

VIEW FROM THE HILL

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF KINGS HILL PARISH COUNCIL



March 2024



Local Council Award Scheme Quality Council

As Chair of the Council, it is with great pleasure that I confirm that Kings Hill Parish Council has achieved the Quality Award. I want to express my sincere thanks to the the Council officers for the hard work in submitting this application and the additional work throughout the assessment process. My thanks also to the Councillors. Their service to the community is recognised and reflected in this award.

Message From The Chairman



Welcome to the March 2024 newsletter. Within the Annual Report, you will find lots of information about the Parish Council which we hope gives you a clear understanding of what we do, why we do it and what we cannot do. The Annual Report also covers how you can help us, how you can join us and what we plan to do in 2024.

5% Reduction in Parish Council Tax

Kings Hill Parish Council has been able to reduce the precept by 5% for 2024/2025.

To read more, visit page 8-12

Kings Hill Parish Council


NALC Chair

01/2024 The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.
start date 01/2028
valid until



Valley Invicta School

The school had the opportunity to buy 2 large communication boards for the playground and one for the hall to cover PE and assembly. The communication boards have facilitated our pupils who use Alternative Augmentative Communication to communicate with the wider school community. This allows pupils to show a preference for activities, make requests and get their needs met. These boards have also been used by pupils to work with peers which has decreased their reliance on adults to get their needs met.

Pupils in the wider school have also learnt how to model the use of communication boards to those pupils who find communication challenging. This has supported pupils to build relationships with others. The boards have also developed knowledge for staff across all age groups to have a better understanding of alternative communication systems. S Walls. Senco.



Allotments

Storm Isha got the year off to a flying start, literally! Allotment holders turned out in their wellies to help each other put sheds back up and repair damage. Our giant sun-bubble was tucked away safe and sound, but will be in action again (refurbished) in early spring to protect seedlings being grown for our Spring Plant Fair and Social - 18/19 May 2024. As the growing season starts, we look forward to welcoming Duke of Edinburgh volunteers to help out with all manner of allotment gardening jobs. Please get in touch if interested. Allotmenteeing is all about learning, adapting and resilience. Roll on spring, and Happy Gardening!

Author, Jessica Brooker

Dog Fouling

Kings Hill has an ever growing population of four-legged friends. Despite there being many dog bins across Kings Hill there is an ongoing issue of dog owners who do not clear up after their pets. We encourage all dog owners and dog walkers to pick up after their dogs, especially in and around children's play areas.





Christmas SEN

We had our usual set up in Townsend hall. In the Mary Ellis Hall we had Santa's grotto with calm lights and quiet music. Lots of the children enjoyed seeing Santa, with no queues! Each child received a small chocolate or sweet gift from Santa, tailored to their needs or diet.

There was lots of fantastic feedback from parents, "It was a safe and secure environment", "My daughter felt like she could be herself", "Just happy that my son could get the sensory feedback he needed from all of the bouncing/running". Thank you to all those involved in making this happen!

Author, Charlene Kelly



A Christmas to remember

Covenant Fellowship Church International (CFCI) held it's first Community Christmas lunch on the 25th December 2023 at the Kings Hill Community Centre. The event was open to all community members who found themselves alone at Christmas. BBC Kent granted us an interview to talk about the event and extended the invitation to nearby communities. On Christmas Eve volunteers set up tables and put up decorations, some were preparing gifts and raffle prizes from their homes. The team welcomed all the guests with drinks and snacks, followed by a yummy Christmas lunch. To extend the day we played Christmas music and raffle games. Each guest had a beautiful gift to take home, including boxes of evening snack. The day ended with a lot of laughter and dancing.

We couldn't have done this without the great support from our Parish Council, who went over and above our expectations, the CFCI team who carried this event with so much grace, the community members who gave their resources and time, local businesses and organisations who donated food and support from Kent radio station who spread the word. To all who attended, what a blast!

Author, Zandile Nhlela

Our Local Young Hero



A huge congratulations to our very own Kings Hill hero for becoming the youngest ever recipient of a New Years Honour. Tony Hudgell has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the prevention of child abuse and has helped raise more than £1.7m for charity in the pandemic.

