

# Keyworth Parish Council

## CHAIR'S REPORT 2023/24 Plans/Priorities for 2024/25

### Foreword by Cllr Tamsin Armour, Chair of Keyworth Parish Council

As we continue to attempt to return to 'business as usual' there are frequent reports of factors impacting people's lives. I for one am still waiting to see if we ever fully recover from the negative impacts of COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis, war and hostility, struggles with NHS access and waiting lists and so on. However, we remain a village full of people who care for and support each other, with many volunteers giving time and energy across a huge range of activities. As a Parish Council, we are keen to support and develop these opportunities and initiatives and many of our Councillors are actively involved in clubs, groups and societies as well as giving their time to develop and expand the positive impact KPC can have on issues that affect the village, representing views of residents where appropriate and working with authorities and service providers to mitigate negative impact and improve services where possible. This past year saw many events, some one-off, some regular, including residents coming together to celebrate the coronation of King Charles, enjoying the Keyworth Show and joining the annual Remembrance Sunday Service by the Memorial Gates including Beavers, Scouts, and Guides, remembering those who gave their lives in the two world wars Remembrance Sunday. We also sadly said goodbye to Keith Barton, who died early this year. Keith was a long-time Parish Councillor and former Council Chair. He will be greatly missed.

Support for those in need, via foodbanks, warm spaces, and other activities continues. Demand has been high, unsurprisingly, given increases in the cost of living. Sadly, as you may have heard the foodbank is closing and I want to say a special thank you to all those involved in organising and running it for so long. Moving forwards, the need continues, and other resources will no doubt be signposted. English lessons for the Ukrainian residents of Keyworth continue to be supported by the Parish Council, providing space, refreshments and some funding for equipment. We also support Platt Lane with a grant, and this contributes to an amazing facility where over 1500 participants are involved in cricket and football at all levels and ages. The Keyworth Community Garden continues to be a brilliant community asset and provides a safe space to support mental health and wellbeing, as well as providing volunteering and gardening skill development opportunities. Similarly, Keyworth Abundance, Wild Things Keyworth and the Keyworth Nature Reserve provide opportunities to share the fruit harvest, protect and enhance the natural environment in and around the village, or just enjoy the countryside around us. The Community Bus regularly visits Rushcliffe Country Park, taking residents to Parkrun (where you can run or walk 5k, or just enjoy the open space). Keyworth Community Projects continues to organise events and support and is a wonderful source of support for many. Most recently, you may have seen a new initiative publicised by the Keyworth News, in partnership with Community Concern, (and Councillors Butler and Millband) seeking to highlight volunteering opportunities for those who may want to get involved. These initiatives would not be possible without the dedication of the organisers, primarily volunteers, and once again I would like to take this opportunity to say a massive 'Thank you' on behalf of myself and the Parish Council, to all those who have given their time and energy to continue to help others. You are amazing and Keyworth is a safer and better place to live thanks to your wonderful teamwork. We hope to once again say thank you in person to many of these wonderful members of our community at our PC Reception, which will happen slightly later than usual this year...

There have been other areas where members of the Parish Council have liaised or collaborated with companies or bodies, and I just wanted to highlight a couple of these. In particular, many residents will have been impacted by the problems with The Keyworth, with buses unable to stick to the timetable and many users exasperated. This issue was also inevitably going to be made worse by necessary roadworks primarily along Station Road and lower part of Nicker Hill, where Severn Trent had to close part of the road for many weeks while the new pumping sub-station was installed. Thanks to excellent communication between Severn Trent, Trent Barton and members of KPC, plus the ongoing Area

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Coordinators across the village, clear communications regarding road closures and bus rerouting were shared with residents and KPC. Whilst inevitably this was disruptive and is only just finishing, it would have been so much worse, had we not been in regular contact. Working with NCC, Trent Barton, Plumtree and Tollerton Parish Councils and the Keyworth Bus Users Group, Councillor Baker and I arranged a public meeting in the Centenary Lounge (with an amazing 50 + attendees). The MD of Trent Barton explained, listened and has subsequently collaborated with others to put in place positive changes to the timetable, the bus stop signs and the communication between drivers, leading to a promising improvement in reliability. Ongoing work with NCC, our MP and others, seeks to ensure future road improvements keep the public transport options front and centre. One other area KPC are involved in is planning. You will be aware we have a Planning Committee, and we submit comments on applications within the village. There have been some controversial applications and without going into details, we shared insights with the Conservation Area Advisory Group about to inform objections and have worked with RBC and others over the appeal on the Hillside application. The appeal itself was an experience (!) and there were contributions from many residents as well as Councillors and legal teams. We await the outcome.

