

## **Kidlington Parish Council Chair's report November 2020**

As we enter the second lockdown, the Council's office staff are back to working almost entirely from home, tennis courts and the outdoor gym have been closed, and Exeter Hall bookings limited to essential work meetings. Uncertainty about the new regulations also led us, regretfully, to cancel the usual Remembrance Sunday service and parade. Instead we held a virtual event on the preceding Friday, in which the names of Kidlington and Hampton Poyle residents who died in the last century's wars were read out, the bugle played, two minutes' silence observed, and wreaths laid by representatives of local organizations. The whole event was recorded on video, and published on the Council website (<http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/>) on Remembrance Sunday morning: do please take a look. We hope people will see it as an appropriate and moving commemoration, in the present circumstances, of those who sacrificed their lives for their country.

How the new lockdown will affect Kidlington residents remains to be seen, but we can be sure that for many it will cause very real difficulties. The two local foodbanks continue with their invaluable work, the Cherwell Community Larder operating from Exeter Hall, and the North Oxfordshire Foodbank from the Baptist Church. Kidlington and Surrounding Areas (KASA) Coronavirus Community Help still has its teams of volunteers available to provide support for those who cannot leave their homes for whatever reason. We are updating the details about the support available during the emergency, and about services provided by local businesses and other organizations, on our webpage at [http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/Covid19\\_HELP\\_30728.aspx](http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/Covid19_HELP_30728.aspx).

It is a relief to be able to report two items of good news. The High Street bollard has been working most of the time. Looking forward to next year, the County Council have applied to the Department of Transport to provide civil parking enforcement in Cherwell and other districts from this time in 2021. This is something we have long been pressing for. It means that parking regulations will be enforced by traffic wardens rather than by the police, who no doubt understandably have tended to have other priorities.

Three major issues for the future remain in the realm of uncertainty. While planning for the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway seems to have paused, the massive long-term development scheme known as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc still remains on the table, with the consequent prospect of a huge increase in the Oxfordshire population. Within Oxfordshire discussions on local government reorganization, and the possible integration of the five district councils into a single council for the county, have also paused. Whether or not this is desirable is a matter for debate, but there will be a real advantage if it brings with it a greater devolution of powers, something at present sadly lacking in the British government system. Finally, we are watching with some concern the progress of the government's White Paper *Planning for the Future*, which looks like removing much of the protection of essential interests that the present system provides.

DAVID ROBEY