

Chairman's Report June 2021

It was in April 2019 that I made the last chairman's report. Since then we all know what happened to get in the way of our normal everyday lives.

Covid 19 presented all of us with challenges to be overcome. Now that the majority of the population have been vaccinated, hopefully things will start to return to pre Covid normality.

Kewstoke Parish Council has continued to operate as normally as we could during the pandemic. Our meetings became virtual when we could not meet face to face. In fact I think that after a few initial teething issues, we all took well to our monthly Zoom calls. So much so that I think smaller committee meetings will continue to be done in this way. It's a lot easier to get half a dozen people together virtually to have a short meeting, without them all having to traipse to the Village Hall, especially on a cold dark winter's night.

We are very fortunate in this Parish to have a great team of orderlies and volunteers that have worked throughout the various lockdowns, ensuring that the jobs the Parish are responsible for, all got done. These jobs were made much harder by the sheer volume of people that have been descending upon our village. We are not alone in experiencing this, Villages and beauty spots throughout the country have all been the same. Too many people about, bad and inconsiderate parking, huge amounts of rubbish being left behind for local people to clear up afterwards. This said, I believe that as things start to open up again with people going back to foreign holidays and different activities being reopened, we should see more of our normal visitor numbers back in the Village. We should as residents remember that Kewstoke & Sand Bay have long been a popular visitor destination. The caravan parks that are now largely residential, were initially purely tourist sites. We should not forget

that there are those with businesses in the Parish that depend on visitors for their livelihood.

The Parish Council have continued to maintain the toilets in the Terminus Car Park. They too have seen a much heavier footfall than we would expect in normal times. The mechanisms on the doors would have long expired without the continual attention of Ken Harper and Ron who have done a sterling job in keeping them open. New doors with electronic payment have been ordered and hopefully will be in place very soon. John Sayer and his team of volunteers have continued to plant trees&shrubs in the area surrounding the car park along with decking around the toilets. This is funded by money given to the Parish Council by North Somerset Council for maintaining the Car park surrounds. The Concession for the kiosk continues to work well. The income from this and that raised from the toilet users has kept this cost neutral for residents.

A new lease was signed with the land owner allowing the footpath in Crookes Lane to continue for a further 10 years.

In my last report I mentioned the “yellow signs’ that we installed on Kewstoke Road. This was a temporary measure to stop coaches using Kewstoke Road as a short cut to Weston, whilst we awaited the Traffic Restriction Order. This order is now in place and the yellow signs have been removed.

The Parish Council Newsletter has now gone online and can now be viewed on the Parish Council Website. A number of copies are printed and can be obtained from the Pink Shop for those that don’t have access to the internet. It has only been possible to have the newsletter accessed online because the website is managed so well by Marcus Tripp. Before, this website was a little looked at and mainly historical. It is now kept fully up to date with relevant information. This linked with the ‘Kewstoke Our Village’ Facebook page moderated by Karen Jenkins gives up to date information to

residents. A new Noticeboard will shortly be installed on the bus shelter in Crookes Lane, This, with the others around the village give information to all.

A large amount of work has been carried out by the Environment Agency at the request of the Parish Council, on our sea defences. This has seen the erecting of a lot of new Chestnut fencing to help combat the erosion of the sand dunes. Large posts have been sunk into the beach at intervals to allow the constant monitoring of the sea defences going forward. This work has been ably assisted by Russell Adams and his tractor helping to fill around the fences where people have dislodged them. This as well as keeping the promenade free from the build up of blown sand.

Another recent development was bringing Community Response Officers to the beach. These are the people that are normally found dealing with anti-social behaviour in Weston Town Centre. They have now been seen strolling around the beach area, particularly during periods of fine weather. Hopefully their presence will dissuade those from ripping up the fencing for fires and anti-social behaviour in general. We have Mike the Clerk to thank for this intervention.

I have left to last what has been the biggest topic of conversation in the last year or so. This is Traffic and in particular parking in the Parish. There have been requests for Yellow lines and parking restrictions on many of the roads in the Parish. Early on in the Pandemic the Parish Council surveyed residents in Myrtle Tree Crescent & St Bridges Close who felt that they were particularly badly affected. The results of the survey were inconclusive with no majority to any of the proposed options. In other roads there have also been calls to restrict parking from residents. We are fortunate that the Village Hall left its car park open whilst the hall itself was closed. This did a lot to relieve the problems in Crookes Lane. The hall is now open again and the car park required for the use of its users.

The Parish Council have been liaising with North Somerset Council officers throughout this period. It has been extremely frustrating as their officers were mainly working from home and were difficult to get hold of at times. It was agreed by the Parish Council some time ago that North Somerset Council had to look holistically at our parking and traffic issues. Putting yellow lines in one place just pushes the problem to somewhere else. Will the residents calling for double yellow lines now, still be happy to have them when things get back to normal? Will those in Crookes Lane be happy that going forward their family and friends will not be able to park close to their houses when visiting and have to pay to park, some distance away?

Some of the parking issues can be laid at North Somerset Council's door. As part of the original scheme, the small car park on beach road was closed. The plan was to increase the level of the lower car park opposite the Commodore (Now South Sands) using road shavings from a scheme in Portishead. This was to increase the number of spaces available to more than that lost. This has not happened.

