

Chairman's comments

Before I start, I need to explain that because we are in the Pre-election period, the time between the notice of the election and the election itself. Councillors are not permitted to publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies them with any individual member or groups of members.

So, unlike other meetings I am not permitted to thank or acknowledge councillors for the work there have undertaken.

I can say, Kesgrave has 11 Town Councillors standing to be elected (Uncontested) on the 4th of May and they will officially take office on the 15th of May at the Annual Town Council meeting.

Because the number of town councillors has been adjusted to 14, We are expecting to have 3 vacancies for councillors in the West Ward.

The Town Councils Office and meeting room are in Ferguson Way, Kesgrave, where our team is based: -

Joanna Abbot, Clerk and Proper Officer

Angela Dougall, Responsible Financial Officer

Jennie Catling, Events & Estate Manager

Linda Denny, Events, & Estate Administrator

and the Estate Operative team

Graham Cobb, Kevin Smith, Mark Bridges and Graham Hughes

This team looks after the services and events the Council provides along with external service providers and town councillors.

In the last year we have undertaken or enhanced the following projects

The provision of Youth services,

Replacing the Youth Club, we now have the 'Hang Out' run by 4YP at the Millennium Jubilee Hall. Also, a Youth Outreach service, run by 4YP, where two youth workers are out once a week in the evening engaging with our young people. They provide valuable support and feedback for the young people. The youth workers are also guided by issues fed through by the Council office and the Police.

The Town Council continues to financially support Kesgrave Library, to providing additional opening hours. We are also working with Suffolk County Council with a view in the medium-long term to expanding the limited space available in the current premises.

Police community support officer, our partner in this service, Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council decided they no longer wished to continue to partnership fund a PCSO from April 2023. This decision triggered a review by us with Suffolk Police. We investigated the options of working with other parishes but without success. Council debated and concluded unanimously that funding the whole cost of a full time PCSO would not be value for money. Therefore, the contract was terminated on 31 March 2023.

The Council office has established a good working relationship with our Police Community Engagement Officer and will continue to work with them in engaging with our community by attending local schools, Town events, community groups.

Parking and traffic issues

We have had a meeting, on site at Heath School, with Suffolk County Council representatives to observe the parking and speeding issues at peak school times. We are awaiting a report from SCC on practical solutions that can be implemented.

We have engaged with our neighbouring Community Speed Watch Team who have carried out speed watch along Bell Lane near to Heath Primary School.

We are also working with Community Speed Watch to identify locations for Speed Indicator Devices, with a view to purchasing one or two to site and be managed in the Town.

We are continuing to work with East Suffolk, Police and schools to address parking issues in and around all our schools. This includes Parking Enforcement visiting all our schools on several occasions to provide warning notices and discuss parking issues. The schools are also being encouraged to engage their pupils in speed and parking initiatives as well as sending out and displaying notices for parents. Some road markings and signage in and around the schools are not sufficient / legally enforceable and we are working with partners to address these issues.

Planning & Development

In the last year the committee, which meets fortnightly, has reviewed around 100 resident and business planning applications and supported 95% of them. It has also reviewed and responded to over 20 requests for consultation from the Suffolk County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan to proposed changes in the National Planning System.

Throughout 2022, the Local Planning Authority, East Suffolk Council (ESC) which ultimately grants permissions, has referenced the policies in our neighbourhood plan in eleven cases. The office continues to play an important liaison role with the planning department at ESC to ensure the right balance is achieved between representing individual applicant interests and those of the neighbourhood that may be affected.

Conservation and the environment

Town council considers both when discussing or making any decisions, specific projects will be covered under item 7 later in the agenda.

Community and Recreation

We have adopted ownership of the Dobbs Drift and St Agnes Way play areas from East Suffolk Council. As part of the handover, existing equipment was brought up to an acceptable standard.

The play area surface for the 'space net' at Oak Meadow had to be completely replaced following damage caused by vandalism.

In conjunction with Kesgrave Kestrels Football Club and funding from the Football Association Foundation, a schedule of works was agreed and put in place to improve the quality of the pitches. This work has largely been carried out and will be completed by summer 2023.

The council organises and supports several events during the year aimed at bringing the community, of all ages, together these include:

Our Monthly Market

The Family Funday here, at the millennium Sports ground has a large following and a great event with most entertainment at no charge on the day.

Other annual events in our calendar include:

Elderly Residents Outing and Tea Parties

Fireworks Display,

Remembrance Service

Lighting of the Beacon,

Christmas Tree and Lights Switch on,

Santa's Grotto & Ice Skating,

Tree of Reflection.

finally, the Town Council has a small budget for grants We will consider supporting and funding other Kesgrave organisations in providing facilities of benefit to the residents of Kesgrave, grant application forms are available on the web site.

As there will be a new administration in May, I would like to acknowledge those who served over the past 4 years but for whatever reason have left the council.

They are.

Kevin Archer

Paul Carr

Derrick Fairbrother

Rebecca Patten

Danial Shaw

Sue Ventrigila

THANK YOU for their time, effort and voluntary work serving Kesgrave.

Neal Beecroft-Smith

Chairman Kesgrave Town Council

17th April 2023