



Edmund de Langley
&
Isabella de Castilla

KINGS LANGLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL 2020/21

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to this the first Annual meeting of Kings Langley Parish Council to be held via Zoom. The COVID pandemic has thrown us all into the virtual world with a steep and rapid learning curve into the use of on-line platforms for meetings and communication. You will see throughout my report that numerous Parish events have had to be cancelled but rest assured they are not forgotten and will be in full flow again once we are given the all clear by Central government

Let me introduce my fellow Councillors:

Alan Anderson

Alan represents North Ward, is a member of the Planning and Licensing Committee and the Personnel Committee, is the Council's Finance portfolio-holder, and a Dacorum Borough Council Councillor for the Kings Langley Ward. Alan also represents the Council on the Kings Langley Local History & Museum Society.

Gerry Angiolini

Gerry represents Central Ward, is Vice-Chair of the Council and the Personnel Committee, Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee, and works tirelessly on many aspects of the Council's activities, including the Christmas Lights event, the Best Kept Gardens' Competition and helping with the village carnival*.

Derek Collins

Derek represents Central Ward and is a member of the Council's Leisure Group and a stout campaigner for road safety. Derek also represents the Council on the Community Centre Association.

Rene De Silva

Rene represents South Ward, is Vice-Chair of the of the Planning and Licensing Committee and represents the Council on the Kings Langley Local History & Museum Society.

Andrew Hubberstey

Andrew represents South Ward. He is lead councillor of the Leisure group and is a member of the Friends of All Saints' Church, and works tirelessly to represent residents in the northern part of the village. He was elected in 2019.

Alan Johnson

Alan represents South Ward and is a member of the Planning and Licensing Committee and the Council's Vision Group (Leisure) and has also taken a very special interest in green / environmental matters. Alan is a school governor, organises the Kings Langley "Puffaten"* , litter picks and has special responsibility for the village garden (and much of the work) and the Council's allotments. He is also very active in the scout movement, helps Gerry with the gardens' competition and is also a Trustee of the Kings Langley Charities. Alan took on the role of Borough Councillor, representing Kings Langley in 2019.



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Bob McLean

Bob represents North Ward, is a member of the Planning and Licensing Committee, the Personnel Committee He is lead councillor on the Transport vision group and helps with the village carnival*. Bob is also a Trustee of the Waterside Centre.

John Morrish

John is lead councillor for the Parish and Neighbourhood plans. He organises the local produce market* (currently being held in the village garden) and is a leading member of the Kings Langley Community Benefit Society. John has also been working to improve the canal towpath amongst many other similar projects..

Mark Rogers

Mark is a member of the Planning and Licensing Committee and the Council's Vision Group (Business) - working hard to set-up a local High Street business group. Mark also represents the Council on the Community Centre Association. He also took on the role of a Borough Councillor for Bennetts End in 2019.

And, finally, myself, Howard Button, Chair of the Council and the Personnel Committee, a member of the Planning and Licensing Committee; lead councillor for the Environment group and member of the Transport Group. In between campaigning for improvements to the paths and roads and protecting the grass verges, I lend a hand with everything, including the village carnival*. More importantly during the COVID lockdown period I seem to have become the resident Zoom expert!

My thanks to all our Councillors for their support and dedication, working on your behalf, and for their support of me in the role as Chairman.

* Not a Council run activity or event

I would also like to say a thank you to the Parish Council's staff for their exceptional efforts throughout the past year:

- Paul Dunham - Clerk to the Council
- Beverley Ross - Administrative Assistant
- Paul Savin - Village Warden

I would like to say a big thank you to Paul our village Warden who is, sadly, stepping down to enjoy more of his retirement time and we wish him all the best. I am sure you would all agree that he has been doing a tremendous job.

The Council's Personnel Committee has recently interviewed several candidate for the warden position and look forward to welcoming Paul Hier to the role. He will be starting on the 4th May.

I would also like to say a big thank you to all local business that have managed to keep essential services open whilst maintaining compliance with COVID restrictions.



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SPEAKERS & GUESTS:

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce our speakers and guests:

- County Councillor Richard Roberts
- PCSO Ian Martin

The Council decided to suspend the Schools agenda item this year.

COMMUNITY SAFETY:

Once again, we would like to thank our Community Police team who continue to work in keeping Kings Langley safe. We are very fortunate to live in a village where crime is very low. That is not to say we are entirely crime free; we do suffer minor crime like burglary, car break-ins etc. but these average around 12 or 13 a month in total.

Our PCSO Ian Martin reports on these at our monthly Parish Council meetings and any trends in any particular area are addressed and where possible enhanced activity, such as more regular patrolling, initiated.

CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL:

Anyone wishing to contact the Council can telephone or visit the Council premises at Charter Court, Vicarage Lane. Opening hours are 9.30am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday.

The office telephone number is 01923 261828. The Council can also be contacted by email: klpc@kingslangley-pc.gov.uk.

The Council also has a website: www.kingslangley-pc.gov.uk on which you will find a range of information including the Council's agendas and minutes, and there is a Facebook page.

The Council meets on the first Tuesday of each month, whilst the Planning & Licensing Committee normally meets before Council meetings and on the third Tuesday of the month. These meetings are open to all and we would welcome more members of the public attending.

A list showing Councillors' contact details is displayed on the notice boards throughout the village and is also available from the Council office and website. This list also shows the contact details for the two Dacorum Borough Councillors for the Kings Langley Borough Ward and for the County Councillor for the Kings Langley County Division.

