



www.kimptonpc.org.uk

Parish Room
Kimpton Memorial Hall
Hall Lane
Kimpton
Herts SG4 8RD
T: 01438 832573
E: clerk@kimptonpc.org.uk

Annual Report 2014/15



Kimpton Parish Council Annual Report gives a review of the activities of the Council and the financial report for the year ending 31st March 2015

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Chairman's Report

The year began with a review of the flood risk in the Parish. The Council had concerns about the groundwater levels beneath the village, owing to the heavy rainfall earlier in the year, and we met with the County Council, the District Council and the Environment Agency, and a consultation was undertaken on our behalf.

The consultants duly reported back with their measurements and we learned that there had been several years since the flood in 2001 where the groundwater level had come close to flooding again, although a number of infrastructure improvements that were made as a result of the 2001 incident are still in place, so may mitigate against future events.

Of course, the available funding for preventative measures in the future is related to the risk of a flood occurring, and if the predicted interval between incidents is large then it is not considered cost-effective to fund much in the way of works. Whilst this might make economic sense, it is little comfort to those whose homes and businesses have been flooded, so we await the final outcome of this exercise with interest.

The year has seen limited progress on the proposed new Secondary School due to be built in Harpenden. The location has been revisited, and our current understanding is that it is still planned for the Batford site that was selected originally. Unfortunately, this is a frustration for the Parish in view of the urgent need for school places that will ease the annual cycle of appeals that we need to go through in order to gain a place at our nearest schools.

It does look as if we are in for a couple of uncomfortable years until this school comes online, but the Parish Council will continue to work to support our families as much as we can.

A significant initiative this year is that of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for Kimpton. Under the Localism Act of 2011, communities have been given the power to set some priorities for development in their areas, with less interference from Central Government. How this works in practice remains to be seen, but the Parish Council has taken the view that we are better placed by having a plan than by not having one.

Unlike previous attempts at a similar thing – the Parish Plan, for example, compiled some years ago – a Neighbourhood Plan has some degree of statutory status. With the current feeling, not just from our own government but from external forces like the International Monetary Fund, being that we need more houses sooner rather than later, this document could become quite significant for the Parish of Kimpton.

We have responded to North Hertfordshire District Council's consultation on development sites, and we have (in common with many other Parish Councils in the area) expressed a view that one single large development – a new Garden City in essence – might be the most constructive way forward, as opposed to building piecemeal developments in towns and villages.

Kimpton, of course, is playing its part already – development at Probyn House and on the land off Lloyd's Way is in hand, with the second development due to start later this summer, so there is an argument to suggest that we have already done our bit. In any event, the production of a Neighbourhood Plan will help to safeguard our interests, and

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we are grateful to those members of the community who have supported it so constructively to date.



Quite a lot of maintenance work has taken place around the Parish – trees and hedges have been pruned and maintained in Parkfield Recreation Ground, on The Green and on the Recreation Ground itself. The Bench Working Party continue to do sterling work and, without their efforts, our environment would be very much untidier!

Allotment take-up has grown slightly this year, which is good news, especially for the Parish finances, as we have to subsidise any shortfall between rent receipts and the cost of leasing the land and providing a water supply, as well as providing several annual grass-cuts.

Finally, the Parish Council saw one change of Councillor following the elections this year – Councillor John Baughan left the Council, and was replaced by Councillor Lewis Hawke.

Once again, my thanks to all my fellow Councillors (and our tireless Clerk!), alongside the many volunteer 'extras', for the input that they provide, and the work that they carry out around the Parish – here's looking forward to an equally constructive 2015/16!

Cllr David Hardstaff
Chairman

Financial Report

This year we completed capital improvements to Kimpton Memorial Hall using the second instalment of the agreed loan from Public Works Loan Board. The new entrance and kitchen area of the 'Green Room' has created an appealing independent meeting room with excellent facilities. Delegates to training courses have provided positive comments and commended those involved with the project. Loan repayments of £7,500 pa will continue for 10 years.

A significant item of expenditure was further tree works in the parish, this time at Parkfield Sports Ground. We hold two meetings a year with Kimpton Sports Clubs and the improvements to the sports ground were in response to requests from Kimpton Tennis Club and Kimpton Cricket Club. Tree roots had spread and were causing a problem to the surface of the third court. An arborologist advised on the best option being the installation of a root barrier along the length of the tennis court and the tree canopy reduced in size to slow down the spread of the roots. Cricketers complained about



losing balls within heavy undergrowth and so the area by the picnic tables was cleared and an area of brambles on the east bank cut down. Boundary hedges and trees were trimmed to generate healthier specimens and create vistas to the surrounding countryside. Our thanks go to the Kimpton Bench Working Party for carrying out some of these works which helps keep costs down for the council.

The Parish Council was approached by residents to step in and pay for repair works to the flint/brick wall between FP34 and Canham Close. After extensive research the legal ownership of the wall remains unknown and so expenditure was agreed as the wall is considered to be an important community asset contributing to the village character. Other items of expenditure have been strictly controlled.

