

## **KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2019 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

My report as Chairman is intended to give a brief overview of the work of the parish council (PC) over the past year.

In addition to the annual parish meeting, the PC is only required by statute to meet three times a year. However, throughout 2018/19 we have chosen again to continue to meet every month.

Throughout most of the past year the council has comprised nine parish councillors who have been responsible for the following remits:

- Amenities and the Rec – Cllr William Dowling
- Cemetery – Cllr Jacqui Creed
- Communications and website – Cllr David Wood
- Finance, Governance and Policy Committee Chair– Cllr Ronnie Irving
- Footway lighting – Cllr Bob Burrell
- Planning Committee Chair – Cllr Tom Forde
- Traffic calming – Cllr Richard Sykes
- Tree Warden - Cllr Michael Bailey
- Playing Fields Association Rep – Cllr Susanne Read-Maskell

Towards the end of 2018 Cllr Roger Burne retired as a councillor due to deteriorating health and family commitments. To facilitate his attendance, council meetings were until then held in the Oman Room in the churchyard but have since reverted to being held in the first floor Astrop Room of the Memorial Hall. Three new councillors, Mrs Janet Woodford, Mr Antony Alcock and Mr Lindsay Ross Field were co-opted onto the council as of this month's council meeting bringing the council to a membership of twelve.

Councillors also serve on the PC's two standing committees – the Planning Committee and the Finance, Governance and Policy Committee (FG & P) - and some also sit on working groups such as the Flood Review Group, which make recommendations to the full council.

Representatives of the PC also sit on the village Playing Fields Association committee, and, as its nominees, act as trustees of the Poor's Allotment charity and the Millennium Memorial Hall and Health Centre.

The PC has also appointed wardens who are not themselves councillors but oversee the parish footpaths and the war memorial on its behalf – during the past year these roles have again been undertaken by Mr D Hall and Mrs A Burrell and Mr A Waite respectively.

All full council and committee meetings are open to the public with agendas published on the council noticeboards and website. It has been pleasing to note that this year's meetings have been routinely attended by members of the public – on one occasion by around twenty people!

A range of issues have exercised councillors over the past twelve months. These have included the following - separate reports giving more details of these and other areas of council work are available at the meeting:

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- Responding to the proposed reorganisation of Local Government in Northamptonshire - to which the PC responded by stating our preference for the creation of three rather than the proposed two unitary authorities
- Responding to the loss of the 499 bus service from/to the village led the PC to explore a number of options including the possible provision with other villages of a Community Bus with volunteer drivers. Ultimately the decision was taken to limit the PC's involvement to increasing the provision of the existing fortnightly "Thursday Bus" service to each week and extending its use to include residents from Aynho
- The purchase of adjacent land to enable the Mill lane cemetery to be extended – a small Working Group has been formed to pursue this project which is now well advanced
- The formal acceptance of the transfer of care and maintenance of the parish churchyard from the church parochial council
- Consultation with Brackley Medical Centre on the closure of the village doctor's clinic
- Facilitating meetings of residents of Wales Street regarding the property level resilience (PLR) scheme to alleviate flooding and an open meeting and community surface water catchment area walk with a civil engineer from the county council's Pathfinder project
- Financial assistance has been provided to a number of village organisations: to the Primary Academy "LITS for the KIDS" project. The PC continues to sponsor the Youth Club that meets at the Memorial Hall; the Thursday Bus to and from Banbury; the King's Sutton in Bloom competition and the village Garden Club Annual Show. A grant of £500 was also provided to the local Citizens Advice Bureau

The PC's finances and reserves, which are externally audited, remain sound and appropriate for the services the PC provides. This has enabled the use of reserves to hold down the budget precept for the coming financial year to £68,100 representing a 3% increase for a Band D property.

It is appropriate here to once again place on record our indebtedness to our excellent parish clerk who also doubles up as our Responsible Finance Officer. This year her workload has been somewhat compounded by the need to ensure compliance with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Finally I wish to draw attention to one of the consequences of the local government reorganisation, namely the deferring of the parish council elections. These were due to take place this year but are now scheduled for May 2020. At that election the number of councillors in the parish is to be reduced from 15 to 11 and I would encourage all eligible residents to consider standing for the positions.

Bob Burrell

Chairman – King's Sutton Parish Council

April 2019