

2022-23

# ANNUAL REPORT

KEYNSHAM  
TOWN  
COUNCIL



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## Chairman's Report

We have come to the end of the current four-year Council cycle with elections in May this year. It has been my privilege to be the Chair of the Council throughout those four years. These last four years have been tough, probably the hardest four years since the Council came into being in 1991.

Covid has been around for three and a half years and it is still with us but far more manageable than before. We have national difficulties caused by Brexit, government instability and a European war in Ukraine which has repercussions in the town with a number of Ukrainian refugees living with us. Internally we had a number of vacancies which caused much pressure on the remaining staff. My thanks goes to the small group of staff who managed a colossal workload for a time. I'm very pleased that in the last year we have expanded our staffing to match the need of a growing community. We now have very experienced and enthusiastic staff to offer their service to the town. There is a much needed more comprehensive Youth Service offering in TimeOut and we have the capacity to look to new projects like the Spring Show.

I've already mentioned the elections, please vote as all the candidates want to serve Keynsham in this voluntary way. Following the elections on May 4th, we have the Coronation of King Charles the Third on Saturday 6th May. The first one since 1953, seventy years ago, so that is something to celebrate. We will be celebrating on the afternoon of Sunday 7th May with our Picnic in the Park. This will follow a similar format to the successful Jubilee celebrations last year. We should have a second bench to match the bench for the jubilee by the Bandstand in the park by then. Look out for the timetable with a huge range of activities. There are further activities organised by others over the Coronation weekend so keep an eye out for those as well.

Later on comes the 26th Keynsham Music Festival running from Monday 26th June through to Sunday 2nd July. There are many events and plenty of opportunities to volunteer, particularly at the weekend. Last year, due to the weather and inflation, the 25th Keynsham Music Festival made a significant loss so money is tight this year. Please help in any way you can. To learn more about how you can help please email [marie@keynshamfest.co.uk](mailto:marie@keynshamfest.co.uk). I firmly believe that this year could be our best ever.

Finally, my thanks must go to the 15 individuals who are currently Town Councillors for their service over the last four years. Some of these lovely people are not standing again for election so my particular thanks goes to them, but also to those Councillors who are throwing their hats into the ring again. They together with some enthusiastic newcomers will, hopefully, serve Keynsham well for the next four years. I hope the next Council doesn't have the surprises we had in the last four years.

Make the most of it, whatever happens.

# Report by the Events, Arts, Tourism & Heritage Committee



"It was a real pleasure then this year for us to be able to put on larger events and entertainments."

Those years prior to 2022 had been very difficult for all of us and left many town events at a necessarily 'lower ebb.' It was a real pleasure then this year for us to be able to put on larger events and entertainments whilst still acknowledging some Covid dangers still around. This year the Winter Festival returned fully and was bigger than ever, more of our shops stayed open and joined us in the fun and the Christmas Market was expanded. It was wonderful to see our younger residents back to their creative best and we enjoyed singing and dancing from the littlest to the biggest. The parade grows year on year and plans are afoot to try to make it even more of a spectacle next year. The Town Council were very pleased that they managed to secure new Christmas lights and were particularly pleased with our Community Christmas Tree in the Park.

We were also pleased with our event for HRM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee at the beginning of June last year. We hope that we managed to create the right balance between fun and respect. The Committee were very grateful for funds coordinated by Beth Whalley and the High Street Heritage Action Zone. The creation of a video of 'memories' of HRM Queen Elizabeth by local residents will be a treasured archive for many years to come.

Remembrance Day was back to full strength and it was wonderful to have such a well-supported morning of remembrance for our veterans. The service at St. John's was packed out and the hymns and prayers at the park gates were very well attended. It truly is a privilege to walk with those that have served, so ably supported by our local groups, young and old. As always, our Town Clerk, Dawn Drury, made an excellent job of arranging and organising along with the RBL and our local Churches. Thanks to all of them for such a wonderful morning.

'Keynsham Heritage Open Days' was run as part of Keynsham's Local Cultural Programme, a strand of Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme. We were very lucky to receive a great deal of funding thanks to the hard work of staff member Beth Whalley, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Although there were many funded activities that happened throughout the year, early September found our 'Astounding Inventions' themed event which was much appreciated by young and old alike.

The Committee has also instigated new events too and we are very grateful for the work of Deputy Town Clerk, Katherine Sears for the arrangements for the Spring Show on Saturday 25th March, 12-5pm and we look forward to seeing you for the Investiture Celebrations in Memorial Park for HRH King Charles III on Sunday 7th May.

# Report by the Environment & Sustainability Committee



"A big thank you to all those groups and individuals working across Keynsham helping to tackle the Climate and Ecological emergencies."

