

# KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2021-24 THIRD ANNUAL REVIEW



## Foreword

It is with immense pride that this review report is presented covering the last three years of Council work. In this period, Kesgrave emerged from the doldrums of the pandemic to become once again the undoubtedly flourishing and vibrant town it is today.

It falls to me to congratulate and give thanks to all those in our great town who have contributed to our award-winning progress: all of the town councillors who served during this time; our amazing officers and staff who work so tirelessly and with great dedication; our district and county councillors who do so much for Kesgrave; our partner organisations and benefactors, with a special mention for the KWMCC, SPARK and the Tru7 Group; and above all to our residents who support to the full the many events we lay on every year.



If you feel inspired and would like to play a part in the future of our town, there are currently Councillor vacancies on the Town Council, which is a voluntary role. For more information, please contact the Clerk at the town council office or speak to any of the town councillors.

**Neal Beecroft-Smith**

**Chair, Kesgrave Town Council**

## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Overall Achievement Against Strategic Objectives .....	3
3.	Community & Recreation .....	5
	Public Open Space and Play Equipment .....	5
	Highways and Public Transport .....	6
	Youth Provision .....	8
	Conservation and the Environment .....	8
	Community Services and Support.....	9
	Community Events .....	10
4.	Finance & Governance .....	10
5.	Planning & Development .....	12
6.	Operations.....	13
7.	Additional Actions .....	14
8.	Awards & Recognition .....	16
9.	Grants and Community Support.....	17

### Key to abbreviations:

C&R	Community and Recreation Committee
ESC	East Suffolk Council (responsible for community support, council tax, environment, housing, leisure, planning, refuse collections)
F&G	Finance and Governance Committee
KTC	Kesgrave Town Council
MJH	Millennium Jubilee Hall (located on Long Strops, owned by Council)
MSG	Millennium Sports Ground (located on Long Strops, the land on which the MJH stands)
P&D	Planning and Development Committee
P&CC	Police and Crime Commissioner
SCC	Suffolk County Council (responsible for adoption/fostering, adult care services, children with special educational needs (SEND), drainage, public transport, recycling centres, schools, majority of streetlights)
	SCC Highways is responsible for cycle paths, pavements and roads (gritting, flooding, repairs, signs, traffic lights, white marking)
SID	Speed Indicator Device (designed to enhance road safety by displaying real-time vehicle speeds to drivers)
SPARK	Sports and Recreation in Kesgrave (charity)

## 1. Introduction

When the plan was implemented in October 2021, Council committed to carrying out a review of progress against its action plans on an annual basis. This is the third and final review of this plan and it is published for residents, businesses, organisations and community partners for transparency, and to enable all concerned to gain an appreciation of what Council thinks has gone well and what there is still to do. The latter will be considered to take forward into the next Business Plan 2025-28.

Additional actions to those in the plan that were deemed appropriate to carry out have been included for completeness.

## 2. Overall Achievement Against Strategic Objectives

Over the plan period our strategic objectives and achievements were as follows:

- a) To continue to provide an 'umbrella', single point of contact and support service to our residents to deal with issues initially arising from the covid emergency and help establish in the medium term a Good Neighbour Scheme (GNS) to provide a wider support facility.

The Council Office is the recognised central point of contact for our residents (via face to face, phone or email), where support is provided directly or by signposting them to the agencies that can help them with any problems they may have. The office delivers many of the intended benefits of a GNS but ultimately the latter requires volunteers to participate in it and these were not forthcoming.

- b) To enhance the use of our green spaces by the provision of appropriate additional facilities and, where feasible, protect them for the long term through the adoption of land ownership.

Good progress was made in conserving and enhancing our green space environments. Our programme of land adoption and acquisition saw a notable success in the transfer of ownership to Council of the MSG. A good deal of groundwork was put into this during the plan period that will bear more fruit in the next plan.

- c) To ensure best practice in our operations and to support community initiatives aimed at environmental improvement and the development of the flora and fauna in our suburban environment.

The commentaries below evidence a successful period of improvements made to our environment.

- d) To expand the range of organised social events, where feasible, and work with community partners wherever possible to retain existing, and provide new, recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

