



Kennington Community Council

Kennington Community Council Annual Report 2022-2023

Welcome to the annual report of Kennington Community Council where you will find details of your Councillors, how the Council spent your money and how this expenditure is funded, along with the activities of the Council over the past year.

Kennington Community Council came into existence on 1 April 2019 and, as a civil Parish Council, it is the first tier of local government for our area. The Council is divided into five Wards Bybrook, Grosvenor Hall, Kennington, Kennington North and Little Burton Farm to provide balance across the area. Three wards have four councillors each, one ward has three councillors and one ward has one councillor.

The Council usually meets on the second Wednesday of every month for a full council meeting in public. Committees and Subcommittees of the Council meet as required by the amount of business they need to consider. Meetings will usually include a Public Open Session for members of the public to make representations, ask and answer questions, and give evidence regarding items on the agenda or to suggest concerns or make recommendations for discussion at a future meeting.

Your Councillors

Councillors are volunteers who want to give time to support their community. Elections are held every four years, with the last election was held on Thursday 4th May 2023.

Following the elections Councillors elected to post were:

Jacob	Chacko	Councillor	Bybrook	Elected 4 May 2023
Ellie	Crook	Councillor	Bybrook	Elected 4 May 2023
John	Seaton	Councillor	Bybrook	Elected 4 May 2023
Paul	Bartlett	Councillor	Grosvenor Hall Ward	Elected 4 May 2023
Charles	Ellis	Vice Chair	Grosvenor Hall Ward	Elected 4 May 2023
Shafi	Khan	Councillor	Grosvenor Hall Ward	Elected 4 May 2023
Nathan	Iliffe	Councillor	Kennington Ward	Elected 4 May 2023
Chris	Morley	Councillor	Kennington Ward	Elected 4 May 2023
Alan	Cooper	Chair	Little Burton Farm	Elected 4 May 2023

The elections saw three of our Councillors not stand again, but we would like to thank Justin Armitage, Carole White and Matilda Barrow for their service as well as other Councillors that left the Council during the year.

When vacancies occur between elections, the Community Council can co-opt new members who serve as councillors for the remainder of the term. Following the elections we have 1 vacancy in the Bybrook Ward, 1 in the Grosvenor Hall Ward, 2 in Kennington, 1 in Kennington North and 2 in the Little Burton Farm Ward. A decision will be made at the May Council on these 7 vacancies.

If you are interested in becoming a Councillor, please do send your details to our Clerk clerk@kenningtoncc.gov.uk. Any of our current Councillors would also be willing to talk you through the process and what is involved.

Staff

The Council is supported, by a part-time Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Deborah Prior was appointed to this post in December 2019.

Assistant Clerk and Allotments Officer is due to be employed soon.

Committees

Committees are established to provide additional focus on particular responsibilities of the Council. The committee structure is reviewed annually, to determine whether they are still required, and Terms of Reference amended, as necessary. This is formalised at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May each year.

During the year 2022/2023, the following Committees supported the Council:

- Bybrook Bockhanger Community Facility
- Communications
- Environment and Open Spaces
- Finance and General Purposes
- Personnel and Development
- Planning

Bybrook Bockhanger Community Facility Committee - The Committee works closely with the Borough Council, Proper Officer, residents, local societies, and other community stakeholders e.g. GP surgery, Sure Start, Phoenix Community Primary School, Age Concern etc.

Communications Committee - The Committee works closely, with the Council's Clerk to define, set up and monitor all forms of communication to the public, having regard to the Local Government Act 1972 s. 142.

Environment and Open Spaces Committee - The Committee works closely with residents, statutory bodies and voluntary organisations to protect promote and enhance the environment of the Council's area, having regard to legislation including but not limited to the Local Government Act 1972, the Public Health Act 1936, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, Highways Act 1980, the Open Spaces Act 1906, the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. Its work has a direct impact on your local environment.

Finance and General Purposes Committee - This Committee works closely with the Council's Responsible Financial Officer to provide assurance that the Council's financial management is adequate and effective, and that the Council has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

Personnel and Development Committee - The Committee collaborates closely with the Council's Clerk to provide assurance that the Council's management of employees meets statutory requirements, and that training of staff and councillors is relevant to current and future needs of the individuals as Councillors and the Council as an organisation.

Planning - The Committee works closely with the Council's Proper Officer to provide assurance that all planning applications that directly relate to the Community area are brought forward for consideration in a timely manner, and that the Council's views in respect of planning applications which merit support, objection or other comment are lodged with the relevant Planning Authority within their published timescales. The Committee makes reasonable endeavours to find out the views of the community, to inform its views when considering applications.

Allotments Subcommittee – A subcommittee of the Environment and Open Spaces committee was also established in late 2021 re Allotments to provide an advisory forum for engagement and discussion and assist with transition between the Community Council and its Allotment Tenants at Burton Farm and Bybrook Allotments. Kennington Community Council is looking to work closely with the 2 site representatives, tenants, and the Subcommittee members to understand the needs.

