

Annual Report 2024 to 2025



**KINGSWOOD
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Published at the Annual Assembly, May 2025



**Making Kingswood a Great Place
to Grow Up and Grow Old**

CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR	3
A look back at our achievements	
WHAT DOES KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL DO?	4
Making a difference locally	
WHAT OTHERS DO LOCALLY	5
South Gloucestershire Council and others	
EVENTS	6 & 7
Something for everyone	
COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME AND PROJECTS	8 & 9
Making a local impact	
AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE CHAIR	10
The glue that holds us together	
SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES	11
Helping with the stress of everyday life	
AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE CHAIR	12
Protecting our neighbourhood	
AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE CHAIR	13
Meet our staff	
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL	14
Our best bits	
WHO WE ARE	15
The faces of Kingswood Town Council and their contact details	
HOW TO GET IN TOUCH	16
Cut out and keep	



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to write in our first annual report and update you of our achievements in the last 2 years and look at our plans for the coming year.

For those who are not familiar, Kingswood Town Council was only created on 4th May 2023, and over the last 2 years it has successfully recruited its 15 strong councillor team and created a structure that has developed a four-year vision of how the council can bring direct benefits to the residents of Kingswood. The council is fully operational, visible, and creating opportunities for partnership work in the town. Our vision has been translated into several projects that the staffing team are implementing, and we are really excited about the year ahead.

I would like to thank all councillors for their time and efforts, as this is an unpaid role with very specific and far-reaching responsibilities, and for continuing to champion the local interests. From time to time there are vacancies on the council, and I encourage anyone who wishes to consider contributing to local life to become a councillor. It is rewarding and a great way to contribute to making Kingswood a great place to live.

I am particularly proud of our role in the Community Grant Scheme which, in its first year, has awarded almost £50,000 to local groups. It means that money stays in the local area, and volunteers get the support that is often hard to come by. It means that money stays in the local community, and volunteers get the support they need to turn their ideas into reality, and the residents get the benefit of new services or events. Our annual event programme is innovative and exciting, with something for everyone, and my personal highlight was to walk in the parade on Remembrance Day. With many more events planned, we look forward to meeting you all.



Kingswood has a fantastic network of groups and charities delivering a huge range of services, and I really do believe that we can make Kingswood a great place to grow old. Please keep this newsletter, as there are dates and contact details that might be of interest. If you can, follow us on social media and attend one of our council meetings, where you will find us a friendly and welcoming bunch.

Stephen Forsythe

*Chair of Kingswood Town Council
2024 to 2025*

WHAT DOES KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL DO?

The town council is a legally constituted body with legal powers and duties. It differs from South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), as it is known as the lowest tier in local government and the councillors are from the immediate area, and accountable to the residents of Kingswood only. Town councils have fewer statutory responsibilities (things that need to be done), and more freedom to do things that really make an impact and difference at local level and can focus on impactful and visible activities and services. It is funded from your council tax and developer contribution.

Kingswood Town Council was only created two years ago, and with no land or buildings it is still finding its feet. With 15 councillors and 2 members of staff though it really has punched above its weight and is proud of its achievements in two years. Here are some of the things the council provides or does:

- **Represents the community in responses to public consultations**
- **Listens and responds to community needs**
- **Signposts and supports residents with queries**
- **Holds regular public meetings and visits to local organisations**
- **"Pop Up" meet your councillor in the library each month**
- **Extensive local information via social media and website**
- **Comments on Planning Applications as a statutory consultee**



- **Installed the colourful Floral Displays and the Christmas Lights**
- **Supports new initiatives, sometimes with funding, and enables collaboration**
- **Extensive partnership work with SGC, Kings Chase Shopping Centre, the Police and many others**

In addition, we have highlighted our new initiatives on pages 6 to 14.

Could you be our next councillor?

Ever wondered if you could be a councillor? Why not come and attend a council meeting to see us in action. From time-to-time councillors will step down, creating a vacancy. If you meet the criteria, this is a real opportunity to get involved in the local community, to be a voice for locals, to influence the activities and services that are being provided locally, and if nothing else, it's a monthly Tuesday council meeting with interesting people, deciding on some amazing things. Further details are on our website.

WHAT DOES KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL NOT DO?

There is often some confusion over the roles and responsibilities of the different councils. Some of the functions that South Gloucestershire Council are responsible for are:

- Education, schools and learning (school places and term dates)
- Elections – SGC, WECA and town council
- Environmental Health (including noise pollution and pest control)
- Housing (council housing and housing benefits)
- Library Services
- Planning, Development and Building Control
- Registry Services (birth, deaths, marriages, partnerships)
- Safeguarding and Social Care (fostering, and public health)
- Transport, streets and parking (including road repairs and bus routes)
- Waste Collection and Recycling Centre (as well as street cleaning, litter and fly tipping, missing bin collections and ordering new bins)

- **SGC also collects council tax on behalf of the town council**

In Kingswood, South Gloucestershire Council manages a number of public open spaces that includes parks, skate parks, commons and allotment sites, including Grimsbury Farm.

The above list is not exhaustive and the council's website, www.southglos.gov.uk is easy to use. It also has a Report It page if you have an issue to be resolved.

Alternatively, you can visit the One Stop Shop in person, located in the Civic Centre, High Street, where you can make an appointment and can receive help with council tax and reductions, housing benefit, homelessness and housing waiting lists, community care, road repairs, grants and enquiries about the planning process.

The phone number for the One Stop Shop is **01454 868000**.