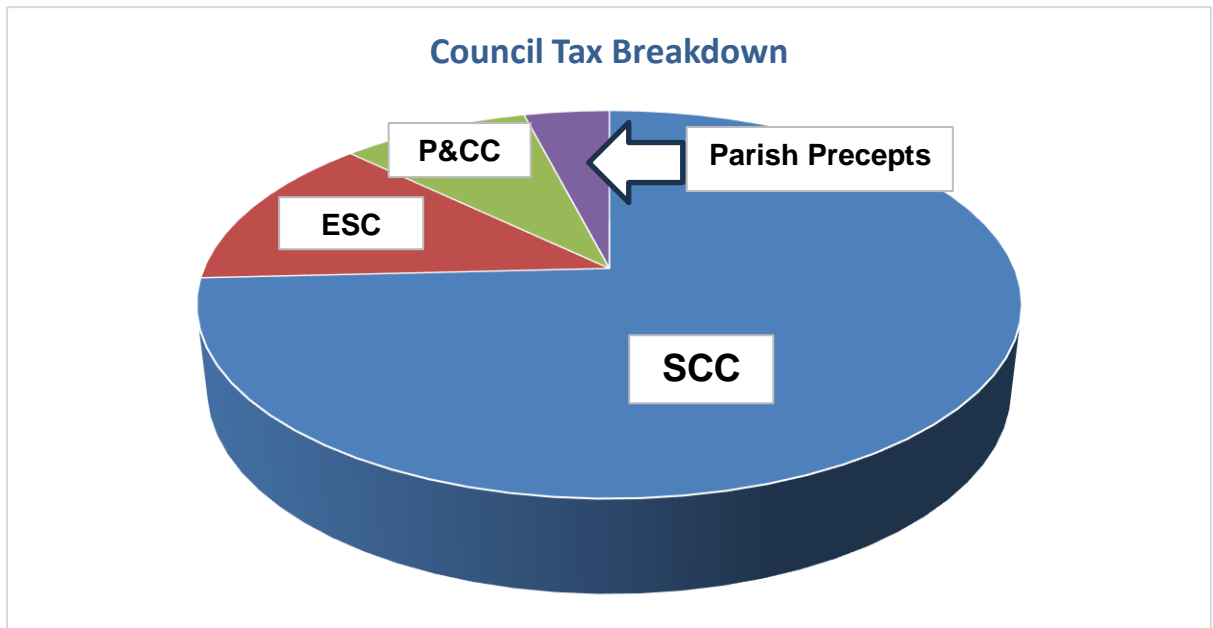
In partnership with SPARK, our key events have gone from strength to strength, with special mention for the Family Fun Day which each year delivered an increasing number of free/low-cost recreational opportunities and stalls.

- e) To provide value for money to residents and ensure effective and verified governance covering compliance with all applicable codes, laws and regulations as they exist or are introduced over the plan period by government, other authorities and/or our "trade" associations (primarily the National and Suffolk Association of Local Councils) in the form of best practice.

Effective governance, financial prudence and legal compliance have been validated throughout the plan period by our external auditors.



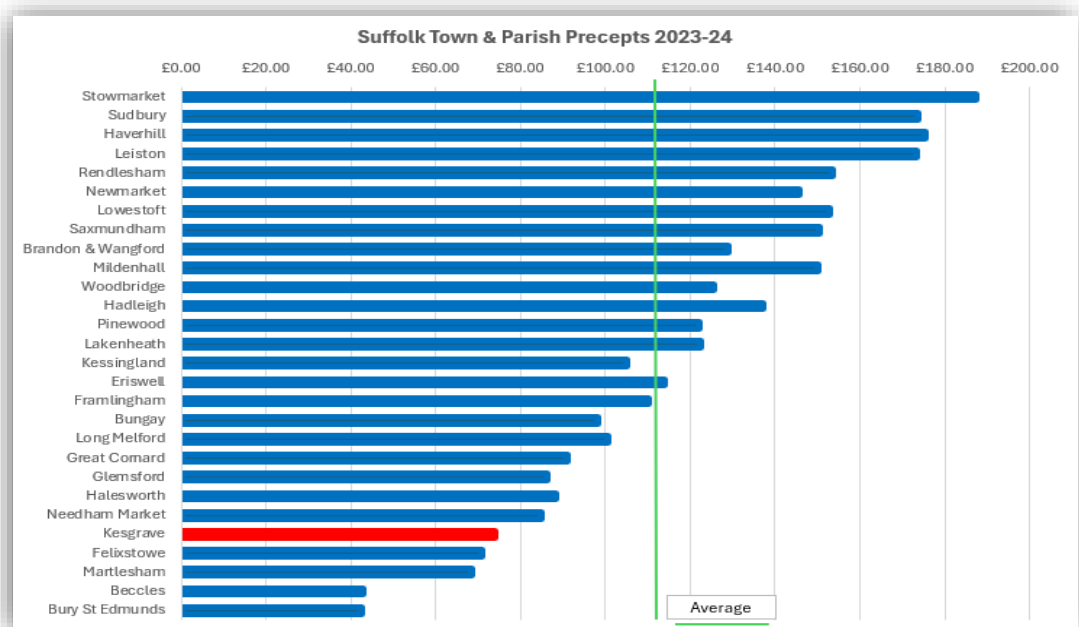
Householders pay for the running of Kesgrave Town Council (KTC) through the Council Tax paid to East Suffolk Council. The chart below illustrates the overall proportions that go toward running each local government authority in Suffolk compared to the parish/town costs (known as the “precepts”).



For the financial year commencing 01/04/2023 council tax charge for a Band D home (as an example) in Kesgrave was £1,978.88. The precept for KTC was £74.03 representing 3.7% of the total council tax payable.

