KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON 19th MAY 2022

Item Nr	Item	Action By
1.0	**Attendance and Apologies** In attendance: Cllr P Townsend (Chairman) Cllr S Hancock Cllr A Simpson Cllr D Stripp Cllr A Wilcox Mrs K Gibbins (Parish Clerk) Cllr D Darch (SW&T Councillor) Cllr R Williams (SCC Councillor) Apologies were received from Cllr D Taylor, the Chair of the Village Hall Committee, and the Head of KSM Primary School Members of the public attended the meeting.	
2.0	**Approval of Minutes of Last Annual Parish Meeting dated 8th March 2021** The Minutes were approved and signed as a true record.	
3.0	**Matters Arising** None.	
4.0	**Report from the Parish Council's Chairman** Cllr P Townsend, Chair of Kingston St Mary Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all members of the community for their help and support over the last year. The Chair went on to present his report. See attached report.	
5.0	**The Chair invited the following village organisations to present their reports to the meeting:** **ST MARY'S CHURH** **KINGSTON COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP** **LINK-UP** **PARISH FOOTPATH LIAISON OFFICER** **TAUNTON INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL** **KINGSTON ST MARY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL** (Report read by Chair of Kingston St Mary Parish Council) **KINGSTON ST MARY VILLAGE HALL** (Report read by Chair of Kingston St Mary Parish Council) **LITTLE WILDINGS NURSERY** See attached reports.	
6.0	The Chair expressed thanks to our Local Authority Councillors, Rod Williams and Dixie Darch, and the Parish Councillors for their support in 2022. The Chair also thanked the Village organisations for their reports and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 19.50.	

Signed: ..... **Date:** .....

KINGSTON ST MARY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 19th MAY 2022
REPORTS TO MEETING

KINGSTON ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2021-2022
SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

PARISH COUNCIL Nick Townsend, after many years as a Parish Councillor, resigned in July and Simon Harris was recently co-opted, bringing the Parish Council numbers back up to eight. Following an Internal Audit recommendation, the Parish Council approved policies covering, 'Complaints', 'Safeguarding' and 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion'.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT The Boundary Commission is proposing that Kingston St Mary Parish be included in a new 'Tiverton and Minehead' Parliamentary Constituency. The Parish Council objected to this proposal as Tiverton and Minehead have very little relevance to Kingston St Mary electors. The Boundary Commission's revised proposals will be published later in the year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT In July the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, confirmed that Somerset would move to a single unitary council from 1st April 2023. The formation of a single Council for the whole of Somerset, will be achieved by combining the four District Councils of Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West & Taunton with Somerset's County Council.

The District Council is in the process of forming a Town Council for Taunton. The Parish Council's Extraordinary Meeting in November made it very clear that residents want Kingston St Mary to remain separate from Taunton and that the proposed Staplegrove East housing development should not be part of our Parish.

The District Council has agreed with the Parish Council's proposals and also recommended that the urban parts of Staplegrove Parish should become part of a new Taunton Town Council and that the remainder of Staplegrove should be merged with Kingston St Mary. The second stage of the consultation, for forming a Taunton Town Council, takes place in June.

PLANNING The Parish Council supported nineteen planning applications during the year and objected to one, being the proposed construction of an integrated wetland on land close to Nailsbourne, designed to allow the Staplegrove housing development to progress.

FINANCE The Parish Council's Precept for the coming financial year will increase by 10%, to a level very similar to the amount raised in 2019/20. The increase is mainly for the Playing Field, which has been significantly underfunded in the past.

GRANTS During the year the Parish Council successfully applied for grants from a number of sources, totalling some £25,000, for Playing Field equipment, the Queen's Jubilee and the Neighbourhood Plan.

LOWER SPEED LIMITS The Parish Council has used its financial resources to reduce speed limits to 20 mph through most of Kingston St Mary Village and to 40 mph along Kingston Road. The new speed limits are scheduled to become effective starting the 19th April.

PLAYING FIELD An improvement project has been launched to regularly maintain the grounds and add additional play equipment, as funding becomes available. Grants have so far been secured to purchase new play equipment, a bench and a shelter, which will hopefully be installed before The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

A very successful Village Fete was held in August to celebrate the easing of coronavirus restrictions.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN The Parish Council has embarked on a Neighbourhood Plan using the Community Plan and the Housing Needs and Climate Change surveys as a starting point. The Neighbourhood Plan will cover a number of policy areas to help the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Annual Parish Meetings is to discuss Parish Affairs. This year's Parish Meeting is a little different from previous years, as it is being held separately from the Parish Council's March meeting and has been combined with the Neighbourhood Plan public meeting.

