

Kidlington Parish Council

Chair's report

May-June 2020

Councillors and office staff have continued to work mainly at home since the lockdown. The regular calendar of formal Council and committee meetings has been resumed on-line, and members of the public are welcome to attend: for details see

http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/Council_Meetings_20044.aspx.

An on-line version of the annual Newsletter is available at

http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/Newsletters_31298.aspx.

Exeter Hall remains closed, as do playgrounds and sports fields, in line with government instructions, but the Exeter Close tennis courts have been re-opened. The Council's grounds staff are continuing to maintain the two burial grounds in the village at St Mary's and Bicester Road, which are now fully open to visitors.

The three main volunteer organizations active in the Village are still doing sterling work to meet Covid-related needs. The Kidlington and Surrounding Areas Community Hub (KASA) has an extensive network of volunteers who provide help with shopping, picking up prescriptions and other tasks. The Cherwell Community Larder and the North Oxfordshire Food Bank continue to provide food-boxes for those that need them; and the Council is contributing to the former a regular supply of fruit and vegetables from the market stall, now back in its usual place in the High Street on Fridays and Saturdays.

Thanks in large part to these three organizations, we think the greater part of Covid-related needs are now being met in the Village. But we remain concerned about the small number of individuals or families who may still be slipping through the support net, because of lack of access to the internet or other problems such as language. We have tried to address this problem through our recent distribution of a joint leaflet from us and Cherwell District Council to all households in the Village, containing some of the emergency contact numbers on our website. The leaflet also includes details about Cherwell's useful 'Looking out for each other' scheme to which people can report if they have concerns for a neighbour.

In addition to routine work, the Council's other main ongoing activities continue to progress. Plans for an extensive new network of drains and paths in the Bicester Road cemetery are going through the planning approval process, and we hope to go out to tender in the near future, with a view to the completion of works by next winter. We are in the course of finalizing specifications for an options appraisal on the redevelopment of Exeter Close, together with the County Council and other stakeholders. With Cherwell, we are carrying forward the K5 Better Together scheme to enhance health and wellbeing across the community. We continue to work on the development and implementation of our Climate Emergency strategy, to which we plan to invite contributions from members of the Kidlington community.

Finally, the two main care homes in the Village, Glebe House and Lincroft, both report that they continue to manage well in the emergency. Considering the appalling difficulties there have been in the sector, this is most reassuring and impressive.

DAVID ROBEY