

March 2021

## Parish Council meetings

All meetings of the Parish Council will be held virtually until restrictions on face-to-face meetings due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are lifted.

Members of the public are very welcome to join any of our virtual meetings. Please contact the Clerk on [clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk) to request an invitation.

- **Planning Committee** – Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 7.00 pm
- **Allotments Committee** – Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 9.30 am
- **Finance & General Purposes Committee** – Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2.00 pm
- **Planning Committee** – Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 7.00 pm
- **Full Council Meeting** – Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 7.00 pm

Meetings listed are correct at the time of printing but may be subject to change. Please check on the website for any updates or confirm by contacting [clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## Community events

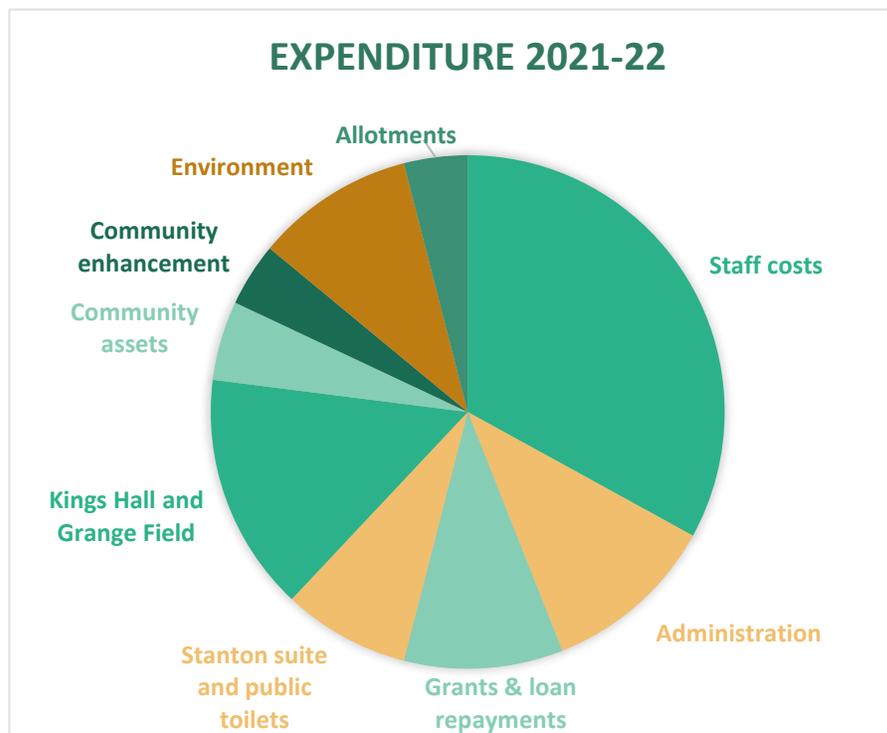
- There are no Community events this month

## NEWSLETTER No.19

**Parish Council Newsletter** Newsletters are posted on Noticeboards within the Parish and made available on the Parish Council website. If you would be interested in receiving the Parish Council Newsletter by email, please contact us on [clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**COVID-19 support** There is a dedicated page on the Charlton Kings Parish Council website where we are posting information and useful contacts for individuals and community groups. <https://www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk/covid-19-corona-virus-support.html> This information is also being posted on our noticeboards and hard-copies can be requested by contacting [clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Parish Precept 2021-2022** In what for many will be a very difficult financial year, we want to explain why we are asking our residents to pay an average of an additional £5 on the Parish Precept. This year, Gloucestershire's 264 Town and Parish Councils levied an average Precept of £49. Charlton Kings Parish Council is the fourth largest Council in the county and in 2021-22, our Precept will be £29.50, about 1% of your Council Tax bill. The Precept is a 'progressive' tax, so Band A householders will pay £20 and Band H £59. How we plan to spend your money is shown below. A full programme with detailed budgets is on our website at <https://www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk/finance.html>



Our Precept income will be £146,000, with £26,000 raised from rents and reclaiming VAT. We will again reluctantly, need to take £26,000 from our reserve to fund our proposed spending plans amounting to £198,000.

## Contact details

Charlton Kings Parish Office, 26 Church Street, Church Piece, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 8AR

01242 250087

[www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk)

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In recent years, we have maintained the recommended level of one year's Precept in our reserve. We recognise that these are challenging times, so we have reduced the Precept request that we would need to balance our finances.

This is unsustainable, so we have a clear plan to bring in additional income (we can access a six-figure external grant to improve the biodiversity interest of our two large Commons), and we will reduce planned spending wherever possible. We would very much like to hear residents' views about progressively increasing our Precept in future years to maintain our track record of sound management and innovation.

In 2021/22, we plan to use your extra money to employ a fourth, part time member of staff, to reduce the pressures on our hard-working staff and our 17 volunteer Councillors. Additional money will be channelled into our CK Futures environment work to enhance wildlife and help residents understand and contribute to addressing Climate Change.

We will continue our regionally recognised work on our CK Health Connect programme, addressing five priority themes including loneliness and digital exclusion of older people. Providing support to young people will also be a key element, and we will work with partners across Cheltenham to be effective. We will continue our core work with our many partners and elected Councillors, on highway improvements, tree planting, churchyard maintenance, footpath improvements, and many other improvements to community assets and services. We remain fully committed to securing the future of an improved Kings Hall as a vital community asset.

Your Councillors are proud that we are one of only 180 Councils in England to have achieved the 'Quality' award in the national Local Council Award Scheme. This award recognises that we work on your behalf in an efficient, effective, and transparent way and we promise that we will continue to do so.

### Outcomes from the Grange Field Working Party virtual meeting on 4th February 2021

Grange Field is at the heart of Charlton Kings. Consultations with the local community over the last few years and the current crisis has highlighted the importance of such an area to people both young and old, and of all abilities. The Parish Council has listened and aims to work with the community to enhance this area and make it more attractive and multifunctional, allowing people to use it and enjoy the space at all times of the year. As you are aware the Parish Council want to work with residents now and in the future and to create a group who have a long-term interest in the Field.

Members of the public who had shown an interest in participating in future plans for the enhancement of Grange Field, plus any residents with particular concerns were invited to attend a virtual meeting on February 4th, and CKPC was very pleased with the response and interest shown by parishioners.

It was apparent that major concerns were around anti-social behaviour, litter and dog fouling. Some people were also unsure about the proposal to lay an all weather pathway around Grange Field.

We would like to reassure residents that we are working very hard to address their concerns, and the following actions are ongoing:

- the Council has ordered a contamination survey by CBC engineers to assess the safety of the ground before undertaking any works.
- as leaseholders of GF, we are contacting CBC to determine whether it is ourselves or them as landlord who is responsible for the flooding which is

## Your Councillors

Cllr Rob Williams (Chair)

Cllr Paul Cockwill

Cllr Ian Gosling

Cllr Katie Gosling

Cllr Russell Grimshaw

Cllr Penny Hall

Cllr Clive Hodges

Cllr Ned Holt

Cllr Janet Honeywill

Cllr Lynda Johnson

Cllr Andrew Lansley

Cllr Duncan Munro

Cllr Jim O'Sullivan

Cllr Pat Palmer

Cllr Felicity Parnham

Cllr Rob Reid

Cllr Ros Smith

caused by runoff from both the MUGA and the Kings Hall roof. Suitable action will be taken as soon as possible

- We are working with our nominated Borough Council Community Support Officer to address continuing dog fouling issues. We will trial a free bag dispenser and he will patrol the field from time to time with the power to impose an immediate fine on anyone who does not 'pick up', or who is not carrying a proper receptacle ready to do so.
- The litter bins will be assessed and new or re-designed lids will be provided where appropriate. A discussion with Ubico about collection will also take place.
- Since several people raised the issue of difficulties in contacting the Police to report incidents, councillors will conduct a 'trial reports' exercise to understand the problem and if necessary we will take this up with the local police force at the next opportunity.
- We feel that we need to clarify the design of the proposed all-weather exercise pathway around Grange Field, as some people had envisioned a circular 'racing track' type of installation. Many were relieved to learn that the intended plan was to link the walkway with 3 spurs to the adjoining pathways. This would provide a safe and dry crossing for pedestrians entering from all sides and form part of the current network of paths. If the working group wanted to extend the access they could add stepping stones to any planting areas provided in the future. It could also be more pleasant for dog walkers to be able to avoid the muddy grass themselves during a substantial part of the year. A clear space would be maintained in the centre of Grange Field to enable events like the Summer Fayre, and other activities to carry on as usual.

Regarding anti-social behaviour, although CKPC has limited powers to act in some situations, we can report that we have been involved in major discussions with all parties dealing with the problems surrounding the behaviour of a worrying minority of young people.

The Parish Council hosted another in our successful series of Community Support meetings on 19th January, where the relevant organisations (schools, police, churches, councillors) develop plans for supporting our young people through these difficult times and seek to reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviour. We followed this by getting together with key Borough Councillors and the other Cheltenham parishes, to try to develop a professional youth outreach service across Cheltenham. We think we have the basis to create a sustainable, long-term service based on an existing provider and more work is being done to take this forward. Your Parish Council has set aside £10,000 next year which could be used to buy in services to support our young people and address the issues that concern many residents.

We are pleased to report that since this meeting, several residents have offered to join the working group team. We look forward to working with them to help shape future plans.

For more information and future updates, see the Grange Field page our website <https://www.charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk/grange-field.html>

**Consultation with residents regarding litter on Grange Field and adjoining areas** In response to the number of concerns that have been raised by residents in regard to litter and litter bins in the Grange Field, village centre and St. Mary's Churchyard the Parish Council's Grange Field Working Group is in discussion with the Borough Council to implement a plan of action to improve the situation. To help pinpoint the key issues and identify the most

effective solutions, the Group is keen to gather the views of residents, who live in or regularly access this area. In particular, we would welcome comments and suggestions on:

- What are the key problem areas?  
For example: specific locations, particular litter bins, events or activities etc. ...
- What is the root cause in each case?  
For example: lack of, or insufficient, number of bins; bins becoming overfull; bin contents being scattered by birds; casual littering; anti-social behaviour etc. ...
- What would help improve or resolve the situation?  
For example: more capacity at key locations; relocation of bins; replacement by a different bin type; more regular collection; improved signage; local volunteer taskforce etc. ...
- If possible, we would also like to take the opportunity to encourage less use of disposable items and greater recycling of waste items: for example, by providing different bins for different types of waste at one or more locations. Where might the multi bins be most effectively sited?

We would be grateful if you could make your comments and suggestions specific and practical to help us identify an effective action plan. **Please submit your comments and suggestions by letter to the Parish Office, or by email to: [admin@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk). The consultation period will close on Sunday, March 21st.**

**Response to recent vandalism on Allotments sites** Unfortunately our allotments sites have been the target of mindless vandalism, intrusion and theft over the last few weeks. The Council appreciates that this has brought great upset and frustration to the plot holders. We continue to liaise with the local police on these matters and have been advised that in response to the rise in reported incidents, the police have introduced a SARA PLAN for the area (Scan, Analysis, Response, Assessment) and are working hard to reduce and manage incidents. Police presence has been increased across the area over the last few weeks and will continue to be a priority going forward. **The most important message from the police is to please keep reporting any incidents to the police phone service 101 or online at [www.police.uk/101/](http://www.police.uk/101/)**

**Policing update** Our close liaison with our Neighbourhood Policing Team becomes more important when there are peaks of antisocial behaviour and vandalism. We have consistently emphasised the police's advice to report all crimes and vandalism, because this is the best way they have of focussing scarce police officer resources into particular areas.

Particularly during lockdowns, the 101 non-emergency reporting system is acknowledged to be often overloaded with long waiting times, but the online 'Report a Crime' system which can be accessed at <https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> or [www.police.uk/101/](http://www.police.uk/101/) is very effective and has allowed police to identify current hotspots in Charlton Kings, especially the severe vandalism at the Ryeworth and Haver allotments and antisocial behaviour around Grange Field. An important step in the allocation of policing time is to have a SARA Plan which has now been put in place with an increased number of operations; with officers in both High-Vis and plain clothes, enforcing a dispersal order, visits to parents and potential COVID fines for unlawful gatherings, as well as the deployment of the Youth Support Team to assist in difficult circumstances.

We thank our Neighbourhood Team for taking these actions based on residents' reports and encourage everyone to continue to assist our local officers to help us.

### **Youth Services in Cheltenham and Charlton Kings**

It was a sad day in 2020, when the Kings Hall Youth Club finally had to close its doors when the Youth Workers' employer was unable to keep his long-established and highly respected company going for lack of financial support. Over the last decade, virtually all governmental and Council funding has disappeared, leaving small pockets of youth support in Cheltenham struggling to address very considerable needs, especially with young people's mental health issues as a result of the Covid lockdowns.