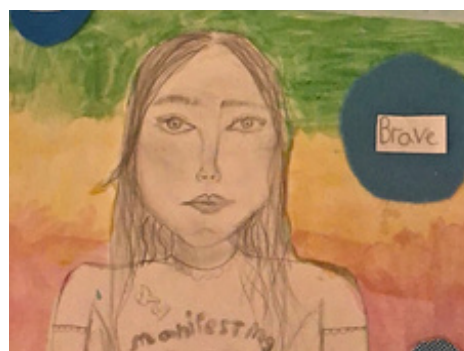
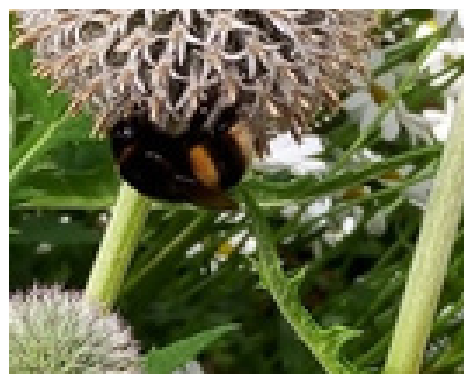
Report From Kings Hill Rotary Club

YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER AND ARTIST COMPETITION

Judging has now taken place, and in the Young Photographer competition, youngsters (aged 11-17) submitted photos on the theme "Rebuilding" using phone or camera.

For our Young Photographer competition, Emma was chosen as the winner for her photo "Save the Bees". Emma received a £30.00 gift voucher and will go forward to the district-wide round and, potentially, to national level.

For our Young Artist Competition, Evie (aged 9) was chosen as winner for her amazing piece "Rebuilding Myself". Evie received a £30.00 gift voucher and her work will go forward to the district competition taking place in Minster.



»»» KENT ADVICE HUB

From the 1st April 2024, Kings Hill Community Centre will now provide a drop-in free advice kiosk available to all residents. Get advice and support with benefits, housing, energy, dealing with debts and more, every Monday and Friday 10am-4pm.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT <<<

Kings Hill Parish Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant on 18th January 2024. The Council commits to uphold the Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community.



»»» YOUTH OUTDOOR FACILITY

Prologis has announced that the plans for the Youth Outdoor Recreation Facility is progressing and hopes to submit a planning application by March 2024.



ANSON AVENUE PLAY PARK

We are delighted that the new Anson Avenue play equipment was installed just before Christmas.

If you have not had the opportunity yet to visit, pop down and take your little ones. We hope Kings Hill residents enjoy it and we invite everyone's feedback.

Parish Council Donations

The Council is very pleased that we have been able to support a huge variety of groups and organisation within Kings Hill over the last couple of months:

£1000	Tony Hudgell Foundation
£500	CFCI Christmas Day Event
£500	Crisis - nominated by the Kings Hill Christmas Lights Competition 1st place winner.
£300	Alzheimer's Society - nominated by the Kings Hill Christmas Lights Competition 2nd place winner.
£200	Kings Hill Rotary Club- nominated by the Kings Hill Christmas Lights Competition 3rd place winner.

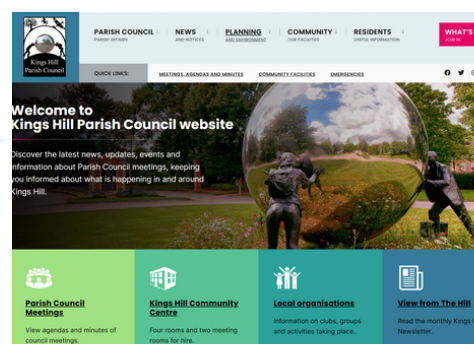
Welcome to our new staff member

The Parish Council is delighted to introduce it's newest member of the office team, Tasha Brockey, who is the Bookings and Finance Assistant. Please join us in welcoming Tasha onboard and don't hesitate to contact the office team with any Parish or Community Centre related questions.



Live Website

All good things must come to an end... and be replaced with something even better! The new Parish Council website is now live and ready for all Kings Hill residents to use. The office team have been working really hard to make the new website accessible and modern, and most importantly easier for you to use and find information. Take a look and let us know what you think www.kingshillparish.gov.uk.



D-Day 80th Anniversary Commemorations

6th June 2024

Everyone is welcome to join us as we participate in the National D-Day Commemorations by the "Running Airman" War Memorial at 8am and 9.15pm. The formalities will conclude with the lighting of "Lamps of Peace".