Finally, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Councillors who have stood down over the last year, including Tom Attack, Chris Takel, Tony Wells and Chris Kemp who have been Councillors for many years and between them made substantive contributions to many areas of PC activity. Further a heartfelt thanks to all the Parish Councillors and Parish Council staff for everything they do. We are a great team, and I am honoured to be part of it.

## Council Members

- The current members of council are: Tamsin Armour (Chair), Tony Grice (Vice-Chair), Geoff Baker, Mary Butler, David Clarke, Kevin Fitzgerald, Samantha Kaye, Kev Lowe, Richard Lumb, Michael Moncrieff, Kath Oakley, Shelley Millband. During the elections in 2023 Tom Caven-Attack and Chris Takel did not stand to be re-elected, and Tony Wells was elected as a Borough Councillor so resigned from his Parish Council role. This gave opportunity for Kara Sayers, Jamie Walker-Jones, David Manning-Ohren and Stuart Scott to be co-opted to council in September and December. Following the resignation of Chris Kemp earlier this April, the Parish Council currently has a vacancy and will be looking to co-opt a new councillor in the near future.

## Council Staff

- The Council currently employs six part-time members of staff including the Clerk to the Council Michelle Law, the Responsible Finance Officer Emma Goodman. The council also employs Helen Bradshaw as the Clerical Officer, Steve Mottishaw as the Facilities Manager, Sam Daft as the Cleaner and Alan Wilkins as the Handyman. The total basic hours worked by these staff equates to the hours worked by three full time staff.

## Council Facilities

- The Council owns, or is responsible for:
  - The Village Hall complex – including the Village Hall, Centenary Lounge and Feignies Room
  - Rectory Field and the Peace Garden
  - Keyworth Activity Park
  - Rectory Field Pavilion and former Changing Rooms (occupied by Keyworth Table Tennis Club and Keyvolution/Abundance respectively)
  - Memorial Gates
  - Wysall Lane Burial Ground
  - Nottingham Road Play Area (leased from the Equals Trust and Nottinghamshire County Council)
  - Platt Lane Skatepark (leased from UK Research & Innovation)
  - Keyworth Meadow (managed by the Nature Reserve Management Group)
  - Keyworth Bowls Club – clubhouse and green (managed by the club)
  - Keyworth Tennis Club – clubhouse and courts (managed by the club)
  - Platt Lane recreational field (1/3 interest and managed by Keyworth Sports Association)

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## Village Hall Complex

- The Village Hall is being hired on regular basis by both new and old customers; the levels of hire have increased on previous years in the last 12 months.
- The bar area of the Feignies room has been occupied by the local Food bank in the last 12 months. The food bank will be sadly closing their doors on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and users have been sign posted to other available help with the local area.
- For the 2024/25 financial year, the Council's Finance committee agreed to not increase in the hire fees for the Village Hall complex.

## Nottingham Road Play Area, Rectory Field, Wysall Lane Burial Ground, Activity Park, Skate Park

- All of the play areas continue to be proactively checked and maintained by the Parish Council's Facilities Manager with repairs carried out as needed.
- The new Skate Park has been open and being used for over a year, the skate park is well used by all age groups.
- The Council's Finance committee agreed to not increase the burial ground fees this year.

## Memorial Gates

- The paving and area in front of the memorial gates has had its annual clear and tidy up before the Remembrance Day Service, and despite the weather there was a great turn out for the annual service.
- The Peace Garden near the memorial gates is maintained on a regular basis by local company Branch & Bloom.

## Support for Local Organisations

- **The Council continued in 2023/24 to provide financial assistance to:**
  - Platt Lane Joint Management Committee (the Council has a one-third financial interest in the land at Platt Lane)
  - Keyworth & District Community Concern
  - Keyworth Conservation Area Advisory Group
  - Keyworth PCC (re maintenance and repair of church clock)

Donations were also made to:

- Keyworth Community Projects
- RHR Cadet Corps of Drums
- The Keyworth Quiz
- Keyworth English Language Support for Ukrainians
- The Friday Warm Room
- The Keyworth Twining Association

The Council makes its premises available at concessionary rates, and in many cases free of charge, for various community events and services such as:

The Food Bank, Keyworth Advice Centre, Thursday coffee morning; Conservation Group; Keyworth Show; Fun on the Field; Christmas Charity Fair; Remembrance Sunday; Christmas Fair & Christmas Dinner, the Bereavement Support Group and the Keyworth and District Community Concern.

