

Chairman's Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2023

- With the exception of August 2022 (when no meeting took place), there have been monthly meetings of the Parish Council since the last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2022.
- Since the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council has accepted the resignation of James Ball. James was a great source of advice on technical matters and was involved in setting up a new website. During the year the Parish Council welcomed Peter Billingham as a new Parish Councillor. We are benefiting from his commitment to providing monthly summaries about planning applications in advance of parish council meetings.
- The Parish Council also welcomes Zoe Kemp as the new Tree Warden and Chris Payne as the new Flood Warden. Chris has taken over from Dennis Tidmarsh who carried out the role for 30 years. The village has benefited greatly from Dennis' diligent involvement with various agencies responsible for ensuring that rain and flood waters drain away as quickly as possible. Kislingbury's drains are probably in the best state they have been for decades. Chris has already been taking up new challenges, especially in relation to the arrangements for how the balancing pond on the new Rothersthorpe Road development drains via field ditches along Camp Lane and ultimately to the River Nene.
- I would like to thank all Parish Councillors for their support and hard work during the last 11 months. I genuinely think that we have, as a Parish Council, become an excellent team. This team work is improved as a result of councillors focusing on particular areas of responsibility. These areas of responsibility are evident in the Parish Council Minutes and the Parish Council Directory which is in each edition of Kislingbury News.
- At the Annual Parish Council Meeting, which last year followed the Annual Parish Council Meeting, I was formally elected as Chairman and Councillor Janet Mallett was elected as Vice-Chairman. Nominations papers for Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be made available by the Parish Clerk tonight and elections for these positions will take place in May 2023.
- There are currently 2 vacancies on the Parish Council. I also note that other village organisations find it difficult to recruit new committee members and that, sadly, some organisations are no longer continuing. I commented in the Kislingbury News (February /March 2023) that for Kislingbury to be a community rather than just a pleasant place where people happen to live, the village groups and businesses need the support of all villagers.
- I would like to thank our Parish Clerk, Ann Addison who has generously shared her extensive knowledge of the way Parish Councils work. The Parish Council, and the village as a whole, benefits from the fact that Ann is the Kislingbury Lead Member on West Northamptonshire Council.
- The Parish Clerk usually meets with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in advance of each Parish Council Meeting.
- In addition to expressing my appreciation of the work of Parish Councillors, I would like to add that there are many others who make significant contributions to the life of the

village. It would be invidious to name names but I would include here those who are involved with the Village Hall, the Community Pantry, the Playing Fields Association, the Village Facebook page, Kislingbury News, the Kisle Amblers, KOFS, Neighbourhood Watch, the VAS signs, the Friendship Group and St Luke's Church, as well as local charities. In addition I would like to thank those who take on responsibilities as Tree, Footpath, and Flood and Snow Wardens. My apologies for any I may have omitted.

- The Parish Council recognises the value to village life of these various groups who all share the same wish to make Kislingbury an even more pleasant place to live. The Parish Council supports the work of these groups in a variety of ways. For example during the year we were able to support KPFA when the football field was occupied by a travelling family. This took the form of liaising with the police to ensure the family moved on after 2 days as well as a financial contribution to help with clean up costs.
- The Parish Council and our Parish Clerk, in her role as WNC Councillor, have also worked with the Village Hall to ensure that a defibrillator on an external wall can be installed and maintained.
- Another important way in which the Parish Council works to make the village a more pleasant place to live is through maintaining its extensive greens and verges. Last year we agreed an annual mowing contract with All Seasons. This has worked well and I hope villagers will agree that the greens and verges are now looking as good as they ever have done. The arrangement has worked so well that we have extended it recently to include mowing the Pocket Park and the children's play area.
- Keeping the village as 'tidy' as possible is also reflected in the maintenance of planted flower boxes on all roads coming into the village as well as the one on the Old Pond site. The Old Pond site has also been cleared and will be planted with wild flowers and selected shrubs. The Parish Council was pleased when KOFS agreed to plant a flowering cherry on the site.
- The Parish Council organises regular litter picks.
- The Parish Council ensures that all street lights are working properly. During the year we have agreed to take on responsibility for additional lighting associated with the Pembleton development on Rothersthorpe Road.
- However, the work of all these groups and of the Parish Council is not helped by the reluctance or inability of other organisations to meet their responsibilities. Of particular concern this year has been the state of the WNC Planning Department. The problems within this department were acknowledged by the WNC Council Leader recently (in April 2023). This has meant that a decision on the application to build 58 houses on Camp Lane/Beech Lane is still pending when this decision was originally promised in September 2022. To make matters worse, the Parish Council has recently found out that there will have to be a renewed consultation despite the fact that an initiative from the Parish Council led to over 90 objections being submitted in relation to the original proposal. We will 'mobilise' opinion again in relation to the Beech Lane proposals.
- The Parish Council is most concerned that the combination of an understaffed planning department and a National Planning Framework that favours development irrespective of local views is a significant threat to Kislingbury.

- The single most important decision taken this year by the Parish Council was to increase our precept and budget for the second year running. This intention was communicated to the village but no responses received in advance of the decision in December 2022. The Parish Council chose to increase the precept in response to an inflation rate of over 10%. This means that it costs more for a range of services and for the energy to power the street lamps. We also wanted to provide added support to the Community Pantry at a time when the cost of living has also been increasing.
- In April 2023, a new Parish Council Website was launched.
- There have been regular (bi-monthly) reports about the Parish Council in the Kislingbury News.
- A regular monthly open session (on the last Sunday morning of each month) was held at the Cricket Club until September 2022.
- The Parish Council marked the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee by providing all villages with a special Jubilee bag and ensuring that all children at the school had a commemorative medal.
- To mark the Jubilee the Parish Council instituted an annual cup for the student who had made the most progress.
- The Parish Council posted formal condolences on village notices boards on the death of Queen Elixabeth.
- For the King's Coronation in May 2023 we intend to give each student at the Primary School a commemorative bookmark.
- During the year the Parish Council has sent birthday cards congratulating villagers who have achieved their 100th birthdays.

To conclude, this report shows that the Parish Council has been proactive on behalf of the village. I am sure that the Council will approach the next 12 months in the same positive way.

Dr Jonathan Hughes

18/4/23