

Kings Hill Parish Council is a corporate body of 12 elected representatives working together to improve the lives of Kings Hill residents. This is a review of our recent work.

From the Chairman



Welcome to all our residents of Kings Hill, whether you've only just moved to KH, or whether you were here when KH first emerged from the old airfield. Welcome. I am Sarah Barker, Chairman of the Parish Council for the last two years, and a councillor since 2007.

During the last two years there have been a considerable number of challenges. My thanks must go to Cllr. Chris Finlay for all his help supporting me in his role as Vice-Chairman. His knowledge of Finance has been a great asset to the Council and thanks to the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Committees and all Members of the Council for the work they have carried out on behalf of parishioners during the past year. Sadly, Cllr Caroline Bridger has recently resigned and on behalf of councillors I would like to thank Caroline for her work on the Council since she joined in 2017. From the start of the first lockdown the Parish Council moved all its meetings remotely. Everyone quickly adapted to this remote format and we have seen a larger number of residents join the Parish Council Meetings. I hope that joining the meetings has given a much clearer understanding of how the Parish Council operates.

In October 2020 four residents were co-opted onto the council and are playing an active role in meetings whilst learning the ropes of local government and how a parish council functions. Your Councillors can be found on page 4 of this report.

Over the past year all the staff involved in running the parish council, Sports Park and Community Centre have done a fantastic job. They adapted to working from home and our socially distanced offices when they returned to their usual place of work and last, but by no means least, my very special thanks go to the Clerk, Julie Miller, and Deputy Clerk, Georgina Jackson, who both have done an outstanding job in what has been a very difficult year.

Some exciting things will be happening in the near future as the Sports park management will be taken on by the local sports and leisure trust, tactive, and thanks to developers contributions work will start in the summer on extra facilities at the Sports Park, including Trim Trail, changing rooms, tennis courts and rugby pitch. Regular updates will be given at the Amenities Committee meetings and on our website.

An election for a parish councillor is taking place on 6th May 2021 completed nomination papers must be delivered by hand to the Returning Officer on any working day no later than 4pm on Thursday, 8th April 2021.



Can you spare a few hours helping us identify speeding motorists in Kings Hill? Email us at deputy@kingshillparish.gov.uk to find out more about how you can be a part of making our community safer.

Tel: 01732 870382



Chris Finlay, Chairman of Finance and Human Resources Committee

As we all know, the financial year 2020-21 has been an extremely turbulent year, on all fronts! On the national scene, we started the financial year in a virus induced lockdown, businesses temporarily closed, staff furloughed, deaths resulting from Covid at 5,000, the Queen addressing the nation to boost morale, and the Prime Minister being admitted to hospital and quarantined in intensive care! What a start to a financial year!

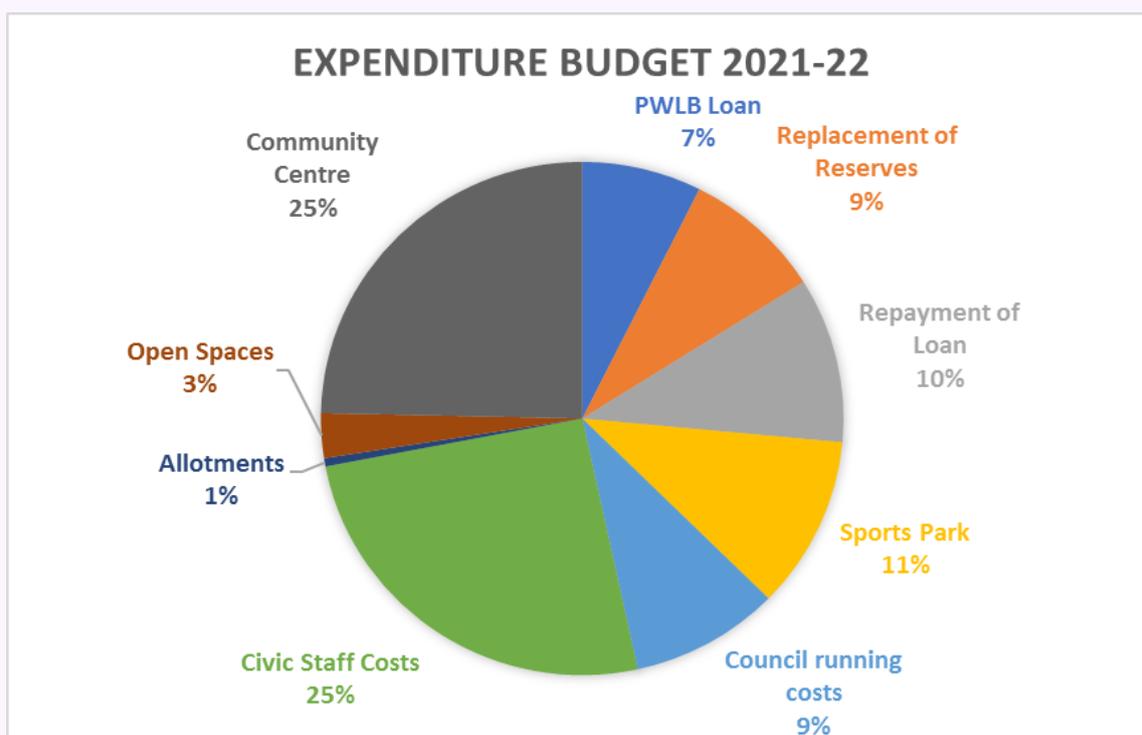
At Kings Hill, as the financial year unfolded, the parish followed the nation – the Sports Park was closed, the Community Hall shut, and where possible, staff were furloughed / stood down. Activity was almost at a standstill, as everyone turned their attentions to supporting the old, the infirm and those in need.

