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Annual Report 2020/21



Kimpton Parish Council Annual Report gives a review of the activities of the Council and the financial report for the year ending 31st March 2021

Published
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Kimpton Parish Council Annual Statement

This past year will undoubtedly be remembered by everyone as the time of Covid19 and lockdown. Many of the village events have been postponed for obvious reasons of safety and each family has been affected by the epidemic in differing ways.

As we start to emerge from these restrictions it is perhaps appropriate to look back upon the year to remember that many day-to-day activities for the Parish Council have continued.

Council Charges

Many of you will have received your Annual Council Tax notification in recent weeks. The Parish Council Precept element has been held at an increase of 0.6% for each household which we felt was an acceptable level.

Overall, Council Tax has increased by 4.14%. The other elemental increases are NHDC 2.13%, Hertfordshire County Council 3.99%, and Police and Crime Commissioner 7.6%.

The largest actual financial increases have been for police investment (£18/household), adult social care (£15/household), and Covid19 support (£5/household).

Community Support

As a direct support to village clubs and organisations during restrictions, we waived rental costs to the tennis, bowls, cricket and rugby clubs. Financial grants have been made to Kimpton Football Club, Kimpton Cricket Club, The Corner Stores and Kimpton Pre-School, totalling £15,000; and repayment of a loan for improvements to the Memorial Hall in the year have been £7,500.

Sports Facilities

The Parish Council has provided a second set of goal posts on the Recreation Ground due to the high usage of the set provided 3 years ago. These are full size and are also suitable for youth 11-a-side matches. In addition, local government community funding has been made available for the provision of an outdoor table tennis facility adjacent to the playground area on the Recreation Ground. This has been delayed due to the Covid19 outbreak but has now been ordered and should be available in time for summer use.

Planning Applications

As a Council we welcome applications that offer a high quality of design, affordability, meet government national space standards, proven defined sustainable delivery, address community defined requirements and add value to the parish.

Planning submissions for new dwellings in Kimpton have risen over the last 12 months. Applications submitted to NHDC over the last year total over 50 new dwellings. Approval has been given to 10, 10 withdrawn and with 30 still under consideration. The largest two of these sites is by Oxford University for 15 houses upon the land on the north side of the High Street at the west end of the village; and by Jarvis Homes for 9 dwellings upon the old Ron Hyde Diary.

Affordable Housing

KPC have been working with Hightown Housing Association to find ways to deliver the 24 dwellings that were identified within the 2019 Parish Housing Needs Survey. Hightown have developed a proposal and made a financial submission to Oxford University to acquire land at the north west of the village. We have recently heard that Oxford University has notified Hightown, that at this time they do not wish to consider the matter further. This is obviously disappointing news to the community. The only opportunity currently available to us is to ensure that the land between 138 and 146 High Street, can be encouraged to deliver 5 affordable homes.

The White Horse

Following a request from the 'Save Our White Horse' community group, the Parish Council applied to NHDC to renew the building's status as an Asset of Community Value. After due consideration NHDC have confirmed agreement with this request and the ACV has been extended for a further 5 years. Separate discussions have taken place with the current building owner and they have recently made a planning submission to convert the building to mainly residential use with a micro pub and an office attached. A final outcome should hopefully be reached by autumn of this year.

Kimpton Flood Risk

Some of you will remember the flooding of Kimpton in February of 2001, when a river flowed down the length of Claggy Road and into the High St, causing significant disruption to the industrial park:

<http://www.kimptonvillage.tsohost.co.uk/flood.htm>

After some serious temporary measures including the provision of sizable pump sets, pipework running for half a mile, and sandbagging along most of Claggy Road, the flood was brought under control.

In addition, permanent works were then undertaken at Whiteway Bottom to create a dam, all at a total cost of over £500,000.

These efforts have worked well but within days of the 20-year anniversary the Environment Agency had issued a new flood warning:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/target-area/062FAGKimptonGW>

The EA reported that all the catchments in Hertfordshire had received exceptionally high rainfall over the previous six-month period, (170% of the long-term average falling between October and January) which resulted in saturated ground, higher river flows, and flood warnings.

This groundwater flow most likely relates to rainfall events which are not recent (possibly months ago) and is slower to respond to rainfall than rivers but can last for a long time. It is extremely problematic to manage as it covers significant areas and large volumes of water.



Gully Cleaning in High Street

Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority is the authority with powers to manage flood risk from groundwater. A review of options based on the findings from 2001 has been carried out: The highway drainage has been surveyed and cleaned; and the Fire and Rescue carried out a trial deployment of their high-volume pump. The difficulty with pumping is that it can move water away from the area of flooding only to increase flood risk downstream.