The Environment and Sustainability Committee has continued supporting the people of Keynsham and its communities to become more environmentally friendly over the last 12 months. The council is committed to its goal of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The following things have been actioned by the Committee this year:

- The Council planted further batches of trees and shrubs from the Woodland Trust charity and planting was carried out last Spring with members of the community . More sites have been identified and more planting is planned for 2023.
- The Grants Committee has continued to support local initiatives with environmental groups by awarding a ring-fenced sum of £15,750 to environmental projects.
- The Keynsham Environmental Celebration Day, organised by Churches Together, was once again supported by the Council and was a great success. Various talks were given on the Friday evening, followed by around 30 stalls in Market Square the next day. The stalls had plenty of information about local initiatives that were taking place to deal with the climate emergency and how people could be supportive.

Give away at events and the Farmers Markets of:

- Native wild flower seeds (over 1000 packs so far) to encourage residents to help our bees and insects
- Fifty 'baby living Christmas trees' to be planted in people's gardens – grow and be 'reused' for many years – to help absorb carbon and reduce 'one use' Christmas trees
- One hundred 'Hedgehog Highways', to encourage people to make their gardens more hedgehog friendly
- The Environment and Sustainability Committee continues to liaise with other Councils, particularly in South Gloucestershire to develop cycle routes to provide better access to Keynsham and onwards to Bristol.

The Environment and Sustainability Project Plan continues to be updated.

Over the course of the next year, we continue to support local groups to help endeavour to plant as many trees as possible in available green spaces in Keynsham. We also hope to enable members of the community and groups to become or continue to be environmentally friendly.

Finally, a big thank you to all those groups and individuals working across Keynsham helping to tackle the Climate and Ecological emergencies and look forward to working with you next year.

# Report by the Finance & Policy Committee



"This year has been a busy one for us. Given the increasing financial workload that comes with a growing town and an expanding population..."

The Finance and Policy Committee meets at least monthly, and at our meetings we review Town Council expenditure, we review annual budget preparation and audit reports. In addition to this, we also look at investment strategy, risk strategy, review Council policies and procedures. We cover procurement terms and conditions, as well as finance and government regulations.

The Committee also reviews the Capital Projects Programme, and makes recommendations to Town Council on the procurement of large capital items such as mowers or vehicles or new playground equipment, as well as ensuring our properties are all kept up to standard, including the Cemetery, Manor Road Pavilion, the Bandstand, all play areas/other spaces.

This year has been a busy one for us. Given the increasing financial workload that comes with a growing town and an expanding population, the Council has now employed a full-time Responsible Financial Officer - which means we can implement improvements to our business processes, and also allow our Town Clerk to concentrate on other vital Council work and issues.

This year the Council has begun work in our beautiful Cemetery - including urgent remedial work required on the chapel/tower, and the repairing of pathways and walls within the Cemetery area. We have also just begun planned works to refurbish Manor Road Pavilion, including new roof, refurbished showers and changing facilities.

# Report by the Capital Projects Committee



"The responsibility of this Committee is to maintain a list of Capital projects, review the funding of these, and to help to progress them."

The Capital Projects Committee is a relatively new one for the Council, and has only been around for the last two years. The Town Council always has a running programme of projects that need to be addressed - and we noticed that although we were able to keep up with most projects and issues that arose, there were a number of longer-term projects that we were not able to address. Many of these were longer-term or capital projects, such as property refurbishments, accommodation etc, involving construction or specialist building advice etc, and were projects we have been planning for some years. In order to be able to progress such works, the Town Council has set up the Capital Projects Committee. The responsibility of this Committee is to maintain a list of Capital projects, review the funding of these, and to help to progress them.

- Over the last year, this Committee has helped the Town Council to complete the purchase of the land at Fox and Hounds Lane for community use as a small woodland area, and also another area of land adjacent to St John's Church also for community use (yet to be decided). This land was at risk of ending up in the hands of developers, so we are happy that these spaces have been secured for our residents.
- Also this year, we have begun the refurbishment of Manor Road Pavilion. This will provide users of the pitches at Manor Road with much-needed provision for changing and for showers, and will ensure the building is once more safe to use.
- Work is being planned to make urgent repairs to our lovely chapel in the cemetery, following a survey which has shown some subsidence at one end of the chapel. Along with this, we will be looking at some of the walls and paths in the cemetery in order to maintain safety standards and appearance.

# Report by the Planning & Development Committee



"We have played a full part in the defence of our green spaces that are constantly under pressure."

Last year has again been a busy one for our Committee as we deal with individual and community planning issues. Our objective has been to combine individual rights with the wellbeing of neighbours and the wider community.

