

## KWMCC Report for Annual Town Council Meeting – April 2025

2024 was an excellent year for Kesgrave Community Centre. We were very proud to win the prestigious Chamber of Commerce Awards for the **Local Charity of the Year** at The East Suffolk Business Awards in an event held at The Ivy House Country Hotel in Lowestoft.

Then like London Buses the following week we were also thrilled to be awarded the **Active Community Centre** of the Year at The Active Suffolk Awards which was held at Trinity Park!

These awards were a celebration of everyone who brings our community to life through events, sports and activity. A huge thanks to all the staff, our band of volunteers and Board of Trustees. Also, a huge thank you to our incredible community for making these achievement possible.

Working in Partnership with Kesgrave Town Council, Jo Abbott and the wonderful Team there, Kesgrave now have The Most Active Town and the most Active Community Centre for 2024/25 - so there certainly is plenty to do in Kesgrave for people of all ages. Well done to all!

### **Community Advice/Support:**

We are pleased to work in partnership with the **Citizens Advice Bureau** (CAB) and we hold regular monthly meetings free of charge in our Deben Room, which is used by many local residents. Barbara & Rob from CAB have a private room on site and as always give their help/support and advice to all that attend, and we thank them for their commitment to our community centre for the benefit of Kesgrave.

We now also have regular **Police** Surgeries on -site. This is so residents can meet and chat to our local Community Policing teams. We also hold a secure box in the foyer that anyone can leave anti-social behaviour information that the Police will follow up on. Of course, if there is an emergency then the call should go to 999, but if you know or spot something on a regular basis that is troubling you, then the information will be collated and worked upon.

We also now have regular local surgery via **Patrick Spencer MP**. Patrick is regularly on-site, and appointments can be made through his office, and that information is clearly visible in the entrance information at KWMCC.

It is so good to host CAB, the Police and local MP so that residents can feel that if they need help and support, they have plenty of opportunities to speak to someone who should be able to help.

## **Staff Updates:**

In November Lesley Soden our long-standing Booking Secretary who many residents would know very well through hires over the last circa 20 years, left KWMCC and moved away from the area. We all thanked Lesley so much for her time at the Community Centre and wished her well for the future

In December Kevin Postma our Groundsman of many years took his well-deserved retirement. We now have a new Groundsman Simon who after a handover process with Kevin, is now well underway in ensuring our grounds are in tip-top condition in all areas from Bowls, Cricket and the various age groups of football pitches (as well as hedgerows/over-hanging trees etc).

## **Events:**

Our **Centre of Networking** has proved popular again throughout the year for local businesses with 30+ attendees at each event. We have a guest speaker, and everyone is invited to swap business ideas/solutions/contacts to enable the sharing of information. Our Charity of Choice Project 21 handed over to ICENI in June 2024 and it is great that a charity such as ours works in partnership with other charities to show support throughout the sector.

Our Monthly **Chinwag** hosted by Fiona Farrell and our volunteers continues to go from strength to strength. Approx 150+ residents continue to meet up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in the month for free entertainment, refreshments and home-made cake. Our Volunteers are superb in their interaction with our guests, and we couldn't hold these community events without them. Long may these Chinwag get-togethers continue.

Our **Time Together Tuesdays** which is a free community event for younger children and their parents/carers/grandparents in the school holidays, are very well attended and we have circa 50+ youngsters and families on a regular basis. Each event has a crafty theme, from Easter surprises, underwater themes, as well as lots of toys/games to play and for interaction between the children and their parents.

**Christmas Carols** at The Bandstand has now become an annual event. Despite the weather last Christmas meaning it was moved indoors; it was so well attended and thanks to everyone involved. This year's evening with the Salvation Army and festive songs will take place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December from 7pm.

**Music in the Bandstand** was a real success with over a thousand people attending throughout the day last summer. Another free event we host with local musicians and a wide range of music genera took place, with families especially enjoying the free activities from bubbles to crafts and balloon making. This year's event will again be free and thanks to SPARK and local councillors for their help and support. It will be taking place Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August from 12pm-6pm.

### **Other Information:**

Unfortunately, after many years on-site the **Humpty Dumpty Nursery** decided to close for business. We tried very hard in partnership to keep this going with support from all at KWMCC, which was appreciated by its staff and management, but it was not to be. It was a sad occasion on their last day, and we wish them all well.

The **Cycle Speedway** UK Championships were held here in the summer and was very well attended. Several Kesgrave Panthers of all ages were in the finals and did very well. This well supported event hit the headlines throughout the cycle speedway world, with people across the UK attending (many for the first time) and we are hopeful to host some of the World Championship heats this summer.

**Participate** now host regular music workshops for residents with health-related illness such as dementia or Parkinsons along with their carers. This weekly event is held in the Bowls Pavilion and is well attended. We also had a collection of stories from Kesgrave residents transferred to the Stage at Snape Maltings in June, and it was amazing to see these tales brought to life.

### **Going Forward:**

Looking ahead for 2025/26 I am looking at **Wheelchair Sports** at our Community Centre with particular emphasis on team participation, accessibility and access. With advice already given we are looking at new entrances for wheelchair tennis, wheelchair Pétanque as well as utilising all areas in the Sports Hall.

We have a new **KWMCC Website** being designed currently, which we hope to launch in the summer of 2025. This will make it easier for bookings to be made, information

readily available and easier navigation, so that viewers will be able to see all the events we host and to buy tickets/make reservations online.

So, I'd like to thank all residents who use our facilities and give such great feedback on a regular basis, the working partnerships we have including Kesgrave Town Council, the Police, Charities such as SPARK and local Councillors.

Our Charity continues to give as much back to the community as we can in excellent facilities, various free or low-cost get-togethers, exciting events and advice and support from local groups.

Thank you

Stuart Lawson

General Manager KWMCC