Portfolio Holders / Parish plan Groups:

The Council continues to operate its "portfolios" so that each Councillor is responsible for an area of activity such as highways, environmental, and social and business issues etc., or a geographical area of the village, so that there can be a clearer focus on problems allowing a single Councillor to "own" and tackle them and report back on progress to the full Council, helping to reduce the duplication of discussion at council meetings.

The Council's "Vision" initiative evolved into a Parish Plan, which continues to be progressed, with a business focus group, and similar groups for transport, the environment and leisure, and better communications via Social Media. The resurrection of the village newspaper was another initiative to come out of the vision think tank and it is now a well established feature in the village (although times are a little difficult because of Covid!).



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Work continues on overhauling the village garden, extending the improved canal tow path and exploring possible routes for cycle ways through the village, a human sun dial, and trying to find ways to deter vehicle damage to grass verges.

Best Kept Gardens Competition:

2020 event cancelled due to COVID restrictions but we are hopeful of being able to judge the event this year

Christmas Lights Festival:

2020 event cancelled due to COVID restrictions but let all hope we can get this event live again this year.

Carnival:

Cancelled due to COVID restrictions one to look out for in 2022

Planning and Development:

The Parish Council Planning Committee will continue to carefully monitor planning applications, especially to ensure that the Green Belt is maintained, and that the village of Kings Langley is not subsumed into the Hemel Hempstead, or indeed, Watford conurbations. The Council will always consider the concerns of its residents and support appropriate objections. Alas, sometimes the planning process and policies do not provide the same support, and applications are allowed despite everyone's efforts and objections.

The main focus of the Council's activity in this area has been in its campaign alongside the Kings Langley and District Residents' Association and other bodies to defend the Green Belt in Kings Langley vis-a-vis Dacorum Borough Council's Draft Local Plan, which identified areas of land for potential housebuilding. The updated version of the plan is still awaited. This hasn't been helped by the Government changing targets on several occasions. The proposed Moto service station positioned on the A41 with access off the M25 at junction 20 has been a matter of much debate and looks to be on several agendas over the coming months.

Consultations / Lobbying / Highways:

The Council is consulted on a variety of issue that may affect the village and does its utmost to represent residents appropriately.

It also lobbies organisations on behalf of residents, in particular the County Council on highways and road safety issues and Dacorum Borough Council on planning and development matters. The Council continues to press for:

- Safety improvements in the High Street and beyond, particularly in the Vicarage Lane area and the "pinch-point" problem in lower High Street
- The introduction of parking restrictions in the laybys by the football club so that they are not taken up by long term lorry / trailer parking
- And improved maintenance of the village's roads, pavements and general highways environment.

Councillor Bob McLean will be taking us through the transport vision group report shortly.



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Neighbourhood Plan:

As you will have seen from the several village consultations that have been carried out, the Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village. A Neighbourhood Plan gives us the chance to decide how the village and broader parish should develop together with the style of what should be built. When finally approved it becomes part of the Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan. Cllr Morrish will be providing a brief update at today's meeting.

Annual Grants to Local Organisations:

The Council was able to make some donations to those groups who lost out as a result of the Christmas Lights Event not running in 2020, but also continued its support for others, making grants to:

- Age Concern (Dacorum)
- Dementia UK
- The Peace Hospice
- Kings Langley Guide Hut
- Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
- Christ Church Baptist
- The Abbeyfield Kings Langley Society
- Kings Langley Village News
- The British Heart Foundation
- Berkhamsted Motorcycling Club (in Kings Langley)

Village Environment:

Damage to Verges:

Sadly, this is a continuing and, seemingly, worsening problem throughout the village with particular 'hotspots' outside schools, outside the football ground and in many cases directly outside private houses where the damage is clearly being done by householder's vehicles. We thank the Football Club for its efforts to control parking, but, unfortunately there are still those who don't really care. The Environment group has recently taken up this challenging issue and will certainly be a matter for debate at the next group meeting. Can I please ask that all householders do their bit and refrain from parking on the grass verges.

Fly-Tipping:

This seems to be getting worse, especially in Barns Lane and Rucklers Lane. Our Warden makes regular trips around the area, taking photos and these are reported by the office to Dacorum Borough Council. You can report it too on 01442228000 or <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/clean-safe-green/flytipping>

Volunteer Litter Picks:

Litter remains an issue in the village despite the efforts of our Warden and the team from the Borough.

COVID has stopped community litter picks over recent months but will be re starting aging shortly. You will find the schedule on notice boards and on the website and advertised on Facebook.



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The Village Garden and flower beds:

The Council continues to maintain the village garden, the flowerbeds at the entrance to Great Park, those under the village entrance signs, and the High Street planters. The village garden has undergone a major overhaul under the auspices of Cllr Alan Johnson and several volunteers. The garden is now much more open and has played host to the village market for several months. The next major project will be the upgrading of the path around the garden to a far more useable surface, which has been approved by the Council and should be completed in the summer.

Dog Litter Bags:

The Council continues to provide these free of charge for those who live or walk their dogs in the village and would like to encourage more dog owners to make use of the bags, **but please, please also to deposit them in the appropriate bin.** It is encouraging that the number of dog litter bags being issued is increasing.

Budget 2020/21:

The Parish Council has had to increase the precept for 2020/21. Councillor Alan Anderson will take us through the budget in more detail within his report.

The Council will continue to press for action and improvements in all areas of village life, working with the relevant bodies.

Your Parish Councillors are unpaid and give up their time and effort on your behalf, because they care about the village and the residents' issues. Much of what we do, we know, is appreciated by you, but without your support none of us would be here, and we aim to continue to support and further the needs of the village wherever possible.

Thank-you.

**Howard Button,
Chair, Kings Langley Parish Council.**