Groundwater levels have risen and the levels in a sump installed near the Industrial Estate on Claggy Road have been monitored daily by NHDC. The groundwater level has risen 1500mm since Christmas and is currently only 800mm below surface level.



Wet test in Claggy Road



Fire crew testing pumps

During March, ground water levels stopped rising and have remained fairly static over a 20-day period. It is now unlikely that flooding will occur this year but if higher than normal rain fall occurs later this year, it would result in a very real risk of flooding to the village in 2022. We are currently awaiting for HCC to issue a considered action plan that would be available to implement if the same risk occurs in future years.

Further issues of flooding at a number of locations in the village have caused problems for pedestrians during the severe wet weather during early spring. Locations at Porters End, Blackmore End, Claggy Road and the bottom of Church Lane have all been badly affected. The main cause for this is blocked road gullies and blocked drains.

Road gullies on land owned by the Parish were cleared out during February.

Gullies on public roads are maintained by Hertfordshire County Council and these appear to be the main problem.

Some members of the Bench Working Party have investigated and removed significant amounts of silt from gully sumps; however, the drain connections to the main sewer appear blocked and require specialist equipment. HCC continue to be notified and will be reminded until the work is undertaken.

Luton Airport

Luton Airport (LLAL) has this year submitted a planning application to relax noise levels and many of you will have responded with your views on the matter to Luton Borough Council Planning Department. KPC has submitted an objection to the noise level being allowed to increase.

In addition, LLAL have been holding consultation sessions in regard to a planned airport expansion and I am sure that many of you have had the opportunity to attend. The events were very professionally run and much information was available. However, Kimpton Parish Council representatives have been surprised that LLAL have to date been unable to fully address the following 3 questions:

After the airport has reached a capacity of 32million:

1. Will the noise levels be greater or less than the currently permitted noise levels, and by how much?
2. Will the pollution levels be greater or less than current pollution levels, and by how much?
3. Will the traffic congestion on neighbouring roads be greater than the current level, and by how much?

We would hope that a reputable organisation operating in a world with increasing focus upon global warming and sustainability will strive to significantly improve these factors. We are currently awaiting LLAL to confirm modifications to their initial proposals.

Kimpton Surgery

We have made representation to Bridge Cottage Surgery to provide flu vaccinations at the Memorial Hall. Unfortunately, the surgery felt unable to offer this facility, but they have offered to visit homes of vulnerable patients. We also appreciate that some members of the community may have difficulty visiting a surgery or pharmacy outside of the village to have their injection administered. 'Kimpton Cares' volunteers are offering to drive people to their appointment. If you need assistance contact 07745 903539 (8am to 8pm with answerphone outside these hours) or email kimptoncares@gmail.com. We also note concerns that the surgery has now been closed for 12 months since the start of the Covid outbreak and we are taking this matter up with the practice manager to establish the plans for future reopening.

Virtual Christmas Market

Whilst we were unable to run the Christmas Market this year, we were keen to support previous stall holders and provided a website to allow local craftspeople to display their products and provide an opportunity for the community to undertake their Christmas shopping. Over 25 local businesses took part.

Christmas Lights



They say that it's an ill wind that blows no good. The necessity to cancel this year's Christmas Market meant that we had a supply of lights to use elsewhere in the lead up to Christmas.

The Green

Those normally used inside the craft marquee illuminated the trees outside the school, replacing those that failed last year, and the sets used for Santa's Grotto were put to good use lighting up the west entrance to the village at Kimpton Bottom. The latter was from an idea originally put forward by Councillor Sue O'Brien and we intend for this to be repeated in future years to come.



Coopers Hill

Thanks to Bob Finch and the Bench Working Party for erecting all the lights.

Speed Limits

Consideration to the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in Kimpton commenced last year.

Hertfordshire County Council Highways have completed an initial Stage 1 assessment, which includes a proposal to introduce a 20mph area within Kimpton village, along with associated signage, speed cushions, and possible speed control measures at Hitchin Road and Coopers Hill.

The Stage 2 phase of the project commences after April 2021 and will include engagement with the community, the police, and other parties, to verify its acceptability. Your views upon the proposals will help to shape the solution and determine whether it will be progressed or not. Evidence indicates that the risk of death or serious injury to a pedestrian struck by a vehicle at 20mph rather than 30mph is reduced from 50% to near 15%. The counter view would be that vehicle travel times along the length of the High Street would be increased by 1 minute. Many thanks to Cllr Alex Firth and the Highways Working Party for their determination in moving to Stage 2.

Greening Kimpton



I am pleased to say that Kimpton has joined the Greening Campaign, a grassroots national initiative of communities working together to create a healthier, happier future. Cllr Ian Corbett is leading the initiative on behalf of the Council, but to make it a success we need as many people as possible from within our community to get involved.