8th June 2024

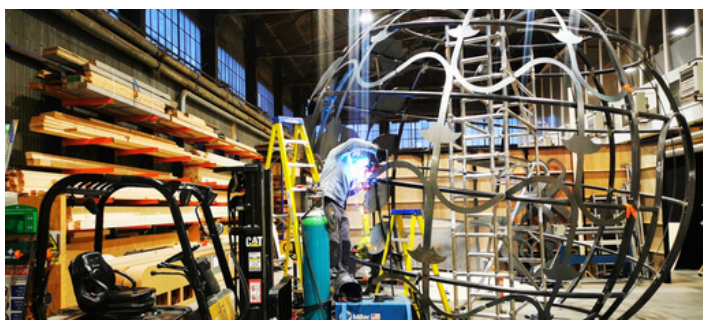
On 8th June 2024, starting at 10am, Kings Hill Parish Council is hosting a WW2 Military Vehicle Exhibition. We invite all residents to this free community event to explore the real vehicles used during WW2 including the ambulance driven by Queen Elizabeth. There will also be live 1940's music. Food and drink will be available to purchase on the day.



Dates For the Diary

1st April 2024	Jam with The Joe Cox Band - Spitfire Pub
11th April 2024	Annual Parish Meeting
29th April 2024	Community Chest presentation - Closing date for applications is 28th March. Contact khrc09@yahoo.com for details
6th June 2024	National 80th Anniversary D-Day Commemorations

8th June 2024	KHPC D- Day 80th Anniversary Exhibition
8th June 2024	Summer Festival - Kings Hill School
9th June 2024	Kings Hill Rotary - Annual afternoon tea for older and isolated people
15th June 2024	Tribute on the Hill - Spitfire Pub
13th July 2024	KH Music Festival
6th July 2024	Summer Fayre - Discovery School
15th September 2024	KHPC End of Summer Party



Slices of Peace

Work has begun on the installation of a new piece of public art in Kings Hill, 'Slices of Peace'. The art work is being installed in Orchard Park (Linear Park) and will serve as a meeting point for the community. This installation is inspired by the rich culture and heritage of Kent, in particular its history of apple growing.



Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award

This award acknowledges and gives recognition to those who have made a significant contribution to their local community. This year, we are delighted to announce that the 2024 award recipient is Kings Hill Rotary Club who will be presented with their certificate by the Chairman of Kent County Council, the High Sheriff of Kent, and Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils at the Annual Parish Meeting taking place on 4th April 2024. Kings Hill Rotary Club is a group of volunteers who care passionately about their community and take pride in making a difference.

Local Girl - Rising Star!

Hanna Rumble, a Kings Hill resident for 17 years (and former Discovery School pupil) who some may also recognise as our budding local DJ, is proud to have been selected to represent England Under 19 Korfball Team in the European Championships taking place in Barcelona over the Easter weekend. All matches will be live streamed on YouTube so do take a look if you fancy knowing more about this growing sport.

Author, Alison Rumble



Kings Hill Wheelers' Cycling Club

We start 2024 with approximately 84 members of our cycling club, which, considering the club was started in 2017, we think is pretty good! For our contributions to local charities this year the committee voted to add British Legion Industries and Spadework, together with the St Gabriel's Foodbank, whilst still supporting HOKH and our local Air Ambulance. We have a comprehensive list of cycling routes which our Club Rides Manager uses to advise our members of nominated rides for the week. Should you wish to join our club each rider is allowed 3 free rides prior to joining. To find information on our website, visit www.khwcc.org. Our cycling club also has social events.

Author, Margaret Colman

Annual Report 2024

Message From The Chairman

This past year has been challenging for many. Increases in the cost of living have made things tough for some, but I've been blown-away by Kings Hill's amazing volunteers who support some of our most vulnerable residents all year round.

From food banks to hospital trips, youth support to sports groups, to health improvement – local volunteers give up hours of their time to help others, often the most vulnerable in our communities. Over the last year, I've had the privilege of meeting volunteers from all areas of life and witnessed their wonderful work. I want to say a big 'thank you' to all these selfless individuals who improve the lives of many.

2023 was a very memorable year, with the nation coming together to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023 as a very happy moment for the nation. Our annual end of summer party was another opportunity for the Kings Hill Community to come together.

Just before Christmas we were delighted when the new play equipment was installed in Anson Avenue, the contractor will be returning soon to upcycle the play equipment we retained. My very grateful thanks to the CFCI for hosting the Christmas Community Day for those who would be on their own on Christmas Day. Another key achievement for the Council was receiving Quality Council accreditation. You can be assured that your Parish Council is working to the highest standard, and we are proud to be one of only 5 local Councils within Kent to hold Quality Council accreditation.