Salaries for KTC employees are set according to local government scales. Councillors receive no payment for undertaking their duties (they can claim travelling expenses but rarely do) and in 2024 when invited by ESC to review the case for paying an allowance to Councillors, Council decided unanimously not to do so.

The table below shows the precept for all towns and parishes in Suffolk with a population over 3,000 (excluding Ipswich) for 2023-24. Taking this with the relatively small amount of council tax allocated to KTC (explained above) supports our claim that Council has provided very good value for money.



### 3. Community & Recreation

The role of the C&R committee is to support engagement with other community stakeholders; oversee the management of our land and property assets and related services; engage with young people in supporting our youth provision; oversee Kesgrave Market, the MJH and all community events; and liaise with other bodies in proactively contributing to solutions to the climate change agenda, conservation work and public transport.

#### Public Open Space and Play Equipment

- a) We will consider providing a canopy or canopies in Rupert Fison Centre Square for the use of Kesgrave Market, social purposes (eg street cafes) and for community events.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

- b) We will look to improve the Town Square by providing additional planting, features and possibly a central feature.

*Action taken: Various ideas were sought and considered, and with funding from ESC district councillor Lawson a pergola seat was purchased and installed on the square in April 2024.*

*In late 2024, two planters were removed and repurposed, and plans are in hand to provide two longer planters that will provide wind shelter at the front of the scout hall.*

- c) We will make repairs and improvements to the Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) at Cedarwood Green with a view to recommissioning its use beyond dusk.

*Action completed: New LED lighting controls and CCTV facilities, were installed in Spring 2022, which enabled the facility to be used for longer in the winter months.*

- d) We will invest in improving the grass pitches and field at the MSG.

*Action completed: In conjunction with Kesgrave Kestrels Football Club and funding from the Football Association Foundation, a schedule of works was agreed and put in place in summer 2023 to improve the quality of the pitches. We continue to work closely with the football club and the grounds contractor to ensure the current standard is maintained.*

- e) We will investigate the provision of recreational equipment at Long Strops suitable for use by teenage children.

*Action taken: A project to introduce a Pump Track described in the last two reviews was progressed through to planning consent and at the time of this review, construction is planned to commence imminently. We are grateful to Tru7 Group for their generosity in providing the bulk of the funding with support also from our district councillors.*

- f) We will investigate the provision of a hut for the sale of drinks, ice creams with table and chairs in one of our public open spaces.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

- g) We will review the case for the provision of a public lavatory including the best location, if feasible.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

- h) We will maintain the levels of Town Council recreational equipment and enhance provision where feasible/possible, including provision on non-Council land.

*Action completed: We adopted ownership of the Dobbs Drift and St Agnes Way play areas from ESC in February 2024. As part of the handover, existing equipment was brought up to an acceptable standard.*

*Further action taken: In summer 2022, the play area surface for the 'space net' at Oak Meadow had to be completely replaced at significant expense following damage caused by vandalism. A year later, further damage was caused to other surfacing areas at Oak Meadow, which were replaced. There was also a lot of 'wear and tear' to well used kit at Oak Meadow (Zip Wire, swing sets) so resurfacing of these was at the same time and this was supported with funding from SPARK.*

*Further action taken: Resurfacing of KWMCC play area was necessary as the grass and matting were no longer sufficient for such a well-used play space. This was also made possible with full funding from SPARK. In summer 2023, a new spinner was also installed with funding from district councillor Lawson. The slide was also vandalised in 2023 needing it to be replaced.*

*In late 2024, ESC began consulting on improving the play equipment at Grange Meadow. Council is supportive of this and part of the consultation.*

- i) We will endeavour to keep graffiti to a minimum in our community.

*Action taken: In conjunction with our schools, ESC and the Police we undertook a project for all underpasses in town to be re painted. A local artist was commissioned for this, who worked with groups of pupils from every school to create artwork designs, around the theme of Climate Emergency and Wellbeing, which the artist then painted on the underpasses. By Spring 2022, all underpasses had been completed, with the exception of the high school underpass. Following further investigation this underpass required more work (condition of the walls) and was put on hold pending SCC Highways review of how this work can be completed safely.*

*Our Estate Operatives monitor all public areas and report and remove any graffiti found. We work with the local Police, the community and ESC to identify repeat offenders for appropriate action to be taken.*

## **Highways and Public Transport**

- j) When opportunities arise e.g. electricity provision is being upgraded or moved underground, typically in western Kesgrave, where lighting is still in the ownership of the Town Council, we will consider funding additional streetlights to bring lighting levels up to modern standards and/or upgrade the lights to LED and install remote control units and additionally attempt to transfer ownership to SCC.

