



**Kennington Parish Council  
Oxfordshire**

**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in the Kennington Village Hall  
on Wednesday 25 April 2017 at 7.30pm**

Cllr. Colin Charlett, Chairman of the Parish Council, took the Chair.

He welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

**In attendance:** There were 24 residents and Mrs Rachel Brown (Parish Clerk)

**Apologies:** Ann Pardo; Pamela Allen; Robin Mason; Rosemary Aldgate; Christine Ravenscroft; Jo Lees; Mark Horseman; Norm Robins; Kit Smith; Eileen Rodgers; Rachel Sanderson; Anthony Morris and Revd. Rosemary Davis

**1. Minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting**

The Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 26 April 2017 in the Kennington Village Hall at 7.30pm, were circulated by the Clerk. The meeting approved the minutes and they were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**2. Chairman's Report**

Basically the same format as previous years and some of the items covered are a repeat of previous years, showing that some things don't improve.

**ROADS** As last year, the roads in Kennington are continual source of complaints and a cause for concern. The experts at the County Highways seem to think they are acceptable. Perhaps they should be made to drive or cycle over them twice daily. The repairs they carry out to the potholes are laughable. If they were repaired properly they would save money by not having to return to them again and again. The only recourse is to keep reporting on Fix my street .com and also contact our County Councillor. Inconsiderate parking is also a perennial problem which is getting worse. The building of flats and conversion of family homes into flats is only adding to the problem. Worst areas are the corner of Playfield Road, the top of Poplar Grove by Beaumont Court, Upper Road and Kennington Road. Also the area by the school although a solution to this has eluded us for many years. Non-functioning street lamps are also a problem. The County Council appears not to have a contractor to do the necessary repairs even after months without. Speed checks have been carried out in Bagley Wood Road, Upper Road and the main road, which have shown that the percentage of vehicles over the limit is relatively low. Following complaints about vehicles speeding in Playfield Road we have had two signs installed to point out it is an area where children are about. With the coming of Oxford's answer to Boris bikes we were inundated with abandoned bikes. The problem seems to be less now but it would be nice if the users could abandon them where they are not a nuisance.

**GRASS CUTTING AND MAINTENANCE** This year we had a different contractor. Initially there were one or two hiccups but we are hopeful that the future will see things run more smoothly. If you know of someone who is unable to cut their own verge please let the Clerk know and she will arrange for it to be put on the schedule. We inspect our trees twice a year and have a duty of care survey done by a specialist every other year. Unfortunately the County removed the cherry tree in the large verge at Grundy Crescent due to it being unsafe. We are still trying to get them to replace it. The hedge between the Playing Field and the Memorial Field which we had cut and laid was trimmed up this year but despite putting a stile in so the footballs can be collected from the Memorial Field it still seems to be more fun to destroy the hedge and not use the stile.

**LITTER AND DOG FOULING** We are still suffering from sporadic fly tipping. In the past we were not charged for removing fly tipping from the playing field and Forest Side. Now we are charged and it is a three figure sum. If you see anyone tipping rubbish please get their reg. number and report it. Despite the Council supplying bags for dog poo we still suffer from antisocial dog owners who are too lazy to clear up after their dogs. It is a reportable offence as well as being a hazard. Some people use the bags and then throw them in the hedge. This too is a disgusting practice.

**PLANNING** The hot topic this year has been the Redrow application for South Kennington, which as we all know is actually North Radley. Kennington Parish Council have been involved in discussions with Radley Parish

Council about the application. We continue to get a steady trickle of plans for our comments. Our planning committee try to take an unbiased view in our responses. Sometimes the Vale take notice of our comments but we are not the people who make the decision. We can only object on valid planning grounds, “we don’t want it” is not a reason for refusal. Please don’t blame us.

**MISCELLANEOUS** This has been the first year for Rachel, our new clerk. She has settled into the job very quickly and Anne our previous clerk has been more than willing to help and advise where necessary. Thanks to them both. We welcomed a new member, Amanda Jempson who was co-opted to replace Paddy Landau who sadly retired from the Council due to ill health. We wish him well and thank him for all his work in the past. We also welcome a new vicar to Kennington, Rev. Robert Glenny. We hope his stay will be a long and happy one. It has also been pleasing to see the reopening of the Youth Club. The signs so far are that it is thriving with a new leader and committee. Although the Best kept garden competition did not take place it is being resurrected for 2018 so get the spades out. The Council arranged a paint amnesty so that residents could get rid of all their unwanted paint at a very reasonable cost. It was very successful and if there was enough call for it I am sure we would repeat it. To my knowledge none of our defibrillators have yet been needed. We would like to organise some more training sessions as it pointless having this life saving equipment if people do not know how to use it. Training takes about an hour and a half maximum and will not cost you a penny. Please consider it, it may save a life and it may teach someone how to save yours. There is a sheet at the back of the Hall to put your details on if you would like to receive training. Remembrance Day and our Carols round the tree were both well attended and we must thank Kennington Band for attending both events. The collection at the Carols raised £200 which was given to McIntyres, the charity which occupies the old Social Club premises. On your behalf, I would like to thank all the Councillors who give up their time and also to the many other people who help to keep the Village running smoothly, too many to mention by name. Thank you to you all. Finally, although he didn’t receive the BBC sports personality of the year award, Kennington has a world champion. Congratulations to Daniel Gooding who is the individual Pooh Sticks world champion. Good luck for this year. I have met with representatives from Radley Parish Council, South Hinksey Parish Council, PCSO Zack Earl and PC Carl Bryant to resume the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). There are leaflets at the back of the hall regarding crime prevention and information about Smart Water. This is available from Abingdon Police Station for £11, and if 80% of people sign up to this on your street, this will help with the insurance.

### **3. Financial Statement for 2016-17**

The Clerk presented the financial statement for 2016-2017. She reported that the total expenditure in 2017-2018 was £67,844. This was a decrease of £6,716 on the previous year, which was largely due to lower expenditure from the Playing Fields Committee. Income was £92,722 of which £87,699 came from the precept. Other income was from the County Council’s grant for the highway verge cutting of £2335; the final decreasing Vale of White Horse district Council grant of £816, and income of £2850 from the Cricket and Football Clubs. £891 has also been received from Vale of White Horse District Council as half of a grant towards the cost of a feasibility study, which is exploring the options for rebuilding the Playfield Road pavilion. Mr Symes is in the process of carrying out the internal audit.

The Parish Precept for 2018-2019 is set at £92,832 which costs a Band ‘D’ property £54.99 per year. This is an increase of £2.62 on a Band D property.

