

# **KINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report highlights the activities and business of the Council for the financial year ending **31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

### **MEMBERS**

Cllr. C.Jones (Chairman)	788567
Cllr. D.Moores (Vice Chairman)	787199
Cllr S Billows	788846
Cllr. J. Cliff	788470
Cllr. F.Crane	787629
Cllr D Crossley	789812
Cllr. D Fletcher	788873
Cllr C Pownall	788823
Cllr D Vickers	733226
Cllr. G. Warburton	788329
Cllr. R.Wilson	787678
Mrs. J Preston (Clerk)	787899

### **Chairman's Report**

This report is my summary of the council's progress since the last report and my first report as chair of the council after having been elected last May. It has been my great pleasure and privilege to serve as Chair of Kingsley Parish Council this year and as you will see below, we have had a busy and productive 12 months. I would like to record a vote of thanks to all members of the council for their considerable efforts and contribution throughout the course of this last year and to all those in the parish who have actively engaged with the work of the council. Thanks must also go to our Borough Councillor, Ralph Oultram, for his continued help and support.

I would also like to place on record special gratitude to Doreen Woods, our long-standing clerk, who decided this year that it was time to retire after 11 years with us. We said goodbye to Doreen in December and wished her well for a healthy and enjoyable retirement. In January, we welcomed Jo Preston as our new clerk and responsible financial officer. Jo has fitted into the council really well and has made a great start in getting to grips with the complexities of the role and the demands of the councillors.

During the course of the year, the council has seen a number of personnel changes and we are very pleased to welcome the following new councillors:

- Sue Billows
- David Crossley
- Chris Pownall
- David Vickers

It is great to have these four new members on the council bringing along their skills and enthusiasm and I do hope that they will find their service on the council an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

Regrettably, we have also seen some departures from the council. The following members decided it was time for them to stand down and I would like to thank them for their commitment and dedication during their time with us:

- Vony Gwillim
- Darryl Riley
- Roy Griffiths
- Mark Goodridge

I would now like to summarise some of the council's key achievements this year and provide an outline of the progress we have made on various village issues.

#### Playing Field

This year, one of our most notable achievements has been our success in terms of receiving grant funding to deliver a path and outdoor gym at Kingsley Playing Field. We have been lucky enough to receive around £55,000 of funding from WREN and Awards for All, as well as contributions from Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) and local business, Forresters. We have recently commissioned contractors in association with our project managers, Groundwork, and we look forward to work starting on site after Easter. We are planning an open event in June and hope that the whole community will help us to celebrate our new recreational facilities.

#### Kingsley and Newton Village Institute

We are delighted that the Kingsley and Newton Village Institute has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months. In May, we agreed to provide a donation to the Institute for essential maintenance and to help the committee get the finances of the building back into good health. We have also made a contribution towards the tennis court refurbishment and it is fantastic news that they have now achieved full grant funding towards the scheme. We look forward to having this great village asset back in use and seeing a new tennis club up and running in the village. Two councillors are represented on the committee at the Institute and we will ensure that the strong links already established with the council will continue.

#### KU17

The Council has agreed again to contribute towards the KU17 youth group and we will work in closer partnership over the next year to look at how the group can start to move towards a more self-sustaining future. The group has some exciting new plans this year and are looking at new ways of fund raising.

#### Communication

We feel that it is important that the Council is seen to be open and inclusive and we are keen to improve our communication with the community in this respect. We are currently working on setting up a dedicated parish council website so that we can present

our agendas and minutes, contact details, key policy documents and other relevant information all in one place. We have recently applied for a domain name (parishcouncilkingsley.org) and hope to go live with the website soon. During the year, we also registered with the Information Commissioner for Data Protection Compliance; we also joined the Cheshire Association of Local Councils to ensure we continue to keep up-to-date with the latest guidance and legislation for parish councils.

The Council continued its liaison with organisations and community representatives throughout the year meeting with groups such as KU17, Kingsley Transition Initiative, our local Police Community Support Officer (Phil Brandreth), the Frodsham Veterans Football Club and Kingsley Trade Initiative.

### New Structures

Earlier in the year we set up a new structure working group to look at how best to streamline our ways of working and reporting mechanisms and as a result, we have set up a number of new committees and working groups, including a Personnel Committee and a Planning Working Group. The planning group has drafted comments to several CW&C planning consultations along with a number of responses to planning applications and the Personnel Committee has had a busy year recruiting the new clerk.

### Traffic and Transport

In terms of traffic and transport, we continue to work hard to solve some of the parking issues in the village. We have recently persuaded CW&C to re-mark the spaces at the community centre car park to make best use of the parking space available there. We are also working with the parking enforcement team at the borough council to ensure that illegal parking outside the Co-op is enforced. We have had some initial discussions with consultants acting for the Co-op about the potential for a new, larger store in the village which could help to solve some of the parking issues along Hollow Lane. We will continue make a strong case for sufficient car parking as part of any new development.

We have met representatives from Kingsley Community Primary School as well as the police, CW&C and several local residents and parents to look at potential solutions in terms of parking, signage and speeding issues in the vicinity of the school. We have also persuaded CW&C to carry out a traffic monitoring assessment of the entire route from Kingsley Road and Hollow Lane through to Mill Lane and the results of this are expected shortly.

In November, we made representations at the Planning Inspectorate appeal enquiry regarding a revision to an existing planning permission for further sand extraction and importation of restorative material at Town Farm Quarry. We formally objected about the greater levels of heavy goods vehicles that will use the quarry as a result of this application and we are working in partnership with an action group in Acton Bridge and Crowton to co-ordinate any future action.

