

# **Kingsclere Parish Council**

## **Annual Parish Assembly held in the Village Club**

### **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 7.30pm**

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**Present:** Cllrs Adams; Bowes; Farey; Mussett; N Peach; R Peach; Price; J Sawyer. C Cllr Thacker.

Clerk; 21 members of the public:

- 1. Welcome by The Chairman:** Cllr John Sawyer
- 2. Presentation of Gifts to the old Post Office Staff:** Cllr John Sawyer told the audience how on visiting Kingsclere 30 years ago for a house viewing, he witnessed a Bride arriving at Church in a Fire Engine. Later, he discovered the Bride was the Post Mistress Nicky Ross, who had commenced her role one week after her wedding day, having taken over from her mother. Nicky's mother had been the Post Mistress in Kingsclere for 20 years. John expressed his sincere thanks to Nicky for the dedicated service her family had given to Kingsclere and presented her with a gift from the villagers of Kingsclere. Marina Brolly and Elaine Stephens, Nicky's two assistants, who worked until the Post Office was closed were also thanked for their support and presented with gifts.
- 3. Apologies:** Cllr F Sawyer; B Cllr Sherlock.

Cllr J Sawyer introduced Andy Bates, Chairman of the Kingsclere Community Association.

- 4. Presentation on The Fieldgate Centre:** Andy expressed that the current success of the Fieldgate was due to team effort of the dedicated trustees. The community centre had been built in the 1980's and it is recognised that if it was to be built now, the same size and stature would cost in excess of £1M. The building is owned by the borough but run by the Kingsclere Community Association committee.

The footfall this year is up 9½% and regular hirers have doubled. The Liberty Ballroom unfortunately had to close but this has been fortunate for the KCA as Ceroc now hire the main hall at The Fieldgate. The Kingsclere Players have returned and the KCA committee were encouraged to star in the Panto last Christmas.

The KCA has grown from making a marginal loss to one that is now in profit. All profits are reinvested with the help of grant funding and donated materials – namely £5K worth of paint. A new floor has been installed; toilets refurbished; painting and decorating has occurred; new ovens; LED lighting and CCTV are just some of the improvements but there is more to do including a new boiler and replacement windows and doors.

New activities include Race Night and Casino Night along with new groups forming, for example the new Business Connect Group.

The KCA has a 3 year business plan to guide them through raising funds and scheduling necessary repairs to the old building including financial risk assessments.

CCTV was installed due to problems with a minority of young people. It has been agreed to hold a Youth Meeting at the Fieldgate Centre to facilitate some joined up thinking in the village about the provision for our young people – scheduled for Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 7:30pm.

The Chairman thanked Andy for the excellent leadership he has provided to the KCA who run the Fieldgate Centre and expressed the Parish Council's interest in supporting the centre.
- 5. Minutes of last Meeting:** The minutes of the APM held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed.
- 6. Matters arising:** None
- 7. Chairman's review:**

Cllr John Sawyer gave a report on the work of the Parish Council over the last year, which has been a year of issues where we have had to stand up and be counted.

- 7.1. Pharmacy** – The withdrawal of the Rural Pharmacies Subsidy was planned which could have resulted in Kingsclere losing the service provided by Mr Butt. Petitions were instigated and with the advocacy of our Borough Councillors in addition to support from our MP with questions being raised in Parliament the threat has been driven away. We should not be complacent though, as rural pharmacies are not safe forever.
- 7.2. Post Office** – A lot of activity was generated to try and save our Post Office in George Street but unfortunately this was unsuccessful. Other towns and villages are in the same situation and even large towns are now seeing their Main Post Offices being moved into shops. It is very sad but unfortunately this is the model being rolled out across the country.

