

Keyworth Parish Council

CHAIR'S REPORT 2019/20 Plans/Priorities for 2020/21

Foreword by Cllr Tamsin Armour, Chair of Keyworth Parish Council

What started as a normal year, with continuing projects and activities across the village, has ended in an unprecedented and unpredictable situation, with Nationwide lockdown, closure of schools and businesses, sporting and leisure activities paused and the NHS capacity, spread of the coronavirus and disease and deaths caused by it, being the main focus of everything we are currently doing.

For much of the past year, the work of the Parish Council has continued as normal and in the main, this report focuses on summarising those activities. I can't help wondering whether this will all blow over in a matter of weeks and we will find ourselves wondering what all the fuss was about, or whether next year's report will be entirely devoid of most of what we consider 'normal' and COVID-19 will be something that changes our lives for the long term or even permanently....

Council Members

- Following an election in May 2019, Cllrs Neil Breward, Kevin Lowe and Matthew Tuttey joined the council. This left one vacancy to be filled in due course following a skills audit. Cllr Anne Jequier resigned in October 2019 and Cllr Breward sadly passed away in December 2019. The three resulting vacancies were filled by co-option following interviews in February 2020 and the new members to join the council were Cllrs Geoff Baker, Ian Bell and Mary Butler.

Council Staff

- The Council currently employs seven part time staff, including Clerk to the Council, Finance Officer, Facilities Manager, Clerical Officer, Cleaner, Handyman and a person to lock the children's play area. The Bookings Clerk has taken over tasks previously performed by the Clerical Officer (who left in October 2019) in addition to the Bookings Clerk role. The council has also hired on a casual basis, a Bookings Clerk as needed when the Clerical Officer is on leave. The total basic hours worked by these staff equates to the hours worked by approximately three full time staff.

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 Keyvolution/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)

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Village Hall Complex

- The Centenary Lounge seating and tables have been replaced and the benches are due to be refurbished to create a modern and fresh look. The Village Hall Bar, Feignies Room, Office Reception and Centenary Lounge kitchen, toilet, entrance hall, external doors windows, soffits and facias have been redecorated.
- The Village Hall car park lines were re-painted.
- The Council's Finance committee agreed a small increase in hire fees for the Village Hall complex in 2020/21.

Nottingham Road Play Area, Rectory Field, Wysall Lane Burial Ground, Activity Park, Skate Park

- Substantial works were carried out on the extension of the burial ground in preparation for its completion in April 2021
- The remainder of the facilities continue to be proactively checked and maintained by the Parish Council's Facilities Manager.

Memorial Gates

- Names of the fallen from WWI, taken from the Memorial Gates, are being used to name roads in the new housing developments off Platt Lane and Bunny Lane.

Support for Local Organisations

- **The Council continued in 2019/20 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 & District Community Concern
 - Keyworth Conservation Area Advisory Group
 - Keyworth PCC (re maintenance and repair of church clock)

Donations were also made to:

- RHR Cadet Corps of Drums
- Keyworth Bowls Club
- Keyworth United Reformed Church

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:

Keyworth Quiz; Keyworth Allotments; Thursday coffee morning; Conservation Group; Keyworth Show; Fun on the Field; Christmas Charity Fair; Remembrance Sunday; Christmas Fair & Christmas Dinner.

Parish Council Events/Seasonal Activities

- During the past twelve months, the Council has organised and/or sponsored the following events and activities:
 - 50 Hanging Baskets to decorate the village over the Summer months.
 - Fun on the Field – Monday 12th August 2019
 - Volunteers Day and Barn Dance – Saturday 7th September 2019
 - Christmas Craft Fair (proceeds to the Play Park) – Saturday 2nd November 2019

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- Christmas Fair (Volunteers/Charities) - Saturday 16th November 2019
- Festivities Day – Saturday 30th November 2019
- 46 lit Christmas Trees which were displayed by local businesses to create a festive atmosphere in December 2019.
- The Keyworth Quiz took place during January and February but had to be cancelled during March because of Coronavirus restrictions.
- The Annual Parish Council Reception was due to place on 25th March 2020, but sadly had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus restrictions.
- Towards the end of March, the Parish Council set up a COVID-19 working group in order to respond quickly to a potential need to help vulnerable people with shopping, collecting prescriptions and other essentials.

Publicity/Information

- The Council website (www.keyworthparishcouncil.org) is updated regularly.
- 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.
- Due to the outbreak of coronavirus and subsequent lockdown restrictions, the council office and Village Hall complex were closed on 16th March, in line with government guidance. Staff continued to work from home and take it in turns to collect mail and phone messages from the office.

Finance

- The council now has an online banking facility with its new, additional provider, Unity Trust Bank.
- At the time of writing, the Council's accounts for 2019/20 have been finalised. The figures to hand suggest that a substantial budget surplus is likely. This had provisionally been earmarked to go towards the continued development of the Burial Ground and the proposed Peace Garden on the Rectory field.
- 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 set aside 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 2020/21, the Council has set its precept at a level resulting in the Parish Council portion of the council tax decreasing by 0.8% for a Band D property.

Planning

- The council has reviewed a total of 72 planning applications in the period and has worked with the community and with Rushcliffe Borough Council to ensure the new housing developments on Platt Lane, north of Bunny Lane and Nicker Hill are in line with the Keyworth Neighbourhood Plan and that any development South of Bunny Lane is appropriate to the area. Names of the fallen from WWI from the War Memorial Gates will be used for road names in the new developments, as an appropriate tribute to those who gave their lives for our country.
- The council wrote to Rushcliffe Borough Council to object to the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2 Modifications and has been active in ensuring that current housing developments are consistent with their plans.

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Other Items

- The council supported the Equals Trust request to find an alternative polling venue to Crossdale Drive School.
- Cllr Clarke took on the role of lead Tree Warden for Keyworth under Rushcliffe Borough Council's scheme. Cllr Armour was also trained as a Tree Warden.
- Cllrs Millband and Tuttey represented the council on the Rushcliffe Physical Activity Insight Project which aims to resolve health inequalities in Keyworth.

Plans and Priorities for 2020/21

- In my view, the Parish Council's most important priorities in **2020/21** will be:
 - To support all residents, but especially the elderly and vulnerable as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. This may involve finding ways to support those in financial hardship, ensuring food and other essentials are available, finding ways to support mental health and supporting the young people of Keyworth, especially if Schools continue to be closed.
 - To work with RBC and planning enforcement to ensure that the housing developers stick to their planning conditions and are held to account if any are breached. In particular this will be important in maintaining road safety and pedestrian safety where development work is ongoing.
 - To work with residents and local groups to continue to enhance our environment, finding ways to reduce litter, dog fouling, vandalism and ways to enhance and protect the wildlife in and around the village.

Tamsin Armour

Chairman

30 April 2020