### Village Enhancement

In terms of village enhancement, we carried out some landscaping works outside Kingsley St. John's School replacing some of the old shrubbery with new plants and decorative bark. With the generous help of volunteers, we also replaced some of the vegetation in the three planters at the Cross. The village's Christmas lighting display continues to grow, with the installation of several additional sets of lights this year. We held another successful switch on ceremony for the Christmas lights early in December with the help of the Hurst Church and the Red Bull pub.

In January, we were delighted to be told that we had been successful in our bid to the Woodland Trust for a community tree pack. We have been awarded 105 saplings and we will arrange to plant these shortly with the help of some volunteers. We have also agreed to plant some more mature trees – at The Cross, along Top Road and by St. John's School.

One of the key concerns raised by residents this year was the amount of weeds that were evident on the pavements around the village. We made many attempts to resolve this issue with CW&C who have responsibility for their clearance and whilst it was disappointing that some residents had to remove the weeds themselves after many months of inaction by the borough council, it was pleasing to see people taking positive action to help improve the appearance of their village. We will continue to raise the issue with our borough councillor and with officers at CW&C to ensure that the situation does not get out of control again as the warmer weather approaches.

### Middle Lane Playing Field

During the year, we continued to hold discussions with CW&C about a potential lease of the Middle Lane Playing Field. The transfer of assets from borough councils to town and parish councils is becoming increasingly common and the Council feels that the Middle Lane field could be a valuable additional asset in the Council's property portfolio. Negotiations over a lease with the borough council are continuing and we hope the matter can be progressed shortly. Should the lease proceed, the Council will explore ways to improve the facilities and encourage greater use of the field by the local community.

### Future Capital Expenditure Plans

In August and September, we started some discussions about the council's existing budget and its potential future capital expenditure projects. We identified 2 categories of project – the first related to those existing parish council assets in need of maintenance and potential repair whilst the second related to enhancement projects largely based on actions in the 2012 parish plan. We are lucky in that our precept, along with New Homes Bonus allocations and other potential sources of funding (e.g. Section 106 contributions, grant funds, Ward Councillor budgets) enables us to make progress on some of these capital projects and it will be our priority over the next 12 months to move forward towards implementation of at least some of them.

### Upkeep of Parish Council Assets

Our day-to-day responsibilities have continued as normal and I would like to thank Austin Walker, our gardener and those councillors who have responsibility for keeping the cemetery, playing field and various public rights of way in a safe and well maintained condition throughout the year.

### Summary

As Chairman for this year, I would like to extend my thanks to everyone that has been involved in the Council's activities over the past 12 months. I think we have had some great achievements and we've all worked hard to improve the village for everyone living here. There is still lots to do and undoubtedly there are challenging times ahead but we hopefully have the right structures, procedures and support mechanisms in place to enable us to continue such success in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank all the residents of Kingsley who make this village such a pleasure to live in. The many organisations from churches to schools, youth groups to sports groups, village hall committees to theatre groups all undertake roles which makes this village what it is – a village that I am proud to live in and to serve.

Claire Jones

### **Financial Report**

You have before you the financial statement up to the end of February 2016. This will change slightly when it includes the March income and expenditure. There were some overspends which I will explain. The telephone cost did exceed budget, it has now been decided to move to a BT package to be paid by direct debit which is hoped to cut the cost of the telephone bill. The training budget has been exceeded owing to the Clerk and new Councillors requiring training and you will see the budget for training 2016/2017 has been increased to cover these requirements. The subscription budget was also exceeded owing to the Council's membership of ChALC and again this has been increased for the next financial year. The MB Surveying cost was to help improve the parking availability within the village specifically around the Community Centre.

A grant of £7088 has been received from CW&C to be used for village enhancement. Unfortunately this Community Fund will not be available for the 2016/2017 financial year owing to Council cutbacks.

The Parish Council were pleased to be able to donate £5000 to the Kingsley Village Institute as a contribution towards repairing the tennis courts as well as £1000 towards urgent maintenance costs.

We also funded KU17 Youth Group with a donation of £1500 as they requested. Donations towards the Outdoor Gym Project of £2000 and £4399 have been received from CW&C and Awards for All respectively and we have had a cheque from Forresters towards 2 picnic tables.

You will note the cost of £5375 to WREN. This cost is an administrative fee paid to FCC (via WREN) and in return the Parish receive a donation of £50,000 from WREN towards the Outdoor Gym project.

The budget for 2016/2017 is also before you.

I will try to answer any queries you may have.

Jo Preston

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	£		£
Balance brought forward	50656.37	Salaries Clerk	4183.95
		Admin expenses	274.82
Precept	22150	Telephone	673.22
		Home Working allowance	350
		Hall Hire	240
		Donations	100
		Insurance	1340.88
Bank interest	26.09	Training	304.5
		Audit	331.6
Refund VAT	1706.01	Play area inspections	45
		Subscriptions	410.32
Burials	2120	Salary cemetery worker	2400
		Grounds maint cemet	2030.56
		Playing fields grass	1316.62
		Public rights of way	1062.2
Gym project	2,400		
		Subsidy youth club	1500
Community Fund	7088	Chairman's award	50
Walks Books	2	Parish Plan Delivery	
		VAT	1940.88
Awards For All gym project	4399.45	St John garden/planters	531.68
		Portable Hard drive	80
		Xmas lights etc.	671.26
		Election Fees	197
		Minute Book	124.74
Refund Insurance	68.79	MB Surveying (comm centre)	375
BT Credit	18.99	Village Institute	5000
		WREN 3rd party funding	5375
		Weedkiller	72.95
		Groundwork (gym project)	2605
		Land Registry	6
		Chairmans Workshop	100
		St John garden/planters	531.68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90635.7</b>		<b>33693.18</b>