

KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

In addition to this annual parish meeting, the parish council (PC) is only required by statute to meet three times a year. However, throughout 2016/17 we have again continued to meet every month.

Individual councillors continue to be responsible for the council's remits:

- amenities;
- communications;
- the cemetery;
- street lighting;
- the Rec;
- traffic calming;
- trees.

Councillors also form 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 current Flood Alleviation Group (FAG), which make recommendations to the full council. (Separate reports giving details of the work of each of these council remits and committees are available at the meeting).

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

The PC also has appointed wardens who are not themselves councillors but oversee the parish footpaths and the war memorial on its behalf.

In order to facilitate the attendance of one of its members who is disabled, meetings of the Planning Committee and the full PC are now held in the Oman Room in the parish churchyard – meetings of the FG & P continue to be held in the first floor Astrop Room of the Memorial Hall.

The main issues that have exercised councillors over the past twelve months have included the inconsiderate parking around the play park in the Rec, the proposed amendments to the village conservation areas (CA) and the ongoing campaign to secure funding for the Wales Street flood alleviation scheme.

The August meeting of the PC attracted a record number of public attendees who made clear their concerns that parked vehicles were putting the safety of children visiting the Rec and other road users at risk. These views helped inform the PC's subsequent application to the Highways Authority for parking and speed restrictions along The Knob, Astrop Road and Richmond Street – the outcome of the public consultation on these measures should become known shortly.

The district council's review of the two historical conservation areas (CA) within the village were outlined at our September meeting. In response the PC arranged a public forum to assist us in preparing a comprehensive response detailing our critique of several of the proposals which included the removal of the Rec from the CA and

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establishing a separate CA for Astrop. At the time of writing the decision of the district council has just been received and has not yet been considered by the PC.

Our November meeting was addressed by a representative of South Northants District Council who dropped the completely unexpected bombshell that they were considering withdrawing their support for the Wales Street flood alleviation scheme. Members of the PC's Flood Alleviation Working Group under the inspired leadership of Cllr Tom Forde (and with the notable support of district/county councillor, Cllr Ian Morris) are to be commended on retrieving the situation and ensuring that the scheme remains alive.

The PC's finances and reserves, which are externally audited, remain sound and appropriate for the services the PC's provides. The budget precept for the coming financial year has been set at £59,720 representing a 2% increase for a Band D property. Amongst other things, this will allow the PC to undertake a substantial upgrade of the cemetery pathways and set aside some finances for its future extension. It will also allow us to continue to underwrite the room hire payments of the Youth Club and the hire charges of the Thursday shopper bus. On behalf of myself and all councillors I once again wish to place on record our indebtedness to our excellent parish clerk who doubles up as our Responsible Finance Officer.

It is with some regret that I conclude my report with a number of valedictions -

We say goodbye at this annual parish meeting to fellow parish councillors Carole Hill and Walter Mullis who have tendered their resignations after many years of dedicated service to the community. With their departure the number of parish councillors falls to 9 and accordingly we encourage expressions of interest from residents for co-option onto the council.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge the very real support the village has received throughout their period of office from our outgoing county councillor, Ron Sawbridge and as our district councillor, Ian Morris, who have both announced that are also standing down from their roles. We hope to develop equally rewarding relationships with their successors.

All full council and committee meetings are open to the public with agendas published on the council noticeboards and website. Please be assured you will be made welcome!

Bob Burrell

Chairman – King's Sutton Parish Council

April 2017