One of the first activities was the planting of 100 trees within the village. Bim Afolami contacted all the Parish Councils in his Constituency some 7 months ago and offered to arrange the free sourcing of trees as part of an initiative that he had started. Having received the first 100 from this arrangement, we are due a further 500 trees later this year for Kimpton Parish.

We were also delighted to see that Andrew Manning has extended the planting of trees on his family farm with the addition of 1250 saplings along the roadside at Claggy Bottom. The village Bench Working Party and other members of the community were on hand and undertook all the planting within one day early in December.



Planting 10 oak saplings



Bim Afolami giving a helping hand

Public Spaces

A healthy debate took place at the June KPC meeting upon how to manage the growth of trees on the Parkfield Amenity Area/Garden Fields. Tree growth has been very vigorous over the last few years and the area is a verdant green space supporting a wide range of wildlife.



Whilst a joy to some, to others this growth has brought reduced daylight, and potential damage to property. The outcome has been to agree a programme of regular crown reduction of various trees. The increased annual maintenance was accepted as a preferred course of action to the felling of trees that have become too large. I would wish to thank all members of the community who participated and spoke with passion for their view on ensuring Kimpton's green agenda in light of climate change and the protection of our environment.

Public Rights of Way

After 8 years leading the Council and community's interests with respect to Rights of Way, Bob Malcolm is taking a step back. I would very much like to thank Bob for his diligence and determination that has helped to ensure that so many of our local footpaths and bridleways are easily accessible to the community. A great deal of effort has been placed in liaising with Hertfordshire County Council and monitoring the maintenance work of their contractors.

I am glad to say that Jackie Worboys has kindly offered to support the council in helping to identify areas that need attention in the future.

New Kimpton Parish Council Website

With the intent of providing an easy to use and more comprehensive single source of useful information about the village, an updated website was launched at the beginning of December: www.kimptonpc.org.uk

I would like to thank Nigel Dowse and Carina Helmn for their research and efforts to create this tool. We have taken on board many of your comments about what is important to you. If you have any further ideas, please contact the Parish Clerk. Over the next few months, we will continue to add further information.

Cllr Neil Burns

Chairman

Financial Report

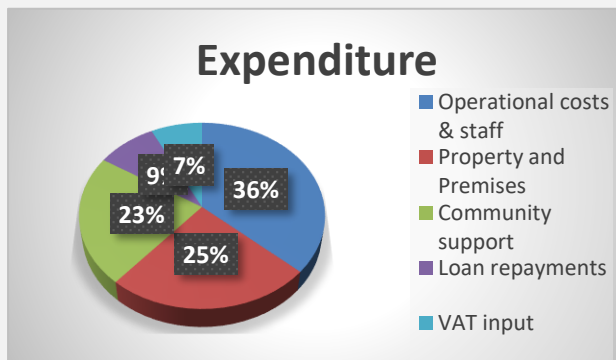
Income

Due to the Covid pandemic and restrictions of lockdown on the activities of the Kimpton Sports Clubs, the council agreed not to charge annual rents to the Bowls Club, Cricket Club, Rugby Club and Tennis Club. Income was therefore reduced by £1,205. However, demand for the allotment has been high with all plots taken and a waiting list operating. The allotment income includes 7 lots of £100 refundable deposit from new tenants, in accordance with the allotment tenancy agreement, in addition to the approved annual plot rental.

Other income relates to the normal income arrangements for services supplied with reduced external grant receipts as projects were put on temporary hold. This includes the use of s106 money for an outdoor table tennis table at the Recreation Ground which will be progressed in May 2021. Kimpton Christmas Market was held online in November/December 2020 and therefore did not generate income from our hospitality services offered at a live event.

Expenditure

Expenditure was higher this year primarily due to the large grant of £12,000 made to Kimpton Cricket Club for a new cricket square. This project was supported as the year-round facility will be offered to the community and youth coaching will be organised for the summer 2021.



Grants have also been made to Kimpton Football Club, Corner Stores and Kimpton Pre-School. The parish council is pleased to support community projects and initiatives including the development of a community focused website.

The loan repayments relate to the Green Room improvements at Kimpton Memorial Hall.

Operational costs are static with a small increase in property expenditure as a replacement notice board was needed at the Corner Stores. Maintenance costs of the public spaces and playgrounds were kept within the budget.

After such an unsettled twelve months, and with a significant grant made to Kimpton Cricket Club, it is with some credit that at the year-end there is a small surplus of nearly £3,000.

