

KIDLINGTON PARISH NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the Kidlington Parish Council newsletter. 2015-2016 has been a very busy year for the Parish, in May 2015 after the local elections there was a change in the makeup of the council that saw 8 new local residents elected to represent you. Maurice Billington was elected chairman. All of the new members are delighted to be on the council and are looking forward to representing you.

Please keep reading for important updates on the following;

- The parking restrictions at Exeter Hall
- Update on Bicester Road Cemetery
- The Kidlington Master Plan
- The Finances of the Council – how we spend your money
- Our Kidlington in Bloom score
- Possible future projects for the village

Please come along to the Annual Parish Meeting being held on the 10th March at 19:30 in Exeter Hall where all members of the public are welcome, it would be great to see as many of you there as possible.

EVENTS

The fireworks last November were regrettably cancelled due to the weather. The ground conditions were inspected and found to be unsuitable for the health & safety of those attending the fireworks and for the firework installation.

Gala Day is planned for 16th July – where we are hoping to have a larger fair, more stalls and are looking to invite local schools to participate. Please help to support your local village event and contact us if you are interested in attending.

Queens' 90th birthday celebrations – we are looking to hold an event for those aged around 90 and in particular to seek Kidlington residents who are 90 in 2016. Please contact the Parish Council (01865 372143) if you know of anyone.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

To be held on 10th March 2016

at 7.30pm at Exeter Hall.

All Members of the Public Welcome

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Kidlington in the next few years** - District Council planning representatives will outline the current planning situation and the likely effect on Kidlington.
4. **Police** - To receive an update on policing in Kidlington
5. **Minutes** - to confirm minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 19th March 2015
6. **Matters Arising** - from Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 19th March 2015
7. **Update on Parish Council Projects.**
8. **Update on issues from previous annual meetings.**
9. **Accounts for year ended 31st March 2015** - to receive Statement of the Parish Council accounts.
10. **Finances for the current year** - to explain the Council's budget.
11. **Resolutions / questions** - to consider any resolutions or questions (of which written notice has been given).
12. **Any other specific items.**

QUESTIONS / RESOLUTIONS - The Public are invited to submit questions or resolutions in writing for consideration at the meeting - to the Clerk of the Council by 8th March 2016.



PARKING

The Parish Council held a number of meetings to tackle the increasing problem of commuters parking in the Exeter Hall Car Park. The problem increased after the Park and Ride imposed parking charges. The result was people visiting or renting space in Exeter Hall unable to park in our own car park!

A unanimous but regrettable decision was reached to employ a private parking firm to impose fines on those not authorised to use the car park.

- There are only a very limited number of spaces, just over 75 in fact and we had try and accommodate those who wished to rent the hall and provide an income to the Parish
- Parish Council Staff and Visitors
- Cherwell District Council Staff and Visitors
- Citizens Advice Bureau and Kidlington Information Centre Staff and Visitors

There is a long standing lease to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for 12 marked spaces in the car park - allocated by OCC to the Forum, and to certain officers (mainly highways) working in Ron Groves' House.

In addition the Parish Council was aware that users of the health centre, Kaleidoscope Centre and Bowls Club often park in the Exeter Hall car park. The health centre has its own car park with 20 spaces and the Parish Council understood and was sympathetic to the fact that not all demands could be met (the Health Centre at one stage asked for 60 spaces alone!) and so after consultations amongst the Members it was decided to grant some permits for the Exeter Hall car park to each of these facilities. All were contacted and given notice that permits would need to be displayed in order that fines were not levied.

The lack of parking at the Health Centre has probably been the most problematic and this is regrettable. The Council has now increased the number of Permits. Signs are displayed in the Health Centre, notifying patients of the new scheme.

Whilst the Council understands the parking situation is regrettable, parking enforcement was not a decision taken lightly. The Council does not have the funds or resources to effectively manage and control a 2 hour parking restriction. Unfortunately, we all have to come to terms with there being less parking provision in our communities today and we all have to make alternative ways to travel and park.

The Parish Council had to protect the revenue and users of Exeter Hall, however, the listed users of the car park are able to contact us to see if they might be accommodated on a specific occasion. The Parish Council hopes that you understand our predicament.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The Parish Council has a list of community projects which it will be scoring for priorities and which it hopes to implement during the coming months.

