

# LYNSTED with KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL



## Chairman's Report – 2022/2023

Planning matters have once again played a major part in the Parish Council's activities this year.

We mounted a vigorous campaign against the application to build new houses on Land East of Lynsted Lane. Well over 200 residents wrote letters of objection and 50 householders attended the June meeting of the planning committee to register their disapproval.

Despite the development being recommended by the Council's officers, the committee voted to reject the application. However, the developer has since lodged an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate. We have written to the Inspector reiterating our objections and presenting new evidence. We await the outcome.

Similarly, the application to build houses on land off Cellar Hill was rejected by Council officers and the developer has appealed. We have again written to the Planning Inspectorate supporting the objections of local residents and this verdict is also awaited.

Additionally, we responded to applications that, whilst not located in our Parish, would have an adverse effect on our residents. Developers re-submitted their plans to build 8,400 houses at Highsted Park and on land to the West of Teynham; and a proposal was lodged to build 380 houses on agricultural land in Tonge. In both cases, letters of objection were written.

Swale Council has put its Local Plan for the Borough on hold, until the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill gains Royal Assent, or there is greater certainty regarding national policy for the local plan system. This is likely to re-surface in the coming year. Four out of five options in the most recent Regulation 18 consultation included development in Teynham/Lynsted, so the area remains under threat from excessive housebuilding on greenfield sites.

One major adverse effect would be a further deterioration in air quality. Analysis of Imperial College modelling shows all addresses in the Parish to be in exceedance of the World Health Organisation (WHO) limits for particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) - but especially along the London Road that borders the parishes of Lynsted and Teynham.

We therefore responded to the Government's consultation on air quality. We argued that communities should have open access to calculations of additional harm arising from every planning application. Currently, developers can claim their housing plans have negligible impact when taken in isolation, so the cumulative impact is ignored.

We also responded to the Government's consultation on reforming the National Planning Policy Framework. We argued for revision of housing targets, prioritising brownfield sites and greater input from local communities.

Finally on planning, we reviewed all individual applications in the parish, as we always do, generally taking a sympathetic view unless there were valid grounds to lodge an objection.

Over the year we have been working with KCC Highways to try to slow down traffic in Lynsted and Kingsdown. Village gates have been installed in Kingsdown and we continue to negotiate for a 30mph speed limit here.

In Lynsted, 30mph repeater signs have been erected and 30mph roundels have been painted on the road from the A2. "Pedestrians on Road" warning signs have been installed and we are negotiating with KCC for a "rumble strip" before the Swedish Houses.

Our SpeedWatch sessions have resumed and further improvements being discussed are a 20mph speed limit between Swedish Houses and The Vallance; and warning/painted lines "narrowing" the road from Toll Lane to the Lynsted village gate.

A significant drain on our budget in 2022/23 was the 41 streetlights for which we are responsible. They accounted for 47% of our precept income. In addition to regular maintenance, tree pruning and running costs, we had to fund numerous repairs - mainly because of vandalism, sadly. And of course, the price of electricity has rocketed. I am pleased to report that the Parish Council signed a new four-year fixed-price contract with SSE at just the right time, saving £2,280 per annum on what we were previously paying, and cushioning us from the subsequent hikes in charges.

This move was especially important as the Borough Council has halved our lighting grant and it will be removed completely in 2024/25.

Temporary repairs were carried out to the Church wall which had collapsed into The Street and we are liaising with SBC/KCC regarding a permanent solution. KCC's preference was for a cement-based wall with flint added afterwards. We have argued for traditional methods to be used, on a like-for-like basis. A structural engineer is now drawing up designs for approval and we remain hopeful that our arguments will hold sway.

The GP surgery in Teynham, which includes many of our residents as patients, moved to the Memorial Hospital in July. This means they must travel to Sittingbourne for a doctor's appointment. We have suggested premises in the Teynham and Lynsted area to re-locate the practice and continue to lobby for the surgery's return.

In other news:

- Having tried unsuccessfully to get a defibrillator installed in Lynsted Church, agreement has now been reached to locate it in the garden of the Black Lion pub. This should be in place shortly
- We have replaced the pads and battery for the other defibrillator in the parish, outside the vets on the London Road
- A waste bin has been installed in Tickham Lane and dog fouling signs attached to lamp posts in Batteries Close
- The Lynsted footpath map has been replaced and is in a new display case outside the Black Lion
- The Parish notice boards in Lynsted and Kingsdown have been refurbished
- Our Annual Parish Meeting was held in September attended by 35 residents and our guest speaker, Alistair Stewart, gave an informative talk on water quality and supply
- We attended the Lynsted fete
- We continue to lobby Southern Water for an upgrade of the pumping station near The Vallance

During the course of the year, I was sorry to have to accept the resignation from the Council of Vanessa Ross Russell but very pleased to welcome back Dylan Winder who has now returned from abroad. All sitting councillors have been re-elected in the local elections and we look forward to continuing our work in the forthcoming year.

**JULIEN SPEED**  
**Chairman**

15 May 2023