Prior to the start of the financial year, in the October to December 2019 period, the budget for 2020-21 had already turned out to be a difficult exercise given the previous losses at the Sports Park, the much-depleted reserves, and the need to focus on maximising revenues and minimising costs. Despite efforts to minimise the impact of 2019-20 losses, the consequent increase in the precept was not welcomed by residents.... but little did we know what would follow.

Throughout the ensuing financial year, the budget income from the Sports Park and Community Hall had largely collapsed and, despite efforts to reduce costs, there remains a significant adverse outcome for the 2020-21 financial year, with losses in the region of £16,000. This will, again, have a knock-on effect on the next financial year, 2021-22, where again the precept increase will be significantly higher than desired (yet not the highest in TMBC).

Obviously the parish was not in a good financial state going in to this last financial year, with little or no reserves to withstand any financial downturn. The independent investigation by Ian Morrell confirmed, however, that the losses were not endemic to the Sports Park operation, but rather were exceptional expenditure items commissioned by the sports park committee during the period from 2016 to 2019. Had the pandemic not happened, then there was a strong probability that the Sports Park would have broken even, but this was not to be. Since the investigation, the council have adopted all of the recommendations, including the recommendation to seek an external organisation to manage the Sports Park – which we believe we have identified. The discussions with TMAActive (a Non-Profit Distributing Organisation who currently manage all of TMBC's leisure services) are progressing well and we believe will greatly assist the parish to fulfil their obligations of a well-run Sports Park, with more sports, more activity, and better finances.

Whilst we are not yet out of the grip of the virus, with the proposed budget for 2021-22 and the prospect of TMAActive managing the Sports Park, we firmly believe we will be in a far better position to return the parish finances to a more prudent and fiscally conservative state, in line with local government requirements, and over the next three years, build our reserves to withstand, much better, such unplanned events. It is fervently hoped that given the above actions the parish can achieve surpluses in future years that will allow us to increase community events and local grants, building on the already present vibrant and caring place that we know and love – Kings Hill.



Planning, Transport and Environment Committee—Chairman Cllr Sarah Barker

This committee meets monthly to comment on local planning issues and to discuss matters relating to transport and the environment.

As a consultee in the local planning process, KHPC has received 71 planning applications for comments in the last year.

In July 2020 a considerable number of residents objected the proposed development of 65 dwellings on land at the end of Clearheart Lane. The Parish Council submitted a strong response against the proposal citing: - partial loss and deterioration of ancient woodland: loss of irreplaceable habitat for protected species such as hazel dormice and serotine bats; increased levels of pollution; environmental disturbance harmful to residents in Clearheart Lane. The application was withdrawn in January 2021 and is expected to be re-submitted soon.

The Parish Council will alert residents to all significant planning applications and we encourage residents to continue to exercise your rights to comment on planning applications. All planning applications are available for comment on the TMBC Planning Portal. Many residents will be aware of the proposal in the Local Plan for over 900 dwellings at Broadwater Farm. If, and when, an application is submitted by Berkeley Homes KHPC will ensure residents are notified of and we will be consulting widely with residents.

The Committee continues to monitor the progress of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan. The Inspector has recently written to T & M with their decision to reject the plan and we await news on TMBC's challenge.

A parking review for Kings Hill was started by TMBC in 2018 and the progress of this review has been delayed due to Covid 19. We expect news of the possible future parking restrictions to be released soon.

In Autumn 2015 Waitrose Ltd submitted an application for a new pedestrian ramp and steps. The application was approved but then lapsed as the work was not done within the allocated time. Waitrose have now advised the Council that they are not going to submit a new application. The Parish Council is extremely disappointed at this decision and will continue to campaign for a new, safer access from Fortune Way.