5% Reduction on KHPC Council Tax

In December the council set its budget for 2024/2025 and with careful spending and budgetary decisions, we've been able to reduce our precept by 5% and make provisions to repay the outstanding PWLB loans. You will be able to read more about our budget on our website and in later pages of this Annual Report. You can rest assured that the Parish Council will make the best use of the resources available to us. I know how tough things are at the moment, and forefront in my mind is the principle that every penny the council spends is your money. While we will continue to protect and invest in services, we will also ensure they deliver value for money and clearly contribute to the main priorities identified within the Parish Council's Strategic Plan.



Agenda

Notice is hereby given that the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Thursday 11th April 2024 commencing at 7:30pm.

- Apologies for absence
- Welcome and introduction by the Chairman of Kings Hill Parish Council, Councillor Tony Petty
- Presentation of the Kings Hill Parish Council Annual Report 2023/2024
- Kings Hill Parish Council Financial Report 2023/24
- Borough and County Councillor Reports 2023/24
- Matters raised by Parish Residents
- Open Forum To receive reports from Community Organisations
- Vote of thanks to all participants
- Closure of meeting

Anthony Petty

Anthony Petty
Chairman, Kings Hill Parish Council
14th March 2024

2024 Annual Parish Meeting

Every year, in every parish, the Local Parish Council is required by law to hold a 'Parish Meeting'. Whilst the Parish Council arranges this meeting and provides reports on parish matters, it is not a meeting of the Parish Council. It is, specifically, a meeting for parish residents and community groups to bring up any issue, raise any questions or put forward ideas and proposals in relation to the Parish of Kings Hill. If you would like to submit a report from your organisation to be circulated at the meeting, please e-mail by Monday 28 March 2024 to clerk@kingshillparish.gov.uk.

We look forward to many residents attending the Annual Parish meeting on the 11th April 2024. There will be a speaker on the Kings Hill Carbon Footprint and there will be presentations from the Community Warden team, Community Safety Unit and Neighbourhood Watch. Refreshments will be available.



Introduction

Kings Hill Parish Council is an elected corporate body with tax raising powers which represents people in the Kings Hill Parish. The Council consists of Councillors, who do more than just attend meetings where projects are discussed and progressed, and policies, procedures and practices reviewed. They take part in many parish activities, deal with resident issues and represent the Council on many outside bodies. We continuously work towards improving community wellbeing and providing better services.



Mission Statement

To secure and maintain best possible services and environment for the Kings Hill community.

Our Commitment to you, we will:

-Work in an accountable and transparent manner to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in Kings Hill.

-Provide several services to the community. We will seek to ensure that these meet the needs of the community and represent value for money.

-Aim to protect and enhance the social and environmental well-being of Kings Hill.

-Welcome the involvement of residents and will consult on issues of importance.



Salt and Grit Bins

These are provided throughout Kings Hill, inspected regularly and replenished when required. However, only the green salt bins are the Parish Councils. If you notice a problem with any of the salt bins, please let us know.

Parish Council Services

Through a range of discretionary powers, we provide and maintain many important and visible services such as:

- Community Centre
- Some bus shelters
- CCTV at the Community Centre
- Some play areas
- Some salt and grit bins
- Allotments
- Consultee on planning applications in Kings Hill
- Sports Park and leisure facilities
- Nominating representatives to serve on voluntary, public and community organisations.
- Producing a quarterly newsletter and an annual report
- Acting as a liaison between the community and other local organisations and Councils

Our Civic Responsibility

We represent Kings Hill at various events. We also have an important civic role, such as attending the Remembrance Day Service.

Fly Tipping

Please inform TMBC by telephoning 01732 844522 or visiting www.tmbc.gov.uk.

Sustainability Policy

Our vision is for Kings Hill to be a vibrant and prosperous hub offering an attractive place to live, work and play for people of all ages. The Parish Council:

-Is committed to preserving and protecting the environment by adopting an environmental and sustainability policy.

-Is committed to protecting the environment and recognising the importance and value of the environment and its contribution towards quality of life.

-In carrying out our own activities, will strive to make a positive contribution to protecting the local and wider environment.

-In conjunction with businesses, community groups and the public, aims to help meet the needs of today's society without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.



Footpaths

Parish Councils can be responsible for footpaths within their boundaries, however in Kings Hill they fall under the remit of Kent County Council or Kings Hill Estate Management. If you notice a problem and are unsure who to contact, let us know and we will advise.

