



Kington Town Council

Annual Report 2016-2017



INTRODUCTION

Negotiations are continuing to develop the organisation that will manage the Old Police Station, the Museum Building, the Market Hall and Place de Marines, the Coach House, the Public Toilets, and three Car Parks that Herefordshire Council are intending to hand over to Kington Town Council. KTC has set up a Kington Community Asset Company and has at last turned it into a charitable company. Once these buildings have been transferred to KTC they will be let on a long leasehold, subject to a business plan, to the charity. This is likely to take some time. Meanwhile the proposal that Recreation Ground Trust is going to take over the management of two additional green spaces of Crooked Well and Kington Park play areas progresses and is waiting for information from Herefordshire Council.

The Kington Centre/Library has now been transferred as a satellite of Leominster Library and is staffed by them. The Council had played an active part to make sure that the library facilities are retained in Kington. The funding is secure for another three years. There is a public meeting to be held on Wednesday 10 May at 7pm at the Old Police Station. Everyone interested in the Library is welcome.



The Council has also been involved in preparing a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan for the development of Kington, More about this initiative below.

The Deputy Mayors have regularly attended the Market Towns forum and contributed to it. The council has found this to be of great benefit.

Christmas Lights: over £6,000 of your precept is paying for these lights. The council is prepared to continue funding them but if any other way can be found to assist this would take some of the burden away from rate payers. The council has set up an advisory group including members of the chamber of trade to discuss the way forward and to consider additional ways to fund them



Kington Remembers has continued to commemorate World War I with conversations, preparations of banners, developing a data base of all those involved and many other activities.



The Council receives regular updates from Balfour Beatty Living Places on road repairs and schedule of works in the area and also works closely with the locality steward informing her of works required. This communication has been a great benefit to the town as many of the minor works required has been carried out. One councillor has especially been involved and is congratulated for making sure that BBLP knows about the work required within Kington.

Kington in Bloom assisted by the council produced colourful hanging baskets in the Place des

Marines again last year and has added a number of planters throughout the town. Anybody

wishing to help with this please contact the council office. The competition will be organised again this year.



Under the auspice of KLEEN, five Edible Kington Community Planter have been set up throughout the town to give people to opportunity to pick, taste many of the plants and to watch them grow. They have been constructed by a team including Roz Brown and her husband who have worked on this project for the last two years.

On Sunday 23 April a civic service Celebrating Kington was held in St Mary's parish church. Over 200 members of the community joined together and listen to the choir and songs from Kington Community Choir in front of a representative of the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff of Herefordshire and the High Sheriff of Powys as well as several mayors of surrounding towns.

I would like to thank all councillors, the clerk and the clerk's assistant for their contribution to this year for without their help and involvement the council would not have been so successful.

Sadly I have to announcement that the clerk has decided to take another position nearer to his home in Welshpool. He will be leaving the Council at the end of May. Kington is grateful

for the eight years that he has given to the community. During the Clerk's tenure, Kington Town Council became a Quality Council and this additional qualification is much due to his leadership. He will be missed.

Kington Town Council Year

May 2016

Cllr Elizabeth Banks was elected Mayor, and both Cllr Bob Widdowson and Cllr Martin Fitton were also elected as Deputy Mayors. Appointments were made to the committees and outside bodies.

June 2016

The Mayor welcomed newly elected Cllr Richard Banks (the fifth generation of the family to serve on the Council). As there was another vacancy, John Dennis was invited to become a co-opted councillor. This left one remaining vacancy. Cllr Forester joined the Joint Action for Herefordshire Libraries Group to look at the provision of Libraries, Museums and Archives in the County. The Council agreed to proceed with the repair to St Mary's parish church car park.

July 2016

Following the referendum the Council passed an Emergency Resolution to resolve "that all people of whatever nationality, race, or religion are welcome in Kington etc...". The 90th Birthday of the Queen was celebrated at a tea party at the Burton. The 40th year of Wheel Barrow race was celebrated marked by a hugely successful race. The council expressed concern at the proposed closure of Barclays Bank.

August 2016

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Jeremy Atkinson who had recently been co-opted to the Council. The council produced a questionnaire to find out the usage of the bus services and impact on possibly service withdrawals. Two councillors investigated fly tipping at the Co-op car park and asked for better signage for the new recycling centre on the Eardisley Road.

September 2016

The council agreed to support a consultation on the partnership of support agencies. A discussion was held over possible CCTV coverage being set up in the High Street with the help of CPSO Alford. The mayor had a successful meeting with residence of the Square over the proposal to add Oliver Thomas' name to the War Memorial. The churchyard parking work was completed.