The Project Assessment Panel, a subcommittee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee has the responsibility to help assess the grant requests that we receive and makes recommendation to the Council. We have seen a healthy interest in our grant scheme this year and by actively working with the applicants successfully seen grants given this year to the Pirate Canoe Club for additional equipment at the Conningbrook Lakes. The Pirate Canoe Club are waiting on further agreement from ABC and what this has been given the remainder of the grant awarded can be given to them to improve their facilities also.

The Council is hoping not only to help fund projects but where possible to continually to work with the organisations to help them bring their projects to fruition as well as new ones in years to come.

A new slicker committee structure is currently being considered.

Finance

The Community Council is a precepting authority, which means it can raise money by a charge per household collected by Ashford Borough Council with the Council Tax. It can also borrow money and

receive grants. The Council is required to keep sufficient funds in reserve (approximately six months of precept income) and is progressively working towards this target.

For the year April 2022 to March 2023, the Council agreed a budget of £149,780.00. Of this, £43,280.00 was funded from unspent amounts brought forward from the previous year, and the remainder from a precept of £106,500. This represented an annual cost to a household paying Band D Council Tax of £27.89, a little over 53 pence per week.

As at the year-end on 31 March 2023, the Council's financial position was as follows:

Accounting Statement 2022/23

Balance Brought Forward	£183,675	Reserves	
Precept	£106,500	Bybrook Bockhanger Community	£75,000
Receipts (All Other)	£12, 848	Little Burton Playground	£21,045
Staff Costs	£29,933	War Memorial	£12,500
Loan Interest Repayments	£0	Election Costs	£2,500
Payments (All Other)	£52,099	General Reserves	£14,942
		Pending Payments 22/23	£12,037
Balance Carried Forward	£220,990	Total	£138,024

The Council's balance carried forward into the coming financial year includes approx. £138,000 ring fenced reserves held over for projects and spend already committed in 22/23, including, the Little Burton Playground improvements of approx. £21k, £12,500 for the War Memorial, Grants of £9,500 as well as £75,000 set aside for the Community Hub project.

Further information on finances, including audit reports, can be found on our website at <https://www.kenningtoncc.gov.uk/finance/>, or by contacting the Clerk to the Council.

Projects undertaken and in progress.

Highway Improvements: Each year, the Community Council can put forward proposals for improvements to roads in our area to Kent County Council. One scheme can be approved only per year, but some smaller schemes can be considered through other routes. This year has seen the implementation in October half term "20 is Plenty" proposal to limit traffic speed in Bybrook Road.



However Kennington Community Council is continuing to work on other proposals such as looking at the speed around Ulley Road, The Street and all those roads surrounding Kennington Juniors and Downs View school. Speed surveys are due to be conducted between May and before the schools break up in July, once the data has been collated Kent County Council will be able to advise us on what can happen next and what can be done, if action is appropriate. Along with this we are also looking to ban vehicles over 7.5 tonnes from Ulley Road and The Street, a pedestrian crossing on Faversham Road and still working with the Kennington Academy School re having funding for a Crossing patrol once further infrastructure issues have been resolved by Kent County Council.

Additionally smaller wins have been since this year like the blue advisory sign at the entrance to George Williams Way is to be relocated to the near side so that it is more visible to drivers and clearer about which road it refers. Hopefully, this will help further deter HGV's from entering the Little Burton estate.

The scheme on East Mountain Lane to fit a "No Through Road" sign has been completed now by Kent County Council, checked and signed off.



Kennington Community Council have also had Kent County Council make improvements at our request to parts of Public Rights of Way such footpaths AU7, AU10, AU12, AU23, and AE206. The next path which needs attention is AU20 but we are open to any other PROWs which members or residents want to highlight to us.

Rylands Road Playground: In 20/21 Kennington Community Council aligned £5000 with the Rylands Road Park Renovation Group to bring the addition of an outside gym facility. Due to pressure from the Community Council and the Rylands Road Park Renovation Group, the regeneration project for this entire site was propelled by this positive community engagement and saw a further £340,000 playground for younger and older children, installed earlier this year. The play area has also had improved path networks, new benches and picnic tables also installed. A proposed Multi-Use Games Area is still to be completed and then the park will be officially opened in Summer 2023.

Spearpoint Play Area: Additional engagement with our borough Council has also now seen the benefit and the investment of £360,000 with the Spearpoint being identified as an area for playground improvement, and installation of a park which was officially opened in February with the help of Kennington Community Council

The play area has been split into zones with easy access between each, for infants, toddlers, juniors, teens and a respite area and fitness area.



The toddler area features lots of equipment to either spin, swing and slide and even includes a bespoke Heinkel Plane to commemorate the heritage of the site. For older children there are many options



which include a junior play tower and jungle dome, a pendulum swing and a 20m double racing cableway.



