

KIDLINGTON PARISH NEWSLETTER

March 2017

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2017 edition of the Kidlington Parish Council newsletter. 2016-2017 has been another busy year for the Council, we have been working hard to deliver on the promises made last year and to make Kidlington a better place to work and live.

Cllr Joe Claxton sadly stepped down from the Parish Council last year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Joe for all of his hard work while he was a Parish Councillor in Kidlington and to wish him all the best for the future. Joe was Chairman of the Kaleidoscope Centre where he battled to keep the Centre from closing. After the by-election that took place we would like to welcome back Alaric Rose to the Council.

Please keep reading for important updates on the following;

- The new paths in the St Mary's burial ground
- An update on Kidlington's position on the Oxford's Unmet Housing Need Consultation
- The Finances of the Council – how we spend your money
- News on the children's centre in Kidlington
- The score from Kidlington in Bloom
- Updates from the Kidlington Recreation Trust
- Possible future projects for the village

Please come along to the Annual Parish Meeting being held at Exeter Hall where all members of the public are welcome, it would be great to see as many of you there as possible.

BUS SERVICES

Following budget cuts and subsequent cancellation of the various local bus services around Kidlington the Parish Council has been in discussions with several independent bus providers to explore the possibility of re-introducing some sort of replacement service to keep the local villages connected. Oxfordshire Neighbourhoods Partnership and "Our Bus Bartons" are both keen to expand their current services to cover the Kidlington area and initial talks have taken place which look very promising.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

To be held at Exeter Hall starting at 7.30pm

On Thursday 16th March 2017

ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED

Tea & coffee will be available from 7.00pm

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Police:** to receive an update on policing in Kidlington
4. **Minutes –**
 - i) to confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 10th March 2016
 - ii) to confirm the minutes of the extraordinary Parish Meeting held on 3rd January 2017
5. **Matters arising** from the minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 10th March 2016, and from the Extraordinary Parish meeting held on 3rd January 2017
6. **Council Reports:**
 - i) Housing development to include the Parish Council response and what happens next
 - ii) Parking – explanation of the advantages of a CPO scheme
 - iii) In Bloom 2017
 - iv) Plans for children's services
 - v) The Parish Council capital project programme
7. **Accounts for year ended 31st March 2016 –** to receive the Statement of the Parish Council's audited accounts
8. **Finances for the current and forthcoming year –** to explain the Council's budget for 2017/18
9. **Resolutions/Questions –** to consider any resolutions or questions (of which written notice has been given)
10. **Any other specific items.**

QUESTIONS/RESOLUTIONS – The public are invited to submit questions or resolutions in writing for consideration by the meeting to the Clerk of the Council (e mail: clerk@kidlington-pc.gov.uk) by 14th March 2017

NEW CLERK & RFO

At the end of April, Patricia Redpath, our Clerk to Kidlington Parish Council, will be retiring from this very valued and important role she has held for 20 years. She has worked tirelessly over this time supporting all the Parish Councillors past and present, and using her skills and experience to benefit the Kidlington community, for which we are very grateful.

Although we will be sad to see Trish go, we thank her very much for all she has achieved and contributed over the 20 years, and hope she will enjoy her well deserved Retirement and be able to spend valuable time with her family.

A new Clerk has been appointed. Rachel Faulkner, who is currently the Clerk to Eynsham Parish Council and has excellent references, will be joining us at the end of April and we look forward to welcoming her to the Parish Council.

Our Responsible Financial Officer at Kidlington Parish Council, Cherie Carruthers left us after 7 successful years. She leaves us with the Council finances in the best position they have been for many years. Stepping into her shoes is Therese Herbert. who joined us in January following a successful interview process and is already settling in to the role and becoming a valued member of the Parish team. A big thank you from all those involved in KPC for Cherie's hard work and achievements over the last few years.

KIDLINGTON IN BLOOM

I am once again happy to report that we have been awarded a Silver Gilt medal again for the In-Bloom competition. Every year we achieve this award and our marks are slowly edging towards the Gold award. This is a national competition run by the RHS and we compete in the Thames and Chiltern area. This year we were only 6 points off achieving Gold.

The judges congratulated us and said that they are looking forward to continued improvement next year and to build upon all the fantastic work they have seen. They believe that we can achieve Gold.

In-Bloom consists of many categories including all the flower beds, sustainable planting, hanging baskets etc. The main area we could improve upon is Community Participation all year.

We need more sponsorship and group participation, such as from local organisations, voluntary groups etc.

If you are interested please get in touch through the Parish Council office. We have lots of ideas that small groups or businesses could undertake.

St MARY'S FIELD

The St Mary's Fields working group is an entirely voluntary group which organises regular working days. If you are interested in joining them please contact David Phipps (01865 372949). In the last year, they have undertaken plant surveys, cleared debris and cut back blackthorn and hawthorn, plus cleared the path from the pond to increase the biodiversity.

The group is currently working on a memorial to the late John Brucker. Once completed, the pond will be reinstated with a new rustic bench and dedication to the extensive work that John undertook. The project has been grant funded by Kidlington Parish Council and Cherwell District Council in appreciation of his services.

FINANCE

The Council Tax required to balance the Kidlington Parish Council budget, was agreed as an increase to the Parish Council portion of the Council Tax by 2% for the 2017/18 financial year. This is £131.22 per Band D property per year - up from £129.22 per year.

This was approved by the whole Parish Council at the meeting held on 26th January 2017. The reasons for the increase is that more responsibility is being placed on the local Parish Council to support Children's and other local services; and with additional professional fees required to assist in our attempt to preserve our village identity. This is on top of the usual inflation related increases.