## Parish Council Events/Seasonal Activities

- During the past twelve months, the Council has organised and/or sponsored the following events and activities:
  - Summer Hanging Baskets to decorate the village.

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- Christmas trees to decorate shops and businesses, as well as lights on the trees in the church yard.
- A celebration for the Kings coronation.
- Cllr Armour represented the Parish Council at the Remembrance Sunday Event held on the Rectory Field at the Memorial Gates along with representatives from Rushcliffe Borough Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Churches in Keyworth and the Royal British Legion. Memorial wreaths were laid at the gates.
- Festivities Day

## Publicity/Information

- The Parish Council website ([www.keyworthparishcouncil.org](http://www.keyworthparishcouncil.org)) is updated regularly.
- We also keep residents informed through news items and the Keyworth Diary (in the Keyworth News), distribution of which, to all households in Keyworth, is financed by the Council.

## Finance

- At the time of writing, the Council's accounts for 2023/24 have not yet been finalised. The figures to hand suggest that the Parish Council is under budget for the financial year 2023/24. Expenditure was made on a general maintenance of the buildings and facilities including. Expenditure was also made on the events in the village.
- The Council reviewed its reserves policy as usual in January. On the face of it, the level of the Council's uncommitted reserves (reserves not set aside to fund specific commitments or long-term development plans) might seem high, but it should be borne in mind that the Council owns, and is responsible for maintaining, fixed assets valued at around £1.8 million, and it follows that it needs to set aside substantial funds for emergency/contingency purposes.
- As for 2024/25, the Council has set its precept at a level resulting in the Parish Council portion of the council tax not increasing for any properties in the village.

## Planning

- The council has held 12 planning meetings, reviewing a total of 58 planning applications in the period and has worked with the community and with Rushcliffe Borough Council to ensure the new housing developments on Platt Lane, north of Bunny Lane, and Nicker Hill are appropriate to the area. The Parish Council are also trying to work closely with Rushcliffe Borough Council to represent the views of the Village regarding the development of land at the South of Bunny Lane site.

## Other Items

- The defibrillator that was located inside the village hall, has now been moved to a box on a wall outside of the village hall. This will make it more accessible to people using the Tennis Club and the Bowls Club.
- The Council have worked with Trent Barton Buses to try and make the 'Keyworth' bus service more dependable for local residents. A number of new measures are being introduced and monitored to see what impact this has on the bus service.
- The Parish Council has celebrated the long service of a member of staff, Alan Wilkins who has been working for the Parish Council since 2004.

## Plans and Priorities for 2024/25

In my view, the Parish Council's most important priorities in **2024/25** will be:

- To continue to look to the future, support and grow the many activities and initiatives that underpin our positive sense of community. Following groundwork described above, to consult residents on our long-term plan for Future Keyworth, helping groups, societies, our Schools and Facilities to form a cohesive set of activities and opportunities, with something for everyone. In addition, to capitalise on any opportunities to secure funding for such projects via sources that are linked to the devolution deal and other targeted funding opportunities. I am keen to see all Councillors have the opportunity to get involved and really make a difference.

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- To continue to support those in need across Keyworth. Recent years have been challenging for many, with the ongoing wars/hostilities in Ukraine and the Middle East, and the dramatic increases in the cost of living, meaning many have suffered and many continue to struggle. Support will include continuing to ensure food and other essentials are available, a challenge that continues to expand, and will need new initiatives following the closure of the foodbank. Finding ways to support those in financial and physical hardship, ensuring medical appointments and treatment, including mental health guidance and support are accessible in a timely fashion to all those who may need it.
- To continue to work with sports leaders, schools, clubs and other local groups, including Positive Futures, to create an inclusive and accessible activity and wellbeing framework, linking Parish Council facilities with developments at Platt Lane, and other venues, providing sports, exercise and recreational opportunities for all.
- To work with residents, local groups and developers to continue to enhance our environment, including planting more trees and hedgerows, finding ways to enhance and protect the wildlife, be it hedgehogs, birds, bees, butterflies, or my favourite, ladybirds, in and around the village.
- To investigate the possibility of extending neighbouring footpaths, enhancing the village centre(s), working with developers, ensuring biodiversity net gain is the minimum new developments offer, using CIL funds to improve our environment whilst supporting businesses to succeed.

**Tamsin Armour**

**Chair**

22 April 2024