Council Accounts

Our finances are in good shape. Public money is carefully looked after. Our cash holdings at 31 March 2023 were £476,913. We are required to hold between 3 – 12 months of our budget as general reserves. Our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 are on our website and our accounts for the year to 31 March 2024 will be published in May 2024. We anticipate that our reserves at 31 March 2024 will be circa £700,000 which will afford us the opportunity to repay the outstanding PWLB loans.

Finance and Governance

We are responsible for ensuring that our finances are managed efficiently and cost-effectively. Annually, we review our internal controls, investment strategy, asset register, reserves, risk assessment and financial regulations and undertake reviews to ensure best practice and careful control of public money. Regular reports are received from the internal auditor who plays an important part in the internal control of our financial and governance activities.



2023/24 Significant Achievements

- Attained Quality Council Status
- Installation of new play equipment in Anson Avenue
- Hosted a Coronation Event and end of summer Kings Hill Community Party
- Declared a Climate Change Emergency and approved a Climate Action Plan
- Launch of the new Kings Hill Parish Council website www.kingshillparish.gov.uk
- Obtained Living Wage Accreditation
- Weekly Community Club

Key Projects for 2024/25

- Improving facilities at the Community Centre
- Christmas lighting
- Community events to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of D Day and End of Summer Party
- Promoting greater engagement of the council with community groups and organisations in the village in line with our Community Engagement Policy
- Adopt a Community Resilience Policy
- Work towards obtaining the Quality Gold Status
- Environmental enhancements
- Commencing work on carbon reduction initiatives

- Installation of Solar Panels at the Kings Hill Community Centre
- Instillation of a bike / pump track
- Work towards Kings Hill Neighbourhood and Emergency Plans

2024/25 Action Plan

- In addition to our key projects, we will continue to:
- Maintain the open spaces for which the council is responsible.
 - Maintain the Community Centre
 - Comment on planning applications which fall within or have an impact on Kings Hill.
 - Consult with the community and represent residents' views on TMBC's Local Plan with particular focus during 2024 on the Regulation 18b and 19 consultations.
 - Represent the views and promote the interests of Kings Hill residents.
 - Listen, investigate, and respond to issues identified by residents, and, if appropriate, signpost to the correct person or organisation for resolution or further progression.
 - Deliver timely and transparent decisions through Council and committee meetings.
 - Maintain good financial practices, ensuring transparency and value for money.
 - Provide funding for the ongoing running and maintenance of the Sports Park.
 - Continue to develop the Climate Change and environmental strategies of the council.
 - Work towards attaining Quality Gold status.

Councillor & Clerk Full Council Meeting Attendance January 23-Dec 23

Karen Bell (Clerk)	100%	Attended 13 out of 13 meetings
Tony Petty	100%	Attended 13 out of 13 meetings
James MacKay	100%	Attended 7 out of 7 meetings
Margaret Coleman	92%	Attended 12 out of 13 meetings
Mike Hartman	92%	Attended 12 out of 13 meetings
Siobhan Kirk	92%	Attended 12 out of 13 meetings
David Rush	85%	Attended 11 out of 13 meetings
Neil Sherlaw	85%	Attended 11 out of 13 meetings
Sarah Barker	77%	Attended 10 out of 13 meetings
Felix Mclymont	77%	Attended 10 out of 13 meetings
Angela Vincent	77%	Attended 10 out of 13 meetings



2024/25 Budget and Precept

How it affects you...

We have set our budget for 2024/25 at £770,796 which requires a precept of £525,205, a decrease of 5% on our 2023/2024 precept which was £552,847. The precept will be collected by the Borough Council as part of the Council Tax. Our budget is honest, based on sound financial principals and allows us to provide projects, services, and activities which we hope the Kings Hill community appreciates.

Our precept is divided by 4,623.08 which is the number of Band D equivalent properties on Kings Hill, this gives us the council tax payable for a Band D property, the amounts payable per council tax band are shown below (the 2023/2024 amounts are in brackets).

