

Annual Parish Meeting

Editorial

Teynham News – Teynham News is the quarterly parish magazine, produced and published by Teynham Parish Council. 1500 copies are distributed free to residents in the Parish of Teynham. Teynham News has been redesigned this year – building on the excellent work of previous editors Cllr Brian Sharman and Cllr Kate Barnett – to create a fresh design with clear and easy to read typography, with a striking image on the front cover, to remind us of the connection with our rural location.

We continue to focus on current community issues and opportunities, with updates on the work of the parish council and community groups plus our borough and county representatives. Several residents have commented on the new design and offered complimentary feedback. I'd like to thank Alex Sidnell – a local resident, studying at Kent University - for his contributions to the new cover design. In addition, thank you to our regular contributors for their varied contributions; and our advertisers who help offset our printing costs.

The editorial committee are planning to consider and test an email version of Teynham News. This will help reduce our printing costs, while the hybrid paper and email formats will ensure the newsletter is accessible for different communities. A large print version, on A4 paper, is also available on request.

Website – Teynham Parish Council's website - teynhamparishcouncil.org - is regularly updated with new content and information to support the local community. New content includes:

- **'Correspondence'** — A completely new section was added to raise awareness of community concerns on behalf of residents. This includes letters and emails relating to Highsted Park Consultation (March 2024); Nomination for Scheduled Monument (February 2024); response to planning application 23/505541/REM 'Frognal Place'. (February 2024); Frognal Place Development (2 January 2024); Letter to NHS about GP services in Teynham (9 October 2023); Letter to SEWater about water leaks and management of road closures (9 October).
- **'Frognal Place'** — Teynham Parish Council published a wide range of information to help support residents understand and respond to the 'Frognal Place', planning application, including a summary of community concerns and opportunities and a quick reply form. Updated information was published within 10 minutes of the main application being published on the MidKent planning portal.
- **'Highsted Park'** — A new section has been created to help support residents understand and respond to the 'Highsted Park, planning application.

Social media – At present we use Facebook as our primary (and only) social media channel. On average we post 2 or 3 stories each week, with original content and media assets. We typically reach 2,500 people (and up to 8,000 people on key items) with each published story; our content is often shared many times. Along with Teynham News, we are working with a consistent look and feel which clearly states the content has originated from the Parish Council. This is important as the four local community Facebook groups are active with many posts each day.

Cllr Paul Townson & Chair, TPC

Finance & General Purpose

FreeAgent – FreeAgent, introduced in May 2023, is an online financial reporting tool provided by our bank, NatWest. It helps monitor our expenditure, creates financial reports, as well as creating invoices and receipts. It's important to recognise the work carried out to date by the Parish Clerk. This includes learning a new IT system; implementing FreeAgent across 4 bank accounts; allocating all expenditure and income to accounting codes; and creating invoices and reports. The benefits of FreeAgent include raising the quality of financial information; managing aged debtors & aged creditors, identifying areas for cost savings; identifying financial processes that need review.

Risks & Issues — This year we have proactively identified and managed organisational risks and issues on a six-month basis.

Induction and Training — Training enhances employee and councillor skills and knowledge to help us best serve the local community. This year the Parish Clerk and Chairman have both attended KALC's Internal Controls course online; The Parish Clerk is scheduled to start 'Certificate in Local Council Administration'. There is an induction programme for new Councillors, which includes KALC's The Dynamic Councillor online course.

Community Concerns and Opportunities — This year we have started to record community concerns and opportunities to raise awareness and help us respond to the evolving needs of the community.

Foundation Award — Teynham PC have agreed this year to take part in NALC's Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS). It's designed to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential.

Forward planning — We've created a calendar for 2024 which covers all our parish council meetings, committees, and main events. We have also started work to create a longer-term strategic and high-level view for the next 3-years. This will help us serve our community and make best use of our resources.

Cllr Paul Townson & Chair, TPC

Planning

Over the past year few separate applications have been considered for domestic extensions, side, back and front. There has however been a massive increase in proposals for speculative housing estate developments necessitating the Parish Council having to employ specialist planning officers for professional advice. It is policy to refer these cases to be dealt with by full Council and they will therefore be reported on elsewhere.

