

Report on the activities of the Parish Council 2016/17 – by the Chairman Philip Catterill

Welcome to the Annual Parish Assembly for 2017.

A number of planning applications have been considered over the year, and the Parish Council has made comments or objections as appropriate. The new housing in the Parish is progressing quickly, & we welcome these new residents to our Parish.

As part of the “developer contributions” for the new housing, we have been awarded a fund of £50,000.00 by David Wilson Homes, which must specifically be used for *“the provision, improvement or maintenance of a community hall, or similar facility or projects reasonably capable of serving the development at Land West of Kempston as agreed under the S106”*. The Parish Council welcomes applications for grants from residents, groups or organisations, for projects that clearly meet these criteria.

We have very recently found out that Bedford Borough Council intends to set aside more land for development within our Parish, which is disappointing to hear. We had previously been assured that this Parish has been developed to its capacity, but it seems the demands of the national housing shortage has put pressure on the Borough Council to find much more land to develop. Their draft plan for development up to the year 2035 is about to be published for public consultation, & is likely to include 4 sites designated for development around the Gibraltar Corner/Home Rd/Wood End area. The plan allocates 500 homes to this area, & suggests there will be need to be works to improve access, a lower school, & a planted area to retain the gap between Kempston Rural & Wootton. We urge residents to take part in the public consultation which we believe will open shortly & run until June.

The Parish Council is responsible for the Wood End Play Space, which is currently managed on our behalf by a local resident – Eva Sominka. Eva carries out weekly checks, & arrange for necessary repairs & maintenance which is funded by the Parish Council. We are very grateful for her support in doing this.

The Parish Council continues to be represented on the Joint Burials Committee with Kempston Town Council, to jointly manage the public burial ground in Green End Rd.

The Parish Council continues to be represented on Kempston Charities, & this charity welcomes applications for grants from any residents who are in financial need.

The Parish Council is responsible for maintaining the closed church yard at All Saints Church, & continues to keep the area well maintained, including grass cutting, tree trimming, & maintenance of the boundaries.

We endeavour to keep residents updated with relevant news by using our 5 noticeboards & our website. The website received approximately 150 visits per month over the last year which is pleasing to see.

We currently have 2 vacancies & welcome applications. In particular, it would be good to have representation from Green End, Church End & the new housing development.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors & our Clerk, plus our Borough Councillor Mark Smith, for their continued work on behalf of the residents of this Parish.

Philip Catterill – Chairman, Kempston Rural Parish Council