We collectively decided that there was no point in trying to find a solution only for Charlton Kings, as the problem needed to be solved by creating a Cheltenham-wide approach with the aim to give 'Young people in Cheltenham, access to a range of places to go and things to do, delivered through sustained, high quality and effective professional youth work'

Cllr Flo Clucas, the Borough Council's cabinet member for Healthy Living, has brought together a working group of Borough and Parish Councillors and Officers, together with representatives from the police, to develop a Cheltenham-wide, professional youth service that would take trained youth workers into each community.

This idea has the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner and we hope that the County Council will be able to support this initiative financially, as part of a wider Covid-recovery programme.

The Parish Council has identified up to £10k of its Precept that it could make available to support this crucial initiative. At one of the regular meetings on 24th February of our County, Borough and Parish councillors, there was full support from all councillors present and promises of help to take this forward and make it work.

**Spring face-lift for Church Piece** Shoppers, parents and passers will have noticed that the colourful mosaics which decorate the water rill on Church Piece have been missing for some time. Designed by school children in Charlton Kings, the mosaics with the accompanying rill, benches and landscaping, were installed in 2004, as part of a country-wide initiative to celebrate the new Millennium. After 16 years of wear-and-tear, the mosaics and other features are in need of repair and restoration.

Charlton Kings Parish Council has partnered with Cheltenham Borough Council to carry out the facelift, including a full restoration of the mosaics. Reinstallation of the mosaics, and the cleaning, repair and repainting of the benches and associated walls, is due to take place during March and April. There will be some disruption, while work is being carried out. Please bear with the contractors during this period. The plan is to have everything up-and-running again for the summer.

When circumstances allow, we plan to hold an event to celebrate the re-opening of the rill. If you, or someone you know, has personal memories or photos of the official opening in August 2004, please let the Parish Office know on [admin@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk) as we would love to include them in the event.

**St. Mary's churchyard – Tree surgery** The Parish Council is now responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard trees and has agreed a rolling programme of tree maintenance with the Parochial Church Council.

There are 12 large, multi-stemmed Irish Yews (*Taxus baccata* 'fastigiata') that



will require little work over the years, other than shaping their tops to a 'traditional' flat-topped topiary shape. The 25 Common Yews however will need careful and precise trimming over a five-year cycle to keep them neat and the churchyard retaining

its feeling of openness. In February, our tree surgeons, Vernon Tree Care, took advantage of less through traffic during the lockdown to prune back the 21 Common Yews inside the churchyard railings where they were overhanging pavements and, in some cases, interfering with passing traffic. This work will not have to be repeated for several years and will set the trees up for height reduction in the next few years.

There are only 4 very large trees that will require looking after from time to time and this year it was the turn of the Weeping Willow (*Salix alba* 'tristis') to be pruned, or re-pollarded back to previous pruning points. This has removed a lot of weight from the ends of the branches which will prolong the life of this beautiful tree.

**Public Rights of Way (PROW) and a new route to enjoy!** Our Parish Council continues to support the County Council PROW department who have legal responsibility, as a sub division of "Highways", for over 4000 miles of paths and bridleways in Gloucestershire. We help to monitor the 71 routes in our Parish, identify issues, collate these on a spread sheet and agree a work plan with our local PROW officer.

Should you be a regular footpath walker and wish to contribute in an informal way, as one of our "Guardians", please give Cllr Rob Reid a call on 01242 251528 to discuss how you might assist and forward your observations.

Building positive relationships with land owners is an important element of our work and we really appreciate the partnerships we have developed. With their cooperation we have improved access by replacing stiles with kissing gates, installed steps and handrails on difficult stretches, placed stone on top of membrane over muddy areas and engaged in clearance of overgrown vegetation. There are many items to tackle on our "to do" list and we recognize that not only does the County PROW department have limited resources, but also that of COVID has both constrained work parties and dramatically increased footfall in the wet season resulting in severe stresses on the condition of the network. Repairs will take some time, so please be patient. Thank you. Some excellent voluntary groups such as the Cotswold Wardens, usually assist by carrying out vital improvements throughout the year, but the impositions of the virus restrictions have largely curtailed their activities.

One example of working together is the provision of a new permissive path. The owner of Vineyards Farm helpfully agreed to allow a new route to bypass a very wet area and provide wonderful new views for walkers. He kindly installed the new signage we provided and graded the escarpment so the Wardens could put in gates and steps to facilitate easy and safe access. It's

much appreciated when land owners encourage the public to benefit from access to their property and enjoy their facilities.