To keep the increase down to only 2% we have invested £500,000 from the funds received from the sale of the Gravel Pits into a secure investment fund which should provide a further £20,000 income per annum. We still have sufficient funds available to complete the various projects that have been identified by the Parish Council and these should be moving forward imminently.

Overall the Parish Finances are in a very strong position and we are on track to have our financial reserves at slightly above the minimum recommended target of 25% by the start of the 2017/18 financial year.



DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

23 rd March	Full Council Meeting
30 th March	Planning Committee
6 th April	Policy & Finance Committee
20 th April	Community Committee
27 th April	Planning Committee
11 th May	Annual Council
25 th May	Planning Committee
1 st June	Policy & Finance Committee
8 th June	Community Committee
15 th June	Planning Committee
22 nd June	Full Council
13 th July	Planning Committee
10 th August	Planning Committee

KIDLINGTON RECREATION TRUST

The main achievement of the trust this year has been to secure an extension to the Lease for 10 further years from the Parish Council. The result of the extension is that the green spaces and parks in the village will be calling to be protected from development. It also means that further improvements can be made to the Yarnton Road Football Club site so that Kidlington Football Club can continue to progress in the league.

Last year there was an appeal in the Oxford Mail for more members of the public to become trustees of the KRT. This was successful and all available positions on the Trust have been filled. I would like to thank all members of the Trust for their hard work over the last year and for their continued commitment to the Trust.

OXFORD UNMET OXFORD

The Parish Councillors believe that the full facts about the Oxford's Unmet Housing Need, and the crisis that all the Oxfordshire District Councils and their Parishes find themselves in should be explained for the benefit the Kidlington residents who were not able to attend the open meeting in Exeter Hall in January.

This situation is NOT of Kidlington's own making. In fact it is precipitated by the Oxford City Council's inability to meet their own housing need, which has been set at 14,850 new dwellings before 2032 by an independent body. The Labour controlled City Council has agreed to take a quota of only 550 out of 14,850 houses and has sought to dump the rest of their housing need on the surrounding District Councils, with 4,400 being allocated to Cherwell District Council. Furthermore, Oxford City Council are pressing Cherwell District Council to locate the vast majority of these houses in locations as close to Oxford as possible.

Some of the sites being put forward which affect Kidlington directly include the land between Cuttleslowe and Kidlington, destroying North Oxford Golf Club and the fields on the opposite side of the A4260, a site at Water Eaton, Stratfield Farm and a site to the North of Kidlington behind the Moors. Additionally, sites in Yarnton and Begbroke have been nominated. The vast number of these sites are in the Green Belt and involve destroying Green Belt land for housing. See the map below for more details.



ST MARY'S BURIAL GROUND

This year the Parish Council has organised for work on the pathways to be improved at St Mary's burial ground to ensure that all the parts of it are accessible. The new paths are being put in at the moment and will be completed in early spring.

In the autumn, Councillor Carmen Griffiths arranged for a Scout Community Day to take place in the churchyard.

The Scouts from the 33rd Jacala Cubs and some family members, together with other councillors worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to tidy up the graveyard. Many passers-by on the day commented on how good the graveyard looked and were also very interested to see graves which had been covered in moss and grass for many years suddenly exposed by the hardworking Scouts and the rest of the team.

CO-OP DEVELOPMENT

You will have heard that the Co-Op and Cantay Developments have submitted plans to redevelop the site in the centre of Kidlington. In summary they want to reduce the shopping space by approximately one third of its current size, and build over fifty flats on what is currently their car park.

The Kidlington Parish Council held a public meeting in November at Exeter Hall and feelings were running high. Local residents raised several objections to the development, some of which are listed below:

- They felt that the proposed development is unsuitable for the location because even though it has been toned down, it's still too intense and has too many stories.
- They wanted more retail space, not less.
- They felt that the development does not take into account the wishes of the local people.
- They felt that democracy has played no part in this planning application.
- They felt betrayed by the two organisations behind this planning application.
- They felt that this planning application is driven purely by greed, and that it delivers negligible benefits to the Kidlington Community.

Kidlington Parish Council Planning Committee unanimously objected to the application and made representations to Cherwell District Council to oppose it.

The Parish Council is however in favour of developing the site, but wants a development that brings value to the residents of Kidlington, not one that destroys the amenities the site currently offers. As custodians of the Village, we were extremely concerned that we would miss the biggest opportunity we will ever get to develop the centre of Kidlington in a way that brings vitality to the village, and provides affordable local housing for local residents.

Cherwell District Council recommended approval of the application, and despite the best efforts of Alan Mackenzie-Wintle, Maurice Billington, and Alan Graham, who all spoke at the meeting, the vote at the Cherwell District Planning Committee was hung and the Committee Chairman chose to support the planning officers, so the motion to approve planning permission was passed.

As a Parish we decided to lodge a formal complaint, and employed an independent planning consultant and sought legal support to contest the decision. As a result of our activity, Cherwell District Council agreed for the planning application to be re-heard, and the process of granting planning permission was suspended.

Since then your Parish Councillors have lobbied hard and succeeded in getting the Kidlington Master-plan approved, which strengthens the case for refusal of the application significantly.

As a result of our work, Cherwell planning officers have now formally changed their position, and the application will be recommended for refusal by planning officers when it goes to the Cherwell Planning Committee on 16th February.

The application was unanimously rejected at the last planning meeting following tireless work from the Parish and District Councils.

KIDLINGTON SPRING CLEAN

We plan to hold a Spring Clean session in Kidlington week commencing 18th March anyone is welcome to join in – contact the office on **01865 373691** for exact times. CDC Street Cleansing Department will be supplying the equipment needed.

There will be small groups of litter pickers/high visible vests/gloves and sacks to be provided.