

**KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2022-2023**

The year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 has been particularly busy for Kington Town Council. In early 2022, we were fortunate enough to benefit from grant funding from HM Government, via Herefordshire Council, for a total amount of £125,000 for a variety of different projects but with some tight spending deadlines.

Working with groups and businesses around the town, the funding went towards supporting various festivals and events by the publication of a Festivals Brochure to attract visitors from a wider area to our town's events, the creation of the town map which is now located in the Place de Marines, celebrating local walking routes, the creation, planting and maintenance of planters around the town, new Christmas lights, support for the Food Festivals, and the purchase and installation of the outdoor gym equipment in the Recreation Ground.

Some of that funding and some from the Town Council's reserves was also used so that some 31 businesses in Kington benefited from grant funding of up to £3,500 per business towards refurbishment of shop fronts. We congratulate all those businesses that were able to deliver this work within such a tight timescale and are delighted with the impact this has had on our High Street in particular.

Building on the work undertaken on the High Street, the Town Council has worked closely with the Chamber of Trade and Balfour Beatty towards the resurfacing of the High Street and pavements and is looking forward to extending this work out to other areas within the town over the coming year.

Not forgetting the impact that Covid has had on our town, the Council completed the design, purchase and installation of two memorial benches during the year, designed and created by local artist Ambrose Byrne. One is now in the Churchyard at St. Mary's Church and the other

is in the Recreation Ground and both offer a place for quiet reflection for those who have lost loved ones during the Pandemic or indeed at any other time.

All of these projects have been universally well received within the town and we are proud of everything that has been achieved, none of which could have taken place without the support and sheer hard work of all those businesses, community groups and organisations that have worked with us. Special thanks must go to the Chamber of Trade, Marches Makers and Kington Walks in particular for their support and hard work throughout the year.

It was, of course, a year of contrasts and we started the 2022-2023 year celebrating the Platinum Jubilee, culminating in a fabulous community picnic in the Recreation Ground, organised by the Chamber of Trade. Sadly, some three months later in September we mourned the late HM Queen Elizabeth II, proclaiming the new King Charles III at a historic event at the Market Hall on 11<sup>th</sup> September. Then earlier this month, another celebratory community picnic on the occasion of the coronation of King Charles III again brilliantly organised by Kington Chamber of Trade.

We also thank artist Rachel Ricketts and the Marches Makes Group for the gift of Fly, Walking Dog of Kington, to the Town. Fly now resides outside the Museum in Mill Street and is a welcome addition to the Town.

If all of this isn't enough in a single year, the Town Council has continued to work with Herefordshire Council to further the aims of the Town's Economic Development Plan and will continue to do so going forward.

Many will have attended the town meeting last year when Herefordshire Council announced plans to change the current free parking available in car parks throughout the town. The proposals were withdrawn as a result although we expect this to be reviewed by Herefordshire. We have continued to press for a Transport Study to be undertaken by Herefordshire Council so that the impact of such measures can be demonstrated before decisions are taken. The impact of the change in key personnel in Herefordshire after the recent elections is not yet known but work on the Transport Study is continuing.

There have also been some changes within the Town Council itself over the year, partly due to the recent elections and partly due to resignations during the year as a result of ill health or other commitments. Town Councillors are, of course, unpaid elected representatives and we thank past and current councillors for their commitment and hard work on behalf of our community. We have said goodbye during the past year or at the recent elections to Patrick Edwards, Rob MacCurrach, Ian Spencer, Ben Macleod-Needs and last year's Mayor, David Redmayne. They will be sorely missed. But we now have a full Council and are looking forward to working with new Town Councillors, Ruth Warne, Philip Sell, Martin Woolford, Alan Dixon, Nicki Cornish and Kim Greig. We have also gained a part time member of staff, Ruth Robinson, who joined us in September as Assistant Town Clerk with special responsibilities for the Recreation Ground and green spaces within the Town.

And finally, we are sad to report the recent death of Ken Perks who for very many years single-handedly looked after the Recreation Ground on behalf of Kington Recreation Ground Trust. We offer our deepest condolences to his family.

This is, of course, just a snapshot of what your Town Council does for the Town and everyone is welcome to attend our meetings which take place on the first Monday of every month in the Old Police Station, Market Hall Street. Further information is available from our website, [www.kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk).