

KNIGHTON ON TEME PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES

Detailed at the end of this report

MEETINGS

Throughout the last year the parish council has continued to follow protocol for physical meetings held at the Parish rooms Knighton On Teme.

The next parish council meeting will be on 8th May 2025 and continue to be held in The Parish Rooms on the first Thursday of alternate months unless otherwise stated, publicised within the agenda and open for all public to attend.

The Parish Council wishes to encourage attendance by members of the public who are given an opportunity to participate during the informal Public Question Time and raise any issue's they have within the parish area, give views on matters within the current agenda or raise a matter for future discussion.

County Councillor David Chambers regularly attends and or sends up to date reports of Council business prior to all meetings. District Councillor Douglas Godwin regularly attends and gives detailed accounts of local council issues or progress, plus provides a valued font of knowledge the Parish Council can use on local planning matters.

Over the last year, the Parish Council saw an unprecedented amount of public attendance at meetings, mainly in part of a local planning application. Advice was provided by Legal Services to The Parish Council of highlighting the Parish Councils current Standing Orders to remind Councillors and members of the public statutory requirements at public question time. These standing orders can be viewed on the Parish Councils website. At the same time, the Parish Council adopted a Vexatious Policy.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INVOLMENT

The Parish area is fortunate to have venues offering a great service and provision to the community, opening up their business and welcoming all to events and special occasions they organise. These include Knighton on Teme Caravan Park and Commonwood Farm who hold regular events, bars, music, firework displays etc that are open to all. A huge thank you goes out to these venues and the organisers for all the hard work and community spirit you provide to the Parish and larger area.

Furthermore, the same goes to the Parish Rooms and all the organisers of events that it holds. Each year more and more events pop up providing a great opportunity for the community to come together and enjoy nights out or community shows and competitions. The Parish Council is always more than happy to support the Parish Rooms and we congratulate all those involved in promoting and making good use of this community asset.

It is also very welcoming to see the opening of the old Talbot Inn, now the Old Hunting Lodge at Newnham Bridge. After being empty and unused for over four years the new owners have created another asset to the local community providing a new style of service and preserving a main focal point of the Parish. We were very saddened to hear of the passing of Johan Barber one of the new owners who died just weeks into the opening. Despite this

Adam, Syemon and Stephen plus their team have persevered and turned the venue around offering a multitude of different foods and drinks for everyone.

Tenbury Young Farmers are a huge influence in this rural area and provide a great network for children and young people to engage and learn with.

They again hosted a bonfire and firework event in Tenbury. They worked relentlessly before and after to make a spectacular event for the community, worthy of a special mention and thanks. Fireworks are a controversial subject to some and as the event was hosted as far as possible from livestock and equestrian land, the parish sponsored the event with a donation to help fund it.

COMMUNICATIONS

Agendas, minutes, the annual report and other documents of interest, are posted on notice boards around the parish area, outside the Parish Room and entered on the website <http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish>. This council run website used by all Parish Councils has now closed and Knighton on Teme Parish Council have their own dedicated webpage that can be found at <https://knightonontemepc.gov.uk/>

The Parish Council has created their own website at an expense but it will regularly feed information and minutes from meetings onto the site for public viewing. It also incorporates a means of contacting the parish clerk. The use of the new website will bring parish news to a wider audience where we can encourage community feedback and reporting on local matters.

The Worcestershire edition of County Association of Local Councils (CALC) is circulated to all Councillors via email which is also used for agendas, attachments and draft minutes.

Occasional articles, helpful advice plus news items are published in Temespan.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

This process is seen as adding a valuable local dimension to planning approval procedures, the Public Question Time at the start of each meeting gives the opportunity for parishioners to give their views to the Council before it discusses an application.

Planning application documents are made available via the planning portal for all councillors to view and copies are available during the meeting so that they can be seen by everyone present, this works satisfactorily. Most Parish Councillors are well versed in matters of planning having served the community for many years making well balanced decisions that have never been challenged.

Last year the Council met all planning application deadlines during the consultation period.

There were 7 planning applications received during the last twelve months.

Of these applications the Parish Council supported all applications, some of which were accompanied with recommendations or conditions to ensure that the best possible planning decision was made.

HIGHWAYS

Requests for attention to potholes and gully problems are reported to the relevant department. They are assessed by the Highway Department to ensure they meet their criteria and are

repairable at public expense. The parish have continued to report any matters requiring attention to the highways department, plus further reports for road sweeping to maintain clean kerbsides and drain cleaning on the main roads.

This year there have been 11 highways matters that have been reported, some of which are protracted matters and ongoing.

This year we have continued to promote the use of the existing litter bins within the parish area and to encourage dog owners to pick up their dogs mess.

In May last year the Parish Council purchased and installed a new double size litter bin at the lay-by on the A456 Kidderminster Road near the Talbot Inn to help combat a hotspot of litter and fly tipping. Within weeks this was vandalised / subject to an attempted theft. It has since been repaired and is constantly filled with rubbish.

There were two Litter Pick events during the year. Both the Autumn and spring litter picks were well attended with members of the community taking to the street in their own time collecting litter as they went. Again, the most litter was collected from the A456 through the parish area, the lay-by near the Talbot yet again being identified as the biggest hot spot for litter and fly tipping.

The Lengthsman Scheme operated extremely well through the year. Under this scheme the Parish Council takes direct responsibility for minor highways problems such as clearing gully grates, digging out blocked gullies, clearing verge grips, advising landowners and frontages when their ditches need cleaning or where overhanging vegetation needs cutting back, cleaning and clearing signs and similar tasks. The tasks are carried out by the appointed contractor directed by the Clerk, and part of the costs are recovered from the County Council. The reporting is being upgraded so Worcester council can have greater accountability for the work undertaken.

Speeding traffic has again been a priority and ongoing problem along the A456 through Newnham Bridge, this section of road accommodates two main arterial routes onto one road until it meets Burford.

Highways and the Parish Council are constantly reviewing the use of deterrents and new means of traffic calming measure on this route. Since the installation of two new solar powered LED speed activated signs the data and observations have shown that these are making a significant impact on speed and traffic noise. The main issues of speed are now generally late at night or during the early hours when there is little chance of any enforcement.

It has also been highlighted that there are rising instances of speeding away from the main roads. Concern has been raised about speeding on smaller narrower lanes around the parish area which brings with it danger to walkers, horse riders and dog walkers. The local policing team have been asked to assist with this matter.

The Parish Council try to encourage landowners to maintain their land that borders highways and neighbouring properties. The Parish Council has again published an article in Temespan to encourage landowners to cut their hedges and carry out maintenance during the cutting season. The last year has seen a marked difference and drop in the amount of reports

pertaining to overgrown hedgerows and trees. The Parish Council thanks those landowners who are maintaining their hedgerows, in doing so they are adding to harmony within the community.

LOCAL POLICING PLAN

During the March 2025 Parish Council meeting, Police Community Support Officer Lee Durrant addressed the Council and appraised them of the new policing plan Tenbury Police had for its community. There were now 7 officers covering the Tenbury area, as a result of this increased staffing the community would see more frequent patrolling of the area. It was agreed that the Parish Councils three point local policing plan for the next twelve months would be:

- a) rural crime
- b) unlawful fly tipping
- c) rural speeding

These are the priorities that the local community will expect police to concentrate on within the Parish during the next year.

FINANCE.

The internal audit system introduced a few years ago continues to operate efficiently. Payments during the year totalled £14171.26 (previous year 19769.00); The Precept for the year £10,000.

Donations to local providers of services totalled £800, £150 to Teme Span, £200 towards the annual bonfire/firework display run by Tenbury Young Farmers and £150 towards the Young Farmers Club, £150 Knighton on Teme Cricket Club, £150 Knighton on Teme Parish Rooms.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

During the year we have seen the resignation of councillors Lynn Quinn, Samuel Perry and Julie Cornes.

Following the advertisement for new councillors the following were agreed and welcomed as new member of the Parish Council: Huw Bevan.

Councillor Bevan joined the elected councillors Duane Hubbard (Chair), Roger Lear, Jonathan Barnes, Emma Mapp, Jonathon Bradley and Janet Spilsbury. The Parish Council has vacancies for two councillors which will be advertised.

Mrs Rachel Lambert remains the Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

D Hubbard
Chairman of Knighton on Teme Parish Council