

# LYNSTED with KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL



## Chairman's Statement – 2023/2024

The Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council (LKPC) administrative year commenced on 1 April with a highly successful litter pick. Twenty residents collected a staggering 35 sacks of rubbish.

In May, we were approached by developers wanting to build eight or nine houses plus a community hall on land west of The Street in the centre of Lynsted. LKPC organised a residents' meeting and subsequently carried out a householder survey. This revealed that over 80% thought the plot should be left as is without any houses built there. There was virtually no interest in the community hall. Upon being presented with the views of residents, the developer withdrew. This is a great example of where a Parish Council can stand up for the views of the community and really make a difference.

Our lobbying campaign against the application to build houses on land East of Lynsted Lane persuaded the planning committee to vote against the officers' recommendation to approve it, which was another victory. Only for the decision to be overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. I think the system is absurd whereby one unelected official can overrule the decision of a democratically elected Local Authority.

In the case of the proposed five houses off Cellar Hill, LKPC represented the views of residents and officers refused the application. This also went to appeal, but the Planning Inspector upheld the decision this time.

The big one coming up the track is of course Highsted Park. A total of 8,400 new homes including 1,250 on land to West of Teynham which will impact our Parish. For possibly the first time ever since Lynsted Parish Council was founded in 1894, we have joined forces with Teynham PC to collaborate on a response. Together with Doddington and Tonge PCs, we have contributed to a fund which will pay for the commissioning of transport and planning reports. The application is set to be determined by the planning committee in late September 2024.

And as usual we continue to review householder applications and make representations as appropriate to planning officers.

The Cellar Hill Conservation Area is on the 'heritage at risk' register and is being reviewed by Swale Council. A site meeting was held in September, attended by representatives of both LKPC and Teynham Parish Council, plus local residents with expert knowledge of the area. We submitted detailed comments to the public consultation - which recommended the retention of Conservation Area status, minor extensions to the boundary, better enforcement of the regulations and consideration to be given to a separate designated area further West along London Road. Following discussions with Historic England it has now been decided to investigate extending the boundary of the existing Conservation Area, rather than creating a distinct new designation. This proposal will be included in a second round of public consultation to take place in the middle of 2024.

We are applying for a Community Infrastructure Grant to convert all streetlights owned by the Parish Council to LED. This would result in an estimated 80% reduction in energy consumption and carbon emissions. New lights would be kinder to the environment and reduce energy costs, which ultimately are funded by the local community via the parish precept levied on all householders. They would also reduce light pollution as the lights can be directed downwards onto the footpaths. We understand that no parish council in Swale has applied for such a grant before.

LKPC was one of only four Parish Councils in the entire country to respond to a national consultation on air quality. One of the other three was Teynham PC! This just proves how worried we are locally about the dangers of increased pollution. With my Borough Council hat on, I've successfully argued the Parish Council's resolution to retain the Air Quality Management Area on London Road, despite the recommendation of Swale officers to revoke it. I've also secured funding for new equipment to be installed on London Road to monitor levels of Particulate Matter – the very fine particles produced mainly by tyres and brakes that can cause serious health consequences including heart attacks and strokes.

Then there's the ongoing saga of the Church wall. Getting KCC, SBC, the Church and their respective advisers to work together has proved a challenge. However, consulting engineers are now proceeding with investigations and soil samples have been taken.

On the communications front, we held a successful Annual Parish Meeting in September attended by residents, councillors and other guests. PC Gary Morris made a presentation on the new ward-based policing model and local resident Simon White gave an introductory talk on CPR.

We took a marquee at the Lynsted fete which gave us the opportunity to further engage with parishioners and distributed a newsletter to all households in June along with fliers from the fete, Lynsted Community Kitchen Garden and the Black Lion.

Simon's CPR talk at the annual meeting generated such interest that three well-attended 'Heart Start' training sessions were arranged. Simon also subsequently ran a Civilian Self-Protection Course in March.

On the subject of CPR, a defibrillator was installed in the garden of the Black Lion, paid for by the Parish Council together with grant funding. A further grant was successfully applied for, which means a second defibrillator will be located in Kingsdown.

I was also pleased to lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish on Remembrance Day at Teynham Church.

Finally, we waved goodbye to Dylan Winder who is re-locating to New York but welcomed Nigel Tiller as a new councillor.

**JULIEN SPEED**

**Chairman**

**Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council**