PARISH COUNCIL

I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors for their support during the past year. They all work very hard and give their time freely to make Kingston St Mary a better place to live. I would also like to thank Katie Gibbins, our Council Clerk, for her continuing hard work and commitment to helping the Parish Council.

Due to the Coronavirus emergency the Parish Council's meeting continued to be held virtually, using Zoom until June last year and have since then have been held in person.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Boundary Commission for England is proposing that Kingston St Mary Parish be included in a new 'Tiverton and Minehead' Parliamentary Constituency. The Parish Council objected to this proposal as both Tiverton and Minehead are located in the west of the proposed constituency and have very little relevance to Kingston St Mary. The Boundary Commission's revised proposals will be published later in the year. Hopefully Kingston St Mary will not be in a Parliamentary Constituency which includes parts of Devon.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In July the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, confirmed that Somerset would move to a single unitary council from 1st April 2023.

This reorganisation of local government, will result in the formation of a single Council for the whole of Somerset. The four existing District Councils, Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset together with Somerset County Council, will be combined into a single Somerset Council.

The current District and County Councils have been working together on plans for the new Somerset Council, which includes the formation of Local Government Networks. There will be between 15 and 20 Local Community Networks in Somerset and they will be committees of the new Somerset Council, headed by elected Somerset Councillors, with their own powers and a budget. Local Community Networks will include the NHS, schools, police, town and parish councils, voluntary groups and other interested parties and meet in local areas. The Local Community Networks will enable the new Somerset Council to think locally, when delivering the services and change that people want.

The Parish Council has already attended a number of meetings and workshops about Local Community Networks, which occupy a lot of its time until April 2023, when Somerset's Council comes into being.

Another feature of Somerset's Local Government Reorganisation is the proposal that Parish and Town Councils can chose to take on additional services and assets, which are currently provided by the District and County Councils. The Parish Council will need to think very carefully, taking the risks, resources and expertise needed before taking on any additional responsibilities.

TAUNTON TOWN COUNCIL

On the 24th November the Parish Council held a very well attended Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting, to obtain residents views on the District Council's proposals to form a Taunton Town Council, from the unparished areas of Taunton and the surrounding parishes, which includes Kingston St Mary.

It was very clear from those attending the meeting that Kingston St Mary should remain separate from Taunton and that the southern part of the Parish that would be in the proposed Staplegrove East housing development, should no longer be part of our Parish.

The District Council has agreed with the Parish Council's proposals and they will be included in the second stage of their consultation, which takes place in June. The review also recommended that the urban parts of Staplegrove Parish, including the proposed Staplegrove housing development, become part of a Taunton Town Council and that the remainder of Staplegrove Parish be merged with Kingston St Mary, as it will have fewer than 37 electors.

PLANNING

The Parish Council was consulted on twenty planning applications during the year and supported nineteen. The one objection concerned the proposed construction of an integrated wetland close to Nailsbourne, designed to sequester phosphates to allow the Staplegrove housing development to proceed. The District Council, approved fourteen of these applications and are still considering five, including the Wetlands application. The one application they refused was subsequently approved on appeal.

The District Council's approval of planning applications is still being delayed by the high levels of phosphates on the Somerset Levels. The Somerset District Councils are jointly working on a solution to the level of phosphates to enable housing developments to progress but it may be some time before this issue is resolved.

FINANCE

Although the Parish Council's Precept for the coming financial year will increase by 10% over this year's level, it will be very similar to the amount raised in 2019/20. The largest increase in spending concerns the maintenance and upkeep of the Playing Field, which has been significantly underfunded in the past.

GRANTS

During the year the Parish Council has successfully applied for and received a number of grants from a number of sources, totalling some £25,000, the main ones is includes:

£1,500 from Somerset Council's Opening Up Safely Fund (stage 1) - Bench;

£5,000 from Somerset Council's Opening Up Safely Fund (stage 2) - Shelter;

£2,500 from Somerset Council's Opening Up Safely Fund (stage 3) – Queen's Jubilee;

£3,000 from the Hinkly Point C Community Fund – Play Equipment;

£3,220 from Somerset County Council for a S106 Grant - Play Equipment;

£10,000 from Groundworks - Neighbourhood Plan.

LOWER SPEED LIMITS

The Parish Council decided to use the Community Infrastructure Levy it received and its own financial reserves to fund a reduction in speed limits, at a cost of £14,000, for:

- a 20 mph speed limit through most of Kingston St Mary Village;
- a 40 mph speed limit on Kingston Road towards the Village;
- extending the 30 mph speed limit along Parsonage Lane.

