

Kersey Parish Council - Chair's Annual Report 2020 - 2021

This is my eighth annual report. COVID-19 presented many challenges over the year but I am pleased to say that our community has responded well. Your Parish Council created many initiatives to overcome the threat to health, well-being, morale, communications and our environment.

The Parish Council is the first tier of government. We aim to represent the best interests of our 360 residents as set out in the Kersey Parish Council pages of the Kersey website.

Your Councillors, all elected in 2019, are Penny Calnan, David Finch, Pascoe Gibbons, Philippa Harris, Kevin Pratt, Andrew Rogers (Vice-Chair) and me. Our contact details are on the website and at the end of this report. I thank them all for their contributions and support during the year.

Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor and Leigh Jamieson, Babergh District Councillor, attend our meetings regularly. I thank them for their advice and for taking up matters on our behalf.

Our finances remain strong with adequate reserves. They are reviewed and minuted in detail at ordinary meetings and audited regularly. Our annual budget remains small at £9,633. However, despite successful efforts to maintain or reduce the effect on Council Tax rates, we have raised the Parish Council element by 11.36%. This is a large percentage, but for a Band D property, this means an increase from £47.88 to £53.32pa or £0.45 per month. The budget against actual figures are shown at the end of this report.

The Kersey website now complies with accessibility regulations so those using assistive technology may access information there. New Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity policies were also adopted. The financial year end accounts to 31 March will be subject to approval at the May Parish Council Meeting. Further information is available on the Kersey website.

The Parish Council have responded to many local and national consultations, including Planning Policy, Suffolk County Council Boundary Reviews and Standards in Public Life.

The Kersey Circular walks footpath map has been updated and republished.

During the year, the Parish Council considered 13 planning applications of which 11 were supported. An earlier application for River House Barns was withdrawn. The application for land to the south-west of Vale Lane was refused by Babergh. I regret that application B/15/0096, for land to the rear of 1-6 The Street, was approved in July by Babergh District Council's Planning Committee. Unfortunately, this decision, not supported by your Parish Council, has caused lack of confidence and distrust in the planning and legal process.

The Kersey Parish Action Plan was updated and is reported on separately.

The Kersey Emergency Plan was finalised, shared with the Suffolk Emergency Planning Team and is ready if needed. Regular 'Pride in Our Parish' articles have been published in the Kersey Newsletter on topics such as litter, footpaths and speeding.

Following complaints, the Police surveyed speeding in Wickerstreet Green. They decided the numbers involved did not justify further action but Councillors are considering the 'Quiet Lanes' initiative as a way of improving safety. Suffolk County Council have been reluctant, despite several accidents, near misses and complaints from other Parish Councils, to take action on the safety of the A1141 junction, although a landowner has improved visibility to the south.

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The playground was closed briefly but following a risk assessment and new signs it has been open to enjoy. I am delighted to confirm work to gain funding for the refurbishment of the playground has been achieved after securing donations from a number of sources, including Leigh Jamieson's Locality Fund, Suffolk Community Foundation, Suffolk Giving Fund and Babergh District Council.

The following actions were taken in response to the pandemic:

1. Since April 2020, Parish Council Meetings have been conducted by Zoom. Although these have worked efficiently, attendance by parishioners has been low. Visitors are always welcome!
2. To counter the negative aspects of lockdown, a system of 24 volunteers from all areas of the Parish was created to help with shopping, collecting prescriptions and other practical support, not least, a friendly contact. A letter explaining this service was delivered to every household in the Parish, followed by a later reminder. We should be proud that we were one of the first communities in the country to respond in this way.
3. Responsibilities of The Kersey Volunteer Group were reallocated.
4. The Village Emergency Telephone System (VETS) was deferred until safe to implement.

It was with sadness the Parish Council noted the deaths of John Maltby, Martyn Rudkin, Nora Ryde and Jack Stiff, local residents long associated with the Parish Council, either by membership or attendance. We will miss their advice.

It has been a difficult year but also a year of achievements. I thank everyone who has contributed to the well-being of our community and, as in previous years, urge the next generation to take an active role in community affairs.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council, I again thank our Clerk, Sarah Partridge for her hard work, knowledge, guidance and willingness to work beyond her contractual hours.