*Action completed: In Spring 2023, by "piggybacking" on SCC's project to change all its street lighting to LED, we had the streetlights owned by Council also upgraded and connected to the control system which enables the lighting to follow the same pattern as SCC (off at 11.30pm on at 6am). This reduced the capital expenditure we would otherwise have had to pay by £70,000. Our power consumption has also reduced whilst at least maintaining, and in many cases improving, the lighting levels in the associated areas.*

*As a follow up, in Spring 2023, a review was undertaken of streetlight timings due to certain anomalies (some SCC owned lighting was on all night) and some public concern. Following a consultation, it was agreed that the main 66 bus route service through Kesgrave would have street lighting go off at 12:00am and on again at 5.30am.*

*In late 2024, an audit was undertaken of streets where additional lamp posts would provide additional coverage to light black spots, and this will be taken forward into the next plan.*

- k) We will organise a project to have street signs cleaned and tidied up where sub-standard.

*Action taken: In December 2021, our Estate Operatives received required training to enable them to safely carry out this type of work. A number of street signs are cleaned each year.*

- l) We will investigate the options for providing improved and greener community transport alternatives covering e.g. buses, taxis and volunteer/community transport schemes.

*Action taken: We met with 'Communities Together East Anglia' in 2021 to discuss options and our specific needs. A second meeting took place in late 2024 following receipt of a proposal for grant funding. Further research is to be undertaken to look at provision over a wider area including the scope for working with nearby parishes to provide a more holistic approach/funding model.*

- m) We will consider the provision of more bus and cycle shelters where practical and sufficient use can justify their provision.

*Not actioned, however, small funds have been set aside in our reserves over time so this can be considered during the next plan. In June 2024, we had an enquiry from a resident about a bus shelter near Kesgrave Fisheries but a suitable location could not be identified.*

- n) We will monitor and support initiatives that improve parking, especially around our schools, and that help minimise parking on pavements and grass verges. This will include consideration of employing a parking warden if justified.

*Action taken: In late 2023, we met at Heath School, with SCC representatives and our district and county councillors to observe the parking and speeding issues at peak school times.*

*We continued to work with our partners in the Police, schools and our county and district councillors to address parking issues in and around all of our schools. This included ESC Parking Enforcement visiting all of our schools on several occasions to provide warning notices and discuss parking issues. The schools were also 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 or legally enforceable so we have worked with partners to address these issues.*

*A report was commissioned to look at the options at Heath School and a follow up meeting was held with SCC Highways and the school to review practical options. A consensus was reached on the way forward and SCC undertook to look into the agreed options in more detail. Initial costs have been provided which will be considered in the next plan.*

*In Summer 2023, we worked with ESC, SCC Highways, district and county councillors, local residents and Cedarwood Primary to improve parking and road safety at, and close to, the school. Works proposed for lines and signage were fully sign off and should be completed by early summer 2025.*

*In January 2025, we commissioned a Road Traffic Survey by SCC Highways outside Kesgrave High School to begin our review of road safety there. This will be taken forward into the next plan.*

*We liaised on a neighbouring Community Speed Watch team and sought volunteers to establish our own team, unfortunately without success. We also worked with Community Speed Watch to identify locations for SIDs, with a view to purchasing one or two to site locally.*



*We added six new parking spaces at the MJH and got underway a review of the main car park at the MSG which will be carried forward to the next plan.*

*We monitor and liaise with the organisers of the key events at the ground to minimise disturbance and inconsiderate parking by participants and supporters in nearby roads. This includes the use of traffic cones in key areas.*

## **Youth Provision**

- o) We envisage maintaining the current Youth Provision arrangements via 4YP throughout the plan period and additionally we will investigate other provision where it enhances youth provision (eg outreach workers, internet café etc).

*Action taken: The provision of the 'Hang Out' run by 4YP at the MJH has been well maintained and numbers attending have been consistently good. In early 2025, we renewed this arrangement for a further 3 years.*

*We continue to support and fund 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 Council and the Police.*

*We launched 'The Spot', a weekly youth drop-in café, run by 4YP, held at the Community Centre. This proved unsuccessful with low attendance. Feedback was that the venue wasn't viewed as a space for young people. We continued to work with 4YP for alternative provisions.*

*In early 2025 we received a grant request from Just42 to provide Compass mentoring at the high school. We are currently working on an SLA with them starting Apr 2025.*

*Through our East Suffolk Community Partnership funding has been allocated to run a Britten Pear Arts project at the High School.*

- p) We will consider the provision of more teenage shelters.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

## **Conservation and the Environment**

- q) We will create a Tree and Wildlife Conservation strategy to drive our conservation projects along with creating a maintenance schedule for our public open spaces including considering taking on responsibilities currently carried out by others on Council's behalf.