### **4. Matters arising from the reports**

None

### **5. Report of the District Councillor – Cllr. Blagrove reported as follows:**

Good evening and thank you to the Parish Council and Rachel for their assistance.

**LOCAL PLAN PART 1** This includes the land south of Kennington opposite Pebble Hill and Woodland. I have been working with Radley Parish Council and officers on getting the best outcomes we can from the development. I always have to be careful where we go with it due to planning law and the developer’s potential to appeal against decisions that could end up being more detrimental. I am disappointed to see the lack of smaller homes going for the open market, including no 1-beds. I have expressed my concerns and have requested that the developer proves their evidence for this. I am yet to receive it. Other areas of concern regard traffic, sewerage and construction traffic plans. For those interested, my written response is on the

Vale's website. The positives from the development are the number of affordable housing, which is at 35%, which will be a mixture of social rent and part ownership.

**LOCAL PLAN PART 2** This is due to be reviewed by the Inspector (now one has been assigned) and therefore as long as it is found sound could be adopted at December's council meeting. As reported last year I am pleased to see no further sites allocated to Kennington or Radley (or immediate neighbours) acknowledging this part of the Vale having taken its share in Part 1. Having a local plan is important to evidence we can build the houses we need but also giving the Vale's planning department control of where. A lack of local plan, as we have seen in neighbouring districts, can lead to speculative development. I have also engaged with officers on the distribution of Community Infrastructure Levy (known as CIL) to ensure the community has the right provisions, with a particular interest in Education and Health Care provisions.

**THE OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH DEAL** This is the deal whereby central government would release an extra £200m in infrastructure funding by the Oxfordshire councils agreeing to deliver 100,000 homes. This is not an extra 100,000 homes on what has already been planned. The number for the councils' combined was already at 96,000, therefore it is potentially another 4000, which isn't to be taken lightly, but some of the reporting did give some residents I had spoken to the impression that there would be more housing on top of what is in Local Plan Part 1 and 2, which is not the case. It was agreed that Council would accept the Growth deal, with a list of caveats for how the Joint Strategic Spatial Plan group would run. The JSSPO will oversee how the Growth deal is delivered and therefore should we back out, which we can do as the JSSP is set up under a section 28 rule, we will back out of the deal. The scope and format of the JSSP will now be discussed and is likely to come to full council in July for Council to approve or reject. I seconded the motion as, having spent many hours working with Cabinet colleagues and officers, the caveats offer the right amount of protection to the Vale and its land supply etc., while also allowing us to participate in the decisions as to where the extra money is being spent. Therefore I believed it to be a bigger risk to reject being part of the deal and the extra funding it will provide, at this stage, if any of our red lines cannot be met then I will fully support us not being part of the JSSP and therefore no longer part of the deal. All of this is taken on with the agreement that we must push for even more funding as this is no silver bullet.

**GENERAL PLANNING** A large part of my role is to assist individuals on planning, either just as general advice for those submitting a planning application or those wishing to comment or object on a planning application and I hope I have been helpful to various residents this year.

**5 COUNCILS OUTSOURCING** This has not been anywhere near the success we wanted. While it has led to some savings it has also led to some difficulties. We are working to address this as we renegotiate the contract. I am now the cabinet member with IT and HR in my portfolio and these are two areas I am working hard with officers to get a suitable solution to, and all options are being explored.

**COUNCIL MANAGEMENT** This last year saw the departure of the Chief Executive David Hill. His interim replacement Mark Stone has now been appointed on a permanent basis and I must say I think he is doing an excellent job. Under Mark there are now 8 heads of services which, as a councillor, has given me a much clearer understanding of who is dealing with what and where to go for queries.

**WASTE** I know it has been a particular disruption to some in the village of missed collections. Prior to joining cabinet I was on the scrutiny committee that analysed Biffa's performance. I mentioned this issue and was informed that the fleet had too many vehicles that were end of life, prone to breaking down and not too moveable. I am therefore pleased to announce the fleet has four brand new and modern trucks that should mean this improves. I am also pleased to say that following feedback they have put in place an improved future proofing plan on their vehicles.

**LOOKING AHEAD** This financial year we look ahead to, as mentioned, the hopeful adoption of Local Plan Part 2, the opening of the improved open air pool at Abbey Meadows, the start of work on the new leisure centre in Wantage and continuing work to improve the Vale as a place to live with a new Civic Pride team. The Council Leader has also said that he will stand down at next month's council meeting, so we will see who is elected there and what changes that may bring.

**5.1 Report of the District Councillor – Joint matters relating to the Vale and County - Cllr. Johnston reported as follows:**

1. A key matter is the Housing and Growth Deal agreed between all the Councils in Oxfordshire including the County and the Vale earlier this year. It involves the Government giving the Councils £215 million over the next three years comprising £150 million for infrastructure, £60 million for social housing and £5m for various matters such as planning and extra staff to administer the above. In return there is a requirement to deliver some 96,000 housing units by 2031. This is in conjunction with three further bids to the Housing and Communities fund for the Didcot Garden Town and other projects totalling over £540 million for various infrastructure projects such as the new science bridge over the railway line at Didcot as part of a new ring road at a price tag of £60 million. All this is being overseen by the Oxfordshire Growth Board; this is a body on which the Council Leaders sit along with business representatives, Health and others. I personally think it lacks democratic accountability in spite of new proposed scrutiny arrangements. I think it will be difficult to achieve the housing targets because of shortages of skilled workers and materials. We shall see.
2. The bid is now being transposed into a work programme with many components including a second bridge at Culham which is needed to unlock more housing at Culham and Sutton Courtenay. Possibly the nearest project to Kennington is one to widen the railway bridge on the Botley Road. which has a price tag of £40 million. This is part of a project to rebuild the station (another £85 million) as it is now a key constraint on the whole rail system. There is also a desire to four track the line between Oxford and Didcot stating in 2019 (2024 more likely) which if implemented will affect Kennington.

**5.2 Report of the District Councillor – Cllr. Johnston reported as follows:**

1. Possibly the most important Vale matter is the continuing roll out of the Vale Local Plan, which protects the Vale from speculative building development. Part 1 has already been adopted and Part 2 is now being rolled out. There is scheduled to be an Examination in Public hearing (EIP) before a Planning Inspector in June and if all goes well the Plan could be completely in place by the end of the year. In my opinion there is a major problem. This relates to the desire of the Vale to safeguard land for a possible bus/cycle lane in nearby Sunningwell to link the Dalton Barracks site to the putative Park and ride at Lodge Hill. The County does not think this is justified and there is scope for a dispute at the EIP. Let us hope this does develop into anything serious.
2. A major project by the Vale is the "5 Councils Outsourcing Project" whereby 5 Councils including SODC and the Vale to outsource much of their remaining back office and matters such as parks and car parking. In my opinion it has been a fiasco. Original savings of millions a year have evaporated and now look like being at most £400,000 pa. Not worth it in my view in respect of all the Officer time and upheaval it has involved. Some services have already been taken back in house such as Licensing. Car parking actually cost more outsourced! Pay roll has not been right for months and there have been great difficulties with e-mail, expense claims, audit and so on. Very happy to answer questions on this matter.
3. We now learn that the Vale Leader is to stand down as he is now going to be a full time Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner. Many of us always said that combining the two rolls was simple not on.
4. I do not know whether the outcomes from the Growth Board and (3) are linked, but all I will say is that the Vale's share of the social housing in the first year is just 6 units as opposed to 80 for the City, now isn't that interesting!

