

KIDLINGTON PARISH NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015

INTRODUCTION



We hope you have got used to seeing this newsletter, which we distribute to every house in Kidlington. It sets out areas of interest and matters that the Parish Council have been involved with over the last year.

The Parish Council have some direct responsibilities but it also campaigns and lobbies for issues on which it can only have indirect influence. One example of this is the involvement we have had in the local plan, which sets out the future development in Cherwell District up until 2032.

We hope you will find things of interest to you and if this does not answer your question then you should contact your local councillor whose name and contact number can be found in the newsletter.

We also try to communicate with you during the year through our web page and through the Kidlington News.

Finally the Annual Parish Meeting is on 19th March and the agenda is in this newsletter. Please come along, as this is your opportunity to ask questions about the work of the Council

EXETER HALL

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, EXHIBITIONS, MEETINGS AND TRADE FAIRS ETC.

Well equipped halls able to accommodate 25, 60 and 250 people. Full licensed bar with full catering facilities. Just off Oxford ring road / 5 mins to M40, Ample car parking, with on site catering.

Tel : 01865 373691

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

To be held on 19th March 2015
at 7.30pm at Exeter Hall.

All Members of the Public Welcome

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Chiltern Railways** – a representative to give an update.
4. **Minutes** – to confirm minutes of Annual Parish Meeting on 14th March 2014
5. **Matters Arising** from minutes of Annual Parish meeting held on 14th March 2014
6. **Update on Parish Council projects.**
7. **Accounts for year ended 31st March** – to receive Statement of the Parish Council accounts.
8. **Finances for the current year** – to receive the Council's observations.
9. **Charities** – to receive the accounts for Charities for the year end 2013
10. **Resolutions / questions** to consider any resolutions or questions.
11. **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 by 9th March 2015.

NEW PARISH COUNCIL

A new Parish Council will be elected on Thursday 7th May.

Most Kidlington residents aged over 18 will meet the criteria for being a councillor and will be able to stand if they have an interest in the community..

Nomination forms will be available from Cherwell District Council and anyone interested should keep a watch on the District Council website www.cherwell.gov.uk, and/or Parish Council website www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk and on local noticeboards.

PARKING IN KIDLINGTON

There has been an increase in commuter parking in many parts of Kidlington since the introduction of charges at the Water Eaton Park and Ride. There is a concern that when the new station opens in the summer of this year there is a potential for this to become worse. The biggest problem at present seems to be on the service roads in Kidlington South. The County Council have proposals to introduce restrictions on these service roads and there have been two rounds of public consultation. The final solution is not perfect but is better than nothing at all.

The Parish Council's main concern is the enforcement of these restrictions. The police have indicated that the enforcement is a low priority. It is therefore likely that these restrictions will not be enforced often enough to be meaningful.

This problem does not exist in Oxford City or in West Oxfordshire because they have a system called decriminalised parking. This means that the Councils carry out the enforcement and they have dedicated staff to do the enforcement. We are working with both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to get the same arrangement for Cherwell. This is not however likely to happen in the short term.

NORTHERN GATEWAY

A high tech industrial park with 22 times the floor space of Sainsbury's is being planned for the Pear-tree area of North Oxford. Add to that, some 500 houses, and you can immediately see why this is of huge importance to us here in Kidlington.

The Parish Council is looking very closely at the traffic implications for local roads, as well as the impact on use of the Park & Ride both at Pear-tree and at Water Eaton. We'll be making strong representations that the proposed local transport improvements are insufficient, and we've objected to the potential use of Water Eaton Park & Ride as the main off-site parking area.

We are about to take our case to the planning inspector, who is having an inquiry in March. We are keen to try and find a solution that does not result in lots of new jobs with total traffic gridlock beyond the perimeter.