*Action taken: We introduced a strategy to improve certain areas and to work with ESC to improve the level of service and the nature of the services we can call on. Specific elements that were improved are:*

- Sections of Pilborough's Walk hedge were improved with ivy removed, sensitive pruning and some planting.*
- A project to enhance Cedarwood Walk received from a resident and was carried out in partnership with Council.*
- Jolly's Pightle was sympathetically cut and the grass raked off with a view to allowing wildflowers and grasses to be re-established.*
- The centre feature of Pergola Piece was enhanced – the centre circle was planted, the hedges cut down to improve visibility and an extra entry created.*

*In summer 2023 we distributed bird boxes across our public open spaces.*

*We worked with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) who provided us with direction to increase wildlife habitat. The focus was first on Legion Green, to showcase how to improve the conservation area while still maintaining access and use. This included bulbs and*

*wildflower seed planting, bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog homes, stag beetle log stacks and the installation of a bee café.*

*In Autumn 2023, SWT carried out workshops at the Forget-Me-Not Café to make bird boxes and hedgehog homes.*

*In August 2023, we attended a workshop (Adaptive Action Planning for Climate Change and Nature Recovery) with neighbouring parishes from which key actions were produced. Later in 2023, we also attended an annual event held by The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. We continued to keep in contact with the group and remain supportive of their aspirations.*

*In late 2023, we engaged with Greenways who carried out renovation work at the Long Strops 'pond' to better support and protect the wildlife in this location.*

*In late 2024, an Estate Operative attended an SWT wildlife conservation training day.*

*In October 2024, bulb planting took place on Legion Green and Cedarwood Walk carried out as a project with 1<sup>st</sup> Kesgrave Scout Group.*

*Bee Café – Initial discussions were held with a neighbouring environmental volunteer group to find suitable locations and to implement their scheme in Kesgrave. This project was unable to be taken forward, however, our own initiative for bees and pollinators will be taken forward into the next plan.*

## **Community Services and Support**

- r) We will consider extending the provision of the resident's helpline established during the pandemic emergency.

*Action taken: The Council Office became a main point of contact for our residents, where we support and 'signpost' them with any matters/issues they may have (via face to face, phone or email). So, an additional support line was not needed.*

- s) We will support SCC in its lease review of the provision of Library services within Kesgrave including its accommodation restrictions.

*Action taken: Beginning in 2021, we liaised with Suffolk Libraries, the charity funded by SCC that oversees library development. Our ambition is matched by Suffolk Libraries to expand the limited space available for the many wonderful community projects undertaken by Kesgrave Library management and its team of volunteers. However, because the lease on the existing premises has around 10yrs left, no progress could be made in persuading SCC to fund an expansion. Taking the strategic view, however, we worked directly with SCC throughout 2023-24 and succeeded in obtaining transfer of a plot of land they owned which is near to the centre of town (on Aerial Green) on a 125yr lease at no cost. This could be the foundation for the development of a larger facility in the long term.*

- t) We envisage maintaining the current Community Policing arrangements for the shared Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) throughout the plan period. We will also continue to pursue extending the standard hours of the contract into the evenings beyond 6pm to provide a service that fully suits local circumstances.

*Action taken: Our partner in the contract being Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council decided they no longer wished to continue to fund a PCSO. This triggered a review, and we investigated the option of working with other parishes but without success. We concluded that funding the whole cost of the PCSO would not be value for money and the contract was terminated at the end of March 2023.*

*Following the introduction of the new Suffolk Constabulary Policing model in December 2023, we established a strong working relationship with our Community Police Officer, PC Matt Finch who has made a very positive impact in town, addressing local issues.*

- u) We will consider supporting and funding other Kesgrave organisations in providing facilities of benefit to the residents of Kesgrave, e.g. a community café.

*Action taken: see Section 8 Grants and Community Support*

### **Community Events**

- v) We will continue to organise key community events each year and look to make improvements to each wherever possible and affordable.

*Action taken:*

- *The summer Family Fun Day was reinstated in 2021 and has seen a very large resident attendance each year since and great appreciation for the provision of most entertainment facilities at no charge. The provision has been continually enhanced in partnership with the SPARK charity which provides a 50% contribution to the running cost.*
- *Other annual events in our calendar continue to be organised and, where feasible, enhanced: Christmas Lights Switch-On, Fireworks Display, Remembrance Service & Lighting of the Beacon, Santa's Grotto & Ice Skating, Tree of Reflection, bimonthly Seniors Tea Parties and Seniors Annual Felixstowe Outing.*

## **4 Finance & Governance**

The role of the F&G committee is to regulate, set plans, manage and control Council's finances, resources and HR/staffing. This includes recommending to Council for approval an annual budget and precept in accordance with our Financial Regulations. F&G also oversees the running of our operations through the Officers and staff.

- a) We will introduce a policy for land acquisition and adoption and pursue all feasible opportunities to bring strategically important land in town under Council control and provide additional facilities of benefit e.g. cemetery extensions and allotments.

*Action taken: This policy was first introduced in 2021 (reviewed in 2023) and a number of initiatives were set underway. We have learned that these things take a long time to bring to fruition, but our perseverance has resulted in the following successes:*

- *The land that includes the MSG, the MJH, the car park and part of the Bridleway to the west of the car park was transferred to us in early 2024 by the generous landowners at no charge.*
- *As reported earlier under Community & Recreation t), we have adopted some of the land at Aerial Green (near the library) from SCC, again at no charge, and commenced work to secure the remainder of this area owned by ESC which will be carried forward to the next plan. This will provide us the option to develop the site for community purposes in the medium-long term and protect it from other development in the meantime.*

*Further adoptions and acquisitions in private and local government ownership continue to be progressed, where the costs are restricted to the legal fees involved, and will be pursued in the next plan.*

- b) We will consolidate the good intentions expressed in our neighbourhood plan on environmental matters with the introduction of an appropriate policy which will set out our internal and wider community commitments and ambitions, including the adoption of solar panels, wind generators, heat pumps, insulation and improved air quality. Continue to engage with and support the ongoing Suffolk Climate Change initiatives and projects. Initially this will be the form of an engagement plan and short survey with our residents, after this we will strive to focus on key areas where we can make a meaningful difference.