Audit

Parish Council finances are subject to accounts and audit compliance stipulated within 'The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015'. The Annual Governance and Annual Return (AGAR) will be presented at Kimpton Parish Council meeting in May. Our internal auditor will be conducting his review in April with the report available afterwards. The AGAR will be published on www.kimptonpc.org.uk and sent to our external auditors, PCK Littlejohn in May. Details of how electors can inspect the accounts will be published on the website and on our notice boards.

Carina Helmn

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Annual Report 2020/21

Kimpton Parish Council Annual Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2021

2019/2020			BANK TOTALS £
	Balance at 1st April 2020		
	Unity Current Account	39,191.15	
	Barclays Account	421.70	
	CCLA	45,000.00	84,612.85
	RECEIPTS		
74,000.00	Precept	75,800.00	
1,205.00	Sports Rental	0.00	
12,747.15	Grants and other income	5,712.48	
1,714.40	Allotment Rental	2,733.22	
331.42	Interest received	88.96	
8,324.07	VAT repaid	4,998.94	
98,322.04	TOTAL	89,333.60	
	PAYMENTS		
31,553.38	Operational costs & staff	31,532.38	
18,384.43	Property and Premises	21,520.57	
12,307.73	Community support	19,559.50	
7,484.36	Loan repayments	7,484.36	
4,998.94	VAT input	6,387.62	
74,728.84	TOTAL	86,484.43	
	Balance at 31 March 2021		
	Unity Current Account	40,861.76	
	Barclays Account	1,600.26	
	CCLA	45,000.00	87,462.01
	Surplus for the Year		2,849.17

Cllr N Burns
Chairman
Date: 28 April 2021

Mrs C Helmn
Responsible Financial Officer
Date: 28 April 2021

Committees, Working Parties and Representatives

- 1. Staffing Committee**
Cllr N Burns, Cllr S O'Brien and Cllr D Reavell (*Chairman*)
- 2. Internal Financial Control Working Party**
Cllr N Burns (*Lead*), Cllr A Firth and Cllr D Reavell
- 3. Christmas Market Working Party**
Cllr D Reavell (*Lead*), Cllr N Burns, Cllr I Corbett, Cllr C Procter, Cllr S O'Brien, Cllr J Marsh, Mr B Finch, Mrs H Kirk, Mrs G Shaugnessy, Mr I Pegrum, Mrs T Corbett, Mrs H McPhun
- 4. Kimpton Bench Working Party**
Cllr N Burns, Cllr J Marsh, Mr B Finch (*Lead*), Mr D Stevens, Mr B Malcolm, Mr J Murphy, Mr K Haynes, Mr J Pollington, Mr P Butcher, Mr P Desborough, Mrs C Beaumont, Mr D Pitcher, Mr A West, Mr T Newton, Mr H Eck, Mr M Saunders, Mr S Thompson, Mr A Davidson, Mr B Emms, Mr J Wade, Mr A Morton, Mr G Glen, Mr J Edwards, Mr J Cardy
- 5. Kimpton Rights of Way Working Party**
Cllr L Hawke (Council reporting), Cllr C Procter, Mrs C Finch, Mr B Malcolm (*Lead*), Mr A Manning, Mr A Burton, HCC Rights of Way Officer
- 6. Sports Clubs Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett (*Lead*), Cllr C Procter, Cllr S O'Brien, Mr S Thompson, Mr W Phillips, Mr T Randall, Mr D Robbins
- 7. Public Spaces and Playgrounds Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett, Cllr C Procter (*Lead*), Cllr J Marsh, Mr B Finch
- 8. Allotment Working Party**
Cllr L Hawke (*Lead*), Mr B Finch, Mr A Morton, Mr G Ewington, Mr P Desborough
- 9. Highways and Parking Working Party**
Cllr N Burns, Cllr A Firth (*Lead*), Cllr L Hawke, Mr T Frith, Mrs J Worboys, Mr M Henderson, Mr T Smith. County Cllr R Thake to attend as appropriate.
- 10. Environmental Working Party**
Cllr I Corbett (*Lead*), Cllr N Burns, Cllr L Hawke, Mrs D Malcolm
- 11. Planning Working Party**
Cllr N Burns, Cllr C Procter, Cllr A Firth
- 12. Representatives to Kimpton Memorial Hall Administrative Committee**
Cllr J Marsh and Cllr A Firth
- 13. Peter's Green Village Hall CIO**
Trustees: Cllr A Firth and Cllr N Burns
- 14. Representative to Kimpton Primary School Governing Board**
Cllr D Reavell

Contact Details

Chairman	Cllr Neil Burns	chairman@kimptonpc.org.uk
Councillors	Ian Corbett, Alex Firth, Lewis Hawke (resigned February 2021), Carly Procter, Sue O'Brien, Jon Marsh, David Reavell	
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