This year we have received a grant of £1,000 for Parish Paths Partnership which is responsible for the condition of public rights of way in the parish. Works were completed on FP34, the section from Park Lane to Claggy Road creating an alternative east-west pedestrian route within the village. North Herts District Council approved an environmental grant of £1,000 used to support the costs of our parish warden.

Parish Council finances are subject to local accountability and audit controls. The council employs the Parish Clerk as its Responsible Financial Officer (Local Govt. Act 1972 s151) to carry out the day-to-day administration and to prepare the annual accounts for audit. An independent internal auditor verifies the Council's financial procedures and processes with the annual accounts approved at the Parish Council meeting held on 20th May 2015. The Annual Return for year ended 31st March 2015 will be placed on notice boards and examined by the External Auditor, BDO Stoy Hayward LLP Chartered Accountants.

Carina Helmn
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

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Kimpton Parish Council Annual Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2014

		Bank totals	
Balance at 1st April 2014			
Current Account		32,768.76	
Business Tracker		14,211.79	46,980.55
2013/14	RECEIPTS		
67,000.00	Precept	66,904.26	
940.00	Sports Rental	985.00	
8,730.09	Grants and other income	5693.13	
1,255.00	Allotment Rental	1460.36	
7.08	Interest received	20.87	
6,825.85	VAT repaid	6933.02	
47,975.00	Loan receipt	16,975.00	
142,928.91	TOTAL	98,971.64	
PAYMENTS			
38,951.97	Operational costs & staff	33,486.72	
16,372.14	Property and Premises	23,744.54	
4,493.39	Parish Office		
0.00	LGA 1972 S 137	0.00	
61,918.84	Parish Buildings and other		
1,483.31	Professional fees		
40.00	Finance charges		
	Community support	14,088.00	
2,757.36	Loan repayments	7,434.96	
16,895.47	VAT input	6,997.44	
142,912.48	TOTAL	85,751.66	
Balance at 31 March 2014			
Current Account		35,200.53	
CCLA		25,000.00	60,200.53
Increase for the Year		13,219.98	

Cllr D Hardstaff
Chairman
Date: 20th May 2015

Mrs C Helmn
Responsible Financial Officer
Date: 20th May 2015

Working Party Representatives and Representatives to Outside Bodies 2014/2015

- 1. Staffing Committee**
Cllr S O'Brien, Cllr J Palmer and Cllr D Reavell
- 2. Representatives to Kimpton Memorial Hall Management Committee**
Cllr D Hardstaff and Cllr J Marsh
- 3. Representative to Peter's Green Village Hall Management Committee**
Cllr S O'Brien
- 4. Representative to Kimpton Primary School Governing Board**
Cllr D Reavell
- 5. Kimpton Bench Working Party**
Cllr J Marsh (Mr B Finch – Leader)
- 6. Footpath and Way Marking Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett, Mrs C Finch, Mr B Malcolm (Chairman)
- 7. Major Emergency Planning Working Party**
Cllr D Hardstaff and Cllr J Palmer
- 8. Youth Initiatives and Sports Council**
Cllr S O'Brien and Cllr D Reavell
- 9. Open spaces, Village Greens, Recreation Grounds and Playgrounds Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett, Cllr D Hardstaff and Cllr S O'Brien
- 10. Allotment Working Party**
Cllr D Hardstaff, Cllr L Hawke, Mr B Finch and Mr M Frost
- 11. Kimpton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**
Cllr I Corbett, Cllr D Hardstaff, Cllr S O'Brien and Cllr J Palmer
- 12. East of Luton Development Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett, Cllr J Marsh and Cllr J Palmer
- 13. Kimpton Environment Working Party**
Cllr D Hardstaff, Cllr J Palmer and Cllr D Pirola

Contact Details

Cllr Ian Corbett	11 Park Lane, Kimpton, SG4 8SB
Cllr David Hardstaff (Chairman)	27 Dacre Crescent, Kimpton, SG4 8QJ
Cllr L Hawke	46 High Street, Kimpton, SG4 8RN
Cllr Jon Marsh	29 Church Lane, Kimpton, SG4 8RR
Cllr Sue O'Brien	98 High Street, Kimpton, SG4 8QW
Cllr Jon Palmer	46 Kimpton Road, Blackmore End, AL4 8LD
Cllr Donatella Pirola	1 Rose Cottages, Lawrence End Rd, Peters Green, LU2 9QD
Cllr David Reavell	Five Chimneys, 10 Church Lane, Kimpton, SG4 8SD
Carina Helmn – Parish Clerk	E: clerk@kimptonpc.org.uk
North Herts District Cllr John Bishop	E: john.bishop@north-herts.gov.uk
Herts County Cllr Richard Thake	E: richard.thake@hertfordshire.gov.uk
The Rt Hon Peter Lilley – MP	E: feedback@peterlilley.co.uk