

KINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2017

INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the activities and business of the Council for the financial year ending **31st March 2017**

MEMBERS

Cllr. D.Moores (Chairman)	787199
Cllr D Crossley (Vice Chairman)	789812
Cllr S Billows	788846
Cllr. J. Cliff	788470
Cllr. F.Crane	787629
Cllr. D Fletcher	788873
Cllr C Jones	788567
Cllr C Pownall	788823
Cllr D Vickers	733226
Cllr. G. Warburton	788329
Cllr. R.Wilson	787678
Mrs. J Preston (Clerk)	787303

Chairman's Report 2017

I would like to pass on my thanks and gratitude to those members of the Council who have made a positive contribution to the work of the Council throughout the year. In addition it is also right and important to remember and recognise the time and effort of all those other people who live and work in the parish and who give up their own time to take an active and positive role in the life of the village.

Thanks must also go to our Borough Councillor, Ralph Oultram, for his continued help, advice and financial support despite being 'out of action' for parts of the year.

I would also like to formally place on record special thanks to the 2 employees of the Council – our Clerk, Jo Preston and our General Assistant, Austin Walker. Jo plays a vital role in helping the Council do its work and it is hard to believe that she has only been in post just over a year. She has adapted to the role well and in addition to mastering all of the important administrative duties, she has also found time to start a new training course and deliver the 'defibrillator' project which will soon see 2 new devices installed in the village.

Austin continues to do his work quietly and effectively and has adapted to his expanded range of duties this year. His work at the cemetery and help in managing the landscaped area outside St Johns and Christmas lights display is much appreciated.

Over the past year, the Council has continued to build on the successes and achievements of previous years.

- With our new Clerk in place, we have continued to identify where new processes and procedures were needed and have sought to adopt those where necessary.
- We have established a new Community Fund that will help to provide support those groups and organisations in the village making valuable contributions to village life.
- In terms of our planning work, we continue to monitor and respond to all planning applications for development within the village and try to represent any views put forward by residents whilst also taking a village wide perspective at the same time.

We have taken a particularly close interest in the ongoing operation of Town Farm Quarry given the significant impact it has on the traffic in the village.

At a strategic level, we have responded to relevant consultations from CWAC including the proposed revisions to the CWAC Local Plan Part 2 and are being proactive in discussing with them, how we can perhaps help to review other plans and policies that affect the village.

For some of the past year, we have also been considering whether Kingsley should produce its own Neighbourhood Plan and are in the process of gathering information and taking advice on how that might be progressed.

- We have continued to try and improve the environment and facilities within the village. The new path, adult and junior gym equipment have been installed on the playing field which was opened with a family event last year. Use of the playing fields has increased significantly over the past few years and hopefully we can build on this success and deliver further improvements there soon.

New ‘street’ trees have been planted in various locations around the village to help improve the appearance of the village and we also hope to have our much missed but newly restored sign back for The Brow soon !

- I’m also pleased to report that the Council is taking a more strategic approach to address the many concerns often raised about car parking. A new focussed working group has been established to look into the problems and consider a range of solutions. A local survey has already been carried out to try and get a better understanding of what the problem is. We are hopeful that with this better baseline information, we can now work with all relevant parties to identify and deliver some practical solutions.
- The Council has also continued its liaison with relevant organisations and community representatives throughout the year meeting with groups such as KU17 (now KYG), Kingsley Transition Initiative, and our local Police Community Support Officers. We have also begun to establish better and stronger links with Councillors from neighbouring parishes to discuss important cross boundary issues.

- With regards to our finances, we have been able to set a budget for 17/18 that will help us to deliver our priorities whilst not increasing the precept. We have also taken to steps to identify other important projects for delivery in 2017/18 that will be delivered through use of external funds and our own reserves. Plans are being developed to improve the layout and appearance of certain sections of the cemetery, and other part of the village including further work at the playing fields and at The Cross.

Summary

This is the second time I have had the honour of being Chair of this Council and I would like to extend my thanks to everyone that has been positively involved in the Council's activities over the past 12 months.

I wish my successor, in May, well and will offer whatever support I can to help them and the rest of the Council continue to make Kingsley the great place it is to live.

Danny Moores

Community Fund Working Group 2017

In February 2016, the Parish Council established a Working Group to look into the possibility of providing a Community Fund. The purpose of the fund would be to allow groups within the Parish to undertake projects which they could not afford to fund themselves and which would benefit the residents and their children within the Parish of Kingsley.

Following on from the work undertaken by the Working Group, in April 2016, the Parish Council formally approved the formation of the Community Fund for the use of community groups within Kingsley Parish.

