KINGSBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Chair's Report for 2021-2022

My first meeting as chairman, or to be politically correct chairperson for the council, which was to be held in June 2021 was cancelled due to Covid.

One of my first duties at the July meeting was to welcome our newest councillor namely Cllr Emma Steel, who was co-opted on to the council to fill the vacancy that occurred following the resignation, and more recently the death of Parish and Borough Councillor Ann Lewis who served on the council for over 40 years.

At the beginning of August I had the honour of presenting Ann, on behalf of the council, a gift to show our appreciation for her many years of service as councillor and her commitment to serving the residents of Wood End over the years.

The chief Fire and Rescue officer and the chief officer responsible for training for Warwickshire attended our September meeting to discuss the need for, and proposals for developing training centres at two locations in the parish of Kingsbury. The Fire Service training centre located on the edge of the Water Park on the site of the old Outdoor Education centre, is now fully operational but plans to create a site on the river Tame near the railway bridge on the Coventry road have been abandoned.

In January 2022 the precept was raised slightly to cover the costs for 2022/2023. This resulted in a very small increase per household of between 50p – 77p depending on the property band.

The council also held a sum of money for the Kingsbury Good Neighbour group but since the group has now disbanded the £784.08 left in their account has been gifted to the council to use appropriately.

It has been a year where we felt the need to monitor fairly closely our expenditure so consequently we have not spent huge sums of money resulting in requests such as a second defibrillator for Kingsbury and Hurley having to be added to our wish list.

The external auditors in their review of the Annual Governance and Accountability confirmed that all information was in accordance with proper practices and all matters met relevant legislation and regulatory requirements.

July 2021 finally saw the Hurley bus shelter erected after having had to overcome numerous hurdles.

Inactivity within community organisations due to Covid restrictions resulted in a reduction in applications for grants.

A maximum of £300 was made available for each parish towards the cost of purchasing Christmas trees. Since Hurley community Association financed their own tree a total of £825 was spent on Christmas tree grants. NWBC were not in favour of parishes purchasing permanent trees so communities had to be content with temporary trees.

A Pin Oak (Quercus Palustris) tree was purchased for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and planted in the recreation ground but sadly was vandalised the same evening as it was planted, leaving only a twig which has been further destroyed.

The clerk continues to work through the agreed list of improvements to the recreation ground which is funded from NWBC Councillors' Community grant scheme. A new litter bin has been purchased and installed near the gym equipment, a replacement seat for the zip wire which disappeared was purchased together with new tyres and the backboard for the games unit has been replaced. Work to replace the wet pour surface under the toddler swings is expected to commence end of May/beginning of June. Sadly the new zip wire seat has been vandalised again and it has been agreed that the parish council meets the £550 cost of a new seat, chains and fittings. The Police have been notified that the number of vandalism incidents in the recreation ground has increased of late.

Cost and types of height restrictors are still being looked into as an added security option for the recreation ground.

WCC have finally agreed to look into the state of the footpath leading to the Water Park via the church steps and prioritise it with other jobs.

Also, D B Schenker Rail Ltd the owners of the fencing alongside the railway at Piccadilly have finally agreed to price up the cost of repairs to the fencing.

WCC Highways dept. are currently costing options for work to be carried out on the Bromage path with a possibility of it being funded out of Cllr Jenns's WCC delegated budget.

It was agreed that we accept the 2 year fixed term price quoted by NWBC for Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning as it gave good value for money.

The council's expenditure for 2021/2022 has included

- On-going monthly bus shelter cleaning at a modest cost of less than £30 per month.
- On-going weekly emptying of parish owned waste bins.
- A new waste bin for Hurley (£312.45 plus fitting).
- A new substantial lock for the recreation ground.
- The cost of repair to two benches in Hurley.
- Subscriptions to WALC (£1059), the Information Commissioner (£35), Zoom at a reduced rate to last year, and Warwickshire Local History Society (£20)

The working party continues to update and ensure all necessary policies and procedures are in place.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for electing me to the office of chairperson. I also thank Cllr Jean Thomas for being a helpful and supportive vice chairperson during my year in office and for deputising for me at Dosthill's Church Centenary celebration earlier this year. I wish her every success in her role as chairperson for the ensuing year.

Lastly, but by no means least I thank Sue our clerk. We as a council owe her a huge debt of gratitude for the endless hours she devotes to council work. Our communities would be very much the poorer but for the work that she does in between parish meeting.

Councillor Margaret Moss
25th May 2022