

KILHAM PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING - MAY 2015

My report is intended to give an overview of the work your council has carried out on behalf of the residents of Kilham this past year, to identify work that is still to be carried out and reveal the plans for the coming year.

We started last May with one vacancy that was filled by the co-option of Gerry Horner in July. Ian Pick resigned in June and he was replaced by Megan Price in September. Mark Broadbent then resigned in November and Sylvia Berry in February. So we ended the year with two new councillors and two vacancies. I am very pleased that all of the outgoing council members decided to seek nomination again and John Girling has rejoined the council leaving us as we started with just one vacancy to fill.

The other change is that Helen Aconley has stepped down as editor of the Kilham Newsletter after 10 years of loyal service. The village owes Helen a debt of gratitude for providing this service mostly free of charge. We were fortunate that Gill Smallwood was able to step in to ensure the continuance of the newsletter.

The new council organised itself by sharing its responsibilities as individual representatives or small working groups. This enables more to be done than would otherwise be achieved in monthly meetings alone. Another improvement in efficiency has been the switch to internet banking with Unity Bank.

Three groups worked on Administration/Finance/Personnel matters, the appraisal and listing of Assets & the development of the Newsletter.

The main work of the AFP group was to set a realistic budget for the year and ensure that while the basics are covered there is some tangible improvement in the village from which the residents will have a lasting benefit. This budget has since been monitored closely by the clerk who provided the council with quarterly reports.

The work of the Assets group resulted in an upgraded insurance policy which covers all the revised assets of the council.

The Newsletter group liaised with Gill and Kevin Smallwood and together worked on the brief to produce a refreshed look to the publication. The smaller, partly in colour booklet has been well received though there were some who missed out because of teething problems with the distribution. It is more expensive to produce and so this year we are planning to introduce paid advertising to offset costs.

Representatives liaised with the Village Hall, Neighbourhood Watch, Youth Club, Local Transport, KPFA & School Governors.

In addition to we also have a flood warden, a severe weather contractor, a grass maintenance contractor and village handyman.

Thankfully the flood warden was not needed this winter. Although the winter weather was mild the roads were gritted on 9 frosty mornings. It was found that the light traffic on close

roads meant that on some mornings the gritting gave little benefit and so these areas are now double gritted.

Thanks to the impressive professionalism of our clerk Claire, we have now in place the policies necessary for compliance. They are the Risk Assessment Clerk Policy, Risk Assessment Newsletter Delivery, an amended Publication Scheme Policy, Handling Complaints Policy, KPC Risk Assessment, Generic Risk Assessment, KPC Health & Safety Policy, a Cemetery Risk Assessment, Play Equipment and Play Area Risk Assessment, a Kilham Risk Schedule, a Recording of Council Meetings Policy and an Assets List Policy. We amended our Standing Orders and adopted the Transparency Code for smaller authorities. All rather boring but, in these times, very necessary.

Equipment in the village hall Play Area was repaired and maintained in good working order and passed the annual safety check. A weekly check of this area was introduced and the reports are reviewed at our monthly council meetings. New signage is planned this year and the metalwork is to be painted.

The large sycamore tree in Church Lane was eventually cut down and the last section of churchyard wall was repaired. Shortly after a large hole was punched in this newly repaired section by a speeding idiot, but fortunately for the council the church paid for the repairs to this damage.

Repairs were made to the War Memorial after it was agreed that the base would be taken back to its original design with no posts or chains.

All Saints Church footpath was resurfaced but we were let down by the contractor as we are still waiting for the non-slip top dressing surface to be applied. Our expectation is that this top dressing will be complete in this warmer weather.

A thorough safety survey was made of all the graves in the churchyard and cemetery. Additional copies were obtained of the Kilham Monumental Inscriptions booklet. Subsequent checks will be made to ensure the safe condition of these areas for visitors.

At the cemetery all the bushes and self-sown trees underneath the cemetery wall were cut down leaving five mature trees. All stumps were ground out and the area levelled. This work opened out the front of the cemetery and revealed the need for repairs and maintenance to the wall and railings. This year we will replace signage and we hope to repair the cemetery wall and carry out tree maintenance.

Councillor Denise Hayhurst has made strenuous efforts to gather support from neighbouring parishes and officials for an improvement to the provision of public transport. To that end a local transport survey was conducted. Further consultations are planned and more publicity of the current availability of transport and timetables.

The council agreed to contribute £100 following a request from The Village Hall Committee to donate funds towards the exterior redecoration of the village hall.

£300 was donated to the Twilight Bus facility for Driffield School students who wish to remain at school after hours.

Last year the parish council budgeted £4,000 for supporting KPFA, £1,000 is paid to ERYC for the land rent, and £3,000 for a grant. Two requests were made by the KPFA for financial support. The first for £2,900, the same as the previous year, and the second request for £1,500 to help pay for the building of a toilet block, removing the need for the portable toilets. £2,900 was granted to KPFA sufficient to pay for the essential running costs of rent, insurance, toilet hire and water rates. The second request was deferred.

To replace the information board in Church Street was one of the planned projects that still remains undone. Although this delay is frustrating it has enabled our clerk to successfully apply for funding to help with this project which we expect to be completed this year.

Following the loss of the First Responders Team this year it has been suggested that we might consider buying a defibrillator for the village. The council is supportive of this idea and further advice is being sought so that a properly informed decision can be made.

Early in the year Sam Harrison built the new parish council website. The content management of this site was then later handed to Councillor Gerry Horner. The council is extremely grateful to both Sam and Gerry for making this much improved facility possible. Please Google 'kilham council' if you have not viewed this site. It is still 'work in progress' but it contains useful and interesting information as well as providing you with a means of communicating with your council.

To summarise, the council will endeavour to:

- Maintain and improve the village assets;
- Secure and improve the village bus service provision;
- Update Kilham's Emergency Plan that is now 3 years old;
- Replace the village map and information board;
- Further improve communication links with the village through the development of the website and newsletter;
- Continue to support the school, village groups and residents;
- Remain receptive to your feedback where there is potential for general benefit;

In conclusion I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to all of your councillors who I believe have served you well. My job, with Claire's help, was to enable them to make informed decisions which they invariably did in a carefully considered and thoroughly professional manner. All the meetings last year were very productive, good humoured and enjoyable occasions.

Geoff Seward

Chairman, Kilham Parish Council

May 2014 - April 2015