

## **KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL (KSPC)– CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

As the outgoing Chairman, my annual report would normally be presented to the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held in April each year. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the outgoing parish council (PC) has decided not to hold the APM and instead to publish this report via the council website and the 'King's Sutton Times', and invite comments and questions via the parish clerk's email address (clerk@kingsuttonpc.org.uk).

### **Parish Council organisation**

In addition to the Annual Parish Meeting, the PC is only required by statute to meet three times a year. However, throughout 2020/21 we chose again to continue to meet every month – using virtual Zoom meetings instead of face-to-face meetings.

All virtual council and committee meetings have been open to the public with agendas published on the council noticeboards and website. Despite the technical challenges, members of the public have attended a number of our virtual meetings. At the time of writing it is anticipated that normal face-to-face meetings may resume in May following the PC election.

Throughout most of the past year the council has comprised eleven parish councillors each of whom have individual remits of responsibility – a full list of councillors and their remits is given at the end of this report.

The PC employs one person, Liz Hart, who acts as both Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. King's Sutton PC is extremely fortunate to have found such a diligent, committed and efficient clerk to take the place of her equally excellent predecessor, Anne le Druillenec.

In addition to their individual remits, councillors also serve on the PC's two standing committees – the Planning Committee and the Finance, Governance and Policy Committee (FG & P) – both of which make recommendations to the full council. Both committees have continued to hold their full normal schedule of meetings via Zoom throughout the lockdown.

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 Dave Hall and Anne Burrell and Andrew Waite respectively. Anne Martis was recently appointed Tree Warden.

The whole council will be up for election on May 6 this year.

### **Pandemic**

Of course it has not just been meetings that have impacted by the pandemic lockdown. I wish express the PC's thanks to those villagers who -

- organised the Community Spirit group to assist vulnerable village residents at the start of the lockdown. On behalf of the PC, the parish clerk collected the

## **KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL (KSPC)– CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

food boxes from the district centre and delivered them to the group for distribution each week

- set up the PC's Astrop Road Bus shelter as a village library
- complied with the request not to allow young children onto the play equipment on the Rec when its use was prohibited during the lockdown

### **Activities during the past year**

I now give a brief summation of the work of the parish council over the past year.

#### **Planning**

36 applications/information notices from the planning authority have been considered.

#### **Cemetery**

The PC has continued to pursue the purchase of land to form an extension to the Mill Lane cemetery. Consultation with the landowners, the planning authority and various experts is ongoing with the intention of submitting a planning application shortly.

Substantial maintenance work on the cemetery trees has been undertaken costing £1350.

Action to resolve complaints relating to the presence of wasp nests/ badger damage to graves has been carried out.

The PC has now taken over responsibility for grass-cutting in the parish churchyard and has set up a Liaison Group with the Parochial Church Council to consider churchyard related issues.

#### **Traffic calming**

An additional installation point for the Vehicle Activated Speed signs has been provided at the village entrance on Mill Lane.

Repeated representations have been made to the Highways Authority for road surface improvements in the village - particularly in Orchard Way, Astrop Road and Mill Lane.

The Highways Authority and Police have also been consulted to jointly explore what traffic calming measures might be introduced to reduce speeding traffic in Whittall Street, Banbury Lane and elsewhere.

#### **Footway lighting**

The PC has switched its electricity provider from EON to Yu Energy as the latter company offers significant savings on the PC's bill for footway lighting energy.

At the request of residents, a review of the adequacy of footway lighting in some areas of the village has commenced.

#### **The Rec**

The PC is investigating the cost of providing an all-weather surface to eliminate the mud and slip hazards experienced in wet weather within the enclosed toddler area.

# **KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL (KSPC)– CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Rights of Way**

Due in large part to the persistence of the PC's ROW warden in his discussions with landowners, kissing gates have continued to replace stiles (which present an obstacle to access for some people) on a number of village footpaths.

New village historic plans and walks leaflets were designed, produced and delivered to every village household.

## **Grants**

Following requests for financial assistance, the PC awarded the following grants during the year:

- £3000 to King's Sutton Pre-School for repairs following flooding
- £1500 to the Cricket Club for the purchase of mower
- £1884 to the Playing Fields Association for roof repairs
- £200 to the Volunteer Driver Service

## **Budget 2021/22**

The PC has set a payments budget of £85,509 and a receipts budget (excluding precept) of £9,050.

Rather than having to consequently raise the PC's element of Council Tax precept by an unacceptably high 9.8%, it was decided to limit the increase to 3% by reducing general reserves by £4,765 to an estimated £49,711.

This is considered prudent financial policy given the current economic uncertainties and the forthcoming changes to local government organisation.

## **Other matters**

Following the positive reception to the installation of a Xmas tree on the village green - made possible by generous donations of the tree, lights, container and hardcore filling – the PC has resolved to make such provision itself in future.

## **Outgoing Councillors**

Bob Burrell (Chairman of Council)

Ronnie Irving (Vice-Chairman of Council)

Tom Forde (Planning Committee Chair)

Susanne Read-Maskell (Amenities and The Rec)

Jacqui Creed (Cemetery)

Tony Alcock (Assistant to Cemetery)

David Wood (Communications)

Ross Field (Lighting)

Janet Woodford (Traffic Calming)

## **KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL (KSPC)– CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Richard Sykes (Traffic Calming) – resigned during year

Michael Bailey (Tree Warden) – resigned during year

During the year vacancies on the council were made up by the following co-options:

Ben Humphrey

Rosina Filippelli

David Loughran

Joan Patterson

Adrian Barry (Police Liaison Representative)

### **Parish Council election May 6 2021**

A number of the above outgoing councillors will be standing for re-election at the forthcoming election. However I wish to place on record my particular thanks – and I'm sure the thanks of the whole community – to Tom Forde, who after some 20 years' service on the parish council (not least as the incomparable chairman of the Planning Committee), has decided to not seek re-election.

Bob Burrell, outgoing Chairman KSPC

April 2021