

Kingsley Parish Council

Kingsley Parish Council
The Boardroom
Kingsley Cemetery
Hollow Lane
Kingsley
Cheshire
WA6 8EF

www.kingsleyparishcouncil.org.uk

Annual Report of Kingsley Parish Council Civic Year 2024-2025

Welcome to Kingsley Parish Council's Annual Report.

This Civic Year has been one of progress, collaboration, and meaningful impact as we have focused on supporting our community through various initiatives and projects.

Our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents has driven us to focus on activities that address key issues and foster community spirit. From improving local infrastructure to supporting environmental sustainability, our projects have been designed to meet the diverse needs of our parish.

Cemetery

In late FY2023/24, the Parish Council appointed a new grounds maintenance contractor following a competitive procurement exercise. This was a necessary step following some years of decline in the cemetery's upkeep. Routine maintenance visits have now increased, ensuring ongoing attention to detail. The quality of the work is evident and reflects our commitment to cemetery management. The transformation has been welcomed by many - lawns are now properly edged, moss and weeds removed from all pathways, and overgrown vegetation has been cut back. These simple but overdue interventions have substantially improved the appearance and accessibility of the cemetery, particularly for elderly or mobility-impaired visitors accessing the site from Westbrook. Work has also been undertaken to give a more dignified impression for visitors - for example, in the new section of the cemetery, the flower beds have been dug over and replanted with pollinator-friendly plants. Two benches, previously deemed structurally unsafe due to rot, have been replaced with environmentally sustainable alternatives. These now offer visitors comfortable places to sit and reflect.

The Council has planned to level the ground in the new part of the cemetery during FY2025/26, once soil has settled and families have had time to remove seasonal bedding plants. This will improve both safety and the visual appearance of the lawned cemetery.

A change to the fee structure was introduced during the year to assist families who face the unique emotional and financial challenge of burying more than one relative at the same time. By offering a reduced rate in such instances, the Council has taken a compassionate and fair approach to its responsibilities.

Tree works are scheduled to remove a cluster of silver birch trees near the boundary wall, which have been identified as obscuring light to the solar-operated SID on Hollow Lane.

The cemetery bench restoration programme is underway, and all benches are expected to be repaired or refinished by the end of FY2025.

The Council has received reports of residents misusing the cemetery bin for domestic waste. This could result in increased disposal costs, potentially passed to residents via the precept. A clear notice has now been affixed, and we request residents use the bin solely for cemetery-related waste. We thank you for your cooperation.

Finally, the Parish Council is aware of feedback regarding the woodwork on the boardroom and will review repainting options in FY2025/26.

Village Environment

The long-awaited ramp linking the Co-op and Community Centre is in its final planning stage, with revised plans being prepared to meet Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWAC) final specifications. This will significantly enhance safety and accessibility for residents, particularly those with limited mobility or pushing prams.

Elsewhere, the Council engaged a contractor to edge back overgrown paths and kerb lines throughout the village. In some areas, up to two feet of vegetation was removed, restoring safe pedestrian access and improving visual tidiness. The work has been very well received by the community.

Three successful village tidy-up days were held, generating large volumes of green waste and general litter, all collected by CWAC. These days serve not only to improve our shared environment but also to foster community spirit. All residents are welcome to attend future sessions, and a set of community tools is now available for use. Volunteers are reminded to follow the safety guidance in the risk assessment.

The village planters were replanted this year, with a focus on seasonal colour and biodiversity. Ongoing maintenance will continue each season, helping to brighten the public realm while supporting pollinating insects.

Playing Field and Recreation Ground

Routine inspections and maintenance of the children's play areas and outdoor gym have continued throughout the year. One climbing frame has shown signs of structural compromise, and members have received a report confirming that it is no longer in line with modern installation standards. Timber elements set directly into the ground are now recognised as vulnerable to rot and not compliant with best practice.

As a result, the Council has begun the process of sourcing replacement equipment. This will involve full removal and installation of new foundations and surfacing. A site visit from the original manufacturer is expected in early FY2025 to provide costings and design options.

The sunken area in the pathway has now been repaired, improving safety for all users.

The Council continues to maintain two wildflower meadows and an area of rewilded grassland in the park. These efforts contribute to increased biodiversity, provide valuable habitats for insects and birds, and support our wider environmental objectives.

A newly planted orchard, established in early 2024, is growing well and is expected to bear much fruit for the community in the coming years. Once matured, this will provide a small but meaningful community asset with environmental and educational value.

All main paths around the park were edged back this year, improving access and appearance.

Residents are reminded that the park gate is not locked and the space is open for public use at all times. Users are asked to be considerate of neighbours, particularly regarding noise.

Grants and Community Support

The Council was pleased to award two community grants this year:

- **£500 to Kingsley Players** – to support local theatrical productions, enriching village life and providing cultural and creative opportunities.

- **£500 to Kingsley St John PTA** – to assist in the purchase of a sensory swing, offering inclusive play experiences for children with additional needs.

The Council has also formally expressed its support for retaining services at Knoll Surgery, recognising the essential role it plays in local healthcare provision.

Planning and Development

The Council submitted a formal objection to a proposed large-scale housing development adjacent to the cemetery. Our response, which can be viewed online, raised concerns regarding scale, infrastructure, and impact on the character of the village.

The Parish Council remains committed to reviewing all planning applications carefully and in line with the views of the community and adopted planning policy.

Highways and Road Safety

The Council continues to receive a high volume of concerns from residents about traffic speed and inconsiderate parking, particularly near schools and on residential streets. These concerns have been forwarded to CWAC and discussed with relevant officers. Although enforcement and infrastructure decisions rest with the principal authority, we continue to press for action and will keep residents informed of developments.