

A Message from the Chair

As we begin 2026, I extend warm wishes to all residents of Kidlington. The past year has seen much community effort, shared celebrations and important decisions. Now, as we look to the future, there are both exciting opportunities and serious challenges ahead, and our unity, voice, and engagement matter more than ever.

Christmas Lights, Community & Remembrance

Our Kidlington Christmas Lights Switch-On always brings festive cheer to our village on a dark winter evening and this year was no exception. The event began at 5:00pm, with the lights switching on at 6:00 pm in the High Street and village centre. The evening featured live entertainment, festive stalls, and delighted children and families, creating a wonderful sense of community spirit and seasonal cheer.

At the same time, we remember with sadness the passing of former parish councillor Alan Graham. Alan served Kidlington with dedication for many years and contributed greatly to our community through his work on planning, local governance, and community initiatives. On behalf of the council and all residents, we extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends. His service and commitment will be long remembered.

Council Updates & Community News

- **Local Development & Planning**

We continue to monitor carefully all proposals with potential impact on Kidlington and neighbouring areas. There are a number of applications coming forward that could have a significant impact on our community. As always, our priority is that any changes respect our village character and meet the needs of residents.

- **Website Redevelopment**

We are refreshing our Parish Council website to make it more accessible and informative. The new site will be launched in January and we thank you for your patience while we improve our online services.

- **Green Spaces, Parks & the Historical Route**

We are progressing with plans to improve footpath networks, enhance green spaces around Kidlington, and explore development of a marked “Historical Route” that celebrates our local heritage. The new path at St Mary’s Field was opened in the Autumn, the playground at Park Hill has been refurbished, and an official opening is being planned for the new year, along with additional plans for the space.

- **Evolving the Summer Gala Day**

Our Summer Gala Day has long been a cherished tradition. For 2026, we are revisiting the format, with fresh ideas, more inclusive activities, a possible return of some lost traditions, and opportunities for a broader range of community groups to participate. We aim to make the event more accessible and reflective of our changing community. Keep an eye out for details and how you can be involved.

The Threat of Greater Oxford — What It Means for Kidlington and Our Green Belt

As many of you will know, alongside proposals for reforming local government in Oxfordshire, the Greater Oxford proposal has been put forward by Oxford City Council. Under this proposal, a new unitary council, the Greater Oxford Council, would extend across the city and into the surrounding Green Belt, including villages such as Kidlington.

Proponents argue this would bring benefits: integrated services, improved transport links, affordable housing close to jobs and transport, and coordinated planning across the region. However, there are serious concerns, many shared by local residents, environmental organisations, and parish councils, that the plan not only threatens the integrity of our Green Belt, but undermines the very nature and character of places like Kidlington. Kidlington has always proudly seen itself as independent of and separate to Oxford and the Parish Council are looking to uphold that as a priority. We stand ready to speak up for residents, for sustainability, for heritage and to press for transparent, community-led decision making. In the meantime, we encourage residents to read up, stay informed, and share your views with us.

Illegal Waste Dump — A Threat to Our Environment.

You may have seen or heard about the large-scale illegal waste dump on the outskirts of Kidlington, between the A34 and the River Cherwell. This is a deeply disturbing development affecting not only our local environment, but potentially the health and well-being of residents and wildlife.

- The site was first reported in June 2025, access to the site was gained in July which is when the full scale of the issue became clear, and the Environment Agency took on responsibility.
- Specialist investigators from the Environment Agency are working alongside law-enforcement partners, the site is a live crime scene and entry is prohibited. The EA and partners are undertaking continuous monitoring, assessing risk to the nearby river, and planning remediation. There is a security presence on site.
- The potential damage is severe: dumped waste close to the floodplain and river risks toxic runoff, harm to habitats, pollution of watercourses (including the River Cherwell), and a threat to wildlife and community health.

Kidlington Parish Council strongly condemns this blatant environmental crime. We urge all residents who have any information relating to this issue to report it to the Environment Agency hotline (0800 807 060). This is a shocking and disgusting crime, together, we must stand against those who seek to damage our community and environment. This criminality does not represent Kidlington, nor who we are as a community.

We will continue to liaise closely with enforcement agencies, push for swift clean-up and restoration, and support all efforts to protect our countryside and waterways.

Discussion on Village Status

At our next Full Council meeting in January, we plan to discuss whether Kidlington should consider changing its official status from “village/parish” to “town.” All residents are welcome to attend, listen, and contribute.

Closing Thoughts

2026 stands before us full of promise, and full of decisions that will shape Kidlington’s future for decades. Between protecting our green spaces, improving recreation facilities, re-imagining community events, and engaging with proposals like Greater Oxford, there’s much at stake.

I want to thank every volunteer, resident, and councillor who gives time and energy for the community. Your involvement is what keeps Kidlington more than just a place on a map — it keeps it a home with heart and heritage.

Lesley McLean

Chair, Kidlington Parish Council