In return for this kind gesture, it is important that walkers do not trespass, but follow the route carefully and abide by the countryside code. Nationwide there have been increased, distressing, incidents of cattle worrying by dogs so please keep them under close control.

### **Walking the new route.**

Start at the Timbercombe triangle, which is at the top of Little Herberts Road. Walk up the path and after 50metres, continue straight ahead, do not turn left



up the hill though the woods. In a short while you pass over a stream and after entering the open field follow the path up towards Vineyards Farm. 100 metres

before reaching the Farm Buildings, which are private property, the bridleway turns left off the track. At this point you will see the additional signage indicating the direction of the new permissive footpath. As this is a footpath, not a bridleway, only walking is permitted, no bikes or horses. As you continue, the direction markers in the field are on oak posts with circular direction discs. The last one of the three points towards the base of the escarpment where a proper fingerpost indicates the way up the steps. At this location there are excellent views. We hope eventually to place a bench as it is a place of solitude, ideal for a stop and some refreshment. At the top of the steps a fingerpost indicates the correct route over the field to a gate where you can follow the bridleway either right, up to the common, or left, back down to the Timbercombe Triangle.

Until a couple of years ago the first stretch of this descent was almost impenetrable but, thanks to the actions of the landowner, the overgrown vegetation was cut back and the bridleway widened and made fit for purpose. The reverse route down from the gate is self-evident. Enjoy your new walk!

**CK Futures update** In late spring CK Futures is looking forward to introducing a carbon footprint initiative to help us all reduce our carbon emissions in support of Cheltenham's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.

We are preparing to launch the CK Carbon Footprint Challenge. We will be asking every household and business in Charlton Kings to look at their own carbon footprint and see what steps they can do to reduce it. Currently planning is underway, and we will say more in April. In the meantime, if you haven't checked already - take a look at the WWF Carbon Footprint calculator at <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/> and find out your result.

Every month we are promoting new ideas through the Sustainable CK Facebook page. March will focus on 'Using our gardens to help wildlife' but

that doesn't mean you can't share other topics, learning, and ideas on your carbon journey.

We are also involving our young people, through plans for a school-based virtual eco-exchange with students from Cheltenham's twin-towns. More about that next month.

Last but not least we're updating our CK Futures web pages to make them easier to find what you're looking for.

**Creating two new Native Woodland copses at Newcourt Green** Our treasured open greenspace at Newcourt Green with its wide range of native and ornamental trees has not always been so beautiful. After the Court House was built around 1550, the workers' cottages that sprang up had their cottage gardens on the Green across what was then called Moorend Street. The cottages gave way to the Diamond Laundry on 'Laundry Lane' which, by 1912, overlooked a 10-metre deep working sandpit. When it was worked out, it became the rubbish dump for Charlton Kings Urban District Council, which, in its turn became a public open space when it was closed in the 1960's and grassed over.

These positive changes will continue when Cheltenham Borough Council plants two small, copses of native trees in March. Originally planned as community plantings, Covid-19 has disrupted its plans and the limitations of the Forestry Commission grant scheme under which these trees have been provided, has meant that this planting season is when they have to be put in the ground.

All the Borough and Parish Councillors in Charlton Park and its adjacent Charlton Kings Ward are really supportive of the project which will see new generations of Oak, Holly, Field Maple, Spindle, and others bring new landscape vistas and increased biodiversity to a much-loved greenspace.

**This is the public notice regarding Newcourt Green distributed by Cheltenham Borough Council's Trees' Officer**



We were awarded an Urban Tree Challenge Fund grant from The Forestry Commission to plant 1000 trees our greenspaces.

We had hoped to involve the local communities and volunteers in the planting but unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions this is now not possible. We have arranged a contractor to plant for us **w/c 8<sup>th</sup> March** as it is still important to get trees in the ground to help achieve our goals to become carbon neutral by 2030 and increase biodiversity.

There's still plenty you can do to help these baby trees grow into healthy, mature, carbon capturing life givers.



**Give them space-** the young “whips” are fragile and need time to establish their roots in the soil before they become robust enough to cope with dogs urinating on them, balls being thrown at them and feet trampling around them.

**Water-** The first few years are critical. If we have a long dry spell like spring and summer 2020 please feel free to give them a drink of water- the more water you can give the better.

**Look out for them-** Watch them grow, see what other wildlife they attract and if you notice any problems let us know.

More planting opportunities next Autumn/Winter keep an eye on the CBC website, Facebook, and twitter for more details.

**March 2021**