There are a number of long standing projects and some new ideas from the new members that are to be considered.

The Council hopes to see improvements to the cemeteries, to the play areas and generally around the village.

BICESTER ROAD CEMETERY

The Parish Council spent several years (from 2002) with the help of professional consultants seeking a new burial ground site coming up with 10 options.

Burial grounds have to meet the Environment Agency standards for ground conditions otherwise planning permission will not be given. All but 2 of the 10-options were rejected by them. One of these was the fields along the Bicester Road/Water Eaton Lane stretch and this was the only one available for purchase.

It is not ideal because of water pooling due to the clay seam which slows absorption. It is acceptable to the Environment Agency because below the clay the land is fairly dry, whereas most Kidlington land takes the water below the surface - OK on top but wet underneath.

Improvements are being done with the cemetery drainage but there will always be issues following persistent heavy rain.

This was the only acceptable, and available site. If we hadn't gone with it, there would be NO burials in Kidlington.

HIGH STREET BOLLARD

The Bollard in High Street has been working well. There is now a good working relationship with a dedicated team at CDC, ensuring, that on the few occasions when the Bollard has failed, it has been repaired with minimum disruption. Villagers and visitors continue to enjoy the pedestrianisation of our High Street.

LOCAL PLAN & MASTERPLAN

The Council thought an update on the Kidlington Master-Plan would be helpful for Kidlington residents.

To explain, The Kidlington Master Plan is a document commissioned by Cherwell District Council to evaluate what sort of developments should be made within the village, and how to best take it forward to meet the needs for housing, retail facilities, office space, commercial development, and amenities. The idea is for a plan to be put in place, which takes into account all the needs of Kidlington, so that future development can be carried out in a co-ordinated way to meet the best interests of the village and those who live here. Similar plans are in the process of being produced for the major Cherwell residential settlements such as Bicester and Banbury.

The first draft of the plan was written by consultants over two years ago funded by Cherwell District Council. The consultants underwent consultation with the Parish Council and other stakeholders and a draft version was made available to a very restricted number of Parish Councillors on the basis of confidentiality, that its findings were not binding, and that its recommendations held no weight in terms of determining planning applications in the parish.

It has been a great source of frustration to the Parish Council that we can not use the Master Plan, which we believe is reasonably sound and has some great ideas about how we should take Kidlington forward. We have consistently lobbied Cherwell District Council to either adopt it in its current form, or update and adopt an updated version after consultation. The Parish Council is pleased that in January the District Council confirmed it had instructed consultants to update the Master Plan urgently and this work has already started, with a view to consult during March. At this point we have no date when the report will be completed or released, however the Parish Council will continue to make every effort to expedite this.

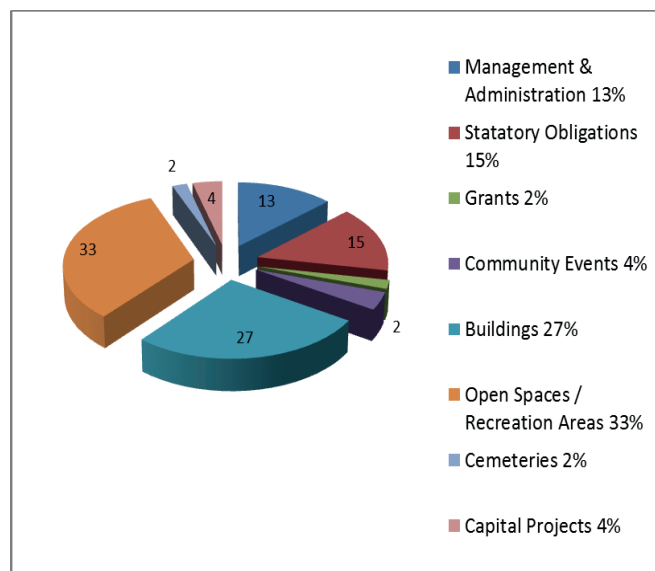
It is vitally important to have an adopted Master Plan for the Village in place as soon as possible because it will help the Parish Council, and the Cherwell District Council Planning Committees, when considering planning applications for Kidlington. For example, had there been an adopted plan in place when the application to develop the Co-Op site was submitted, it would have been measured against the Master Plan policies concerning the regeneration of retail facilities in the heart of the village and the desire to generate a vibrant village centre. No doubt this would have considerably influenced the consideration of the planning application.

