**Annual report of Kingston on Soar Parish Council 2019 to 2021**

I would like to start with a big thank you to the councillors and staff of our Parish Council for their work throughout the past twelve months, and for offering their continued support for the community in which we all live. We do, at present, have one vacancy on the Parish Council, and hope to fill that within the coming year. The present Parish Clerk, Richard Parrey, wishes to retire at the end of May, so we are keen to recruit a replacement.

* The Government has now issued its roadmap for the end of **lockdown** and a return to some level of normality – but we are not there yet so please follow the guidance and stay safe. If you or your neighbours need support during these difficult times, then do look at the Notts County Council website for the Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support Hub pages.
* The 2019 Sutton Bonington and Kingston on Soar **garden walkabout** was successful despite the poor weather and raised over £5000 for Cancer Research. Covid-19 restrictions meant the event had to be cancelled in 2020. This year we are hopeful that the event can go ahead in July.
* The **Beer Festival** in September 2019 was well supported with a wide range of beer being offered together with live music from Lady Rose on Saturday night. Sadly, due to Government restrictions, the 2020 Beer Festival had to be cancelled. However, if the Government’s Covid 19 roadmap goes to plan, then we should be able to hold the 2021 beer festival later in the year.
* We are working with Live & Local to bring a **free arts project** to Kingston on Soar. Sarah Roberts is a visual artist whose project inspires people to keep a record of their ‘lockdown life’ every day for a week either by writing, drawing, writing poems or taking photographs. Sarah will provide some prompts for people. People will then send in their contributions to Sarah via post or email who will use all the material to create bespoke concertina books. Everyone who has participated will receive a printed copy and photos can be shared with the wider community. Sarah will provide all the materials and instructions and will speak directly with those taking part. She can also hold a Zoom session demonstrating how the books are produced and some creative ideas for people.
* During the period before the first lockdown several shows were held in the village hall. We are hopeful that these will continue when the Government restrictions are lifted.
* **Village Hall** refurbishment works are in progress. Further funding is still required to complete all the desired improvements and funding bids are being prepared. Updates will appear on the Facebook page “What’s on in Kingston on Soar”.
* During summer 2019 a **height restriction barrier** was erected at the entrance to the village hall car park. High vehicles can enter, having requested prior permission.
* The planned removal of the three **trees on the Green** progressed in February. They will be replaced by three new trees and a consultation was issued to all households to ask for feedback and preferences for their replacement. The consultation closed on 7th March. Thanks to those who responded with useful comments and positive suggestions. The Parish Council has reviewed those comments and proposed a preferred option.
* The **bus shelter** has, in the past, been misused as a dumping ground for items other than its intended use for books. This has been addressed, and hopefully it will continue to improve as a place for people to share their reading material. Thank you, Janice, for your involvement with this.
* **Speeding traffic** continues to be a problem. We are liaising with our County Councillor to solve this.
* Yet again, this last year has seen an increase in number of **cyclists** from the cycling clubs, using the lanes in and around the village for racing and time trialling. Our main concerns now are for safety, particularly due to a significant increase in traffic using the local roads following an increase in housing, mainly in East Leake; which in turn leads to people discovering West Leake Lane, as a convenient short cut. We are now back into the trial and race season, so if anyone witnesses any misconduct or is victim to it from those involved in the cycling activities, please contact your parish councillor and/or the police (depending on the severity of the matter).
* As with previous years there have been various **planning applications,** which we, as the Parish Council, have been asked to consider and respond to with our observations. Information about these was included in the village newsletters, with more details and comments from consultees being available on the Borough Council’s planning website.
* The 5 Parish Councils in the Gotham ward have continued to hold regular meetings associated with the **Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan,** in preparation for the next round of consultation which is expected sometime after May. A small sub-group also met with Rushcliffe MP Ruth Edwards to express our concerns. We will keep you informed as more details emerge.
* The Government announced recently that the East Midlands will be one of eight new **Freeports** in England. The area covered will include the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power plant which has been earmarked for redevelopment as a Green Technology Park
* You may have also seen in the news that Nottinghamshire County Council are expected to submit an Expression of Interest for a site close to the existing Ratcliffe on Soar power plant later this month, in response to the Government’s STEP programme to design and build a prototype **fusion power plant**. The Government will only be selecting one site from around the country. STEP is an ambitious programme to design and build a prototype fusion power plant. It is a Government programme, currently with £222 million funding to produce a concept design by 2024.
* The Parish Council is continuing with the preparation of the **Village Plan.** A consultation questionnaire was issued with the January 2021 newsletter and fifteen questionnaires were returned. Thank you to those households who took the time to respond. The responses are now being analysed, and your feedback will help us understand what the Parish Council priorities should be in terms of targeting funds for improvements and responding to wider development proposals and policies that could impact our village.
* The Church continues to be a focal point in our community, and it should be recognised for the events it organises throughout the year.

Let us look forward to another entertaining and enjoyable year in our Village.

Help your Parish Councillors to help you, let them know your thoughts and ideas and give your support where you can.

In closing, on behalf of Parish Councillors, past and present, I would like to thank, our Parish Clerk, Richard Parrey. Since Richard took on the role in April 2007, both Councillors and the Parishioners, have benefitted from his hard work and unwavering guidance and support, over the years.

Richard has decided it is time to hang up his pen and pursue other interests, and so we wish both Richard and Margaret the best in their future endeavours.

With regards,

Mark Johnson (Chairman).