

Keyworth Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017/18 Plans/Priorities for 2018/19

Council Members

- During the course of the past twelve months, three Parish Councillors have resigned from the Council. The positions left vacant by Cllrs Pinder and Gracey have subsequently been filled by co-optation, whilst the more recent vacancy left following the resignation of Cllr Cane will be filled by a newly co-opted Councillor with effect from 14th May. This will leave us with a full complement of 17 parish councillors.

Council Staff

- At the time of writing, the Council employs seven staff, all part-time, including Clerk to the Council, Finance Officer, Facilities Manager, Bookings Clerk, cleaner and handyman. It should be borne in mind, however, that the total basic hours worked by these staff equates to the hours worked by less than three full-time staff.
- Debbie Cooke took over as Clerk to the Council/Proper Officer with effect from 1st May 2017, whilst the previous Clerk, Neil Grocock, is now employed as the Council's Finance Officer.

Council Facilities

- The Council owns, or is responsible for:
 - The Village Hall complex – including the Village Hall, Centenary Lounge and Feignies Room
 - Rectory field
 - Keyworth Activity Park
 - Rectory field Pavilion and former Changing Rooms (occupied by Keyworth Table Tennis Club and Transition Keyworth/Abundance respectively)
 - Memorial Gates
 - Wysall Lane Burial Ground
 - Nottingham Road Play Area (leased from Notts County Council)
 - Platt Lane Skatepark (leased from UK Research & Innovation)
 - Keyworth Meadow (managed by the Nature Reserve Management Group)
 - Keyworth Bowls Club – clubhouse and green (managed by the club)
 - Keyworth Tennis Club – clubhouse and courts (managed by the club)

The clubhouse and tennis courts have now been leased to Keyworth Tennis Club, the Pavilion has been leased to the Table Tennis Club, and a similar lease is being arranged for Keyworth Bowls Club.

Village Hall Complex

- In the Village Hall, all the old chairs have recently been replaced, and the foyer has been repainted. In the Centenary Lounge, a replacement carpet has been fitted, whilst funds have been earmarked for replacing the chairs and refurbishing the bench seats.
- Work to install a drainage system in the Village Hall car park, to reduce the risk of flooding on Elm Avenue, has now been completed.
- The Council's Finance committee has agreed that there will be a small increase in hire fees for the Village Hall complex in 2018/19. This represents the first increase in charges since April 2016.

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Nottingham Road Play Area

- Quotations have been obtained to resurface the Play Area, however this would depend on availability of funds and renewal of the lease (due for renewal in June this year). This would provide a more permanent solution to the current arrangement of topping up the existing bark surface each year.

Rectory Field

- The Keyworth Show will, as usual, take place on the Rectory field in July.

Wysall Lane Burial Ground

- The first phase of work to extend the Burial Ground has been completed, and a new Memorial Garden was opened in September 2017 for the scattering of cremated remains.

Activity Park

- Following completion of the Activity Park in 2016, some remedial works have taken place due to continuing acts of vandalism. In particular, the stone gabion walls have been removed in order to prevent further damage.

Memorial Gates

- Quotations have been obtained to repaint the Memorial Gates and railings along Nottingham Road. Works will hopefully take place during May or June, with the aim of completion prior to events marking the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI in November.

Peace Garden

- Although not directly an initiative of the Parish Council, plans to install a 'Peace Garden' on the Rectory Field are ongoing. This would be located close to the Memorial Gates, aiming to provide a space for quiet reflection.

Support for Local Organisations

- The Council continued in 2017/18 to provide financial assistance to:
 - Platt Lane Joint Management Committee (the Council has a one-third financial interest in the facilities at Platt Lane)
 - Keyworth Bowls Club
 - Keyworth Tennis Club
 - Keyworth & District Community Concern
 - Keyworth Conservation Area Advisory Group
 - Keyworth PCC (re maintenance and repair of church clock)
- Donations were also made to:
 - Keyworth United Reformed Church (re maintenance of cemetery)
 - Royal British Legion (re lamppost poppies)
- The Council continued to make its premises available at concessionary rates, and in many cases free of charge, for various community events and services such as:

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- Monthly Borough/County Council contact point – on the first Friday of each month in the Centenary Lounge
- Keyworth Advice Centre – Tuesday afternoons in the Feignies Room
- Centenary Lounge coffee mornings
- Keyworth Show
- Village Quiz