**6. Report of County Councillor - Cllr. Bob Johnston reported as follows:**

1. There are moves behind the scenes to consider going back to the Committee system. I personally favour this as it would give a voice to the back benchers, most of whom are effectively excluded from the decision making process by the Cabinet system.
2. The County has adopted Part 1 of its Waste and Minerals Plan. This effectively protects the County from speculative mineral applications. Part 2 is now proceeding, and I am on the working group. It is going well and should be in place by the end of next year. The main bone of contention is trying to seek a better balance in terms of sites between the West and the South of the County.
3. The biggest thing to hit the County is without doubt the prospect of a new Oxford to Cambridge expressway, a four (possibly six lane) highway between the two cities with a minimum of junctions and no hard shoulder. It is linked to the possible building of a million new homes along its length. Currently there are three very broad corridors (details on the County website) and the one which most concerns Kennington is the one which starts at Lodge Hill, goes across Radley College, skirts the Bartons and joins the M40 at

Wheatley. We are promised by Highways England (the project leader) a choice of a corridor this summer (July?) with a firm route by 2020, a start in 2025 and completion by 2030. I personally am yet to be convinced of the need for the project. I would rather that more was done on the East-West rail link which could achieve quite a lot of the same with far less environmental destruction. The official County position is that they do not want anything to happen which will make matters worse on the A34 between Lodge Hill and Kidlington, I agree with that.

## **7. Reports from Local Committees and Organisations**

**7.1 Neighbourhood Policing – PCSO Zack Earl reported on** the current crime statistics in Kennington, and the new initiatives from the police in tackling crime.

### **7.2 1<sup>st</sup> Kennington Guides – Margaret Biggs (on behalf of Jo Lees) reported as follows:**

The village unit is thriving with 25 Guides, 5 Adult Leaders and 3 Young Leaders. Over the last 12 months we have enjoyed an action packed programme the highlights of which include:

- Gaining the survival badge which culminated in making our own shelters to sleep in. Breakfast was cooked over a wood fire.
- Taking part in a drop off-hike and chip shop walk, as well as an informative visit to Millets Falconry.
- Attending County events such as an activity day at Youlbury Scout Activity Centre and a day walking on the Ridgeway.
- Guides brought a parent to a meeting where they enjoyed a campfire and made s'mores
- Completing the kindness challenge badge by writing thank you letters and painting friendship rocks - we hope that you found one
- Harry Potter has been a popular theme with a science night making elephant's toothpaste, as well as a Fantastic beasts themed sleepover
- In preparation for the unit attending the village Remembrance Parade, one of our Young Leaders ran a session on the meaning of Remembrance Sunday and the Guides created a display for the Church.
- We ran our own Ceilidh and choreographed our own dances
- Christmas brought cake decorating and a sleepover in Botley which included a visit to the story museum and film making
- The Clover cogs engineering challenge was a great success and the girls made slime, built volcanoes and lava lamps
- Yorkshire Building Society visited to run a "Money Matters" evening and we launched our 'Grow A Fiver' Challenge for unit funds and our summer trip to Switzerland. The Guides managed to turn a loan of five pounds into profit with cake sales, homemade sweets and diary date competitions.
- We attended the Abingdon Division Thinking Day celebrations, joining other local Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to take part in activities to mark the birthday of our founder.

We now look forward to our summer visit to Switzerland with Abingdon Division Guides. We are very grateful to the Parish Council for giving a grant of £200, and we were delighted to receive a very generous, anonymous donation for the trip. Finally, we would like to thank everyone for supporting our fundraising efforts.

### **7.3 Kennington Parish Path Warden Officer – Jim Parke reported as follows:**

A majority of paths without hard surfaces have suffered due to the snowfall which has fallen throughout a hard winter and wet spring - particularly along the Thames National Trail.

This year saw damage to the footbridge over the brook on FP 3. It would appear that part of a nearby tree had fallen across the hand rails at the northern end of the bridge. This event has not made the bridge unsafe as the handrails are still in place over the major part of the bridge over the stream. The damage has been reported to the Countryside Access Team (CAT) of the County Council.

The width of FP 2 between Kennington Road and Rowles Close had been compromised and narrowed by a section of fence leaning over the footpath. This, too, had been reported to the CAT. I am pleased to say that at a recent inspection the property owner had replaced the leaning fence with a new fence.

The PPW is cutting back the privet hedge overgrowth at the end of FP 6 (between The Avenue and Poplar Grove) which, if left unchecked, would completely hide the Fingerpost. The property has been vacant for some time and has been sold, subject to contract, to a purchaser. When the new owner takes possession he should be asked to undertake a major cut back of this privet hedge which is growing over the surface of the footpath. Generally the path infrastructure of gates and stiles on Kennington's PRoWs is in good condition.

The snowmelt and the wet early spring has resulted in the ground surface to be thoroughly saturated. Consequently the grass covered paths, particularly along the Thames National Trail, have become very muddy.

#### **7.4 Friends of Kendall Copse – Roger Gelder reported as follows:**

Over the past two years, the plans for the Flood Relief channel have slowly been disclosed and estimates given for the impact on the two fields of Kendall Copse. The Environment Agency, responsible for planning, state that 80% of the woods in the eastern field and 20% in the western field will be cut down and some 100 foot of the hedgerows also. In addition, the requirement for large concrete culverts beneath the Old Abingdon Road and the Kennington Road means these will be constructed 'on site', causing further damage, although its exact location in the eastern field has never been discussed. The installation of culverts requires the closure of the Old Abingdon Road for an estimated six months, followed by a like period for the Kennington Road.

Requests have been made that the "memorial trees" and yew trees be saved and replanted and this hope has been met with some uncertainty and rather vague answers. Similarly, the request that efforts be made to restore the hedgerows has also been answered very uncertainly.

