



[For Environment and Community](#)

Core Team Meeting 22nd April 2026

Present: Kate Moss (Chair), Molly Barltrop (Secretary), Charles Tomalin (Wildplaces Officer), Mike Henchy (Treasurer), Peter de Voil, Mark Ayres, George Smid, Kieran Haycroft, Allan Wall

Apologies: Anna Stockley, Isabelle Garnett, Lisenka Klompenhouwer, Ben Coulthard

Mini-Allotments

- The plan to take over the top plots has not happened yet as **Lisenka** needs to get two or three people interested first.
- **Lisenka** will notify us when a work party is needed to take some of the sheds down. Could the wood go on the village bonfire (Charles Atkinson)? - Waiting on skip to breakdown sheds.
- Solar panels at the allotments: **Lisenka** will research getting someone in to advise. Would need to be a specialist in remote solar panel installation, such as those on caravans/boats. This is on hold.
- Mark has emailed Rob Meadows re keeping water supply to the allotments on the PC agenda. No response as yet. **Mark** to update us as and when something happens.
- Community Orchard: Work parties

Transport Group

- Bikefix: started up again last month, lots of work to do – next session on the 2nd May
- Discussion on the logo, and which colours to use. We decided to stick with the TKC blue and green, however we will need to ensure we get an exact colour match. **Mark** will look into this.
- **Mike** to ensure that Bikefix sessions are promoted on FB.

Energy Group

- **Mark** has taken over thermal camera duties. Waiver needs to be separated from instruction sheet. It has been highlighted it's an old bit of kit and is slowly becoming obsolete – recommending using the phone that comes with it due to the lightning cable being incompatible with other phones.
- **George** is going to think about doing something around home energy. This could be as simple as writing an article/blog to share with the community,

e.g. interviewing folk who have successfully installed and benefitted from air-sourced heating, solar energy etc. George is putting links to articles on our whatsapp group, very much preaching to the converted. Needs to be communicated with a wider audience – **Kate** to share on FB where appropriate.

Tree Planting

- Anna has investigated and Kier doesn't do the tree planting next to highways scheme anymore. **Anna** – any other ideas?

Wildplaces

Workparties since last report - January 2026

We carried out some preparatory work on the site of the proposed new connecting gate between The Common and KC Meadow. It was important to get this done before the start of the nesting season.

We returned to the Horsewater to do further clearance of brambles by the path, and also to clear more reeds and algae from the pond.

Maltings Green got its traditional spring clean, with the butterbur and nettles getting the most attention.

Water testing

It was noted that the Maltings Green pond appears to be bereft of invertebrates, and there is a notable leachate coming from the soil at the northern end (NOT from the spring source). Since these may be connected, we have arranged to meet up with one of the Augean team, who has access to appropriate laboratory and equipment for water testing. Although it is extremely unlikely that Augean operations are in any way connected to the issue, he is keen to assist if he can in identifying the problem.

59 Steps project

On 19th April we completed the 59 steps along the railway path. We actually installed 61 in total, with meadow junction getting two extra after a bit of redesign work at the bottom of the staircase.

I can now sign off the completion report for the NNC/Augean grant providers, although there are a couple more jobs we want to do with the remaining materials.

Installation of the Horsewater bench will be the next task - led by Ian Burrows and Jody Grace. After this we will look to the construction of the boardwalk in the railway cutting - hopefully to complete before the Autumn.

Adders

We have had a very encouraging start to the adder season, with over 20 individuals already identified. We have also seen juveniles from 2025, which is a relief as there was concern that we had not seen any new-borns ('neonates') in autumn last year.

Ian Froggatt has also observed adders mating within the Parish for the first time

The usual crop of lizards, slowworms, and a juvenile grass snake have also been seen,

Parish Council

PNRP

I gave a walkround for Claire Poulton, from Nene Rivers Trust in February, with both our PC chair and clerk. Claire is leading the project to implement Parish Nature Recovery Plans within North Northants villages. Our PC have subsequently declined to be actively involved at this stage due to other major commitments, although I have committed to ensuring that Wildplaces continues to align itself with the values and priorities of the NNC Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Common

The PC have approved the plan to graze the common, and a grant application has been submitted for clearance, flailing and fencing for the site. There will be a need for roughly £3K funding from the PC to release the full grant (common practice in larger grants), which they have approved if it is necessary. I am however looking for a secondary grant to cover this 'donation'. We also need to get further quotes for the work, if the application is successful, so I am working a full specification of requirements.

Village Field

The cricket pitch has been sprayed, levelled and reseeded. The adder zone has been protected so far.

Other stuff

I met with the new Estates Director from F&A George, Harry Thomson, along with Jeanne Atkinson - PC Chair. We inspected the railway path and he is happy with the status and the works we are doing. He has offered assistance if we need significant tree surgery/felling from his own team.

The information boards at Meadow Junction and the Wood Lane entrance to KC Meadow have been cleaned, and David Bedding has made some new train logos for the railway path signage. Unfortunately, we have had to move to Perspex for these as the wooden ones rot away too quickly.