The Parish Council requested that the issues be raised to Director Level at North Somerset Council. After some consultation we now discover that the post of the director that we were dealing with has been reorganised and we are now starting again from scratch.

Speeding traffic has been a concern of some residents but get little traction from police and the local authority as there have been very few accidents in the Parish and they concentrate their energies where there have been accidents. This said, the Parish Council offered to arrange a meeting with residents and our local Police Community Support Officers. There was no response from residents when a notice was put up on the Parish Council Website with links to the Facebook page.

It is the intention of the Parish Council to intensify our pressure on North Somerset Council to get a well thought out resolution to these issues.

In my last Chairman's Report I mentioned producing a resident's survey similar to the one that was carried out in 2002. This has not been forgotten and we will hopefully make progress in this in the coming months as we all get back to normal again.

So in closing I would like once again to thank everyone who have given freely of their time for the good of this Parish and those that live here: Parish Councillors, Orderlies, Volunteers & The Parish Clerk, who puts in so many more hours that he is paid for.

Jim MacDonald

Planning Chairman's Report June 2021

I will start by reminding fellow Parish Councillors of its mission statement, which is to protect the Rural Character and Environment of the Village from overdevelopment and to promote Kewstoke as a pleasant place to live. With that in mind the Parish Council will try to comment fairly on any application that it is asked to comment on.

One of the largest proposed developments for many years was for a large holiday Park on the edge of the Village adjacent to Lower Norton Lane and Sand Road. This was for 300 or so lodges /caravans and is believed by the Parish Council and many residents to have a significant and overbearing impact on the village .No decision has yet been made even though the application was submitted in May 2018 some 3 years ago.

Another proposed development of great interest was for 20 houses on land off Crookes Lane. The application was refused for a number of reasons, in particular that it was on a flood plain and that it was outside of the Village settlement boundary. Kewstoke being an infill Village, only development

within the settlement boundary will be considered and also the land had been allocated /safeguarded for a replacement primary school.

The appellant appealed the decision and a hearing was held at Weston Town Hall later in 2019 where a government Inspector listened to all the evidence. The Parish Council attended and gave their comments. Several weeks later the Inspector came to a decision and upheld the Local Planning Authority's decision to refuse.

A little more recently a proposal for 8 Holiday lodges was submitted on land to the rear of the Commodore/South Sands Hotel, this was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. The Parish Council raised concerns regarding Highway safety.

There have been several smaller applications for loft conversions and the odd demolition and rebuild which have kept the Parish Council Planning Committee busy.

A request was also made for a formal screening opinion on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was required to be submitted with an application for the installation of up to 65,000 photovoltaic (PV) panels on Land at Holm Farm and Norton Farm, this land being in the main to the East of Sand Road .

I am sure that if an application is submitted for the development it will be of great interest to the whole Parish.

Planning Chairman

Cllr R. Adams.

7/6/2021

Financial Report – 2020/2021

I would first like to make reference to the unaudited AGAR Accounting statement which has recently been completed and published on the Parish Web Site and various notice boards around the Village. This has now been forwarded to our external auditors for review.

A notice of Public rights and Publication referring to the unaudited AGAR statement has also been published which allows members of the public to inspect our accounting records, should they wish to do so.

2020/2021 Current year

The position at the end of the Financial year was that of an under spend of around £4K in respect of the Revenue/Operational budget.

The Parish Council had initially set a budget for an £8K deficit, in order to keep the precept level the same as 2019/2020, and in the knowledge that it was expected some cost savings to be achieved, particularly in respect of the Dog Bin emptying contract which was eventually awarded to Weston Town Council w.e.f 1/4/2020 for a year, showing an eventual saving of around £4K.

A payment of £15k in respect of securing the footpath agreement along Crookes lane was met from reserves.

Total Payments for the year was £76.2k and receipts £63.2k

Of course the effects of the pandemic were unknown at the time of setting the budget and costs were subsequently reduced as a result, particularly a reduced rent for the Village Hall as no meetings could take place and the Events budget was never able to be spent.

Delays in contractors working on Capital Maintenance such as the Memorial Benches, again as a result of Covid-19 restrictions ,also contributed to an under spend with some payments deferred to 2021/2022.

On the other hand keeping the Toilets open all year and the influx of visitors to Kewstoke saw a rise in income from the use of the Toilets, an increase of around £1.2K.

A contribution towards electricity use of the Kiosk from the tenants was negotiated and further increased our anticipated income.

The result of all these factors, therefore, contributed to an Operational under spend of around £4K rather than a budgeted deficit of £8K.

Current Assets

2020/21

Balances 31st March 2021.

Current A/c's (Nat west)	£1,676
(Unity Bank)	£12,104
Reserve1	£38,572
Reserve2	£35,552
Total	<u>£87,905</u>

(Less £205 un presented payment £87,700)

Out of our reserves some £11K is currently ring fenced in respect of the Toll Road Project and some £16K in respect of the Traffic Management Plan of which an invoice is still outstanding. These two items would reduce our current reserves from £87.7k to £60.7k

Although the £11K is ring fenced for the Toll Road project and an historic precept was set to raise these funds, it is proposed to use it towards the cost of upgrading the Toilet doors as the Project is not expected now to go ahead.

M.Hardwick

Clerk to the Council.