The owners of the two fields, Oxford City Council, the principal beneficiary of the flood relief scheme, has never spoken to the Friends of Kendall Copse, the Parish Council, nor to the people of Kennington who helped plant the trees and hedgerows, neither thanking them for their efforts nor regretting the waste of this work and the grant aid that they requested we raise.

#### **7.5 Kennington Amateur Drama Society (KADS) – Alan Cobb reported as follows:**

Membership has again grown over the past year with increases in our Youth side and also more adults joining. Shows now hosting upwards of 40 plus per show which makes staging quite a logistic exercise. We had a very successful *Wizard of Oz* show and our recent pantomime of *Beauty and the Beast* excelled all expectations. However as with any society our costs increase and cost per show is rising per year making it more crucial that we sell seats for our performances.

We will hopefully be looking for grant aid this coming year also to become charity registered as what money we have only finances the next show and we need to update several areas including lighting and sound in order to bring them up to date with today's technology etc.

Our thanks go to the Village Hall for all the support it gives us and in allowing what was a first for us at Panto with the erection of a scaffolding platform whereby we could run our sound and light desks along with follow spots which allowed the top room to be available for hire during show time. I also believe it wasn't obtrusive as Monday Badminton was still able to play with no problems.

I would also like to thank the organisations who give up their sessions in order that we are able to go ahead with our show dates. This is of course the Thursday night Badminton and also the Oxford Ballet on a Friday. Thank you.

Lastly I would like to mention our next show which is *Raising the Roof*. This is a show directed by my daughter Louise and features a selection of songs from past KADS shows along with a medley of World War One songs to commemorate the 100yrs since the Great War and some contemporary songs mixed in with some gospel, all of which I am sure you will know and like especially as they are bound to conjure up many past memories. *Raising the Roof* goes out on the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th of June this year. We then get ready for our forthcoming Panto next January 2019 which will be *Robinson Crusoe* and next year sees the 40th anniversary of KADS which we are busy planning at present.

#### **7.6 Kennington Baby and Toddler Group – Rachel Brown (on behalf of Ann Pardo) reported as follows:**

The Kennington Mother and Toddler Group now have 30 members and 8 committee, with new members joining all the time. Whilst it is committee led, it is predominantly a parent funded and run group. We offer a range of activities to the children; from young baby sensory area, sit and ride toys, soft play area, role play with a kitchen and shop, crafts with Mary and a messy play area which incorporates sensory play for the older children with rice, sand, pasta, Play Doh and foam, and the learning of building skills with Duplo and train

tracks. We offer a snack and drink for the children where they all sit together. It's a nice relaxed atmosphere where new parents can come along and meet other parents and chat whilst their children play with different toys. The new committee are meeting regularly to discuss our new roles. I wish to thank Peter Biggs for his help in sorting out a few teething problems we had and also his efficiency in invoicing us at the beginning of each month.

**7.7 Kennington Chronicle –Paddy Landau reported as follows:**

Another year has passed and another 20,000 Chronicles have been delivered to the homes in Kennington free of charge, by about 50 volunteer deliverers. However the Chronicle is at a critical point, as I need to retire for health reasons after 15 years in the Editor's chair.

We have advertised and continue to advertise, but have yet to find a new editor. If no one is forthcoming, the Kennington Chronicle will close. It seems a shame, and possibly indicative of current difficulties, that in a vibrant village like this, we have been unable to find anyone. I would hope that someone could give a few hours each month to edit this valuable publication.

So if you, or someone you know, could edit our village magazine, please encourage them to talk to us, because after 34 years and nearly ¾ million copies, if no one comes forward then the Kennington Chronicle will end, and then where will we go to find a plumber or a gardener?

**7.8 Kennington Cricket Club – Alan Cobb (on behalf of Norm Robins) reported as follows:**

Kennington Cricket Club (KCC) is a member of the Oxfordshire Cricket Association (OCA), an Oxfordshire league with about 90 teams playing in 10 divisions. In 2017 we had to close our junior section (boys & girls under 18) due to lack of membership. In 2016 we had about 50 junior members and fielded teams in the U-8 to U-13 leagues (down from 70+ members in 2015). In 2017 only 13 boys signed up! The reasons for loss of membership were a combination of lack of interest in cricket, boys wanting to join bigger clubs and members following friends to other clubs. Cost was mentioned on a small number of occasions.

We fielded two adult teams in the OCA, divisions 5 and 9. Adult membership numbers continued to be borderline with about half our games played with less than 11 players. This is not unique to KCC – 3 other OCA teams folded during the year. KCC has very few members who live in Kennington. This makes it difficult to develop a club 'community' e.g. members don't bump into each other socially unless someone organizes an event. We tried to recruit players from Kennington but with somewhat limited success. The club lost £1,006 during the 2017 season, ending the year with reserves of just over £1,700. There are fixed costs for playing (ground rent, insurance, umpire fees, teas, match balls) and when we have less than 11 players in a team we often end up losing money on the game. The cricket square and outfield performed well in 2017. We will need to do some end-of-season work on the square at the end of 2018 as it is beginning to show signs of tiredness. The outfield could do with some weed spraying before the weeds take too much of a hold. Hopefully in 2018 we will be able to field two complete teams each week and the club will continue to provide a cricket facility in the village.

**7.9 Kennington Festival Group – Margaret Biggs reported as follows:**

The Group continue to meet every other Monday afternoon in the Village Centre for social get together for the over 60's. The afternoons offer a very friendly, social environment for a chat over a cup of tea and cake for £1 including a raffle ticket, following a game of Bingo or scrabble. Last year we had 4 lunches one of which was paid for by someone who wishes to remain anonymous when we all went to the Tandem who kindly let us stay there for the afternoon meeting. During the year we celebrated many special birthdays the last one for Mrs Keep who was 103 in January. We had minibus trips on the School/Community Bus4us to Lechlade and later to Winchester Christmas Market. Unfortunately Colin will be unable to drive the minibus for us after June so we are planning to go on one last trip with him before then. If anyone else would be willing to drive it for us please do let me know. We had a Garden Party at Mary Bakewell's where we tried our hand at Bell Ringing courtesy of Pat Mabbut and hosted another Strawberry tea for Breast Cancer Care which raised £118.30 for which we received a certificate. We were entertained at Christmas by Judy Lane and her group of singers and musicians which we all enjoyed. Our last meeting was on Easter Monday and although only 18 of us were there it was most enjoyable for those who would have been on their own otherwise, and we all had a raffle prize. Sadly our numbers are lower due to natural causes and we do miss our friends. If you know anyone who gets a bit lonely or needs a bit of variety in their life please do ask them to get in touch with me. Details can be



found in the Chronicle. Lastly a big thank you to Margaret our tea lady and to our volunteer drivers without whom some of our members could not attend.