Band A	6/9	£75.74	(£82.03)
Band B	7/9	£88.36	(£95.70)
Band C	8/9	£100.98	(£109..37)
Band D	9/9	£113.60	(£123.04)
Band E	11/9	£138.85	(£150.38)
Band F	13/9	£164.10	(£177.73)
Band G	15/9	£189.34	(£205.07)
Band H	18/9	£227.21	(£246.08)

Council and Committee Meetings

Our meetings are an opportunity for you to see the council in action. Meetings are formal events, not social occasions. They have a clear purpose – to make decisions. Meetings are advertised, and the press and public have a right to observe, record and report on how the council operates. Council meetings are meetings of the full council whilst Committee meetings bring together a smaller number of councillors to concentrate on a specific council function. Meeting papers may be viewed in the Parish Office whilst the agenda is available online at www.kingshillparish.gov.uk. Dates and times of council and committee meetings can be found in the calendar on the council's website.

Grants & Donations

Each year we receive funding requests from charities, groups, and organisations. All are welcomed and considered in relation to the resources available. During 2023/2024 grants and donations were awarded to the Tony Hudgell Foundation, Valley Invicta Primary School, The Discovery School, Kings Hill Pre-School, Kings Hill Women's Institute, Royal British Legion, Coronation Street and Garden Parties, Activities for Children with Special Educational Needs, Rotary Club, Kings Hill foodbank, Community Library, CFCI and to the Alzheimer's Association.

Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan

The Borough Council will consult with us on its Local Plan and we will fully participate in the consultation process. We will be doing our utmost to ensure that any new development is not at the expense of the quality of life for current residents, does not harm the environment and that new housing is supported by infrastructure improvements.

Climate Change & Environment Committee

Tackling climate change is everyone's responsibility. If we want to leave a planet that our children and grandchildren can enjoy, then we all need to play our part. Kings Hill Parish Council has declared a climate emergency and has an approved Climate Change Action Plan which is used as a working document focusing on both short- and long-term goals.

As a council we are already doing the following:

- Developing a tree maintenance programme.
- Ensuring the Community Centre is as energy efficient as possible.
- Using green energy sources and environmentally friendly products.
- Limiting the use of plastics, especially single use plastics within the council.
- Reducing waste and recycle as much as possible.
- Protecting important open spaces and carbon sinks.
- Considering the creation of a community orchard and a wildflower meadow.
- Solar lights at the allotments.
- Recycling more with new bins inside and outside the Community Centre.

Together as a community there is more we can do such as:

- Creating a task force to establish a green agenda.
- Provide access to electric vehicle charging points.
- Reducing waste and recycle as much as possible.
- Maximising the use of open spaces to provide recreational opportunities.

Planning & Transport Committee



This Committee has an important role in commenting to the planning authority on the implications of planning applications in Kings Hill. We find ourselves pushing for better design, adequate parking, and resisting development in the wrong place. We are also mindful of any negative impact on climate change and harm to the environment. Whilst the Committee considers issues affecting Kings Hill, it is the Planning Authority who makes the final decision, but they are obliged to consult with us on most types of planning application. Kings Hill is surrounded by Green Belt and regulated by National Planning Policy and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Plans. The National Planning Policy Framework may ease the path for developers, with a stated presumption in favour of further development.

We particularly want to preserve the Green Belt. We are not opposed to development, we all need a place to live and work, but new homes and offices must be in the correct place, with the correct infrastructure and be built in keeping and retaining the character of the area. There should also be significant open separation between neighbouring parishes. The Committee monitors all planning applications, updates, appeals and Tree Preservation Orders in Kings Hill and comments where required by making recommendations, objections or supporting the application to the Planning Authority. Whilst we are part of the planning consultation process; our recommendations are not always reflected in Planning decisions.

The Committee is made up of Councillors with local knowledge who meet regularly to consider planning applications which have been received. Full details and drawings are made available at these meetings. Over the last 12 months we have commented on many applications particularly in relation to local infrastructure, parking, tree protection, environment, flooding, and effect on neighbouring properties. We also monitor and comment on planning issues in bordering Parishes and Boroughs which might impact upon Kings Hill environs. We encourage the development and use of Footpaths, cycle ways and all open areas available to the public. It is important that connectivity is creative to allow free and easy movement around the Parish. Our policy is not to support the loss of garage space at the cost of increasing on-road parking. We are concerned about any loss of trees, and we support re-planting where trees must be felled for sound reason. We are keen to strike the balance between protecting the Green Belt and supporting local businesses which provide jobs for residents.

Over to you...

Do you have any ideas on how to make Kings Hill an even lovelier place! Or do you have any observations about how the environment in Kings Hill can be improved, please send an email to clerk@kingshillparish.gov.uk. We look forward to hearing from you. Hopefully, together, we can use these new projects to preserve all the good things in Kings Hill, improve where we can, and ensure we are sustainable for the future.