October 2016

The council welcomed two members of the Kington Medical Practice to talk about the current situation at the practice. Cllr Sally Williams had sent a letter resignation and the council expressed thanks for all her work. A resolution stating that 'Kington Town Council believes the Kington Library (Kington Centre) to be at the heart of the community and an essential service for the town which must be retained' was sent to Herefordshire Council

November 2016

The council welcomed the new Safer Neighbourhood Inspector Callie Bradley. At the Remembrance Parade, the community welcomed the new name, Oliver Thomas engraved onto the War Memorial. Concerned was continued to be expressed about the Library facilities. Several Councillors offered to help by tidying up various areas of the town.



December 2016

The council held a meeting with directors of the HSBC following the proposed closure of the last bank in Kington in early February. The council also wrote to the MP, Bill Wiggin and the chairman of HSBC (Britain) requesting the impact assessment and expressing concern at the lost of a banking facility in Kington. Dog fouling was also brought to the council's attention.

January 2017

The HSBC bank confirmed that they would run a post closure clinic,. The mayor set out new plans for the setting of the War Memorial.

February 2017

Mr. Stephen Grist, chairman of the governors of Lady Hawkins' School told the council about the long term viability of the sixth form and that this section of the school might be closed; resulting in all sixth form students travelling to Hereford every day. Meetings between the school and mayor and deputy mayors were arranged. The Wye and Usk Foundation undertook some much needed coppice work along Back Brook. The Council was also working on the repair to the north churchyard wall.

March 2017

The advisory group over the Christmas lights was set up and contains two members of the Chamber of Trade. The Council continued to be involved with Lady Hawkins' School over the proposed closure of the sixth form and the council's concern that 2-18 education in Kington should be available. The Council also supported Herefordshire application to be a City of Culture. Following the closure of HSBC the council was concerned about available 24 hours cash machines and supported the Chamber of Trade who was investigating where one could go on the High Street.

April 2017

CPSO Alford is nearing the completion of the CCTV project on the High Street and has found most of the funding. The Mayor and Deputy Mayors continue to be concerned over the threatened closure of the Lady Hawkins' School sixth form. They also met with the developers of the Chapel. The council congratulated the Kington Tourist Group which was runner-up in the volunteer category of the Herefordshire Championship Awards.

Kington Town Council finances

Our expenditure in 2016/17 was £84,183 compared to £79,670 the previous year. The precept (the Council Tax bill) increased from £63,270 in 2015 to £73,739 in 2016/17. The increase was due in part to the loss of over £5500 funding from central government as well as the need to set aside monies for urgent work at the Recreation Ground play area and for works to the churchyard wall. In addition to the precept grants were received for the work on the Neighbourhood Plan, Kington Remembers, marking the anniversary of WW1, and we also received income from the markets held in the Market Hall.

During the year we agreed a reserves policy that non-earmarked (free) reserves should not fall below 40% of budgeted expenditure. This is in line with good practice and ensures that expenditure is kept under control and in line with agreed budgets. Earmarked reserves are now held for the Recreation Ground and the Churchyard to fund planned works and a contingency in case there is a need for emergency works.

For the foreseeable future we will aim to hold the precept at its present level plus inflation, although we will be seeking to reduce expenditure though seeking savings on items such as the Christmas lights as well as grants where appropriate.

Full accounts are available from the Clerk and will be posted on the website www.kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

More work in town by the active volunteer team lead by the more energetic councillors.



Local Groups Supported 2016-2017

St Mary's PCC	£300
Herefordshire Nature Trust (Wild Play)	£500
Kington Chamber of Trade	£500
Kington Bowling Club	£200
Kington Chamber of Trade (Food Festival)	£500
Kington Operatic Society	£500
Kington Festival	£500
Kington Walking Festival	£500
Kington Agriculture Show	£500
Kington Museum	£426
Kington Tourist Group	£2,500

Kington library

Over the past year, the Town Council has been actively engaged in trying to secure the future of the library. Three years ago, Herefordshire Council were proposing to close the library completely, but lobbying by the Town Council, with a report on the potential for the library, led to Herefordshire Council providing funding through the Public Health budget for two years to develop the library as a health and well-being hub. This was a successful pilot, but due to cuts in Herefordshire Council's public health budget, this funding came to an end at the end of March 2017.