**7.10 Kennington Good Neighbours – Margaret Biggs reported as follows:**

For 50 years the Good Neighbours have been offering help to residents of the Village in many ways but, now especially the elderly due to changes in the social structure of our lives. The Good Neighbours continue to offer transport, for those without, to local hospitals, Day Centres and amenities. The service is free but if parking is necessary then we ask that our clients pay this or use their own Blue badges. We belong to the Oxfordshire Community Network Volunteer Link up and our Drivers can apply online for an OCTA Badge to allow free parking at Local Hospitals and are covered by public liability Insurance. New volunteers now have to complete a DBS. We have 15 Volunteer Drivers who have completed about 150 journeys between them over the year but a few more would be very welcome to share the load. We also have a group of Drivers who take one person to hospital 3 times a week for treatment. We also have a few volunteers to visit the lonely or housebound people on a social basis but how we find out who they are is proving somewhat difficult. I have to say that I know many people who are not on our list who do visit their neighbours, and some have pastoral visits from the members of their churches so that may be the explanation. We are hoping to have a celebratory tea party later in the year for anyone who is or has been a Good Neighbour in the past. Please pass on their names to me if you or anyone you know who helped in any way over the years. There will be more information about us in the chronicle in the coming months. I thank all our volunteers, on your behalf, who help so many in this village.

**7.11 Kennington History Society – Linda Andrews reported as follows**

We have had another successful year as the calibre of our speakers remains high. We have had many informative, emotive and amusing topics. To date, our membership is 59 loyal members with several visitors coming throughout the year. Notable members have also sadly passed away. In September of 2017, our annual outing was a coach trip to Bristol and the historic dockyard was very impressive. Each year our coach is filled by approximately half of our members and the other half are people from the village that take up this opportunity to share the day with us. In September 2018, we are traveling to Coventry. We are a very welcoming group and our meetings are very well attended each month.

**7.12 Kennington Horticultural Society – Colin Charlett (on behalf of Brian Peedell) reported as follows:**

Kennington Horticultural Society (KHS) was founded 1939 and aims to promote horticulture in the village through a number of activities. Our annual programme commenced on 1 April and this year and includes a number of presentational talks/social events, coach outings, and a plant sale; this year on 5 May. In June we are running a five day holiday to south Wales visiting various gardens of interest. On 8 September we hold our annual show. Last year's membership reached just over 300. We understand we have the highest membership of any organisation in the village. A small committee, assisted from time to time by volunteers serves the KHS. We also have a number of vice presidents and honorary vice presidents, many of whom donate to the Society's funds. Apart from VP donations, KHS is fully self-funding and from time to time donates to projects in the village. Over the years' this has amounted to several hundred pound. For the second year running, you will not have failed to see the display of purple crocus throughout the village, a joint project with Oxford Isis Rotary and funded by the Society towards eradicating Polio. Members continue to maintain the War Memorial flower beds and receive a significant number of favourable comments. We aim to continue the project this year. Full programme details and other KHS information is published in the Kennington Chronicle... We now have our own website at: [www.kenningtonhortsoc.org.uk](http://www.kenningtonhortsoc.org.uk)

**7.13 Kennington Methodist Church – Doreen Biggadike reported as follows:**

Our usual services and meetings have continued during the year. Numbers attending still remain small. Coffee Mornings on the 2nd Tuesdays of the month are still well supported with local people enjoying a morning out. Helpers consist of members from the church and others from the village. The proceeds from these mornings help pay our gardener. An Amnesty letter is signed each week by members of the congregation and any Users of the church, if they wish. We hope that it will make a difference to the situation occurring at the time. One such letter concerned the disappearance of 43 students in Mexico and the seeming collusion of the Mexican police. A reply came back from the Mexican Ambassador to the U.K. detailing how Mexico had accepted international cooperation through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Issues relating to these



allegations were now being pursued. So sometimes our letters do make a difference.

Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations went well and we thank those who were involved in making it a success. We thank Mark Horseman for ensuring that information of this event went into Kennington Chronicle. There was a concert on the Saturday night with Claire Barrett and friends and there was an exhibition of past events. On Sunday there was an Anniversary service led by our Minister, Reverend Rosemary Davies which was followed by a buffet lunch provided by caterers. A strip of land has been sold alongside the driveway to the church to Mr. Breakspear in Upper Road. Trees alongside the borders of our grounds have been trimmed to make them more manageable. A window had been replaced during the year and the outside of the church had been painted.

We do have some sad news in that our Minister, Reverend Rosemary Davies will be preaching her last service with us on July 1st• Rosemary has been with us for 10 years and in that time has seen us through sad and joyous occasions. We will miss her dedication, of strengthening us in the faith and for her advice on all aspects of church life. She has also been a true friend. Rosemary's new appointment will be Superintendent of Neath and Port Talbot Circuit. Our new Minister, Reverend Doctor Stephen Maunder will begin in September.

**7.14 Kennington Overseas Aid – Sylvia Vetta reported as follows:**

In 1968 the question 'Who is my neighbour?' was discussed and the result was two organisations: 1) Kennington Good Neighbours which engages with our near neighbours. 2) The world was becoming increasingly interlinked so we held out the hand of friendship across our planet through KOA. A lot of the most active people volunteer for both. 3) 50 years later and over £500,000 raised we are celebrating our Golden Anniversary but it will be our final year. 4) As well as buildings in Kenya, Sudan, South Africa and Benin with our village's name on them, there are 4 water tanks for schools in Uganda with Kennington written on them. 5) Two weeks ago representatives of the some of the small charities we have supported talked to us about the ongoing effect of our projects. We have helped tens of thousands of people to change their lives for the better. Indeed of our two projects have influenced the policy of African Governments. I believe Kennington (Oxon) has been the only village in the world to do this.

I don't recall much support for KOA from the Parish Council over the 40 years I have been involved with KOA but it would be nice if someone could represent the PC at our final event on Sept 29. But KOA has also been about providing events that bring our village together and suit villagers of all ages and backgrounds. KADS came out of some early theatrical events for KOA. When there was a good music teacher in St Swithun's we set up KIDS 4 KOA –the final one is this Saturday. 20 years ago during the first spurt of Fun Runs we organised the Bagley Wood Fun Run /Walk. We believe the August pop- up shop may have been the first in Oxfordshire. It is sad that KOA will end this year but I do think the village can be proud of what we have achieved.

**7.15 40<sup>th</sup> Oxford Saw Scout Group – Ed Blagrove (on behalf of Kit Smith) reported as follows:**

Scouting in Kennington has had another good year. In our recent census we showed a youth membership of 68, plus 14 leaders, (for the first time in I guess 20 years with more male leaders than female), and a further 20 adults and young adults supporting us. We are of course particularly grateful for the adults who are still enthused to play with, guide, teach and share their skills with the young people of our community. Some are fleeting, some very long-standing and we are so thankful to them all, including the many unsung heroes: Steve Daniels (firework director), Pinky Severn (hall hire), Sandra Ward (treasurer), Sam Smith (secretary), Paul Hallam (health & safety) and Lorna Hind (waiting list) who behind the scenes do steady quiet work, or occasional spectaculars, all for free! Taken together, the efforts of all these adults mean that we operate incredibly smoothly, and our subs have been maintained at the 2012 level.

During 2017/18 we finished our kitchen refurbishment and as I write we are preparing for resurfacing of the bumpy "unmade" car park. We are enormously grateful to Kevin Summersbee for his time and favours called in to our benefit, orchestrating donations and being on call for other maintenance. We also had some reroofing done on our boat deck, and plan to have some further storage built. We are grateful to Alan Cobb for being in the right place at the right time to get our HQ listed on the street signs. It does make it easier for people to find us.

Resilience is something we keep hearing that 'modern' kids are severely lacking. I was therefore so encouraged and pleased to hear that around a dozen of our young members attended the Winter Challenge in March – a 9 mile cross country hike along the Ridgeway, in the snow. I can confirm that Beaver Scouts, Cub

Scouts and Scouts are most definitely not 'snowflakes'. One of our Scouts has beaten stiff competition and earned the right to attend the World Jamboree in West Virginia in July 2019, we are so excited for him. The press have reported that there are 50,000 UK kids on waiting lists who aren't able to Scout. We would love to reopen a second Beaver colony, which is where our shortage is. I invite anyone listening or reading, please do think seriously about what you might have to gain personally - and if it's time for you to stride across the meadows, squirt a fire extinguisher, pet a snake or sing as loud as you can, please talk to any of us, or email [kenningtonscouts@gmail.com](mailto:kenningtonscouts@gmail.com). You can do as little or as much as you want. If you're like most of us, you'll start off with a small project to accomplish, and then get enthused about everything else you might achieve!

**7.16 Kennington Strollers – Bob Johnston (on behalf of Rosemary Aldgate) reported as follows:**

Our report for 2017/18 is to advise you that Kennington Strollers met for ten short walks between May and the end of September last year to take exercise by walking around the Playing field at Playfield Road. The aim of the group is two-fold: to provide an opportunity for gentle exercise for those who haven't exercised for some time, either because of recent illness or a health problem, and secondly to provide an opportunity to meet others and be sociable after the walk, helping to alleviate social isolation.

We have five volunteers who are willing to walk alongside people who need a little support and encouragement. Typically our walkers are "older" people who might need some physical support to walk, sometimes due to mobility problems. However we cater for all age groups and welcome everyone who comes to walk. Whilst most of us do a gentle walk, a person might also choose to walk briskly or even jog gently around the field if they wanted to be more active. Walkers are encouraged to do as many or as few laps of the field as they feel able to. The advantage of using the playing field is that we can "keep an eye on" everyone easily, whereas on a walk with a linear route that is not possible if people go at different paces.

Last summer, we attracted between eight and ten people attending every walk. With five volunteers often available, this number of walkers is easily catered for, as we can provide a high level of support if needed. No one need walk on their own unless they prefer to,

In 2018, we will be working in partnership the Vale of White Horse Go Active Get Healthy team, who wish to focus on the problem of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is now a very common condition affecting millions of people. A poor and inactive "lifestyle" is often blamed for this condition i.e. we are not active enough and therefore getting overweight in the process, which can be one cause of diabetes (Type 2).

As someone with diabetes, I understand that this simplistic explanation is far from accurate and not always helpful to people with the condition. We are pleased that the Kennington Strollers have been asked to participate in encouraging people with diabetes (type 2) to become more active through walking for exercise as there is some evidence that the condition can be managed better through increasing exercise, and in some instances exercise can help to prevent diabetes developing.

We are looking forward to the start of our short walks on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 2pm and hope that our small contribution to keeping people more active is welcomed by villagers who might want to come along to our programme of ten free walks. Thanks once again go to the Parish Council who gave us a grant to enable us to hire their Pavilion and therefore incorporate a sociable element to the walks.

**7.17 Kennington Village Hall – Colin Charlett reported as follows:**

2017 saw a high level of bookings again, which has enabled us to keep the hire charges the same for 2018. Maintenance is becoming increasingly expensive and we are having to replace the boilers this year. Vandalism has been less of a problem, partly due to the installation of two more CCTV cameras. We are drawing up a programme of repairs and replacements to hopefully be carried out over the next two or three years to keep up the standard of the building and attract hirers. We have all the necessary safety certificates and risk assessments are carried out as required. We were pleased to welcome McIntyres into the old Social Club premises and it is nice to report that the library lease has at long last been renewed by the County Council. We are grateful to the parish council and the district council for grants we have received.

**7.18 Kennington Youth Club – Jenny Forder (on behalf of Mark Horseman) reported as follows:**

The Kennington youth club has made tremendous progress in the last year, under the leadership of Roy Peach, our new and very enthusiastic leader. He has turned the club around after a period of instability, and there are now about 30 children from years 5 - 8 regularly attending the sessions on a Wednesday evening. During the

year they have visited the police station in Abingdon, and Laser Combat at the Kassam, where great fun was had, and the noise they made was incredible. On quieter evenings, apples have been pressed into juice, (that made a lovely mess), pancakes have been made, and edible snowmen created, (though some bore little resemblance to snowmen), besides offering board games, pool, darts, and usually ending the evening with a team game. The young peoples' progress in the games has been recognised with a termly competition involving trophies, which has proved very popular.

The club had a serious financial shortfall of £2000 this year, and to address that several measures have been taken, including the restarting of the 50/50 club draw, trying to increase the income from hall bookings, as far as we are permitted, and to that end have carried out improvements to the premises. We have rearranged some contracts to reduce costs, and are grateful to people who have supported us financially including the parish council. Our financial goal for 2018/19 is to break even. Just recently the club was awarded the Ambition First Steps Quality Mark from AmbitionUK, which shows the club is delivering a verifiable high quality experience to the members. We are delighted for the help and assistance we have received from so many people and organisations, and are pleased that so many children come regularly.

**7.19 Patient Participation Group (PPG) – Sylvia Buckingham reported as follows:**

Botley and Kennington PPGs merged last autumn in line with the changes to Kennington Health Centre. It was considered a sensible move to ensure all patients would be represented and that both Botley and Kennington people could identify any concerns related to the changes. We also wanted to support the doctors whilst this change was occurring and keep patients informed. This merger has proved to be useful both in the PPG informing the practice manager and doctors of any issues and the practice manager and doctors informing the PPG of new developments and there has been cross fertilisation of ideas. For example there is a subgroup related to self-care which is active in identifying areas where patients may be able to help themselves.

In May we hope Margaret Biggs will attend our meeting again to tell us more about Good Neighbours as Botley is interested in understanding how it runs, and Kennington people also need an update on what they are doing. We are also organising more talks in the coming months and the first we hope will be on identifying how patients can help themselves to reduce the risk of cancer. We will put the date and time in the Chronicle when we have it. You will be aware that healthcare is going through unprecedented change and this will no doubt continue in the future. There is a Locality Forum (organised by Chairs of PPGs in the city) meeting on May 15th at West Oxford Community Centre to consider these changes in more detail. If you would like to attend please go to the Healthwatch Oxfordshire website where more details are available. All welcome and I am sure you will find it very informative. The buzz phrase at the moment is Social Prescribing and you may hear this from time to time. Essentially it is about how we in society can help each other stay well. To this end Botley have set up a walking group which meets fortnightly, we in Kennington are fortunate to have many groups already in existence and you could say that the village is ahead of its time in this area.

Our next PPG meeting is in Kennington on 14<sup>th</sup> of May at the Health Centre at 6pm we are always looking for more people who want to help support the practice and patients so if you are interested please come along.

**7.20 Kennington Thames Rainbows – Pauline Robinson reported as follows:**

In 2017 we celebrated not only the Rainbows 30th Birthday but our own 15th Anniversary. Prompted by a birthday card from Marple Rainbows via Marjorie Bennet we made cards for other Rainbow units, not only in our own District but further afield. We visited Rewley Road Fire Station where White Watch demonstrated their wonderful Fire Engine and its equipment. The highlights were sitting in the cab and using the big hose! We had a picnic at Sandford lock and a nature hunt from the Canal and River Trust website. We also visited the Radley College Countryside Centre to see the Beagles and other animals there. Most popular were the small puppies. Poppy, daughter of the manager and former Rainbow, was very efficient at handling all the animals and making sure none escaped!

We finished the summer term with a 'beach' party, though sea and sand ~ strictly in the imagination and not the Methodist garden. In the autumn we completed the Anglia so- Rainbow Birthday challenge which had a watery theme. We played fishy games, made origami paper fish and using coloured circles as scales made a fish collage. We visited Pets at Home and petted the rabbits and hamsters and were allowed to feed the fish. Holly, the demonstrator, presented the 30th Birthday badges. We had a Halloween evening making magic wands with breadsticks coated in cake decorations and spent 6th November making and firing pop-bottle

rockets. Eight Rainbows joined the Remembrance Day parade - the most ever. We are considering buying a flag as they are the only group which does not have one. At Christmas we made cards and decorations and joined the Brownies for a combined party. The new year saw us working on the Trefoil Guild All Sections Challenge with an activity for each letter of Trefoil. For 'F' when we made mocktails from four different fruit juices. We finished with a game of Comers using the four flavours and 'mocktail' in the centre. For 'R' we looked at old Guiding books and tried Kim's game. The books were very dull with lots of writing and a few black and white pictures not like the books of today. 'I' is for International so we celebrated Thinking Day with games from abroad and four Rainbows went to the Division Celebration too. 'L' is for Learn, one of the four core elements of the Rainbow programme but from the Challenge suggestions balloon modelling sounded fun. We discovered Fern makes a lovely dachshund dog while the less skilled made hats. 'T' is for teamwork. We treated the Trefoil Guild to Afternoon Tea in celebration of their 75th Anniversary. Many members stopped active Guiding before Rainbows were well established locally so it was a good chance to show them what we do. We ended with a promise ceremony for our new Rainbows. Our Chocolate Tombola at the District Table Top Sale made £38 and the two Rainbows who helped on the stall did a grand job. We currently have 15 Rainbows and are appreciative of the parent help on a rota basis. Two Kennington Guides are helping at Rainbows as part of their D of E service, Both were former Rainbows so it's rewarding to have them return and we welcome their help.

**7.21 Thames (Kennington) Trefoil Guild – Pauline Robinson (on behalf of Janet Pottle) reported as follows:**

Our Guild meets once a month on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church, Kennington except in August when we have no meeting. We have a membership of 25 ladies coming from Kennington, Cumnor, Sunningwell and Southmoor. Our monthly meetings are varied with outside speakers and also in house evenings as the latter helps to keep down our overheads. Since April 2017 we had a talk on Pets as Therapy with whippet Beth in attendance, and illustrated talks on Going by Water, cruising waterways at home and abroad, and Outreach Fiji about a dental team helping people with no access to dental care in isolated areas of Fiji. An evening of Quick Cooking for One was much enjoyed and a fitness instructor from Age UK gave us a lively evening of exercises. At our open meeting, when we invited other Guilds, we had a supper and entertainment from a talented singer. Our "in house" evenings were 3 members Talking about their Holidays, a Thinking Day celebration with breads from around the world, a talk about Norway with a display of beautiful Norwegian costumes, our Christmas Supper, our AGM and a beetle drive, an evening hearing about the history of Kennington Guides and an evening planning our Collage challenge to celebrate 75 years of the Trefoil Guild. This collage has been entered into a nationwide competition. Some members went to Benson Marina by bus in August to enjoy a summer tea except it was probably the wettest day in August! However the tea was delicious and the company good. Two members completed their Gold Voyage Awards and others are starting out on these challenges.

**7.22 Memorial Field – Rachel Brown (on behalf of Rachel Sanderson from Oxford Preservation Trust) reported as follows:**

Oxford Preservation Trust owns 113 acres of fields in Kennington, over which we permit public access. These are the Kennington Memorial Field, bought in 1946, and the riverside meadows from Sandford Lane up to the old railway line. These were acquired from Colin and Olive Walker in 1971, and from John Tait in 2001. The Sustrans track and Thames Path run through these fields. Following the disbandment of the Memorial Field Committee, Oxford Preservation Trust resumed responsibility for the management of the Memorial Field on 1 April 2016. The management regime remains the same, with the field grazed by cattle from April until the autumn. By managing the field traditionally by farming activities, a small part of the rural setting of this ancient village is preserved. In addition to the grazing, several volunteer work parties were held during the year to clear scrub from the bank. These were well attended by local residents and the Abingdon Green Gym and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the village for their time and help. Oxford Preservation Trust would also like to thank Kennington Parish Council for their grant towards the cost of a new information board which is currently being made.

