

## Item 4. Chairman's Comments.

Good evening and thank you for joining us. The Annual Town Meeting is a time to report on the past 12 month and reflect on the issues that have been raised.

2020 was a year most of us would not want to relive, a year like no other. We all have to deal with the restriction imposed on us by this virus, Isolation, furlough and for so many illness, suffering and for some the loss of a partner, family member or friend.

The council has had to adapt to temporary ways of work, The Clerk and all the office staff have continued to work remotely to keep the day-to-day operation of the town flowing, Council meetings and committees have been run on Teams and Zoom, and what was a rocky road to start with has now become the norm.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of Kesgrave Town Council Both Office and Estate Operatives for there Commitment and flexibility in keeping the Business of Kesgrave Running.

This includes the

Lawn Cemetery

Millennium Jubilee Hall and grounds

Rupert Fison Square and Car Park

Kesgrave Market

Oak Meadow Fitness and play equipment.

Grange Meadow Basketball Court

Cedarwood Green Teen Area

Wildlife pond on Longstropes

As well as the bins Notice Board and some of the older lamp posts

And the list goes on but that gives you an idea of some of the areas the council is responsible for.

The elected part of the Council consists of 16 Councilor posts split evenly between East and West, since our last Town meeting we have had 7 new councilors join.

Paul Carr, west

Alastair Cook, East

Rod Gibson, East

Danial Shaw, East

Glenn Ward, West  
David Meers, West  
And Becky Patten, East has rejoined the Council

We still have 2 vacancies, so if anybody wishes to apply, we would be more than happy to hear from you!

Our longer serving councilors are:-

Jonathan Ogden, East  
Kevin Archer, West  
Avtar Athwall, East  
Alan Comber, West  
Derrick Fairbrother, West  
And Geoff Lynch, West

I would like to note my appreciation and thanks for the voluntary work all the councilors undertake for the residents of our Town.  
Thank You.

May the 6<sup>th</sup> I am sure all of you have in your diary, is the date of the local elections.  
We have 3 items to vote on in our area.

Firstly, the Election of County councilors on Suffolk.

Secondly the Police and Crime Commissioner election for Suffolk

And Thirdly the Referendum on the Kesgrave Neighborhood Plan, You will hear more about this latter.

You all have a vote, please use it.

Normally this report would be about what has happened over the last 12 months, but I want to look forward, and we are planning for the next stages of the easing on restrictions. For the reintroduction of events and the opening of the facilities which we as a community would normally be using.

We are tentatively planning the next 12 months of events  
Which include The Fireworks, Christmas Lights, Ice Skating and the Kesgrave Fun Day, which we will be holding this year on Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup> July at the Millennium Jubilee Sports Ground.

I referred to Community before, so often we hear that there is no community spirit anymore, it's not how it used to be.

When this pandemic first hit in 2020 and we were instructed about self-isolation for some and lock down.

It didn't take long for one person to stand up and start supporting those vulnerable people, to put out the call for volunteers to leaflet drop.

The Kesgrave Emergency Support Group (Covid19) had started. The Council joined the group and more and more volunteers signed up to provide a service for the people in the community that needed help. Collecting shopping, picking up prescriptions, or just a friendly voice over the phone.

Its now a year on the group is still very much in operation and has no intentions of stopping providing its services.

In November, the group was nominated for the support it provides and was awarded the certificate of merit by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and the High Sheriff. The letter which accompanied the certificate concludes

"I feel privileged to award you the Lord Lieutenant's special Certificate of Merit for your remarkable contribution. You are a shining example of all that is best in this county of Suffolk."

I would now like to thank that first person to stand up, Debbie McCullum for the Bell Public House, for putting the Community first. I would also like to thank all those who volunteered and continue to do so. The award is to all of you.

I believe we have a strong Community Spirit.

A community that has been brought together to move forward for an optimistic future and a better Kesgrave.

Thank you.