

KEDINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

25th MAY 2021

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020/2021

The past fourteen months has been an unprecedented time for all parishes including Kedington. The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact not only on the community we serve but, on the way Kedington Parish Council and other Parish Councils conducted their daily business. Kedington Parish Council did not have any meetings in April, May or June 2020 and in July 2020 undertook to do virtual meetings via Zoom in line with Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. This was a new experience for all Councillors but one they coped with very well. With Government not extending the regulations to allow Councils to hold remote meetings beyond 6th May 2021, face-to-face meetings have now returned.

Kedington Parish Council worked extremely hard during the pandemic and continues to do so. We supported our parishioners and worked with other agencies, including Unity Trust, GP Federation. Kedington Parish Council volunteers delivered a fantastic service to our residents. My personal thanks to my fellow councillor, Stella Wilsher, Sharon Eames, Tony Steel, Jo Johnson-Stokes who worked tirelessly to ensure our residents were supported. Our Parish Clerk, Marion Farrant ensured all the correct paperwork and risk assessments for volunteers were all place. I must extend my thanks to Kedington Community Association who without their support and allowing us to use the Community Centre, the volunteer network for our village would not have succeeded.

At Christmas the usual visit of Santa and his Sleigh to the village organised by Haverhill Lions was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Myself and Councillor Wilsher along with two other village residents went above and beyond to organise some "special" visitors to our village for the children to see. Father Christmas (aka Richard Payne), Mrs Christmas (aka Terri Starling) and myself and Councillor Wilsher as Elves went around the village in Richard's Army Jeep decorated as a "sort of sleigh". The Parish Council purchased some sweets for the children and the whole evening was a fantastic success with the "special" visitors being driven around the village in the "sleigh". The Christmas visitors also visited Eastcotts Nursing home where the residents and staff were absolutely delighted. I would like to offer my thanks to all concerned for giving some Christmas cheer to the village.

Kedington Parish Council has continued to keep the village maintained to the highest standards possible. M D Landscapes (Anglia) Ltd cut most of the grassed areas in the Parish, i.e. the Church Yard, Great Meadow, Silver Street Park, Old School Playing field, Calford Green and some other smaller areas around the village. Other areas in the village are maintained by West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. RMS Tree Services (based in the village) carried out the strimming contract once again in 2020 and this keeps The Cut, Watermill Field and other areas in the village neat and tidy. Mortimer Contracts Ltd are a new contractor who has been working for us doing various jobs; they did a fantastic job in cleaning all the play equipment and outdoor fitness equipment before we were allowed to “open” them up again last July. Mr Dennis Brownlow our Village Cleaner continues to keep the Parish clean and tidy from litter. The Parish Council’s Crossing Supervisor, Mrs Pauline Beasley, continues to ensure the children cross the busy road in West End Lane safely on their way to and from school.

Within the last twenty-four months, the Parish Council has installed twelve new dog bins and one new litter bin, with four other litter bins getting new metal liners. The bandstand/gazebo in Silver Street Park was completely re-furbished to a very high standard in the Autumn of 2020. The lower and raised beds in Silver Street Park continued to be maintained by the Parish Council.

The Youth Shelter on the Great Meadow had a complete new roof in 2020 and will be repainted shortly.

The Parish Council monitors the play equipment on Old School Playing Field aided by Monthly and an Annual Play Inspection Report facilitated at no cost to the Parish Council by West Suffolk Council. Any defects reported are repaired as soon as possible after they have been reported. The picnic benches on the playing field will be refurbished soon and it is hoped that they will not be ruined again by needless graffiti carved into the wood. Rubber matting has also been installed under the picnic benches to give a more stable surface for users, especially for wheelchair users.

Dog fouling seems to be an ongoing constant issue within the Parish, despite the number of dog bins provided. Dog and litter bins are provided by the Parish Council who also pay for these to be emptied at a cost to the Parish of £5,200.56 per annum.

Kedington Parish Council dealt with? Planning Applications during the past year. The Parish Council **objected** to application and had **no objections** on (two applications were not circulated). St Edmundsbury Borough Council **granted** seventeen applications and one application was **refused**.

In the financial year 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021, £3,319.95 were paid out in grants under Sn 137, LGA 1972 as being of benefit to local people. Grants were awarded to:

East Anglian Air Ambulance
Kedington United Football Club
The Royal British Legion
Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
Kedington Primary Academy
1st Kedington Rainbows
Kedington Community Association
Kedington Volunteers (Christmas sweets for Santa's trip round village)
Magpas Air Ambulance
Citizens Advice West Suffolk
Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley
1st Kedington Scouts

The Parish Council also received a £10,000 **Covid-19 Grant** (not anything to do with Sn 137, LGA 1972) from West Suffolk Council. A £7,500 grant from this money was awarded to Ketton Early Birds to pay for repairs to their building.

The Great British Spring Clean Event was not held in our Parish this year (2021) due to the pandemic, but hopefully we will be able to facilitate this again next March (2022). My thanks to our Councillors, our Clerk Marion and residents who have assisted in 'picking up rubbish' around our village.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous Chairman, Simon McGuire and Vice-Chairman, Joe Harrison for their service to Kedington during their time on the Parish Council. I would also like to thank Heather Carre-Skinner who has now moved to Wickhambrook, and no longer eligible to serve Kedington. Thanks also to Justin Waite, who left the Parish Council due to work commitments. I wish them all well.

Kedington Parish Council has four new Parish Councillors who were co-opted onto the Parish Council within the last six months and I am sure they will continue to work hard for our parishioners. They are Karen Barber, Tracey McCallister, Debbie Pateman and James Stranger who will work alongside myself as Chair, Stella Wilsher as Vice-Chair and Terry Wheeler who has served the Parish as a Councillor and previous Chair for the last thirty years.

The last 14 months has seen the introduction of our new website for Kedington Parish Council (www.kedington.suffolk.cloud). The website is regularly updated but is still a work in progress. In January 2021, the Parish Council introduced new model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and has introduced new Policies and Procedures and updated some of our old ones. Again this is a work in progress and Policies will be updated as and when new legislation is implemented. The Parish Council has purchased a new accountancy package, "SCRIBE" so all accountancy work will be

carried out by the Parish Council's Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. SCRIBE is an accounting system specifically designed for Town/Parish Councils.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Accountant, Bridget Turner who resigned in March 2021 after being in post for the last 18 years.

It is with great sadness we say goodbye to our Parish Clerk, Marion Farrant, who will be retiring from the Parish Council on 31st May 2021. Marion has been a great ambassador for our Parish and has served the community for the past 15 years. Marion has gone above and beyond to support Councillors and residents of Kedington. My personal thanks to Marion and I have no doubt she will continue to assist us in the forthcoming months.

Marion to speak ...

Our new Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, John Boxall is a local man and was appointed to the post on 26th April 2021. John has been "shadowing" Marion over the past five weeks and he has joined us with the enthusiasm that Marion will leave behind.

Ann Naylor - Chair
Kedington Parish Council
25th May 2021