Major Planning Responses & Significant Community Concerns — In addition to the standard planning applications, Teynham Parish Council has responded to large-scale planning applications and areas of significant community concern. This includes:

- **‘Frognal Place’** — Teynham Parish Council responded to the planning application 23/505541/REM 'Frognal Place', a planning application for up to 300 dwellings with open spaces, pavilion, and sports fields. The 14-page response was based on formal and informal feedback, received by Teynham Parish Council, and represented a range of community views. A draft copy of this document was shared within the local community to gather additional comments plus additional comment were discussed with members of the public at a Parish Council meeting. In addition, Teynham Parish Council published a wide range of information online to help support residents understand and respond to the ‘Frognal Place’, planning application, including a summary of community concerns and opportunities and a quick reply form.
- **‘Highsted Park’** — A 8000 dwelling planning application, split in to two applications – Highsted North and Highsted South. This is a significant planning application and will take significant time and resources to respond. We’ve recently created a dedicated webpage to provide updates for the local community; requested an extension to the consultation period; attend updates hosted by the lead case planning officer; and are in the process of preparing a plan to respond to this significant planning application.
- **Scheduled Monument** — In February 2024 Teynham Parish Council wrote to Historic England to request that they evaluate the site of the Roman mausoleum and finds, including the statue of the Roman sea god Triton, and determine if it has the status to be classed as a Scheduled Monument.
- **GP facilities** — In October 2023, on behalf of the community, Teynham Parish Council wrote to Paul Bentley, Chief Executive Kent and Medway ICB NHS to highlight the continued absence of a local doctors' facility in Teynham.
- **Water leaks** — In October 2023, Monday 9 October. Teynham Parish Council wrote to David Hinton, CEO, SEWater to express our growing concern about the significant number of water leaks that have been plaguing our village for several months, the management of road closures and a request for a dedicated senior representative from SEWater to act as a single point of contact.

Teynham PC recognises that it takes significant time and resources to gather, process and present information for large and complex applications, as well as responding to questions from the community. Teynham Parish Council would like to thank everyone for their contributions and time.

Cllr Paul Townson & Chair, TPC

Amenities Committee

Cllr Kate Barnett stepped down as Chairman and I (Cllr Lisa Simester) took over the role, and I'm learning as I go.

Last year went pretty well with another successful Christmas fair & lantern parade. Thank-you to everyone that helped make this happen. We have now installed CCTV at The Meadow.

We have seen a high level of damage throughout the village, especially at The Meadow to the new play equipment, MUGA, fencing and the kissing gate.

The new Police Constable is hosting monthly drop-in surgeries which runs alongside the coffee morning. This is a chance for the public to report or address any concerns they may have.

We are still trying to get a bin for the meadow.

Teynham Parish Council were delighted to receive the generous gift of the cherry trees from Teynham in Bloom which have now been planted in The Meadow.

Allotments:-

- 3 new gates and new locks was installed after vandalism and wear and tear.
- We have set up monthly meetings to run along with the coffee morning.
- The Clerk has also written to owners of each allotment due to some being severely neglected and overgrown.

Street lighting:-

- Street light columns have now been painted.
- The cost of running the lights is a potential financial risk to the parish council
- Three local PCs are at significant financial risks due to cost of lighting.
- TPC has the second largest number of street lights (compared with other councils in the Swale area.
- There is a complete mix of KCC, TPC and private lights in our parish.

We intend to use all available tools and grants moving forward to make Teynham a safe and happy place for all the community. Let's continue to work together towards a lovely year ahead.

Cllr Lisa Simester

Community Hall Committee

Community Hall hiring/bookings, for family functions and for clubs and organisations, have been surprisingly good. The Parish Council now also use it for their meetings, along with Teynham Surgery for bloods tests, flu jabs and alike. The latter saves patients a considerable amount of time and money now having to make the journey to Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital, where Dr. Nilan and his team is currently located.

The Drop-in-Café, organised and funded by the Community Hall Committee are enjoying increasing numbers of attendees and meeting new faces all of the time. We are very grateful to those volunteers that run the kitchen and look after everyone so well, and Paul who provides background music. Tea, coffee, homemade cakes and hot sausage rolls are sold at reasonable prices with all the money raised used to fund future sessions.

During the year we said goodbye to our cleaner, Paula, who retired breaking the long 'Boorman family' lineage. We are pleased to welcome Angie as her replacement.

We are still carrying out repairs and refurbishment of the Hall, which in the past year included updating the electrical supply and distribution system of the Hall, updating the emergency lighting system and replacing the LED lighting tubes, in the mail hall, with high intensity LED lighting panels. These works, along with most other works carried out since acquiring the Hall, were carried out at using grant aid monies at minimal cost to council tax payers.

We currently awaiting the results of a grant aid application for monies to replace the wood floor in the main hall which has signs of major rot.

Now established as an essential part of the parish's Christmas celebrations the largest yet Christmas tree was installed in the Hall's car park. Following the switch-on there were carols sung in the Hall.

Living with Parkinson's and not able to physically contribute, I sincerely thank those who have stepped in to do the running and maintenance of the Hall, which is much loved by parishioners as 'their own'.

Cllr. Brian Sharman.