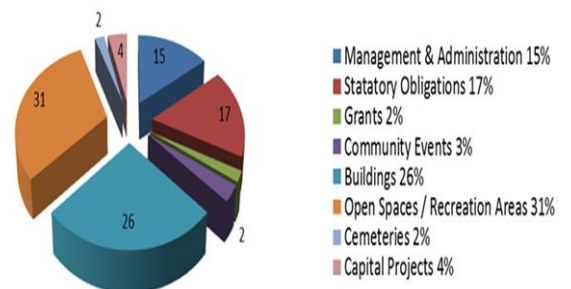
COUNCIL PRE-CEPT (COUNCIL TAX)

We had hoped to keep the increase in Council tax in the region of 3%. This increase covered the inflationary rises in utilities and general expenses. This also includes increasing our reserves which are currently below acceptable levels.

However you may, or may not be aware that the County Council has reduced the funding for cutting of the grass verges. This meant that potentially the verges throughout Kidlington would be cut only twice per year.

The Parish Council felt that this may be fine for a rural parish but not for an urban parish like Kidlington. The council has therefore agreed to take on the responsibility for the verge cutting and to do so has increased the council tax for the parish by a further 2% to cover the cost of maintaining the grass verges to the current standard.

As a result the increase is 5% which is equivalent to £7.26 per household per annum. Below is a chart which shows how the money is spent.



LOCAL PLAN & GREEN BELT

Over the past year and more KPC has been actively involved in discussions on the Cherwell Local Plan.

In order to avoid the risk of a planning free-for-all in the District, in KPC's view it is important to support the speedy approval of the draft Local Plan. This generally preserves the village's interests by opposing development in the surrounding Green Belt with two limited and specific exceptions.

The first is the proposed small-scale review of the Green Belt for employment needs on a specific site on Langford Lane.

While supporting this as part of the general development of the area, KPC initially took the view that the Plan should allow for mixed development to include housing on the site. We were however persuaded that this would only open the way to further arguments for Green Belt housing development, and as a result withdrew our objection.

After the public examination of the Plan opened in June 2014, the inspector suspended the process in order for Cherwell to increase the provision for housing development in the Plan. As a result the Plan was modified to allow for the possibility of a future small-scale Green Belt Review if local Kidlington housing needs cannot be met within the built-up area.

Kidlington's housing needs will be examined and discussed with Cherwell District Council after the forthcoming publication of a consultants' Master Plan for the village. Preparation of that Master Plan was agreed between KPC and Cherwell District Council at an early stage of discussions on the Local Plan, and the recommendations in it will be the starting point for the development of an integrated and detailed set of proposals for future planning in the village.

While KPC remains very concerned at the possibility of the small-scale Green Belt Review to accommodate housing needs, it decided not to object to the proposal, because **(i)** the review will take place only if local housing needs cannot be met within the village boundaries, and **(ii)** we are assured that if this Review takes place it will consider all possible options. KPC will strongly oppose any proposals for piecemeal Green Belt development except in the context of an all-options review.

The public examination of the modified Local Plan resumed in December. A further, county-wide strategic review of the Green Belt in relation to broader housing needs is also now on its way. KPC will do its very best to ensure that the village's interests are represented as strongly as possible in this process.

LAND SALE

You may be aware that the Council is proposing to sell the Gravel pits allotment site. This is now quite advanced and we expect to enter a conditional contract with Castlemead to build a 70 bed elderly persons care home. There is a need for homes where the elderly can no longer look after themselves and this will be an asset to the community. None of the residents will own cars and the only cars will be staff and visitors. We intend to have 32 car park spaces which are more than required under planning

regulations as we do not want to see any parking on the road in The Moors. The building will be 2 storeys and as it is in a dip will not be higher than adjacent houses in the Moors.

Why do we want to sell the land and why do we need the money? The Parish Council currently have minimum reserves and can no longer raise money on the precept for capital projects without very larger increases in the precept. Grants and assistance from other councils and funding bodies have dried up.

We want to continue to provide facilities for the people of Kidlington and the money from the sale of this land is one way we can do this.

Examples of the likely areas where the money will be spent will be improvements to Exeter Hall, Exeter Close improvements, improvements to playgrounds for children.

You may say what has been happening to the allotment holders. They have all been given the opportunity to move to Station Fields or to any other site where we have vacant plots.

ST MARY'S FIELDS

St Mary's Fields is the area of mixed shrub, trees and open grass immediately behind St Mary's Church. It is a haven for wildlife including birds, foxes, deer and butterflies, including the rare Brown Hair Streak Butterfly. The area covers roughly 12 acres with many grass tracks which can be a delight to walk throughout all the changing seasons. It is carefully managed by a group of volunteers aided by the Parish Council to maintain good access without destroying the natural habitat. The grass areas are cut and raked at specific times of the year to encourage the growth of wild flowers.

The volunteer group arrange working parties throughout the winter months controlling trees/vegetation growth and keeping footpaths open etc. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for this group then contact the parish office.



EXETER CLOSE

The Council expects to receive substantial capital funds from the sale of the Gravel Pits allotments, and a major claim on these will be the extension and improvement of the civic facilities at Exeter Hall and Exeter Close. Outline plans are currently being developed to upgrade the interior of Exeter Hall, where major expenditure may also be needed on renovating the roof. Plans are also being developed to increase and enhance the recreational facilities in Exeter Close, in order to make them more attractive for all ages. A wide range of options is under consideration with a view to preparing an outline scheme for a civic park in Exeter Close, as a basis for consultation and further action by the new Council that will be in place after the elections in May.

KIDLINGTON IN BLOOM

KIDLINGTON IN BLOOM WINS SILVER GILT AGAIN

Carole Pack, Chair of "Kidlington in Bloom", collected another Silver Gilt for this year's entry in the Thames & Chilton in Bloom competition.

The judges were impressed with how well Kidlington is maintained and with the pride that residents take in their environment. They made some special mentions regarding :

- *The vibrant hanging baskets and beds at Exeter Hall making a floral impact that "gladdens the eye"*
- *The increased floral displays in the piazza and the interest shown by shop owners in decorating their premises*
- *The garden at St. John's Ambulance centre maintained by the Gardening Society*
- *The planting of 125,000 bulbs at Sainsbury's roundabout.*
- *The achievement of Eco School Green Flag status by North Kidlington School and their Wonderland garden.*
- *Clean environment; weed free kerb sides gutters; no dog fouling, graffiti or fly posting.*
- *The planting hanging baskets workshop run by the Gardening Society.*

Since the judging, the village planting continued to look beautiful right until the beginning of October. The trees along the main road were especially striking in their autumn colours and the flower beds were planted up for winter. Let's hope we can maintain the same high standards for the coming year.

KIDLINGTON CEMETERIES

At a time of budget constraints, maintaining three cemeteries in Kidlington is a major task for the Parish Council. The historic churchyard and the burial ground at St Mary's, and the new cemetery on the Bicester Road. Last year we had some problems keeping up with the grass cutting at the St Mary's site, but this year everything there has been under control.

On the other hand we have had some difficulties with the Bicester Road cemetery, which will require some time for the hedges and trees to establish themselves. We have agreed a systematic programme of works for Bicester Road which has already started and will continue next year, to smarten the paths and hedges and keep them weed-free, replant some trees, complete the deer fencing, smarten up the access road to the new allotments at the back, and overall to ensure that the cemetery provides an attractive and dignified setting.

Given the demand for allotments, we have to use the rear part of the cemetery for these as long as it is not needed for burials, but we are doing our best to make them as unobtrusive as possible. We are also budgeting for more frequent cutting of the grass in the historic churchyard at St Mary's.

Kidlington Parish Council Contact Details

EXETER HALL, OXFORD RD, KIDLINGTON 01865 372143
Clerk: Mrs Patricia Redpath clerk@kidlington-pc.gov.uk
Chair: Cllr David Betts Vice Chair: Cllr David Robey

Cllr DAVID BETTS	375613
Cllr MAURICE BILLINGTON	842235
Cllr JOE CLAXTON	376309
Cllr ALAN GRAHAM	453442
Cllr LISA GRAY-WRIGHT	847078
Cllr ANDREW HORNSBY-SMITH	378734
Cllr CAROLE PACK	377539
Cllr CHRIS PACK	377539
CLLR NEIL PRESTIDGE	07766 018226
Cllr SANDRA RHODES	848861
Cllr DAVID ROBEY	847140
Cllr CHRIS ROBINS	371760
Cllr RUPERT TRUMAN	847482
Cllr TRACEY WYSE	849586

