

Annual Town Meeting

Kidsgrove Town Council
Victoria Hall
Liverpool Road
Kidsgrove
Staffordshire
ST7 4EL

Tel: 01782 782254

www.kidsgrovetowncouncil.gov.uk



Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 4th May 2021, remotely on Zoom

The Annual Town meeting began at 6:00pm

In attendance:

Cllr A Cooper - Mayor of Kidsgrove Town Council

Sue Davies – Clerk to Kidsgrove Town Council

Cllrs S Bowyer, S Burgess, G Burnett, A Cartwright, C Dickens, S Dymond, K Johnson, K Robinson, M Maxfield, B Owen, J Owen, M Stubbs, P Waring

3 members of the public were in attendance.

1. Meeting opened and welcome.

The Mayor of Kidsgrove, Cllr M Stubbs, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies of Absence.

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs H Maxfield, J Waring and E Wareham-Jones

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th May 2019

The minutes of the meeting of the 11th May 2019 were received and approved as a correct record.

4. To receive the Mayor's report for 2020-2021.

The Mayor presented her report – see appendix 1.

5. Open forum for residents to ask any comments or questions.

A resident who is a member of Rotary thanked the Council for their donations and outlined some of the Rotary activities over the year. She explained the problems with fund-raising over the last year and that Rotary Kidsgrove are looking forward to getting back to fundraising. She stated that Rotary are looking forward to working alongside the Town Council to progress the Dementia friendly project in Kidsgrove.

The Mayor informed that residents are always welcome to join the

A Kidsgrove resident who is involved with Stoke Sea Cadets agreed that fund raising had been badly affected and that cadets had had to resort to online activities.

The Mayor reminded of the ongoing grants scheme.

The resident who is involved with the Sea Cadets answered some questions from another resident and from Cllr M Maxfield.

Cllr Robinson gave thanks to the third member of public present for her work with the Coronavirus support group who had done so much to help in the community. Cllr Robinson also thanked other speakers for their input and impressed that residents should come to the Town Council to discuss assistance.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 6:45pm

Mayoral Report – Annual Parish Meeting – Appendix 1

Introduction.

It has been an honour to serve as Mayor for Kidsgrove for the past year. It has certainly been a year of changes whilst we have endured the effects of Covid 19 within our community. Just before I took up office, we lost one of our Town Councillors, John Dodson who passed away suddenly. Our Town Hall had to close and our meetings had to become remote rather than face to face. It was disappointing too that many of the usual events at the Victoria Hall had to be cancelled.

Officers adapted to working from home and Councillors adopted zoom meetings. So together we ensured all necessary council functions continued and the Ranger service continued throughout. Expected addition to the team will be an Assistant Clerk post approved at the last full council to support in moving forward as restrictions hopefully begin to ease.

A thank you to group leaders Kyle Robinson and Paul Waring for their cross-party leadership which has eased my Chairmanship throughout. I have been supported by my fellow Councillors and I express my thanks. Also, my consorts Jason Owen and Milly Cooper who have always been there to help, as has Deputy Mayor Cressida Dickens alongside Town Clerk Sue Davies and Pauline (Admin).

Despite the restrictions I have continued to attend as many civic appointments as possible. I have officially opened four new businesses, including cutting the ribbon at the new supermarket in town. So, heartening to see new jobs and opportunities within Kidsgrove especially during such difficult times for business.

I have judged Scarecrow and Elf competitions, which apart from being great fun, provided a few smiles along the way. I laid wreathes at VJ and Remembrance Day, an event so well attended usually but hit by restrictions and social distancing. I switched on the Kidsgrove Christmas lights, visited vulnerable residents delivering food and parcels. Joined in appeals like the toy collection and was honoured to receive the first Poppy. There was the commemoration in the Reginald Mitchell peace garden and Guides annual event. I organised an Elf competition and attended the two outdoor Christmas events supported by our town council. It was wonderful to see so many residents there (all socially distanced of course).