The new signage to make our roads safer for all road users by reducing the speed of vehicles is scheduled to be installed starting 19th April and take 6 days to complete.

PLAYING FIELD

The Parish Council is working with the Playing Field Management Committee to improve the Playing Field's play equipment and facilities.

During the year the Management Committee launched an improvement project, with the objective of regularly maintaining the grounds and adding additional play equipment, as and when funding becomes available. Grants were secured from District and County Councils and the Hinkley Point C Community Fund to purchase new play equipment, a happy to chat bench and a shelter to provide an informal meeting space on the Playing Field. These additional facilities will hopefully be installed before The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. An application has also been made to the Somerset Community Partnership Fund - Neighbourhood Grants for redecorating the Pavilion and picnic benches for the Playing Field.

A very successful Village Fete funded by the Parish Council was held in August to celebrate the easing of coronavirus restrictions. I would like to thank everyone involved for helping the Playing Field Management Committee organise the Fete, which included many individual volunteers, the Kingston Community Partnership, the Children's Hospice for the South West and of course a big thank you to all the team at the Swan.

PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

This year's Internal Audit Report highlighted the need to formalise a number of the Parish Council's polices. Consequently, in January, the Parish Council approved policies covering, 'Complaints', 'Safeguarding' and 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion,' which are all available to read on the Parish Council's website.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council has embarked on a Neighbourhood Plan using the Community Plan and the recently completed Housing Needs and a Climate Change surveys as a starting point. The Neighbourhood Plan will cover a number of policy areas to help the Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

St Mary's Church Short Report for Kingston St Mary Annual Parish Meeting

Like everyone, we've had another year of juggling and dealing with the effects of covid. The regular Sunday congregation has been dwindling, some feeling too anxious or frail to return but just in recent weeks it feels a little more normal and we are moving to voluntary mask-wearing, whist still keeping everyone safe by maintaining social distancing and good hand hygiene.

We continue to open our building to the community and are delighted to be hosting the toddler group again. We are always open to suggestions!

The medieval building needs constant care which can be a problem with our aging congregation. Most recently we've had some much needed work on drainage done and you may have noticed the beautifully restored cockerel atop the tower. Thanks to volunteer key-holders the building is open every day to drop in.

We are grateful to the many people in the village who help us maintain and run the church, and are always open to more volunteers – in particular this year, the bell-ringers are struggling to find enough people to ring – might you like to try out this brilliant hobby? – You can come along and learn from scratch if you want to give it a try.

We've been delighted to welcome "The Grange" school back to some of our Sunday mornings. New this year we have introduced a monthly all age service at 10am (3rd Sunday of the month) – a more informal style that we hope is accessible to everyone in the village. We look forward to welcoming the primary school back for their special services during this academic year.

As a benefice (group) of local churches, this time last year, we did some thinking and studying about our care for and impact on creation. As a result, Kingston Parish has taken a lead on supporting a local charity "Send a Cow" that no longer sends cows (!) but works with small communities to cope with climate change and establish sustainable farming practices and food production. "Our" project is based in, Migori, Kenya. And, closer to home we've been helped by a group from the village to start "rewilding" a small section of the new churchyard (not currently being used for burials or parking.)

As a result of suggestions from the community we will host a vigil for Ukraine in the church on Tuesday 22nd March at 6pm – all are welcome to join.

Mary and Jan
Rev Mary Styles, Rector and Mrs Jan Holmes, Church Warden
15.3.22

Kingston Community Partnership (KCP) Report to Kingston St Mary Annual Parish Meeting

An update from March 2021 to 2022

Kingston Good Neighbours: The KCP's focus during the crisis had been on the Good Neighbour scheme, working with parish and local councillors to support those in lock down. With support from a Festive Award from SCF, posies and plants were distributed again in 2021 to 65 residents who would be alone or vulnerable at Christmas.

The invasion of Ukraine prompted a group of GN Volunteers under Stephen Jenkin's supervision to form a support group for Ukrainian refugee families and their sponsors. They are helping the families and their hosts with a range of support – food, phones and transport for the families, in addition to the support already coming from the community. Last Saturday saw the first Ukranian 'Cook In' in the VH with five families and their hosts and six students from Taunton International School – a great success. Many thanks to P Daddy's Kitchen (who provided food support to Kingston families during Covid and now to Ukrainian refugees) and to the VH Committee for use of the hall.

A crowdfunding appeal has also raised valuable funds to support hosts and their families, so a big thank you to the donors.

The legacy of the pandemic will be the Good Neighbour Volunteer (GNV) framework covering the Parish, not just to offer support but also giving a communication structure, as we have seen with the distribution of the community surveys and recent notices. We are very grateful to the GNVs for all their efforts.

