

KNIGHTON ON TEME PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023.

MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES

Detailed at the end of this report

MEETINGS

Throughout the last year the parish council has continued to follow protocol for physical meetings in the shadow of previous covid restrictions, held at the Parish rooms Knighton On Teme.

The next parish council meeting will be in May 2023 after Elections have taking place, and continue to be held in The Parish Rooms, publicised within the agenda and open for all public to attend.

Last year the Council met all planning application deadlines during the period. The Council wishes to encourage attendance by members of the public who are given an opportunity to participate during the informal Public Question Time and raise any issue's they have within the parish area or raise a matter for future discussion.

David Chambers of the County Council regularly attends and or sends reports to all of them. District Councillor Douglas Godwin also regularly attends and gives detailed accounts of local council issues or progress.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS AND INVOLVEMENT

The last year saw several high-profile events including Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee which was celebrated throughout the parish area with parties large and small. Two large parties dominated the celebrations, one at Wyrebrook and the other at Knighton On Teme caravan park.

The parish council saw it was fitting to celebrate this event with the community and following on from an age-old tradition that some of us may remember we chose to do it by means of gifting commemorative coins. Because of the kind generosity of Councillor David Chambers who chose to fully fund the idea, we purchased a Royal Mint carded commemorative £5 coin for each child in the village, so they had something to cherish for the future as a reminder of this extraordinary event.

However, celebrations turned to mourning within a few months of this event. Like many others in the community the parish council respected and observed a period of state mourning.

The new King Charles succeeded the Queen, we look forward to his ascension to the throne in May this coming year. Long live the King.

COMMUNICATIONS

Agendas, minutes, the annual report and other documents of interest, are posted on notice boards around the parish area, outside the Parish Room and entered on the website <http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish/>

The Worcestershire edition of County Association of Local Councils (CALC) is circulated to all Councillors via email which is also used for agendas, attachments, and draft minutes.

Occasional articles, helpful advice plus news items are published in Temespan.

The parish council are looking to modernise its public media approach with use of its own website and Facebook page. This will bring parish news to a wider audience where we can encourage community feedback and reporting on local matters.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

There were 5 planning applications received during the last twelve months.

Of these applications the parish council supported three applications which have since received Malvern Hills Planning approval.

The parish council did not support an application for the building of three log cabins within land owned by Field Farm. The application has since been withdrawn.

Further to these was a planning application appeal lodged regarding a previous application for three self-build dwellings on a plot adjacent to the Station House in Newnham Bridge.

The parish council replied to object to the appeal on the basis that the land in question could not sustain the development of three dwellings. This appeal application was approved by Malvern Hill Planning.

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.

Planning application documents are projected during the meeting so that they can be seen by everyone present, and this works satisfactorily.

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.

With the introduction of further litter bins in the parish area there has been a decrease in the number of complaints reports of dog fouling although there is still an amount of dog fouling that is still present which we should strive to educate the dog owner into maintaining a cleaner community and picking up their dogs mess.

Usage of the bins has been monitored and a regular programme of emptying has been requested and implemented by Worcestershire County Council. It has also been apparent which bins are used more than others and get to the point of overfilling. This has identified the need for larger bins at those locations and the need for a further bin in the layby off the A456 road to Kidderminster which was previously and kindly kept tidy

by the neighbour who vended from a food cabin which they have now retired from. These will be ordered and placed in situ during the coming months.

There were two Litter Pick events during the year. This spring litter pick again saw a huge turnout on the day and a large amount of litter collected. The Autumn litter pick was somewhat of a washout due to bad weather. However, it still didn't stop members of the local community doing their own litter picks in the days prior and after the set date to help keep our villages a cleaner place to live. Thanks are due to all those who took part and to regular walkers who pick up what they can during the year.

The Lengthsman Scheme operated extremely well through the 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 part of the costs are recovered from the County Council.

Speeding traffic is still a priority and ongoing problem along the A456 through Newnham Bridge. Councillor David Chambers, highways and the parish council have spent much time looking at ways and improvements to current highways management to resolve the problem. As part of these improvements will be the installation of automated flashing speed sign to deter speeding. This has been a protracted development and hampered during the way by matters out of the parish councils' hands. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel and this sign should be installed during the spring / summer.

Highways have also installed white gates on the approach to the village. However, their size and impact is limited by the space and locations but are there as another visual means of identifying the start of a residential village area.

Further to this the parish council have reviewed all the signage through the village which is not in the best state of repair or having the visual deterrent and warning they should show. A report has been submitted to highways requesting improvement and new signage where appropriate, in another effort to highlight to motorists the need to stick to the speed limit.

FINANCE.

The internal audit system introduced a few years ago continues to operate efficiently. Payments during the year so far from April 2022 – February 2023 £10729.46 (previous year £11,538.78); The Precept for the year £10,000. Balances brought forward as of 1st March 2023 £8367.72.

Grants to local providers of services totalled £600, £150 each to Teme Span, CAB, PCC Churchyard, and Lindridge Pre- School, all unchanged from the previous year.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

During the year the councillors sitting have remained the same.

Current councillors are Duane Hubbard (Chair), Roger Lear, Jonathan Barnes, Emma Mapp, Richard Bolton, Jonathon Bradley and John Ruffles.

We welcome members of the community to come forward and apply for one of the two existing councillor posts.

The year also saw the start of the newly employed clerk Rachel Lambert who has from the start been a great asset to the parish council and local community.