*In 2021 we engaged with Groundwork East and as a result:*

- *created a climate change [website](#) to promote to residents what they can do to reduce their environmental impact.*
- *through our schools, we sent out leaflets to pupils providing simple advice on things they could do; and*
- *created a community online survey to obtain feedback on the current status of homes in terms of carbon footprint and encouraging improvement. This was followed up by a second survey to measure progress.*

*In 2022 we made significant investments to reduce our power consumption and carbon footprint:*

- *added solar panels to the Council office;*
- *significantly increased the solar panels on the MJH;*
- *upgraded all our lighting to LED in the Council office and MJH;*
- *upgraded our streetlights to LED and arranged for them to be switched off over night; and*
- *upgraded the lights to LED at the multi-use games area at Cedarwood*

*In 2023 we:*

- *Negotiated an export tariff for the Council Office solar panels.*
- *Undertook a thermal image survey of properties in Kesgrave (community buildings and private dwellings) – this confirmed in general insulation was adequate.*

- c) We will review and update all other Council policies ensuring compliance with any relevant legislation or recommended best practice; and establish a timetable to ensure all documents are reviewed as designated during the plan period.

*Action taken: Completed in full.*

- d) We will document an Emergency Plan to bring into action in the event of a serious interruption to Council's operations with a view to ensuring the speediest possible resumption of our services to residents.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

- e) We will continue to maintain our Council website and explore opportunities to be more engaged on social media channels.

*Action taken: Commencing late 2023, we undertook a full review of our community engagement strategy and set ourselves objectives and targets for better use of social media to generate a better sense of community involvement and understanding of what we do. In the early stages of implementation feedback has been positive and targets are being achieved e.g. now 1,000+ followers on Facebook.*

*The next objective is to review and revamp the presentation of our website which is looking a little dated. The key aim will be to make it easier for residents to find the things that are relevant to them.*

- f) We will investigate enhancing the information and facilities on Council's website and consider the provision of a printed Town Guide or Magazine to allow us to cover all resident demographics and audiences.

*Action taken: In conjunction with the website review in Spring 2024 consideration was given to a printed town guide and or magazine. The conclusion was to consult further with residents before pursuing what would be quite a labour intensive and costly project. This consultation received few responses, but it is something we will keep under review and look to re-engage in the next plan.*



- g) We will investigate removing the warding in Kesgrave and reducing the number of councillors from 16 to 14 in time for the 2023 Town Council Election.

*Action taken: Completed in full. Following a consultation by ESC, with effect from the elections in 2023, the number of Council seats was reduced to 14 (from 16). There are now 7 in each ward (East and West). Due to the ongoing Boundary Commission County Council Electoral Review, ESC was not able to consider our request for the wards to be amalgamated.*

## 5 Planning & Development

The role of the P&D committee is the provision of certain services related to planning applications and consultations where Council's role is to respond on behalf of our residents. This is either (mostly) to support cases that accord with planning policies (including those in the neighbourhood plan) or to object to those considered to be non-compliant.

*During the plan period, the committee, which meets fortnightly, reviewed nearly 200 resident and business planning applications and supported the great majority of them.*

*In each year, the committee reviewed and responded to about 20 requests for consultation from ESC, SCC and government departments on subjects as diverse as the Bus Service Improvement Plan to proposed changes in the National Planning System.*

*Since the KNP came into legal effect in 2021, ESC as the Local Planning Authority, (which ultimately grants planning permissions), has referenced the policies in the Kesgrave Neighbourhood Plan in many cases. The Council 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.*

P&D in conjunction with the Council Office also monitors initiatives to improve road safety and reduce speeding around Kesgrave especially around our schools and significant roads eg Dobbs Lane, Bell Lane, Ropes Drive and Penzance Road. This includes the provision of 'road crossings' across the main road (to access All Saints cemetery) and elsewhere. Junction improvements in particular at the Bell Lane/Foxhall Road and Doctor Watsons Lane/Main Road, along with 20mph speed limits and other safety measures/improvements around our schools.

