

KNIGHTON ON TEME PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014.

MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES.

Details of members of the Council are given at the end of this report. The vacancy at the start of the year was filled by the co-option of Mrs Kay Redfern in November, all other Councillors having served previously. At the meeting on 7th May 2013, Mr John Rugman was elected Chairman, and Mr Clive Bevan was elected Vice-Chairman.

MEETINGS.

Agendas and minutes are placed on village notice boards and copies are available on request to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

There were 11 meetings during the year. The Council met all planning application deadlines during the period. The attendance level of Councillors at the monthly meetings was 75% against 65% in the previous year. A member of the public attended just one meeting, well down on previous years; Ken Pollock of the County Council attended 5 meetings and sent reports to a number of others. The Council was given a presentation on Neighbourhood Watch, and on affordable housing by a representative of West Midlands Housing Association.

The Council has encouraged attendance by members of the public who are given an opportunity to participate during the informal Public Question Time. The low level of attendance this year will be reviewed at a future meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS.

Agendas, minutes, the annual report and other documents of interest, are posted on notice boards and in the Parish Room, and reports are included in "Teme Span". The Worcestershire edition of County Association of Local Councils (CALC) are circulated to all Councillors via email which is also used for planning documents-see below.

PLANNING AND HOUSING.

Six planning applications were received and considered, compared with 5 in the previous year; no objections were raised to any of the applications.

This process is seen as adding a valuable local dimension to planning approval procedures; the Public Question Time at the start of each meeting gives the opportunity for parishioners to give their views to the Council before it discusses an application. During the year the issue to the Parish Council of hard copies of planning application documents was discontinued; all information is now sent electronically. To meet this change, the Council obtained projection equipment which shows the documents so that they can be seen by everyone present.

The Council has been keeping under review the subject of affordable housing, and in December supported a proposal to carry out a Housing Needs Survey in the Parish, which has now been completed. West Midlands Housing Association will be invited to brief the Council on the results and possible action.

HIGHWAYS.

Requests for attention to potholes and gully problems have been passed to the relevant department. No action is taken on potholes which are assessed by the Highway Department as minor, and so the Council concentrates on reporting defects which are likely to meet their criteria.

Complaints on dog fouling on roads and paths around the village have reduced sharply, and we hope the evident improvement is maintained by thorough continued consideration and exercise of good practice by dog owners. Roadside litter continues to be a problem. There was a Litter Pick event in March with 19 participants on the day and subsequently, and thanks are due to those who took part. Over 80 kg of litter was picked up and disposed of. Whilst the quantity was well up on previous years, this arose from a better coverage-including parts of the main roads, rather than higher levels of litter. More walkers are picking up in their own area on a regular basis, for which we thank them.

The Lengthsman Scheme operated very satisfactorily through the year, and funding has been granted for the coming year. Under this scheme the Parish Council takes direct responsibility for minor highways problems such as clearing gully grates, digging out blocked gullies, clearing verge grips, advising landowners and frontages when their ditches need cleaning or where overhanging vegetation needs cutting back, cleaning and clearing signs and similar tasks. The tasks are carried out by the appointed contractor directed by the Clerk, and the costs are recovered from the County Council.

FINANCE.

The internal audit system introduced a few years ago continues to operate efficiently. Payments during the year totalled £6421.71 (previous year £6580.21); income for the year was £7508.20 (previous year £7128.52) The balance carried forward to 2014/15 was £6042.36 The Precept for the year 2014/2015 has been set at £4820, (unchanged from the previous year).

Grants to local providers of services totalled £297- Teme Span £103.50, PCC Churchyard £103.50 and Lindridge Pre- School £90, unchanged from the previous year.

PROPERTY.

Nothing to report.

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS:

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John Rugman
Chairman

April 2014.