Parish Council Events/Seasonal Activities

- During the past twelve months, the Council has organised &/or sponsored the following events and activities:
 - Christmas Lights: 52 trees with lights at various locations around the village; thank you to the local businesses which once again contributed towards the cost. (The Council also made a contribution towards the cost of the lights in the churchyard.)
 - Charities' Christmas Event in the Village Hall on 25th November; many thanks to everyone who helped out.
 - Annual Christmas Card Competition, with entries from Keyworth Primary & Nursery School, Crossdale Busy Bees and Willow Brook Primary School.
 - Hanging Baskets: some 55 in total during the summer months; again, thank you to the businesses which made a contribution.
 - Annual Parish Dinner and Parish Council Reception.
 - Keyworth Quiz (January to March) – sponsored by the Council; congratulations to the winners, Keyworth Dramatic Society, and also to the organisers for once again making the quiz (in its 43rd year) such a success. Results and reports can be found on the Parish Council website: www.keyworthparishcouncil.org/keyworth-quiz.

Publicity/Information

- The Council website (www.keyworthparishcouncil.org) continues to be updated on a regular basis, and is well worth a visit for anyone who wants to stay abreast of what's happening.
- We also keep residents informed through news items and the Keyworth Diary (in the Keyworth News), distribution of which, to all households in Keyworth, is financed by the Council. (The Keyworth Diary can also be found on the Council website.)
- The Online Keyworth Guide, which can be found on the Council website, is a useful source of information about local organisations, although we are reliant on the relevant organisations to provide us with updates.
- This year's Annual Parish Meeting was publicised by means of a full-page advertisement in the March and April editions of the Keyworth News, and also on the Council website.

Finance

- At the time of writing, the Council's accounts for 2017/18 are yet to be finalised. The figures to hand suggest a substantial budget surplus, but the Council has agreed that this surplus should be earmarked provisionally for expenditure on a new surface for Nottingham Road play area (see above), ongoing topping up the existing bark surface having proved to be very expensive.
- The Council reviewed its reserves policy as usual in January. On the face of it, the level of the Council's uncommitted reserves (reserves not earmarked to fund specific commitments or long-term development plans) might seem high, but it should be borne in mind that the Council owns, and is responsible for maintaining, fixed assets valued at around £1.8 million, and it follows that it needs to set aside substantial funds for emergency/contingency purposes.
- As for 2018/19, the Council set its precept at a level resulting in only a modest increase (£1.07 per year for a Band D property) in the Parish Council portion of the council tax.

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Planning

- The Council's Planning committee has had another busy year: there were 12 Planning meetings in 2017/18, at which the committee considered 62 planning applications, some straightforward, but some not.
- It's important to bear in mind that it's the Borough Council which makes the final decisions on planning applications, but the Planning committee submits comments and recommendations, having taken on board the views of members of the public who often attend its meetings.

Neighbourhood Plan

- The completed Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Parish Council and submitted to Rushcliffe Borough Council last autumn. They in turn passed it on to an official independent examiner, Patrick Whitehead. The examiner made a number of relatively minor changes to ensure the plan was compliant with current regulations and planning laws. On April 9th the Parish Council met to consider the amended plan and subsequently approved and adopted it. A referendum will be held on May 30th by Rushcliffe Borough Council for the residents of Keyworth to vote on whether to accept or decline the plan. The Parish Council hopes that the plan will be accepted by the residents of Keyworth. The consequences of no plan could allow developers to submit planning permission for numerous locations around the village with residents having no say on what type, size etc. of housing would be built.

Other Issues

- The Parish Council will be assisting the Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance with its fundraising activities during 2018/19, with an event to be held free of charge at the Village Hall complex, provisionally scheduled for June 2018.
- The Platt Lane Joint Management Committee continue in their work to take ownership of the Platt Lane sports facilities (see above), and are well along the road to completing this. In the very near future, exciting new improvements should be noticeable.

Plans and Priorities for 2018/19

- Most of the activities and many of the issues outlined above will, of course, be high on the Council's list of priorities again in 2018/19.

In my view, the Parish Council's most important priorities in 2018/19 will be:

- Considering developments in respect of the sports facilities at Platt Lane.
- Refurbishing the bench seats and replacing the chairs in the Centenary Lounge.
- Redecorating parts of the Village Hall.
- Refurbishing the Memorial Gates and railings along Nottingham Road.
- Resurfacing the Nottingham Road Play Area (see above).
- Continuing works (including landscaping) at the Wysall Lane Burial Ground.

Tony Grice
Chairman
31.3.18