*Action taken: A number of initiatives were actioned on this:*

- As reported earlier, we worked with Rushmere St Andrew's Community Speed Watch to undertake speed checks in Kesgrave. The long-term aim remains to have our own Kesgrave Community Speed Watch volunteer team.*
- In conjunction with ESC, we agreed to provide hi-vis jackets to children at our local schools. These are on loan and are passed on to other pupils when they leave.*
- Following our strong and lengthy lobbying, the Foxhall Road/Bell Lane junction was enhanced to provide a much greater visibility splay. This should help reduce the number and accidents and incidents that happen at this junction. Accidents still happened but fortunately none too serious. It remains that irrespective of this work, there will always be driver error and in our view unless the speed limit is reduced or the junction changed this will always be an 'accident black spot'.*
- We worked via our county councillors to have the verges cut back on the footpath leading to the bus stop on Main Road, opposite Cambridge Road.*
- A SID was purchased with funding from county councillor McCallum. The Town Council applied to SCC Highways for various SID post site locations in the Town and five were supported and implemented in Summer 2024. The data collected from the SID supports there is a reduction in speed when the SID is active. In early 2025, an additional SID was*

*purchased with District Councillor Locality Budget funds and additional sites for more posts is being reviewed and will be taken forward into the next plan.*

- *We worked with County Councillors to address drainage, flooding, resurfacing of roads and footpaths and reinstatement of line markings on the highway, including cycle and footpaths.*
- *In partnership with SCC Highways and with county councillor funding in late 2023 we worked towards replacing the permanent SID on Main Road. Discussions took place; however, the sign and electrics were judged to be not fit for purpose. Going forward into the next plan we will explore the possibility of a permanent solar SID in this location.*
- *We purchased '30mph' wheelie Bin stickers for residents to display who live along some of the major roads such as Bell Lane, Penzance Road and Dobbs Lane.*

## 6 Operations

- a) Significant recent progress has been made in modernising and professionalising the estates operation including the provision of vehicular transport eliminating the risks associated with employee use of their own transport. We will investigate options to further enhance our operations including the use of electric vehicles, trailers and ride-on mowers.

*Action taken: In the summer of 2022, we attended an electric vehicle day where various presentations and stands were on display on the current status of electric vehicles and charging. We reserved funds yearly to enable the option of purchasing a replacement electric van in the next plan period.*

- b) The administration of meetings was successfully adapted during the pandemic to digital means under applicable government restrictions. Subject to government legislation permitting its continuation it is our aim to facilitate hybrid meeting options (mixed in-person and digital attendance) as a means of encouraging resident participation and providing a degree of flexibility to assist with Councillor and Officer attendance.

*Action taken: Unfortunately, this could not be progressed at the time (2022) as the Government was unable to make parliamentary time to consider extending the temporary dispensation. In late 2024, however, the subject was resurrected by the new government who issued a new consultation on the matter. Any developments will be taken forward in the new plan.*

- c) Improvements were also made to the security and efficiency of our IT services with the distribution of Council email addresses to all Councillors and staff, together with the introduction of password control over access to digitally stored documentation. We will consolidate this progress with the introduction of an Email, Internet etc Policy and Procedure.

*Action taken: An Email, Internet etc Policy and Procedure was adopted. In Spring 2024, fibre broadband was installed at the Council Office and MJH.*

- d) We will review the staff handbook in conjunction with our employment contracts to ensure compliance with Employment Law and other relevant regulations.

*Action taken: Completed in full and the handbook is reviewed annually.*

- e) We will establish a list of all work carried out by the office ie inspections, surveys, safety checks etc.

*Action Taken: A full review was carried out with a clear 'Risk Assessment' register, recording inspections, checks, surveys for all Play Areas, Council owned public spaces and buildings, including tree surveys and vehicle service.*

- f) We will offer a work experience placement to Kesgrave High School.

*Action taken: In summer 2024, we provided work experience for a university student who was also a Kesgrave resident. We have also agreed a High School placement for summer 2025.*

- g) The current offices are restricted in relation to the space ideally required for efficient operation and community engagement, therefore action will be taken during the plan period to investigate any viable opportunities for expansion.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

- h) We will establish a project to computerise the Lawn Cemetery records.

*Action taken: Completed in full in Autumn 2023.*

- i) Consider employing another member of staff, or expanding the role of existing members of staff, to improve our communications and engagement with the residents of Kesgrave regarding events, environmental and conservation initiatives etc, through the enhanced use of our website, news articles and social media platforms.

*Not actioned and to be taken forward to the next plan.*

## 7 Additional Actions

A plan is only as plan on the day it is written, and things do come along (like the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis or the Ukrainian appeal) that means resources have to be diverted to matters of even greater importance to residents, meaning that implementing our plans may have to be delayed.

