



Annual Parish Meeting of Kingsmead Parish

Minutes of Kingsmead Annual Parish Meeting
held on Monday 20th May 2024

This meeting is the annual meeting of the electorate, and all members of the public were invited to attend.

The meeting started at 7pm.

Agenda:

1. Apologies

Cllr Logan and Cllr Swift.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 15th May 2023 had previously been accepted and signed.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council for 2023-2024

Firstly, I'd like to thank my fellow Cllrs for their continuing hard work and individual contributions to the PC, I know our community appreciates it. I would specifically like to single out and thank Emma Bannister, who recently resigned from the council. Emma was a major contributor to Kingsmead Residents Association and fundamental to the inception of the Parish Council. She remained a member of the council until April of this year and contributed greatly to its successful running. We now have a vacancy on the council, which we will be looking to fill through co-option.

We appreciate the support our residents continue to give the parish council, whether it be attending the monthly litter picks or simply reporting issues like grounds maintenance concerns. The grounds maintenance has been a particular challenge for us this spring due to high rainfall and subsequent very wet conditions. We are working with our contractors to improve the situation and going forward, we will continue to monitor them closely to deliver a good standard for our residents.

Last year the PC ran a summer event, to mark the King's Coronation and the Christmas Lights Switch-On, both of which were a great success and brought the community together. It was nice to meet so many residents and both events were very well supported. Santa's grotto was tremendously popular last Christmas!

We're also pleased to see how popular the new swing is at Kingslawn Close. This was installed last summer and it quickly became a huge draw for local children, often with queues forming for a chance to ride. We are now looking to see if an area at Kensington Way park can be improved and we would be very happy to hear what local residents think is needed.

On a slightly different, but equally important note, we were pleased to obtain funding that allowed us to install a public defibrillator, which is located on Kingsmead Square and available on a 24/7 basis. Let's hope this critical life-saving equipment is never actually needed.

We are also proud to be working with the local PCSO to support the Kingsmead Mini-Police and provided a grant last year to purchase their uniforms. We know the children have lots of exciting ideas about how they can help the local community and we will continue to support this fantastic initiative.

As a parish council we have been engaging with Cheshire West Council to come to an agreement to take over a contract to maintain the crown hedge. We are still in discussion with them but we're hopeful this will be resolved satisfactorily before the autumn; the PC can then start returning the hedge to its full splendour. Likewise we continue to discuss with them the issue of the advertising signs on the two roundabouts.

We are hopeful that Cheshire West Council will be forging closer links in the future with their PCs, which will help to benefit all residents. Kingsmead PC was successful with its motion to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, at its AGM last October, in which we asked them to lobby Cheshire West to be more engaged with councils like us. This is starting to see some results, with the CEO of Cheshire West starting a round of meetings with local PCs in the autumn.

5. General Discussion

The Kingsmead Mini-Police introduced themselves to the meeting and outlined some of the initiatives they have been working on. When asked what they thought of the play areas in Kingsmead, it was commented that wooden play areas are nicer! The council thanked the group for their efforts and contribution to the community.

The Principal of Sir John Deane's College and CEO of The Sir John Brunner Foundation attended the meeting. They were asked by a councillor if the college is fulfilling its charter by, for example, providing facilities for the local community. They acknowledged that the swimming pool had been closed (due to it not being financially viable) and that the college will not be able to introduce adult education again but did argue that it continues to open its sports facilities to the wider community. It was outlined that as an academy it is unable to spend money on community facilities, which is one of the reasons why investment could not be made in the pool, and that all changes being made are in line with the college's Articles of Enablement. It was further stated that any investment being made to modify the pool facility for use as classrooms was only as a result of central government funding and was being done to accommodate an increase of 5% in student numbers. The parish council expressed its disappointment though that the college had not supported a fund-raising initiative to be run by St Luke's Hospice on St George's field by turning down a request to use its grounds for parking. The college representatives were not aware of this and agreed that it had been unfortunate. A discussion was then had about concerns regarding parking in the area and that complaints are regularly received by the parish council from local residents. It was confirmed that the college's parking facilities are under review, but it was also pointed out that most students travel to the college by bus. It was further discussed about litter issues that arise where students walk and congregate during breaks e.g. between the college and the Kingsmead Square shops, around the Duke's Way pond and on other green areas in close vicinity to the college. Litter is often not disposed of properly and bins are left overflowing. The college agreed that it would raise this concern with its students as part of its regular talks about being a good neighbour and respecting the local community. The college principle then raised a concern regarding road crossings and the potential dangers inherent in there being no crossing near to the college. The council outlined how it has discussed this several times with CW&C Highways, but surveys have always indicated there is no requirement for additional crossings to be installed. The college confirmed it would lend its weight to any further lobbying of CW&C and would share its traffic assessment data with the parish council. The parish council agreed to see how it could progress the issue through engagement with our local "Communities and Engagement" officer and with the support of ward councillors.

Finally, a short overview was provided by a representative of Groundwork and Leisure Services about the benefits of installing a multi-sports play surface at Kensington Way. The council confirmed that this would be formally discussed in the Full Council meeting later in the evening.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.