plan the Developers are charged a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This money, however, is not easily invested wisely. It must be on improvements to the Communities Infrastructure, to that end we now keep a Prospect List for our Programme of Projects. However, I'd ask you to bear in mind that any project does require considerable planning and close management and your councillors are volunteers, often with full-time careers, so their free time is limited.

Strong, well thought through, suggestions for investment in new projects are always welcome.

With the CIL funds not being legally available for day-to-day Parish upkeep, such as verge cutting, graveyard and war memorial upkeep etc. This is where your contribution via Council Tax ("the Precept") comes in and I'd ask you to note that this prudent financial management has meant a Zero increase in the 6 years since 2019/2020. Given the population for the Parish has gently increased with the new developments coming steadily to market, that means in real terms everyone's tax has effectively gone down each year per head. A rare feat in modern Britain. Your Council has Zero Debt.

9. Parish Comms:

- a. WebSite – [www.kimbleparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.kimbleparishcouncil.gov.uk). If you have never visited our site, as I suspect a lot of you haven't, please do, even just once so that you can see what is published. Suggestions and requests for more content welcome, and if deemed appropriate it will be considered.
- b. Newsletter - This comes out monthly and is due entirely to a very dedicated editor, Sue Howgate with a willing handful of individuals walking the beat to deliver. This can only be as good as the contributions are, so please consider if you'd like to contribute, also more legs make less miles in delivery.
- c. WhatsApp - This was the idea of Councillor Alison and with Councillor Burton are its Moderators. This has been a revelation to many, and the number of posts is something to be seen. If you are not on, then drop them a line to join.
- d.

10. Your Parish Council

The Parish Council is comprised of 7 councillors plus the Parish Clerk. It is elected every five years and annually the Chair, Vice Chair and other roles are voted in by the Council. The Council meets monthly (Except August) at 7:30 in the KSH with these meetings being public, so anyone is welcome to attend.

John Austin  
Chairman (2025-26)

### 3. Report from the Kimble Stewart Hall Committee:

There would be no Village Hall without the dedicated group of volunteers who manage the various tasks that are essential to the successful management of a Village Hall.

For over 100 years The Stewart Hall has been at the heart of the parish, providing a venue for various societies, birthday parties, weddings, wakes, horticultural shows, Harvest Festival events, dancing, drama, polling station for elections, along with the various classes and meetings of organisations. In the book 'Halls for All' HRH the Princes Royal writes in the forward: 'Village halls are an essential component of a living Countryside'. In the same book David Emerson, CBE is quoted, paying tribute to '100 years of service from hundreds of thousands of volunteers'.

The committee are most eager, working alongside the Parish Council, to ensure the hall continues at the centre of the local community and plays its part within our expanding community.

#### Centenary Year 2025 Celebrations

The November Celebrations in the hall were a very positive and fun experience. The documentary film 'Halls of Fame,' which featured several halls in the area, was shown earlier this year to the public at a meeting of the

Princes Risborough Heritage Society. The Centenary of the hall and the general day to day events were the main feature. Many aspects of our community in the hall and wider in the parish were reflected both on the day and in the film, evidence of that 'essential component of a living countryside'.

#### Current Personnel

Sue Howgate (chair), Maggie Kaye (secretary) Liz Collins (treasurer and booking secretary), Gerald Redding, Una Alison – hirer representatives Julia Meads, Keith Bull  
Cleaner: Doreen Tietjen  
Sadly the number of committee members is diminishing.

Unfortunately, the committee has been very much affected by Ill-Health and Major Life Events. This has impacted on the availability of individuals. Arranging necessary works and maintenance and the necessary Health and Safety checks and daily monitoring of the hall are falling on a dwindling number of people.

*We are busy engaging more interest from those keen to support their community: Linda Hodgkinson is to come on board as booking secretary, Rachel Piercy will help with monitoring the hall and Matt Wootten as general maintenance (subject to availability). Ben Smith will help with small plumbing tasks.*

#### Maintenance and Cleaning of the Hall

As we develop our facilities there is a need for more monitoring, Fire Systems must be checked weekly, as with the Hearing Loop/Sound System, more tasks for committee members! The onus on the volunteer committee has significantly increased.

Our cleaner, Doreen Tietjen, is very conscientious, flagging up potential issues and if possible is prepared to offer flexibility with the cleaning times. We are so fortunate to have her services, and she is great at unblocking toilets.

#### Finances

Liz Collins manages the finances and bookings, it has worked well combining those two roles. However to lessen the load on one individual we decided, if possible, to separate the roles. David Couling continues to check the annual accounts. Many thanks are due to David for continuing in this role. Increased hire charges came into effect for all hirers from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025. Hirings have been on an upward trend but come, of course, with increased costs and need for monitoring.

#### Committee Room and other maintenance

Roof repairs and other works are still awaiting successful notice of the S106 money. The application also covers some improvements in facilities.

The Parish Council is funding the redecoration of the hall, though this is on hold awaiting the repairs to the committee room roof and other areas.

#### Hiring

Regular hirers include: Chiltern Ladies, Kimble & Ellesborough Horticultural Society, Whist, Drama Classes for children (the hall is now a registered for Lamda exams), Pilates, Art Classes, Dog Training, Strings Music Groups, and Masonic Lodges. The hall continues to be used for family celebrations/get-togethers, and we continue the tradition of parishioners using the hall free of charge for wakes. We continue building community links with the Red Kite Association. Martial Arts for children has discontinued for the time being. Occasional and more recent regular hirers pick up and return keys at Sue Howgate's house.

#### Security

The committee have a rota for checking of the hall to assist in keeping the facility as we would wish. We are so fortunate to have a committee of pro-active people, as well as vigilant neighbours of the hall. Checking is subject to the availability of committee members. Hirers are charged if the hall is not left in an acceptable state. Being situated by the bus stop and opposite the station makes the hall easily accessible and the station car park provides the designated emergency meeting point.

#### The Car Park

Parents of Great Kimble C of E School can use the car park to facilitate walking along the footpath and across the fields to the school to relieve traffic congestion in Church Lane. For a donation groups can use the parking for trips and sometimes neighbours use the carpark if they have many guests arriving. It is noted that some hirers do not park with sufficient caution.

#### Our Neighbours

The hall is well supported by its neighbours, letting us know if they have observed a problem. We are very fortunate in this respect.

*Sue Howgate, Committee Chair, May 26*

The book referred above to is Halls For All – A History of Village Halls – Louise Beaton & David Clark, an interesting read!

**4. Open forum:**

At the request of one attendee, the Parish Councillors introduced them selves and invited attendees to come to Parish Council meetings with any items that they would like to discuss.

Concern was raised regarding the Buckinghamshire County Council Local Plan which appears to state that 95,000 new houses will need to be built in Buckinghamshire. The main concern was that the Parish Neighbourhood Plan ought to take precedence and it still has a number of years to run. The Parish Council representatives were able to assure all attendees that they do comment on all planning applications and use the Neighbourhood plan as a point of reference for their objections or approval comments. It was also explained that, with government changes it is possible that rules can be changed so that the Council Local Plan could override the Paris Neighbourhood Plan. With this in mind, the Parish Council have engaged with neighbourhood plan specialist to see what steps the Parish could/should take to avoid the existing Neighbourhood plan being undermined/overruled.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

**Signed**.....

**Date**.....