So, I hope you can see there has indeed been a lot of change over the past year but nevertheless it's been busy. Sadly, my last duty was to support our Town Clerk in making the arrangements following the death of HRH Prince Phillip.

Council.

The Town council continued to run council meetings plus committees, via Zoom. Those committees are Finance & General Purposes, Planning & Infrastructure, Events, Environment & Allotments plus Staffing. Several working groups such as the dementia initiative and youth provision group run alongside and residents are welcome to join us. Each committee has its own remit and projects to oversee. Several projects have been difficult to progress during the pandemic but the town council is committed to drive those forward in the coming year once restrictions ease. We are also committed to achieving our projects and celebrate the progress made by this town council.

Victoria Hall.

We are proud of our beautiful Victoria Hall but maintaining it demands commitment. Work has been done while closed to ensure we can open again soon. Work such as roofing and joinery repairs, painting, stage improvements, kitchen work and hall flooring. We have seen it utilised as a lateral flow Covid testing centre to support the two vaccination centres in our parish. We are looking forward to fully re-opening.

Planning matters.

As consultees for all planning applications, we try to support and protect our residents and support new developments which enhance our town. The Town council also has representation on the Town Deal Board.

Projects.

I mentioned each council committee has its own projects. The Neighbourhood plan, which sits under the planning committee was slowed by Covid but has continued throughout. A questionnaire for circulation to all residents is currently being developed. There are environmental plans to enhance our parish such as railing and free-standing planters. Plans to support and enhance Newchapel recreation ground with walkways, benches, trees, and planters. Working with NULBC to enhance the park once the pump track is completed. A plan to survey playground areas and parks and focus on one or two to improve. Footpath survey to protect and enjoy our rural areas.

For CCTV provision we are currently entering a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Stoke-on-Trent council where we await their legal team agreement. Six cameras in the first stage are planned. Four around the town centre area, one at Clough Hall Park and one at Birchenwood. An exciting but large project for the Town Council which will support the police and the safety of our residents. As soon as we hear back from Stokes legal department this project will be full steam ahead.

Kidsgrove Town council is committed to Speedwatch support and speed indicator device provision. Also, Christmas lights around the parish and there are ongoing plans for each ward to have a Christmas tree. Other projects include bus shelters, benches and extra grit during Winter.

We also have two allotment sites at Lamb Street and Crown Bank sites.

The dementia project alongside defib. Footpaths, as well as the youth initiative continue and will hopefully regain pace within the coming months.

The town council also recently agreed to a grant to give support to the local Mining Memorial project.

Events.

Our council run events have been badly hit by Covid over the past year. However, your town council is busy planning for the year ahead. Sadly, Party in the park will again fall victim but organising Remembrance Day, Christmas Markets, Panto, Christmas lights and trees, Xmas Lights and film nights continue.

Grants.

The council has been able to support many worthwhile local causes over the past year. We have worked alongside charity and community groups such as the Covid 19 Support group, Salvation army, Rotary (to support with meals and hampers). A new youth group, Newchapel Residents' Association to support their planting, two open air Christmas events, a Scarecrow trail at Mow Cop, Father Hudson Young at Heart and Ladsndads.

Finance.

I am delighted to report a clear audit for Kidsgrove Town council. For those who are unaware, the council is subject to a rigorous audit procedure, and we got a clear audit.

The council, in its budget setting this year has been very conscious that Covid had affected our project spending, so we earmarked unspent monies to enable us to catch up in the year ahead. For Eg, £20,000 is earmarked for environmental projects, £5,000 is available for Covid support as fundraising has been difficult for community groups during the pandemic. Health & wellbeing which includes defib provision (like the new one at Tesco) and dementia project has £5,500. Highways has significant investment planned for CCTV, SIDs and Speedwatch.

Summary.

So, a summary of what has been happening at Kidsgrove Town Council and thank you once again to all those who have supported me during my Mayoral year. I look forward with renewed vigour to the easing of restrictions so we can forge ahead with our plans in the coming year.

Cllr Angela cooper.