- 7.3. Newtown Road HWRC – thanks were expressed to our borough councillors and our new county councillor for the work put in to secure passes for residents to use the tip in Newbury. The Chairman took the opportunity to introduce our new County Councillor. Tom Thacker said that he is still applying pressure to an executive cabinet member until a permanent solution is reached. Fortunately the executive cabinet member lives in a rural location and therefore understands the importance of services in these locations.
- 7.4. Fieldgate Centre – This year has seen the rebirth of the centre as we have seen earlier this evening.
- 7.5. Council Tax Support Grant – we have received a reduction in our CTS Grant this year which will continue for the next 2 years also hence there has been a minor increase in the Parish Precept.
- 7.6. Projects – This year there have been several projects underway:-
  - 7.6.1. The square – The Jubilee Lamp cleaned and repainted; Bus Shelter cleaned and new glass panels; a new tree grille installed although we may lose the other tree as its roots are damaging the footway.
  - 7.6.2. The Churchyard – Repairs to the footpath; the area declared a SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) thanks to the work of Ralph Cook who instigated the Wild Flower Area.
  - 7.6.3. The Royal British Legion Garden – Thanks were expressed to the team who work on the beautiful garden within Crown Green.
  - 7.6.4. The Malthouse Open Space (MHOS) – An ongoing project which was started and is now being delayed until nesting season is complete.
  - 7.6.5. Parish Paths – in addition to the maintenance performed on the miles of footpaths in the parish the team has also helped with further tidying up of the MHOS following the major works completed by our contractor.
  - 7.6.6. War Memorial – it was noticed last summer that a crack had developed in the middle block of the cross. This was inspected and confirmed safe but will need repairs. Subsequently the crack is now visible in the top piece of the cross and the bottom is showing signs of splitting too. This is a result of the way it was built – the works will be expensive but grants are available to help. A new name was added to the memorial last year – Frederick Seymour, who had been missed at the time of installation.
  - 7.6.7. Recreation Ground Play Area – Quotes were obtained by Cllr Adams for the refurbishment with estimated costs of £40K for replacement equipment. Cllr Bowes took on the project when he joined the council this year and has completed considerable refurbishments to the equipment for £800. The equipment has been safety inspected and all significant risks removed. There is still some work occurring on the safety surfaces and it is hoped to introduce a couple more pieces of equipment this year. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Bowes for the work put into this for both research and labour which has saved the council a considerable amount of money.
  - 7.6.8. Spring Bulbs – Cllr Nicki Peach was thanked for her work and that of the volunteers to plant the bulbs which have lifted the village.
  - 7.6.9. Annual Report – the report was distributed to households during September last year and will be repeated this year.
  - 7.6.10. Neighbourhood Plan – Thanks were expressed to Cllr Adams for leading the group which produced the Draft Plan for public consultation in February this year. The group could now be considered experts although they were not when formed in 2013. It is hoped that the amendments will be complete to submit to BDBC in June this year.

The Chairman thanked Councillors, Borough Councillors and County Councillors for all the routine work completed during the year. This has included the review of some lengthy documents; reviewing planning applications; checking financial statements as well as arranging replacement tiles for damaged bus shelters; repairing wobbly legs on noticeboards; replacing missing dog signs etc.

There has been much going on this year which has been very positive year even with the difficult issues faced.

8. **Review of Clubs and Organisations:** The Annual Report giving details of the activities of many of the Village's clubs and Organisations over the past year is currently being compiled and the deadline for submissions to the clerk is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The Annual Report is expected to be delivered in August/September as last year. Representatives present gave brief reports to the meeting:-

- 8.1. Tennis Club – Has a thriving adult team so there is a keen focus on recruiting youngsters. There is a problem that young players are lost when they leave for university so the club is looking at ways to maintain interest and encourage a return to tennis after studying.
- 8.2. Kingsclere Charities – The Charity actually looks after 3 charitable trusts. Robert Higham Trust was formed in 1722 to help with apprenticeships and education. Alms Houses were set up in 1586 – there are two bungalows in Kingsclere and 10 bungalows in Headley. There is also a Welfare Charity which appears to be not that well known, which can help with things such as hand rails etc. It was suggested the group put something in The Tower with a contact number and noted that the group is unable to provide details of the help offered this year due to the confidential nature of the business.
- 8.3. Kingsclere Community Library – continued to grow this year however the future viability is threatened by the loss of the fines money and the viability of the machines for booking in and out items. The group has joined with 4 other community libraries to apply pressure to HCC. The current machines are out of date, unreliable and are being phased out mid next year.
- 8.4. Patient Participation Group (PPG) – the community link to the doctors, worked this year to encourage flu jab take up which was dramatically increased. Work with other PPG groups in North Hampshire to improve facilities
- 8.5. Business Connect Group – started this year at The Fieldgate and has had two meetings this year and proving to be very successful. Approximately 140 businesses were identified in the village in 2013 by the Neighbourhood Plan Group and the contacts have been passed to the group to explore.
- 8.6. Youth Football Club – having suffered a few doldrum years the club is now going strong thanks to the dedication of some new volunteers. Participation is difficult in this age of Xbox and PlayStation however numbers are good and the club are looking to introduce a new U18's team. The club has made increasing use of The Fieldgate as well as continuing to use the Holding Field and Recreation Ground.
- 8.7. PCSO Freya Batchelor – A written report was made available – in summary, Total Crimes Reported: Assault-34; Burglary non-dwelling-14; Burglary in a house-4; Criminal Damage-16; Theft-16; Theft from vehicle-8; Anti-Social Behaviour-23; other-3. 6 young people have been issued orders following incidents at the Fieldgate which means they have curfew's in place. Crimes should be reported on the 101 number but business cards were made available with Freya's email address.
- 8.8. Film Club – A successful year and although some members have been lost, new members are joining.
- 8.9. Youth Club – A couple of Youth Workers were employed last year
- 8.10. and were working with young people up to the age of 18 but unfortunately this had to be cut back due to problems. The club was relaunched for younger ones and it is hoped to increase the age range in time. Ideally a location needs to be found for an internet café, somewhere with facilities to serve milkshake etc. Talks have re-opened at The Fieldgate Centre. The club is looking at restructuring existing facilities in the Autumn. A Skate Park is being looked into by Alan Denness which the young are very enthusiastic about. A Youth Council is required as the young people have some fantastic ideas for the future but more support is needed. The Youth Club is about Young People – they need the opportunity to develop themselves.
- 8.11. Parish Paths – the group continues with lots of volunteers. They have installed new gates in a joint project with Hannington and receive support from the county Rights of Way team and the Ramblers.
- 8.12. St. Mary's Parochial Church Council – A lot of the work of the PCC is confidential so cannot be reported but outreach work is happening – anyone wanting to access Pastoral Care should contact the Church. The PCC works closely with PC, Clive Mussett is the PC link to the PCC and his wife Sarah is the link from the PCC to the PC.
- 8.13. Bowls Club - the group is in desperate need of new members – please come along to the Open Week-end this coming Saturday and Sunday from 2:30pm both days.