Neighbourhood Watch: NW was revived in 2020 based on the GNV framework, thanks to the work of Jean Alger-Green initially and now of Mel Panter, and is providing quick notifications through email, WhatsApp and Facebook of suspicious activity and scams.

Environment - Litter picks have continued in the Autumn and Spring, thanks to the support from the community and Jean A-G's organisation.

Youth: The Youth Club restarted in September with sessions on drumming and Circus Skills coaching, and trips to bowling and trampolining, still supported by students from the Grange when they are available.

Speed Watch: Speed Watch restarted in November 2021. The new speed limits through the village and along Kingston Road will give new sites for the team to work from.

Kingston Area Pedestrian & Cycling Campaign (KAPACC) continues to work with TACC (Taunton Area Cycling Campaign), to improve cycle/pedestrian routes on The Cycling&Walking Infrastructure Plan and with Kingston's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group looking at the Kingston Link – an Active Route to Kingston. The Annual Kingston

event in June last year attracted about 30 cyclists and this year's event is planned for 26th June.

Broadband: We are seeing that the parish is more connected by email, WhatsApp and Facebook, but the pandemic highlighted the patchy nature of broadband connectivity across the Parish. The group has monitoring progress from providers but the big news is that cables for Fibre to the Property have been laid to Kingston due to the efforts of Dave Goodman. We await confirmation of developments from the provider.

Housing Needs Survey: The PC agreed in 2020 that the survey should go ahead, that it should be undertaken in house and that they would contribute £500 towards the cost. The KCP agreed to take ownership of the survey and the resulting report. Many thanks to Paolo Van Der Steenhoven for the huge amount of work he undertook on this, which will form the basis of the housing section of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Climate Change: Analysis of responses to the Climate Change questionnaire showed high levels of concern and knowledge, while most of the respondents were keen to learn more. This resulted in the formation of the Climate Change group which you will hear more about in the NP presentation.

Gardening for Wildlife: Permission has been granted by the Woodland Trust to plant yellow rattle and birds foot trefoil in the Spinney, and discussions are in hand with TSIMS to plant wild flowers in the Grange. The PC have given an award towards the cost of seeds, and seed has been purchased to grow plugs to be ready for planting in summer.

Link-Up Report to the Kingston St Mary Annual Parish Meeting 19 May 2022

Link-Up is the parish magazine covering Kingston St Mary, Cheddon and Broomfield. First issue was produced in April 1982 and this year we celebrate our Ruby Anniversary. The magazine is the main source of information to the villages about events, the Churches and information including parish council matters. There are also the useful "yellow pages" – at least 60 advertisers from this April. The magazine is also available online on the KSM website and from this April, the yellow pages will also be there as a standalone document.

More info

- Current print run is 825 – 435 to KSM, 272 to Cheddon, 87 to Broomfield plus additional requested copies
- LU is delivered to almost all households in KSM in a format that is accessible to just about everyone. This is important for the parish council to fulfill their obligations about informing people
- Free to receive and is funded by advertising and donations
- Main cost is now printing which is no longer done in-house
- Produced entirely by volunteers – 4 editors supported by 50 distributors around the three parishes
- Managed by a Board with representatives from each PCC and PC and officers with specific roles
- The Directory of Village Activities and Organisations is also maintained by two LU editors and is available online (KSM website)

Funding

1. The change to external printing was going to be more expensive although we no longer had to finance our inhouse duplicating machine, buy supplies, pay for repairs, hire the hall for collation etc.
2. Advertising alone does not currently cover the full costs of production and a request was made in November 2020 for donations. Monies received from that exercise (over £5000) should help cover production costs over the next couple of years.
3. However recent world events have not excluded LU from the effects of inflation and paper costs have risen significantly - we will continue to monitor expenditure closely.
4. We will again ask for donations in the future and hope that this time all of our parish councils will be able to make a contribution especially as LU is the main conduit for parish council information Amendments have been made to the LU Constitution which we hope will been seen as more favorable in any future donation program

Like any voluntary organization we welcome suggestions about improving LU and meeting the changing needs of the communities it serves. We also would welcome more volunteers to join the board, become an editor or a distributor.

Jean Alger-Green, Secretary to LU/Yvonne Harris, Chairperson

PPLO Parish Path Liaison Officer Report 2020-2022

As PPLO my role is to liaise with the County Council on footpath cutting and problems. In addition on the past year this has taken me about 50 hours cutting paths and hedges. I am helped with footpath cutting by other volunteers, though more are always welcome. My thanks to all who have volunteered.