Oxford Preservation Trust's riverside fields are also grazed and cut for hay when ground and weather conditions permit. The cattle will be back grazing as soon as the ground has dried out following the recent wet

weather. The downstream field was closed to public access during the construction of the Sandford Hydro but the good news is that the work finished on schedule in the autumn and walkers once again have permissive access to all OPTs fields. Although I am only a couple of miles away, I am very grateful to local walkers and the Parish Council for being my eyes and ears in the village and letting me know when things need attention – thank you all.

**7.23 St Swithun's Parish Church – Revd Rob Glenny reported as follows:**

It has been a good year in the life of St. Swithun's Parish Church. Our new Rector, Revd. Rob Glenny was welcomed with a licensing service led by Bishop Colin, the Bishop of Dorchester in August. Rob and his family live in the Vicarage in Radley and St. Swithun's continues to be part of the United Benefice of Radley, Sunningwell and Kennington. Social and fundraising activities have gone well this year. We were particularly pleased to hold a great Barn Dance in the Village Centre. Messy Church continues monthly (3rd Sunday with a 'blunt' start at 9.30!) and is a lovely, informal space to welcome families with young children, older folk ... anyone who wants to come! We have recently started a fortnightly Pram Service for parents / carers and toddlers and this is growing – seeing new people coming most weeks. We continue to hold our annual service for those who have been bereaved, but this year, we will be holding it in November. This is an important and well-attended service for those in the community who value it.

We continue to work closely with Kennington Methodist Church and are pleased to be jointly involved in our Remembrance Service and at other key points of the year. We also continue to jointly hold services about once a term in Mon Choisy and Kirlina Care Homes. We thoroughly enjoyed our 2017 fete with the School and KOA and are looking forward to the next one! We liaise with St. Swithun's School through a range of activities and it is a joy to host the Easter Experience and various other services throughout the year for the school at St. Swithun's; as well as going in to school for assemblies and Open The Book (drama group for assemblies based on stories from the bible)

We are in the process of actively fund raising to improve the facilities at St. Swithun's; so that we have a wheelchair accessible toilet, baby changing facilities and a small kitchenette in the main church building. This will help enormously with a range of activities in the church and open the space up for wider use too.

One of the key activities of the parish this year has been the Joint Working Group with Kennington and Radley Parish Councils - working to advocate for the very best outcomes for our communities and to think about how we can welcome people when they eventually move into the new housing and ensure the continued growth of a strong, vibrant community. Included in this is working the parish councils on the possibility of some kind of small community facility in the new housing development on the South Kennington site. It is a privilege to be involved in this and we hope to continue to work closely with both councils as and when planning permission is granted and building begins.

**7.24 Friends of Kennington Library – Jenny Forder reported as follows:**

The Friends of Kennington Library exists in order to support the OCC library service through contributions towards the staff salaries, and the provision of volunteer help within the library. Kennington is a Community Library. The Friends have continued to succeed in their endeavours thanks to the many enthusiastic volunteers and to the members whose generosity is often remarkable. Our fund-raising activities during the year have ranged from a family disco and a Quiz Night in the autumn, (the latter sponsored most generously by Tonks Brothers), and a Festival of Arts this last weekend which attracted people from both within the village and further afield to a wide range of talks and activities; there was something for all ages. Our free events such as Story and Rhyme times, Story and Craft sessions in school holidays and the national Summer Read with its associated activities, have continued to be well attended with a marked increase in the numbers attending our monthly author talks. All these free events are clearly much appreciated by our community and funded by FOKL. We are also proud to be the first Community Library in the county where the Friends fund Outreach work by the librarian at times when our library is normally closed. This has so far allowed for school visits to the library and for staff visits to schools which would be impossible during normal opening times. We plan to extend such events for organisations such as the Youth Club and the care homes in the village in the coming months. In short, FOKL is busy and successfully meeting its aims!

**7.25 Kennington United and Church Choirs – Rachel Brown (on behalf of Christine Ravenscroft) reported as follows:**

2017 was another busy year in the life of the Choirs, with concerts in various parts of Oxfordshire. In April we performed Dvorak's Stabat Mater in the splendid Exeter College Chapel, with a full audience, in June/July four concerts of Gilbert & Sullivan's The Mikado at Abingdon, Witney, and Kennington, then back to The Holywell Music Room in November for Handel's Messiah followed by another four concerts in December of Gilbert & Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance at Witney, Abingdon, and Kennington.

As most of you probably know the Choirs do not charge admission to any of our performances but take collections for various charities. We are pleased to say that during 2017 the total amount collected was £22,700.52 shared between Medic Assist International, The Abingdon Bridge, Christian Aid, KOA, The Porridge Club (Africa), and Action for Children. Since the Choirs were formed in 1973 a total of £527,935.42 has been collected and we donate every penny to the charities – no expenses are taken out.

Unfortunately we were unable to sing Christmas Carols in the Covered Market in 2017, as we usually do, to raise funds for Save the Children but hope to do so in December 2018.

The Choirs continue to be grateful to our soloists, who give their services free, and also Denise Evans, our pianist, and other occasional pianists when Denise is not available. They provide the music at our Friday evening rehearsals – their contributions are a source of joy and professionalism to everyone.

By the end of 2016 we had raised over half a million pounds (£505,234.90) since the Choirs were formed in 1973 and we thought it would be a good idea to have a celebration. So in June 2017, 96 choir members and families went on a five-hour return Steamer trip on the River Thames to Abingdon. We decorated the Steamer with balloons, bunting, etc., had a sing-a-long, took our picnics and had a celebration cake. The weather, hot and sunny, couldn't have been better, and everyone enjoyed the occasion, some heading off home with sunburn!

We are delighted that our Choirmaster, Trevor Cowlett, is still able to lead us and knock us into shape at rehearsals so that we can give of our best at the concerts. We are always looking for new members, there are no subscriptions and no auditions. If anyone feels they would like to join us please contact Trevor (735885 or email [info@kenningtonchoir.org.uk](mailto:info@kenningtonchoir.org.uk)) – we would be pleased to welcome you. Visit our website [www.kenningtonchoir.org.uk](http://www.kenningtonchoir.org.uk) for further details.

We also acknowledge the valued support of Kennington residents, and others, when they come to our performances and we sincerely hope they go away having had an uplifting time whilst remembering those less fortunate than themselves.

Our next concert will be Brahms: Requiem and Vivaldi: Gloria in Exeter College Chapel on Sunday 15th April at 3.00pm.

#### **8. Suggestions/Comments from Parishioners**

It has been suggested that an event to commemorate 100 years since the end of World War 1 could take place in the Village Hall alongside the usual Remembrance Day parade. If you would like to be involved, please contact the Clerk.

**Signed .....** **Date .....**