## **9. Open Forum**

- 9.1. Youth Facilities – As there is a meeting booked now at The Fieldgate, 5<sup>th</sup> June 7:30pm item deferred. The Fieldgate is accommodating the meeting but that does not imply that a new facility would be built or run at The Fieldgate Centre.

9.2. LIF Applications – The Local Infrastructure Fund is managed by BDBC but it has been highlighted that the application bids received from Kingsclere so far are in excess to the fund pot available. Organisations that have submitted bids were asked to outline their plans:-

9.2.1. Tennis Club – Courts need resurfacing as they have reached end of life. Team Captains have been rearranging home matches to be played away during the winter due to the poor conditions. Although the members work hard to maintain the courts, deep cleaning in the spring, the base core sand is now too dirty. The courts are usable in the summer but not in winter – a men's match had to be abandoned following a nasty accident. Application is for £24k – the clubs reserves are £5.5k.

9.2.2. Kingsclere Community Association – Has a three year rolling program of improvements outlined in their business plan – the first phase is environmental, a new boiler etc. They are bidding for £150k.

9.2.3. Fieldgate Sports Clubs – The group is made up of all the sports clubs that use the playing fields and hard court – Rugby Football; Youth Football; Mens Football; Ladies Football; Netball and Cricket. Total bid £85K, £30K for whole field drainage, £55K for a new MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) with new floodlighting.

9.2.4. Youth Club – applied for up to £200k to support the existing insurance money for a new dedicated space.

9.2.5. Busy Bees Playgroup – Moved to the Scout Hut in 1998 and due to the needs of young children (2years up) and restrictions placed upon Childcare Centres a new floor was installed and an area fenced for safe play. The floor has reached end of life and is peeling dangerously. The fence is now falling down and is propped up with tyres and haybales. The outdoor play area is barked but is proving a health risk due to the local cat population and needs to be replaced with a rubberised type outdoor flooring.

The Parish Council can only support the applications and will do so for all who request our support. There is a need to ensure the best possible outcome for the village, it would be helpful to know what BDBC's opinion is.

Cllr Mussett highlighted that it is essential that the money is spent to enable the maximum impact and therefore the long-term viability of projects needs to be sound. The Parish Council should not be put in a position of being asked to bail out ill thought out plans.

Alternative sources of funding are available and need to be investigated.

9.3. Village of the Year Competition – Cllr Adams advised that Kingsclere would be looking to enter in 2018 due to the current work load. There are two competitions, one for Hampshire run by HALC, sponsored by Fuller and a second national competition run by Channel Four hosted by Penelope Keith. The first program for this new series is due to be televised in a couple of months. It is proposed Kingsclere enter both but in order to have any success, all the village organisations need to be brought together. The application needs to be coherent and will require a lot of planning. The village last one the county competition in 2013.

**10. Close:** Cllr John Sawyer ended by thanking everyone for their contributions.

Meeting Closed 9:20 pm

Signed:.....  
Chairman

Signed:.....  
Parish Clerk

Dated:.....

Dated:.....