Footpath faults are usually reported to the council who then copy them to me to see if I can help. Following lockdown the footpaths have been even more heavily used leading to surface deterioration i.e. muddy paths. Usage is reducing so this is improving.
There have been the following issues:

1. Dog mess. Some owners are very good but others seem to think that cleaning up on footpaths is not necessary

2. Increasing use of Apps to guide people round footpaths is leading to frustrations when footpaths are found to be blocked. All walkers would be better advised to check on-line at https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/, part of SCC website prior to choosing a walk. This site not only shows footpaths but also shows which are blocked or diverted. If you find new problems please report them on this site.

Peter Crea

Kingston St Mary C of E Primary School - Notes for KSM Annual Parish Meeting 18/05/22

At the time of last year's meeting we were operating in lockdown with Key Worker and Vulnerable children only attending school, this was about a third of the school. The provision for children in school and at home was the same, although children in school were supported by staff. The children received a mixture of live online lessons recorded online lessons and paper based activities.

This provision continued until June when all the children returned to school for the final half term. During this time, we were working in 'bubbles' with children in different classes separated.
The start of the new (2021-2022) academic year brought fresh hope as we started the year under more 'normal' circumstances. The children mixing for play and lunchtimes, older children leading clubs and activities for the younger children at lunchtimes and whole school assemblies. I felt like I had my school back. This lasted until October half term, when we were put at amber level by Somerset Public Health, this was a South West wide measure agreed by Somerset, Devon and Cornwall public health agencies. This meant a return to separation by 'bubbles' and continued for the rest of the term. For a second year, we were unable to put on Christmas performances as normal.

We had our Ofsted Inspection the penultimate week of the term, at a time when a whole class was out of school due to the number of COVID cases and staff isolating whilst awaiting test results. We came out of our inspection, keeping our good grading.

Due to the nature of how we have had to organise the classes and staff, and the constant uncertainty with staff and pupil case numbers, planning for activities has been difficult. We had an outbreak in January, at one time I had three of my four class teachers off. However, in February, our Year 5 and 6 children got to go on their residential. It was such a relief to send all the children off on the coach on the Monday morning, having had high numbers of children in the class with COVID in the weeks leading up to it. We beat COVID to make the residential happen, only to have to cut it short by a day due to the weather, specifically Storm Eunice. The Local Authority (for the first time in the twenty-five years I have worked for it) asked all schools to close because of the red warning and the coach company didn't want to travel on the Friday. Therefore, the children were picked up at 7pm on the Thursday evening.

Which brings us to this half term, which we have started with positivity as we 'learn to live with COVID'. The children are mixing again and assemblies are happening again, but also this week, the number of children with COVID is rising again.

What has this meant for the children, a real sense of uncertainty, of being excited when we have been able to return to some normality but not knowing how long it will last. Concern, when friends or parents have COVID, they worry about how ill their friends or family members may get, and older children, worry for themselves as well, although the majority of our eldest pupils have now had it, some more than once.

I know that COVID is a big part of this report, but it truly reflects the impact it has had on schools and continues to have regardless of the national message being a return to normality. I had a new TA start in March – she told me, “In the outside world I believed COVID was over, but coming to work in a school, with the high level of absence from it, has made me realise that it’s not.”
The summer term has started positively, we have managed three weeks without any COVID related absence and are looking forward to some of our traditional events happening this term.

Kim Greenslade

Kingston St Mary Village Hall - Report to the Parish Meeting on the year 2021

The Village Hall has survived COVID, in the second year of the pandemic, bookings have been cancelled, income has been reduced and costs have risen.

With this background you will see much progress as the hall has new LED lighting for all the public areas. A hearing loop has been fitted. There are new curtains for windows and stage. The toilets have been replaced with new sanitary fittings, hand basins, water heaters, baby changing, and up to date accessible toilet area, new flooring, new heating and decoration.
The Kingston Players Storage Hut has had a new roof and now stores the flower show tables.

These improvements have been possible as a result of government and local government support during the pandemic, bequests and fundraising by the village hall committee over the preceding years.

The committee is formed from representatives of the village groups using the hall regularly and include, badminton and table tennis club, youth club, gardening club, flower show, art show, Kingston Players and WI.

The Hall is supported by a management committee of Andrew Wilcox, Caroline Spencer, Bob Mills and Lois Miles. I thank all of the committee members and Management committee for their hard work and dedication to providing a well-used village amenity.

2023 will be the village hall centenary year, we hope to continue to support the village and its community and to reflect the community needs. We are actively looking at providing WIFI in the hall subject to being able to fund and support the ongoing costs.

Thank you.
Marcus Anderson Chair of the Village Hall Committee