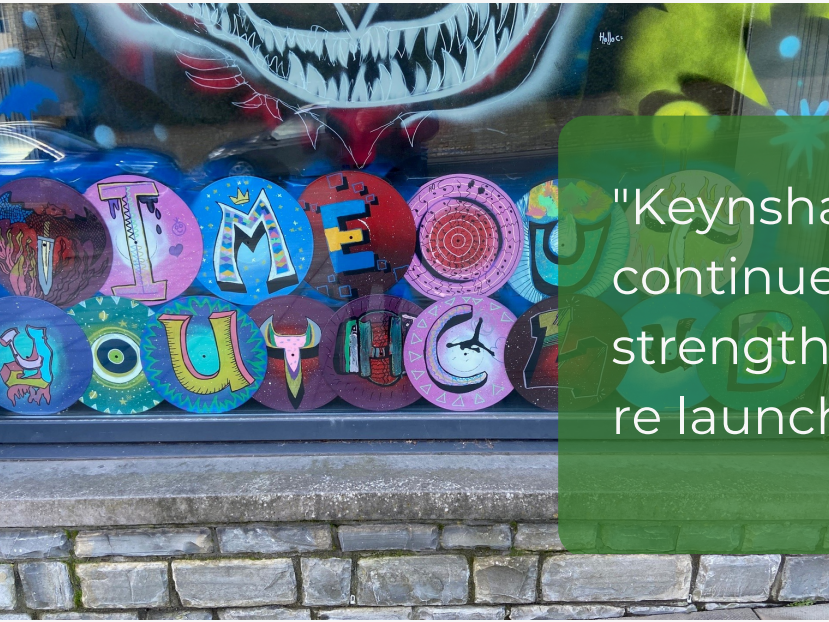
We have played a full part in the defence of our green spaces that are constantly under pressure. In addition we consistently oppose overdevelopment, green belt erosion and the unwelcome impact of unsuitable industrial development.

Next year will provide an even heavier agenda in addition to our usual applications vetting. Keynsham Town Council must play a full part in the creation of the new B&NES Local Plan. Concurrent with that process will be an imperative to complete our Neighbourhood Development Plan forced into postponement by Covid.

Total applications considered – 104, (plus 8 TPOs, not included in below data)

- 71 applications were supported by KTC
- 25 objections
- 88% of KTC decisions concurred with B&NES final approval or refusal.

## Report by Youth Service (TimeOut)



"Keynsham Youth Service has continued to grow from strength to strength since the re launch in October."

Keynsham Youth Service has continued to grow from strength to strength since the re launch in October.

Youth workers are out in Keynsham in the community every Monday evening, on the streets and in parks, building relationships with new young people to support them to attend the club.

During the week and in school holidays the club offers all young people in Keynsham 11-19 years a space to relax, have fun, meet with friends & try new things such as creative arts activities, games & cooking.

Trained youth workers are available if young people want to access information, guidance & support. The sessions are planned with young people and some have set up their own activities such as a Dungeons & Dragons group and a small group are organising a creative arts festival called Nova, which will be from the 31st June to 2nd July 2023.

We are really excited to appoint a new community music studio manager who will bring even more life and energy to our music studios, offering a host of musical workshops to young people in Keynsham during our youth club sessions.

For more information contact Abi Gray: [youthleader@keynsham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:youthleader@keynsham-tc.gov.uk)



# Report by the Grants Committee



"We are blessed in Keynsham with an incredible variety of charitable organisations and groups dedicated to every aspect of our community."

Our July Grants Scheme Award event to celebrate the work done by our local groups and organisations is one of the highlights of the Town Council's year and thanks to all who make this such a success. But it's not just one evening of course. Our Committee must meet to establish the paperwork, dates, the amounts agreed by Council, who we can allocate to and by how much and a whole host of other considerations behind the scenes, ably supported by our Town Council officers.

We are blessed in Keynsham with an incredible variety of charitable organisations and groups dedicated to every aspect of our community. We are very well served from football, to swimming, from Girls' Brigades to Life Savers and everything you can possibly imagine in between. Our groups and services are back up and fully running post Covid after a considerable period of uncertainty and financial instability, so it is a privilege for this Committee to be able to support them financially and to assist with their recovery.

Last year the Town Council were able to run their Grants funding initiatives in 2022 and managed to provide over £23,100 in General Grants to those groups. In all, we were able to assist 25 Groups looking for additional assistance and we were pleased to receive so many applications which specifically serve Keynsham residents.

# Report by the Personnel Committee



"I can confidently say that we now have an incredible team that are working hard to provide an excellent service for the residents of Keynsham. This year the Personnel Committee will focus on staff support, development and training."

The Personnel Committee meets as required (at least quarterly). In reality, this Committee meets frequently, and its remit is to monitor all things related to Council staff. Any decisions we make are always for the Town Council to approve, but we take general responsibility for:

- Staff policy, including the staff handbook
- All recruitment processes and interviewing for new staff
- Supporting the Staff Appraisal process as required
- Managing of any disciplinary issues or grievances
- Researching and making representation to Town Council on all matters relating to staff

Over the last 2 years, we have been working closely with the Clerk to review our staffing needs, ensure our current staff are working to their strengths, and analyse where our gaps in skills and staffing were. Following this review, we have recruited to the empty positions we had. We would like to thank the Town Clerk for her hard work in this area and are happy to report that we have an outstanding professional team who are working hard to ensure we support our residents, create a lively and active programme of events in our town, and are ensuring that our heritage and our 'uniqueness' is celebrated through shared activities. We are also proud to be able welcome a whole new Youth Team to our staff, enabling us to provide a full programme for our young people.

# Council Staff

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# Get in Touch

Any questions about the services  
offered by

Keynsham Town Council can be  
addressed to:

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 0117 9868683

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