David has also now joined our steering group, so our active members are now:

Bob Stebbings

David Bedding

Ian Froggatt

Ian Burrows

Lisenka Klompenhouwer

Jennie Brownlie

Jody Grace

Footpaths

Kate mentioned the application years ago to make the permissive footpath from the Beech tree up the side of Howard's field a formal footpath. This application was made when access was withdrawn several years ago. At the time we were told that it would take at least 5 years to be processed, and it's now been longer than that. From a walking perspective it's considered very important as it links Willow Lane with the official forest footpaths. – **Kate** has emailed Rob Meadows but no response yet – chase.

The Pytchell

Kate sent a proposal to the PC for us to take on maintenance of The Pytchell, very much in conjunction with the PC. It has been agreed that we will work with the PC to keep the Pytchell 'tidy', including enhancing it where easy, cheap, and not contentious. Beyond that there are ideas for sub-projects that will be managed and funded separately, for example getting access to water, determining what to do with the top end where Mel used to keep her ducks and chickens (currently a mess).

Work parties have commenced, mainly to prune, clear and weed. There will soon be opportunities for planting. In theory we meet the first Saturday of each month 3-5pm after the orchard work party. In practice we sometimes move this due to availability, as currently we're just involving the Pytchell team (Kirk, Kate, Mark, Anna, Nick, plus Jeanne from the PC). Others are welcome to join, however this year we will be focused on trying to see the wood for the trees. Literally!!

Finance

Ideas for projects: The Pytchell and water sourcing on the allotments could be candidates for some spend.

Starting balance: £4421.23

Outgoing:

Web Hosting: £201.60

Email Hosting: £8.40

Fuel for orchard mower (kirk): £9.53

Incoming: None

Ending balance: £4201.70

Communications

- Facebook page ticking along nicely – please continue to post and share on relevant topics - **ALL**. Be careful about which posts you approve from others, make sure you follow the rules and ethos of the page. If in doubt don't approve.
- Website. **Charles** to review Wildplaces content. More content needed to get BLOG going – photos of events etc. **All**
- We agreed on an 'A' frame for bike fix and drop-down banner for TKC. Still need some good quality pictures and need to be emailed to Mark or Kate. **All**
- Not everyone is in WhatsApp group so use email for important comms. **All**
- Mark has put a process in place to send emails to our Members list. If you would like to do so, please send the email to mark@transitionkingscliffe.org.uk and ask him to send it out. The members email address should no longer be used. **All**
- Mark has created a generic secretary@ email address that Molly can use. **Molly** to start using the address, with help to set it up.

Events

Kate has booked the upper community room at KCA for the afternoon of Sunday 19th July. We will have the following speakers:

- **Gareth Richards**, local author & RHS gardener: "Should I care about Weeds?". Why do weeds exist? What can they teach us? How can we harness their unique properties to improve our gardening skills and our diet?
- **Mark & Sheila Grout**: "Growing our Own: A Personal Journey". Kings Cliffe's answer to 'The Good Life' – growing their own since the 1980s, now largely self-sufficient!
- **Clare Thorpe**, RHS peat-free campaign manager: "Going Peat-Free in the Garden". Who go peat-free? How are peat-free composts made? Tips and advice for getting the best results when growing with peat-free composts.
- **Mark** may give us a rain garden update, depending on progress.

The following people have volunteered to help on the day (other than Kate): Mark, Charles, Molly, Kieran, Anna (if not on holiday), Allan, Peter, Lisenka, Sally (Kate's sister). Fabulous! Others would be very welcome.

The following people have agreed to make cake/savouries: Kate, Anna, Molly, Lisenka (the famous sandwich cake!), Penny (jam and possibly cake). We need more but plenty of time for **Kate** to sort that out.

The speakers are all donating raffle prizes... Gareth one of his books, Mark & Sheila a veggie box, Clare TBD. Peter will donate some wine. Kieran mooted the idea of a couple of food vouchers to claim leftovers??

We need a volunteer to run the raffle – **Kate** to sort.

Kate will start to sell and issue tickets throughout May and beyond. 4 have been reserved already, due to people reading the gazette. During May we will start promoting through FB and other channels. Kate has produced a poster for promotional use.

Ideas for future talks:

- Adders by Ian Froggatt, NNC Restoring Nature strategy.
- Home Energy success stories. Anna? Bob Gamble? David Lewis (Ketton Climate Action).
- Karen Mcelvy and Jeni Cairns Herbal Medicines?

Organisational Stuff

Keep going with use of TKC rather than the word Transition – **All**. Use TKC as an umbrella word, so sub-projects become, for example, TKC Wildplaces, TKC Orchard, TKC Allotments, TKC Events, TKC Trees, TKC Energy Group, and so on.

The Secretary is no longer responsible for submitting our article for the gazette each month. Instead, submit your individual entries to Jo: gazette@kingscliffe.church. Make sure you mention that it's to be included in the TKC article. Deadline is generally around the 15th.

AOB

If the PC run a **Christmas Fair** again this year, **Kate** may help with promotion. This will mean TKC get a share of the proceeds, especially if we can also provide some volunteers on the day – nothing heard so far.

National Emergency Briefing film – 50 minutes long, accounts from scientists and naturalists (with a few famous people thrown in) about where we're at currently re Climate & Nature. And as importantly what we can do about it, as individuals and communities. Would be great to organise a live showing in the village, perhaps in the Club. However, we should probably view it ourselves first... **Kate** to investigate.

Next meeting

Wednesday 8th July 7.30pm @ the Club