In November 2016, the Parish Council invited groups or organisations within the Parish of Kingsley to submit a bid for a grant of up to £1,000. The application process required groups to provide details of their structure, to provide previous years accounts and details of the project they wished to undertake. The closing date for bids was 31st January 2017.

Bids were received from four organisations within the village, and these were reviewed and assessed by the Community Fund Working Group, and the findings were put in a report before the February 2017 Parish Council meeting for approval. Organisations and groups will be advised by 31st March 2017, whether they have been successful, and funds will be issued in April 2017. Details of the groups and organisations will be published in Kingsley News and on the village website.

It is proposed that the Community Fund becomes an annual event providing further funding for projects within the village, this will require approval of the Parish Council at a meeting later in the year.

David Crossley

Village Car Parking Working Group 2017

The Village Car Park Working Group was set up at the January 2017 Parish Council meeting, following on from work undertaken by a small group of Councillors who undertook a survey at the end of 2016. The survey set out to determine; who was parking on Hollow Lane in the village centre and for what periods, and what purpose. This followed concerns that the parking of vehicles on both sides of the road was causing severe restriction at times to through traffic flow and raising the potential for possible traffic incidents.

The survey and subsequent report to the Parish Council in January 2017 determined that the long stay parking (in excess of 8 hours per day) was attributable to staff from Kingsley St John's School and staff associated with local retail outlets. There was also continuous short stay parking (5 minutes or less) throughout the day with people using the Co-op and Pharmacy.

The Working Group is now looking at possible ways to resolve long stay parking in the village and considering ways of providing long stay parking in alternative locations, and also looking to extend its remit to look at a village wide review of parking. The Working Group will be consulting key stakeholders in the village with regards to their usage and requirements and will seek to consult with the residents on any proposals prior to implementation. The Working Group reports at each Parish Council meeting on its progress and will seek full Council approval for any recommendations.

David Crossley

Playing Fields Report for 2016/17

A bonfire, organised by Medcare, was held on the field together with a fantastic firework display. The weather was good and the event was well attended.

A survey of the trees surrounding the field has been undertaken by CWAC and a contract let for those requiring urgent attention. Unfortunately the recent strong gale force winds caused one of those trees identified for removal to fall onto one of the Highbank Road properties.

The play area continues to be well used. No major repairs to the play equipment has been required over the past year. The bulbs have been replaced in the solar powered lights, resulting in one of them now working. Further investigation is continuing to restore the second light.

The path running around the Playing Field has been installed and is proving very popular with all age groups. A number of pieces of adult gym equipment have also been installed and are being well used. Junior gym equipment was installed towards the end of the year. Two picnic tables have also been placed close to the gym equipment.

For insurance purposes the play and gym equipment continue to be inspected on a weekly basis by the Parish Council and an annual inspection is carried out by an independent body. This annual inspection of the play equipment was completed with only minor actions needing to be undertaken.

The Kingsley Litter Pick continue to help keep the playing field clear of litter, as do many of the dog walkers.

I would also like to thank the team who open and close the gate leading into the playing field.

David Fletcher

Cemetery Report 2017

As the Board Room at the cemetery is being used more for storage of Council Papers, and other items, it was decided to remove the worn and rotten wooden floor and replace with concrete. Local builder Nick Mort was given the contract and work should start any day now. While the Boardroom is empty during this work, it will be repainted inside and out. Howard Morrall will commence work as soon as the building work is complete.

We have appointed a new contractor to trim the cemetery grass during the coming season. Sunrise Gardens are a local company, and I am confident they will do a good job.

A survey of the trees in the cemetery was carried out earlier in the year by CWAC. No major problems were found, and all survived storm Doris. However, some pruning and removal of dead wood is required. Three quotes from tree surgeons have been obtained and one will be appointed soon to carry out the work.

Plans are being drawn up to design a new area for cremation plots in the new section of the cemetery. This work will hopefully be carried out later this year when quotations have been received.

Further plans are also being drawn up to improve the area around the War Memorial, to make it more accessible for people. Once agreed, this work will also be carried out this year.

Graham Warburton

Traffic and Transport 2017

We have continued to work hard to solve some of the parking and highways issues in the village. In the last year CW&C have painted new parking spaces at the Community Centre car park which has created a further five or six new parking spaces. Our thanks our due to Nicola Gibson, a local architect, who arranged a survey of the site and made this suggestion.