The items below describe the additional developments (to those reported earlier) during the plan period that fall into this category:

- **Seniors Tea Parties** - became a very popular, regular sold-out fixture on the events calendar and frequency was increased to 6 taking place each year.
- **Identifying land ownership and responsibility for trees** – this is more difficult and time-consuming than first meets the eye but is important to resolve resident issues e.g. Trinity Close Green.
- **Queen's Jubilee** – this required additional and enhanced celebrations, memorabilia sold (e.g. bags).
- **Death of the Monarch** – we had statutory obligations to undertake e.g. condolence book, flag flying, the proclamation service.
- **Kings Coronation** – also involved additional and enhanced celebrations.
- **Street furniture** – we dealt with numerous requirements/demands for additional seating, rubbish/fido/grit bins.
- **Change of service provider from Norse to East Suffolk Services** - in July 2023, we negotiated a new Service Level Agreement for the land we own; and we have built better working relations with the new operator for the benefit of all of our green spaces. Our Estate Operatives also carry out more ad hoc hedge trimming and grass cutting.
- **Security and crime prevention premises/facilities review** – as a result of this we installed CCTV and upgraded the alarm system at the Council Office. Consideration of further CCTV installations at the MJH will be taken forward in the next plan noting also the plan for CCTV to be an integral part of the Pump Track development.
- **Maximising the interest from our funds** - in 2023, a full review was carried out to investigate options for switching our funds to higher interest deposit accounts that

*would comply with Council's strict Investment Policy and Strategy, whilst seeking to leverage the high-interest rate environment that had developed. Council decided to proceed with the Flagstone administration platform and the account became active in May 2024 with the additional interest income in the 2024-25 financial year over £7,000 (after admin fees) and will be over £20,000 in the next one.*

- ***Improving mobile phone coverage*** - *we supported the installation of a new mast on Long Strops to improve reception in the southeast corner of town where it was noticeably poor. We were conflicted about the environmental impact but had no authority (nor did ESC) to prevent it; and faced with the inevitable, we negotiated one-off fees of £6,000 and an annual rental of £1,000 from the operator.*



## 8 Awards & Recognition

Awards bestowed upon Kesgrave are a reflection on the town as a whole, not just Council. There are many contributors to the outcomes below but the partnerships involving close collaboration between Council, our fine Community Centre (KWMCC), and the amazing Sports and Recreation for Kesgrave (SPARK) charity have been instrumental in these successes. All depend on the hard work and dedication of a limited number of employees and volunteers who give up their time in an effort to make Kesgrave a better place.

### *In 2023...*

Kesgrave received the Highly Commended Award in the Best Town category at the Suffolk Community Awards 2023. These awards, *"Recognise and celebrate those who have improved the quality of life for a community in Suffolk."* They are organised jointly by Suffolk County Council, Community Action Suffolk and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

At the same ceremony, KWMCC won the award for the best Village Hall or Community Building.



### *In 2024...*

Kesgrave won the award for Most Active Town in the Suffolk Community Awards. The judges commented,

*"You only have to visit Kesgrave to notice the hive of activity within the town. Whether its children and families using the cycle lanes, people heading to the weekly parkruns, or local people taking advantage of all the classes and activities offered from the Kesgrave Community Centre, it's no wonder they were chosen as this year's winners!"*



KWMCC won Local Charity of the Year in the East Suffolk Business Awards organised by the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. It also won the Active Community of the Year organised by ESC and Active Suffolk.

### **SPARK**

In 2024, SPARK celebrated 25 years of grants provided to Kesgrave sporting and recreational organisations, including our schools, totalling a remarkable £2,000,000.



## 9 Grants and Community Support

For many years, in keeping with most other parish and town councils, grants have been distributed on application to local organisations and to charities who benefit Kesgrave residents. This is in accordance with the qualifying terms and conditions set out in our Grant Approval Policy and Procedure (available on our website [here](#)).

Throughout the plan period, a total of £11,447 was distributed:

Organisation	Amount	Description/Comments
Birches Medical Centre	£900	Contribution to the temporary provision of a portacabin during the pandemic.
Brave Futures (was Fresh Start New Beginnings)	£330	Provides a support service for children who are victims of sexual abuse. (Three years)
Cedarwood Primary School	£667	Contribution towards conservation project.
Citizens Advice, East Suffolk	£1,550	Gives free advice on a range of need: debt, employment, legal etc. (Two years)
Citizens Advice, Ipswich	£250	As above.
Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk)	£2,250	Provides free advice to the disabled on their welfare rights. (Three years)
Headway Suffolk	£750	Offers advice, rehabilitation and support to anyone who has sustained a brain injury. (Two years)
Kesgrave Friendship Club	£600	Social group for the over 60s. Contribution to their Christmas lunch (four years).
Kesgrave Kestrels Football Club	£500	Contribution towards kit; bibs, balls etc.
Lighthouse	£300	Supports women, young people and children who are affected by domestic abuse.
RBL Poppy Appeal	£600	(Three years)
SARS	£250	Emergency medical charity whose volunteer clinicians give immediate medical care to people with serious medical conditions or trauma.
St Elizabeth Hospice	£1,000	Offers expert care and support for people living with progressive and life-limiting illnesses.
Three Bears Playgroup	£250	Nursery school (next door to Cedarwood Primary School).

In addition, £34,500 was given to the Kesgrave Library (over three years) to support the delivery of the many excellent community events it holds and the additional services it provides our community throughout the year.

We also helped by providing storage space and use of the office at the Millenium Jubilee Hall to Kesgrave Cadets, Parkrun and the Royal British Legion during the Poppy Appeal.