For those that like a quieter area to play, there is the respite and sensory area, featuring play panels, a hangout pod and a rainwheel.

A new footpath has also been placed, leading from the pavilion and car park, around the football pitch and then through to the new outdoor gym and play area, providing easy access all year round.



Little Burton Farm Playground: We are now currently working with Ashford Borough Council on adding play equipment to the Little Burton playground, along with the combined ward Councillors grants of £10, 000 from Cllrs Katy Pauley and Mrs Marion Martin and the Community Council of just over £11, 000 the budget here should allow for two three new pieces to be added for the 2-6 age range to be catered for. This we hope to deliver before the end of 2023.



Defibrillator installation plan: Historically, there was only one public access defibrillator in Kennington, located at the Women’s Institute in Faversham Road. The Council agreed therefore to install three a year, spread out across Kennington. Spearpoint Pavilion and the Co-op were the first to see these installed followed by Bockhanger Square, closely behind to the One Stop Shop and New Hayesbank doctors’



surgery. Due to partners' support on installation costs, the Council has funded five within the original budget The final one will be in the adopted phone box in Tile Kilne Road and hopefully will be installed this budget year.

Daffodil Planting: This year saw the Council planting more and we hope to work again with other local organisations in October of this year and welcome suggestions of where to plant and your help this autumn. Additional options other than daffodils are also to be explored.



Tree Planting: The Council has added to tree to the Kennington Recreation Ground, the first for the Queens Platinum Jubilee which was unveiled at the Kennington Summer Fayre by the Deputy Mayor. The second was planted in late 2022 in readiness for Kings Charles III Coronation which we hope will be great additions to the trees already there. The Coronation tree will be unveiled this year at the Fayre by the Community Council Chair.



Bybrook Bockhanger Community Facility: A large amount of time this year has been spent on the consultation re gaining the thoughts of residents whilst prompting Ashford Borough Council in how we can deliver such a project, following on works from previous committees which pursued the ABC Housing department, which once plans seen, is not considered by all as best way forward. The Community Council now are assessing all that has been learnt over the year in order to present to Ashford Borough Council on what they consider residents what’s and needs are for this area.



Allotments: After the transfer of the allotments in April, wins have been seen as all the plots are now allocated or have a project associated with them. A new maintenance contractor has been established and improvements are hopefully being seen as we learn more each day and of the responsibilities we now have.

New projects

The Council are always looking for ideas as to what you may wish to see them undertake. As described above our projects so far have included speed reduction in Bybrook Road and surrounding areas, playground improvement throughout, Keeping Kennington Tidy, Community Centre re-establishment, noticeboards, defibrillators, making our streets safer. Community engagement and highways improvement remain key. Currently we are also looking at doing some projects including for dementia sufferers and helping with poverty by working with the Family Food and Fun that are just starting up from the Kennington United Church.

If you have any suggestions, the Clerk would be happy to hear them.

Annual Assembly

An Annual Assembly will be held this year on 24th May 2023 from 6pm. This is an opportunity open to all electors of the Community Council's area who have the right not only to attend but also to speak on any matter of local interest.

Chairman's report

This has been a busy year as the Council continues to further gain momentum in making an impact in the community. With a small budget, we need to, work closely with other authorities and influence how they spend their much larger budgets. Our success in securing two out of the three major play area investments across the whole of the borough demonstrates this. The implementation of a 20 is plenty speed restriction in the Bybrook area and similar areas being looked at for further speed schemes as they are identified. The big challenge is still to secure either funding for a vibrant community facility in Bockhanger Square or to pressure Ashford Borough Council to support the need for this and bring a facility back to really put the Heart and a hub back into Kennington.

We will continue, working with local clubs and societies by providing grants or securing grants on their behalf, to help them realise their objectives.

There is a constant opportunity for more to be involved and help us make a difference in our community, so if you can spare even a little time as a volunteer or whether you are ready to be a Councillor, the door is always open.

Getting involved

Residents are encouraged to attend meetings of the Community Council and its committees. These are held in public, which is an opportunity for residents to ask questions and see how decisions are made.



There are also opportunities from time to time to join specific committees as a Non-Councillor member, where you have particular expertise that you can contribute or an interest.

Where vacancies for Councillors occur between elections, the Council may decide to co-opt a replacement. All such vacancies are widely advertised, and appointments are through an open and transparent process.

If you would like further details about our meetings, committees, Non-Councillor or Co-option opportunities, please contact the Clerk to the Council.

Details of all our upcoming meetings can be found on the website: www.kenningtoncc.gov.uk or by contacting the Clerk.

Contact the Council

The Council can be contacted by e-mail at clerk@kenningtoncc.gov.uk, by phone at 07928 824482, or by post at PO Box 606 Ashford Kent TN23 9YF. For more information please visit our website at www.kenningtoncc.gov.uk or follow us on Facebook.