John W Hume
Chair, Kersey Parish Council, 12 April 2021

Kersey Parish Council Contacts

Parish Councillors:

John Hume (Chair)	Ayres End, The Green, Kersey IP7 6EB	01473 810098
Andrew Rogers (Vice Chair)	The Gables, Wickerstreet Green, Kersey IP7 6EY	01787 212242
Mrs Penny Calnan	Wickerstreet House, Wickerstreet Green, Kersey IP7 6EY	01787 210459
David Finch	1 Row Cottage, Priory Hill, Kersey IP7 6DX	07769 612933
Pascoe Gibbons	Kedges End, Kedges Lane, Kersey IP7 6RY	01473 822815
Mrs Philippa Harris	4 Ancient Houses, The Street, Kersey IP7 6EA	01473 827079
Kevin Pratt	Green Gables, The Green, Kersey IP7 6EB	01473 823028

Clerk & RFO:

Mrs Sarah Partridge kerseypc@gmail.com	Bridges Farm, The Tye, Kersey, IP7 6HB	01787 210859
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Kersey Parish Council publishes on the Kersey website past minutes, financial information, ordinary meetings dates for the year and contact information. There is also a wealth of other useful information on the Kersey website including a calendar of Kersey community organisation events.

Kersey Website: www.kersey.suffolk.gov.uk

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Kersey Parish Council budget, precept and actual finance figures

VAT not included in budget figures

Parish Council	Budget/ Precept 2019/2020	Actual 2019/2020	Added to reserves 2019/20	Budget/ Precept 2020/2021	Budget/ Precept 2021/2022
Administration	£828.00	£709.16	£100.00	£748.00	£788.00
Clerk's salary & staff costs	£4,905.00	£4,905.00		£5,400.00	£6,230.00
Training/external meetings	£250.00	£250.00		£250.00	£250.00
Street lighting	£240.00	£225.87		£275.00	£300.00
Parish Council insurance	£340.00	£346.73		£370.00	£300.00
Glebe insurance	£50.00	£39.90		£50.00	£50.00
Hedge cut - The Glebe	£80.00	£145.00		£80.00	£80.00
Playground safety inspection	£87.00	£86.00		£90.00	£90.00
Dog litter bin emptying charge	£45.00	£41.00		£48.00	£0.00
St Mary's PCC	£420.00	£420.00		£420.00	£460.00
Defibrillator & Village Emergency Tel	£215.00	£126.00	£89.00	£215.00	£215.00
Chairman's allowance	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00
Election costs	£25.00	£25.00		£165.00	£165.00
Church Walk future maintenance	£130.00	£0.00	£130.00	£130.00	£130.00
Footpath map printing reserve	£75.00	£0.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00
Mowing The Glebe	£0.00	£0.00		£100.00	£100.00
Contingencies	£300.00	£298.04		£300.00	£300.00
Precept	£7,990.00	£7,617.70	£394.00	£8,716.00	£9,533.00
<i>Other PC income</i>	£64.54				
	£0.00				
PC Income	£8,054.54			£8,716.00	
Agreed spending from PC reserves:					
Defibrillator and VETS	£100.00	£0.00		£100.00	£100.00
Parish election costs		£707.79			
Training/external meetings		£110.00			
Fixed asset reserve		£133.00			
Clerk's salary		£729.50			
Total Budget	£8,154.54	£9,297.99	£394.00	£8,816.00	£9,633.00
KCPC	£4,017.00	£2,109.54		£1,197.00	£1,697.00
Footpath	£382.00	£334.00		£406.00	£447.50
Millennium Book Fund	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	
Total actual spend		£11,741.53			

The precept for 2019/20 was £7,990, for a band D property the council tax was £44.83.
 The precept for 2020/21 was £8,716, for a band D property the council tax was £47.88.
 The precept for 2021/22 is £9,533, for a band D property the council tax is £53.32.

The Parish Council financial year ends on 31 March, the Parish Council usually approves the year end accounts at the Parish Council meeting in May. See the Parish Council Finance page on the website for more information. <https://kersey.suffolk.cloud/parish-council/parish-council-finance/>