Throughout the last year, Cllr Bob Widdowson and Cllr Christine Forrester have been actively engaged, on behalf of the Town Council, in developing a strategy for the library, and in talking with Herefordshire Council to ensure some funding to keep the library open.

They have also engaged with the Joint Action on Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, which has been set up on a county-wide basis to fight against library closures and for enhanced provision in the county. In October 2016, Herefordshire Council's Cabinet took the decision to provide a budget for libraries for the next three years: Kington library is included in this budget. However, it does not include provision for any dedicated staff based full-time in the town and with the loss of the public health funding, we have lost our three members of staff. The library is now serviced by library staff from Leominster.

so there is no reduction of service, as such. So we have achieved something, but we still have concerns for the future.

The library is a key service in our community, and we would like to see an increase in opening hours, more activities provided in the library for the whole community and other services being provided there, too. To this end, the Town Council will be involved in various initiatives, including investigating ways in which the community can be much more involved in providing the service. Further cuts in the Herefordshire Council budget, which are expected over the next two years, could have a major impact on the libraries – we have already heard that the book purchase budget will be cut by 30%.

Kington Town Council will continue to fight to ensure the provision of the library in the town. We would like to thank our library staff, Wendy and Hannah and Zandra (and Julie, who left in Summer 2015), for all their work in providing support and a wide range of activities for all ages at the library over the past two years. Our library is one of the greatest assets available to our community. We will continue to fight to keep and develop it.

Kington Town Council contact Information

The Old Police Station
Market Hall Street, Kington, HR5 3DP

Phone: 01544 239098

Email: clerk@kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Office open hours:

Monday : 11am 1pm

Tuesday : 3pm– 5pm

Friday: 1pm -3pm

Kington Area Neighbourhood Plan.

Draft Plan Completed

The first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan which is being prepared by Kington Town Council in partnership with the Kington Rural & Harpton and Huntington Parishes Councils is now complete

What is the Neighbourhood Development Plan?

In 2011 Parliament passed The Localism Act which gives communities more control over development within their neighbourhood through the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). While NDPs allow a 'local say' in terms of future development proposals the Plan has to be in conformity with the Local Authority Plan and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Plan must also be acceptable to local people who, under the Localism Act, can accept or reject it in a referendum. Once adopted an NDP becomes part of the development plan framework and used to guide decisions on planning applications and other development proposals.

The next Stages

The Draft Plan is now at what is called the **Regulation 14 Stage** and will be available for comment during a six week consultation period which we hope to start at the beginning of June. The comments received will be analysed and amendments made to the Plan where appropriate and justified.

Following this consultation, the Plan will be submitted to Herefordshire Council for a six week publicity period and will then undergo Independent Examination. Subject to a successful examination, the Plan will proceed to a local referendum and if a favourable response is received will be formally adopted and form part of the Development Plan and used to determine planning applications.

Your Chance to be involved

Once the consultation begins the Draft Plan will be available for inspection at various locations- such as The Kington Library, The Council Offices and all the village halls. It will also be available on line at the Kington Plan website. In addition, a special issue of the Kington Chronicle, providing a summary of the Plan policies, will be distributed to all households in the three parishes. This will contain a short questionnaire and invite more detailed comments on the Plan.

Our Thanks

Many people have been involved in preparing the Plan and we have benefitted from the views and advice of the many residents who have responded to earlier consultations and come to meetings to offer helpful criticism.

Our thanks to all and we hope that the Plan if and when agreed at the referendum will guide Kington and the surrounding rural parishes to a sustainable future protecting all that is good about our neighbourhood.

Kington's Councillors

Mayor
Mrs Elizabeth Banks



Councillor
Fred Hawkins



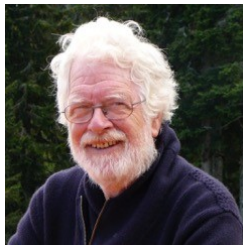
Deputy Mayor
Martin Fitton



Councillor
Rob MacCurrach



Deputy Mayor
Bob Widdowson



Councillor
Chris Forrester



Councillor
Jeremy Atkinson



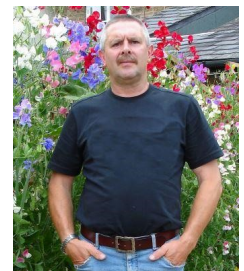
Councillor
Esther Rolls



Councillor
Richard Banks



Councillor
Ian Wood-Johnson



Councillor
Tom Bounds



Councillor
Will Laurie



Councillor
John Dennis



Councillor
Pat Prior