FINANCE – How we Spend Your Money

Following the annual review to decide the amount of Council Tax required to balance the Kidlington Parish Council budget, it was agreed to keep this figure the same as last year (2015/16). The reasons for this decision is that following the recent sale of some Parish land and the subsequent Capital Receipt of funds, we were able to repay an outstanding loan early and have therefore saved approximately £25,000 per year from the expenditure figure.

In view of this saving and a couple of small grants to follow from Cherwell District Council we are proposing to keep the Kidlington Parish Council Tax figure at the same level as last year. This was approved by the whole Parish Council at the meeting held on 22nd January 2016.

This would be the first time in 18 years that the Kidlington Parish Council has managed to freeze their proportion of the Council Tax.





KIDLINGTON IN BLOOM

Kidlington achieved Silver Gilt for the tenth year in a row. The judges said the colours were cheerful with the use of more sustainable planting. Kidlington was complimented for the grass cutting and had seen great improvement including the cleanliness of the village. A further award of Pride of Place was achieved.

Work continues for 2016. The committee have given each of the Primary Schools 2 garden tubs, and helped the student's plant winter flowering pansies and spring bulbs. Visits will be made again in the spring to see the results.

DATES OF MEETINGS

17 th March	Full Council Meeting
31 st March	Planning Committee
7 th April	Policy & Finance Committee
21 st April	Community Committee
28 th April	Planning Committee
12 th May	Annual Council Meeting
26 th May	Planning Committee
2 nd June	Policy & Finance Committee
9 th June	Community Committee
16 th June	Planning Committee
23 rd June	Full Council Meeting
14 th July	Planning Committee Meeting
11 th August	Planning Committee Meeting

PROJECTS

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Kidlington Parish Council Contact Details

EXETER HALL, OXFORD ROAD, KIDLINGTON OX5 1AB 01865 372143 Clerk: Mrs Patricia Redpath clerk@kidlington-pc.gov.uk

Cllr DAVID BETTS	62 The Moors, Kidlington OX5 2AJ	ST MARY'S	375613
Cllr MAURICE BILLINGTON	15 Evans Lane, Kidlington OX5 2HX	ORCHARD	842235
Cllr JOE CLAXTON	74 Hazel Crescent, Kidlington OX5 1EQ	EXETER	07413 803880
Cllr DANIELLE COLLAIRE	50 Evans Lane, Kidlington OX5 2HY	ST MARYS	07525 921371
Cllr ANDY DYER	11 Nurseries Road, Kidlington OX5 1AN	EXETER	07985 248854
Cllr ALAN GRAHAM	107 High Street, Kidlington OX5 2DS	ROUNDHAM	453442
Cllr CARMEN GRIFFITHS	106 Church Street, Kidlington OX5 2BB	ORCHARD	07450 251851
Cllr GILL HOPCROFT	3 Prestidge Place, Kidlington OX5 2XR	ORCHARD	376551
Cllr JAMES HUGHES	52 Evans Lane, Kidlington OX5 2HY	DOGWOOD	
Cllr ALAN MACKENZIE-WINTLE	4 Petre Place, Kidlington OX5 2EN	ROUNDHAM	376614
Cllr CAROLE PACK	13 Mead Way, Kidlington OX5 2BJ	ROUNDHAM	377539
Cllr NEIL PRESTIDGE	26 Lock Crescent, Kidlington OX5 1HE	DOGWOOD	07766 018226
Cllr SANDRA RHODES	50 Evans Lane, Kidlington OX5 2HY	ST MARY'S	07880 804343
Cllr NIGEL SIMPSON	1 Alexander Close Kidlington OX5 2FG	DOGWOOD	372951
Cllr MARK TURNER	99 Wilsdon Way, Kidlington OX5 1TY	EXETER	377906