We also continue to work with the parking enforcement team at the Borough Council to ensure that illegal parking outside the Co-op is enforced. Discussions have taken place with management at Hollands Pharmacy and the Co-operative regarding this issue. As a consequence CW&C have agreed, and are scheduled, to paint vertical yellow 'blips' along the kerbs around the Cross, making it an offence to park adjacent to them for any length of time.

Last year we had number of meetings at the Kingsley Community Primary School with 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. CWAC have since carried out a traffic monitoring assessment of the entire route from Kingsley Road and Hollow Lane through to Mill Lane. As result a 20 mph speed limit has been implemented in Middle lane. Further discussions are taking place to deal with speeding in Hollow Lane

Following a report of traffic accidents at the junction of Top road, Guest Slack and Delamere road CW&C engineers have visited the site and installed a sighting mirror at the junction. The KPC will continue to monitor this

At the beginning of the year the national Planning Inspectorate permitted an extension of the existing planning permission for further sand extraction and importation of restorative material at Town Farm Quarry even though the Parish Council formally objected about the greater levels of heavy goods vehicles driving through the village. Subsequently ,three local councils (Kingsley, Acton Bridge and Crowton) have had regular meetings throughout last year with the Mineral Planning authority of CW&C at Winsford in order to monitor this site and at our suggestion a new site survey has been undertaken .This is an ongoing issue for the village

Chris Pownall & David Vickers

Village Enhancement 2017

Following the successful application to the Woodland Trust, the Council was pleased to accept a community tree pack consisting of 105 saplings. During the summer months, these were planted on the playing field by various groups in the village including KU17, St Johns School, the Cubs and the Guides. A number of saplings were moved later in the year to more sustainable locations on the field and many of them are now growing well. Some hedges and bushes were also cleared in the playing field to improve visibility for users of the new path.

The Council has made some initial investigations in relation to improving the area around The Cross on the pharmacy side of the road. Various suggestions have been made, including removing the green bollards and replacing them with shorter wooden posts, replacing the present planters and replanting and extending the present grassed verge. Further investigations are in progress.

The Council are very grateful to Mr & Mrs Tweedie who very kindly planted 200-300 bulbs in the garden by St Johns School. Several councillors also helped to tidy and mulch this area and a tree was planted. A number of trees were also planted on various roadside verges around the village to replace a number of dead or dying trees. In addition, we cleaned, sanded and refurbished 9 benches near to pavements and footpaths and in the cemetery.

The Council has agreed to widen the wooden barrier adjacent to the playing field car park for better accessibility on the path down to the community centre. This work will be carried out shortly and a noticeboard will also be put up in the car park thanks to a donation from Councillor Ralph Oultram's Ward Councillor budget.

The Council once again put on a display of Christmas lights in the village. We would like to thank Woodhouse Ltd for their help in testing and fixing the lights on the tree outside St John's School and at the Brow.

Finally, we were very pleased to receive a grant from the British Heart Foundation for 2 outside defibrillators at the pharmacy and the Kingsley & Newton Village Institute. The machine outside the KNVI is now up and running and the other one will be installed shortly.

Claire Jones

Financial Report 2017

You have before you the financial statement up to the end of February 2017. This will change slightly when it includes the March income and expenditure.

There were some overspends which I will explain. The General Assistant's salary shows an overspend which was caused by the salary increase for the year. Please note that both the General Assistant and the Clerk will be entitled to a further pay rise in 2017/2018, which will be discussed at a future council meeting, though funds have been allowed in next year's budget to cover such a cost if agreed by Council. The training budget has been exceeded owing to the Clerk training for the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the cost of £250 took half the training budget, next year the budget should be sufficient. The CiLCA training has just been completed by the Clerk who is waiting for the results. The Play Area Inspections now cost double owing to the Inspectors having to check the new gym equipment as well as the original children's play area. This will be budgeted for in next year's budget.

The Outdoor Gym Equipment cost of 62,635.07 was mainly covered by grants obtained through the hard work of Councillor Jones. Donations were gratefully received from Councillor Oultram via the Members Budget and also Forresters. £4,287.97 came from parish council funds with a small amount raised at the Open Day. £1466.33 was claimed from the S106* money due, with a further sum still to be received.

Earmarked Reserves are funds held by the parish council in order to fund village enhancement capital projects. £4000 is kept in reserve in case of a bye election when the parish council would have to meet the costs. £23,848 are at present held in reserve which has mainly come from a New Homes Bonus, so this is a once and only available pot. Councillors are at present considering various projects which would benefit the village.

The budget for 2017/2018 is also before you.

I will try to answer any queries you may have.

Jo Preston
Kingsley Parish Clerk

*Section106 - contribution from developers towards community projects.