Speedwatch in Kings Hill has not been active in Kings Hill since 2018. The council has been recruiting new members for Speedwatch and plans to restart the scheme later this year Speed continues to be a problem in Kings Hill. The Council has recently set up a Climate Change Working Group and is working to produce an Action plan to achieve Carbon Zero by 2030.

Amenities Committee - Chairman Cllr Margaret Colman

2020 has been a really bad time for the Community Centre / allotments / Sports park.

Because of the all encompassing pandemic, government rules stated we had to close the Community Centre and the Sports Park for most of 2020. So sadly, there is very little to report.

In 2019 the PC managed to obtain funding for a large shed to be located at the allotments. The ground works completed and the shed erected it was handed over to the Allotment Group. This is a place where they can keep all of the various items used at the site and swap magazines/books/seeds etc.

Also during 2019 Michael Dean, our Facilities Officer renovated a wooden bench, which was also located on the Allotment site for the holders to use.

Currently, the allotments are almost fully taken and we have been pleased to keep the facility open during lockdown.

2020/2021 an exciting building development started on the new hall extension to the Community Centre. It is now complete and will be ready for use when government allows the community centre to open fully. The new hall can be used for parties / engagement and wedding celebrations to name but a few ideas for the new building.

The Sports Park can re-open and has restarted business. The children of Kings Hill, along with the adult players, have not been able to play matches or take part in their regular training sessions for almost a year, think they will all be very pleased to get back to normal and playing football.



What is a Parish Council?

A Parish Council is the tier of local government closest to the people. It is not linked to the church in any way. The Council can respond to the needs of the community - delivering the services or representation it most needs. To do this well we need to hear from the community about local issues, so please keep in touch.

Who runs the Council?

Parish Council elections were held in May 2019 to elect twelve councillors to run the council for four years. They work for the community on an unpaid basis. A Parish Clerk is appointed to advise the Council and manage the administration of the Council. All decisions are made by the corporate body of the council at constituted meetings, it is unlawful for an individual councillor to make or carry out decisions of the council outside of a meeting.

What does Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC) do?

KHPC is responsible for the following:

- Management and upkeep of Kings Hill Community Centre
- The upkeep of Kings Hill Sports Park
- Maintenance of the playground and green in Anson Avenue and other open spaces in Phase 1
- Installation and replenishment of salt bins in residential areas
- The provision and maintenance of a bus shelter
- Community Notice Boards
- Kings Hill Allotments
- Consulted on all planning applications in the parish
- Acting as a liaison between the community and other local organisations and Councils
- Nominating representatives to serve on local voluntary, public and community organisations

**You can contact us
via our website**



www.kingshillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Write to us at Kings Hill Community Centre, 70 Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, ME19 4LG.

Follow us on social media.

Your Councillors

Sarah Barker (Chair)
Chris Finlay (Vice Chair)
Margaret Colman
Shakira Falzon-Thomas
Khaled Kassem-Toufic
Siobhan Kirk
Tony Petty
Nick Redding
Neil Sherlaw
David Waller
Raja Zahidi



Raising money through Grants

The last year has been extremely difficult for all local authorities but at Kings Hill Parish Council the officers have been working hard to raise money through grant funding, in order to alleviate the pressure on council finances brought on by the pandemic. The following is a list of the successes, and the use to which the parish put these monies.

In November 2020, a successful application was made in the sum of £4,597.40 to Councillor Matthew Balfour's Kent County Council Member's Fund to fund a restoration project at Kings Hill Allotment Site. The project was to fix the perimeter and car park fence as the site was compromised early in 2020 with a spate of break ins, this work will go some way to protecting tenants and the Kings Hill site.

In December 2020, funding was approved for 150 banqueting chairs for the new hall at Kings Hill Community Centre. Hirers are set to get 150 new banqueting chairs for the brand new hall, funded by Liberty Property Trust, at Kings Hill Community Centre, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill thanks to a £2,693 grant from Istock Enovert Trust (IET), an Environmental Body funded through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF).

In January 2021, Kings Hill Parish Council received a generous £4,000 National Lottery support to help towards replacing the tired and damaged community centre lobby flooring. With this grant we were able to dispose of the worn out, ripped carpet and replace with a hard wearing Altro non-slip vinyl all the way through the lobby areas which will be much easier to maintain and keep clean.

The council achieved several HMRC grants and has received £17,859 so far (not including any payments due to be made in March).

Various COVID19 business interruption grants were also successful with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council passing on government funds to help with closure of the parish council's facilities. These total £38,937.50.

These grants have enabled the parish council to make some positive improvements for the community and be ready to re-open