Your Member of Parliament is Damien Egan, and he can be contacted via his constituency office by email: damien.egan.mp@parliament.uk





We have had a brilliant year of putting on events and activities in Kingswood in partnership with local organisations, businesses and charities.

We've loved having the opportunity to bring the local community together at our large events such as the Kingswood Lantern Parade in Kingswood Park and the Remembrance Day Parade along the High Street, with the Service of Remembrance at Holy Trinity Church.

We've also engaged with smaller groups at our more targeted activities which have included craft sessions and activities inside Kingswood Library, Christmas wreath making at the Kingswood Museum and working with Yarn & Yardage to bring yarn related joy to the High Street.

CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOPS

8TH DECEMBER 2024
10:00 & 13:00
KINGSWOOD MUSEUM

THIS IS A NOT FOR PROFIT ACTIVITY WITH A SUGGESTION DONATION OF £10 ON THE DAY WHICH WILL GO TO A LOCAL CHARITY

WANT TO COME ALONG?
EMAIL: EVENTS@KINGSWOOD-TC.GOV.UK
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE.
LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE FOR EACH SESSION!

Community litter pick in Kingswood for the Kingswood Tidy Spring clean
29.3.2025 10:00 - 12:00

Pick up your bit from the Tidy Trolley Clean, Litter, Rubbish, a bag full of rubbish, and receive a great full drink and cake at a thank you.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HALL, HIGH STREET, KINGSWOOD, BS15 4AB

WE ARE BS15

Any questions? Please contact: events@kingswood-tc.gov.uk

KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

INVITE YOU TO AN **AFTERNOON TEA**

TO CELEBRATE THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY ON THE 8TH MAY 14:00-16:00.

EMAIL EVENTS@KINGSWOOD-TC.GOV.UK TO FIND OUT MORE!

EASTER EGG HUNT & BONNET MAKING

FREE!

Friday 11th April
10:00-12:00
Kingswood Park
High Street
Kingswood
BS15 4AD

WE ARE BS15

CELEBRATE THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF **VE DAY**

THURSDAY 8TH MAY 2025
18:30-21:45
KINGSWOOD PARK

BRING ALONG A PICNIC OR FISH & CHIPS TO ENJOY IN THE PARK

AT 21:30 A LANTERN OF PEACE WILL BE LIT. THIS WILL HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME ACROSS THE UK

MUSIC
SAM EASON 18:30-20:00
BRISTOL EAST 8 KINGSWOOD BRASS BAND 20:00-21:30

WE ARE BS15

SOREN PRESENTS - BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2024

FROM ROOTS TO MIGHTY TREES: A CELEBRATION OF BLACK STORIES

FROM 11 AM TO 3 PM

SUNDAY OCTOBER 27TH - KINGSWOOD PARK
MONDAY OCTOBER 28TH - PAGE PARK

FREE ENTRY

Come and embrace Black History Month by discovering inspiring stories up the trees!

- Books for Children up to 12 years old
- Storytelling performances
- Leave the book after reading it

For more information email soren-committee@outlook.com

We have lots of exciting plans in the pipeline for the year ahead! From Kingswood Town Council, you can look forward to large community events across the seasons, starting with a celebration for the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day on **8th May**, a busy summer programme, the Remembrance Day Parade and service on the **9th November** and lots of festive activities at Christmas.

As well as our own programme of activities, we collaborate with others, and have awarded funds to NEST and Movema to deliver a community event entitled "Celebrate With Me" in Kingswood as part of the Bristol Refuge Festival on the **15th June**. We have also given funds to support the South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day which will take place on the **28th June** in Staple Hill.

We are working with South Gloucestershire Council on a family fun day in Kingswood Park on **13th July**.

We are always looking for local organisations and charities to work with on our events programmes. We also need lots of volunteers to help make our events happen so if you'd like to get involved or have an idea, please get in touch with our Community Engagement and Events Officer.

Alice Twinn

Community Engagement and Events Officer,
Kingswood Town Council

t: **0117 4577163** m: **07777 185993**

e: **events@kingswood-tc.gov.uk**



COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME AND PROJECTS

The Community Grant Scheme is making a huge impact! What a success this scheme has been! From awards for gardening equipment to holiday play schemes and facility improvements, we have ensured that a wide range of organisations and activities have been supported.



ORGANISATION	AMOUNT
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School	£1,250
Whitfield Tabernacle	£5,000
Kingswood Heritage Museum	£10,000
We are BS15	£4,980
South Gloucestershire Youth Housing	£1,039
Kingswood Rugby Club	£5,000
Friends of Holy Trinity Church	£387
The Brightwell	£600
Nest/Movema	£5,000
Kingswood History Society	£500
Turtle Play Scheme	£4,000
Our Lady of Lourdes Preschool	£4,400
Date Palm Foundation	£4,429
Total	£46,585



COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME AND PROJECTS

We are running the scheme for a second year and the dates for you to be aware of are below: Please visit our website where you will find our policy, further information and application form. If you have ANY queries, please phone before you submit your form.

Summer Scheme Closing Date:

Monday 10th June 2025 for a Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 24th June 2025

Winter Scheme Closing Date:

Monday 10th November 2025 for a Finance and Administration Committee meeting on 25th November 2025

Spring Scheme Closing Date:

Monday 9th February 2026 for a Finance and Administration committee meeting on 24th February 2026

"The new play equipment is really creative and it means we can choose to do different things on break like make performances, it's really popular! It's great for role playing and to have a safe area for play away from the sports area, some of the younger children make little bands and do music shows on the stage."

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School pupils Niamh and Beau

LIBRARY SUPPORT

In addition to giving the grants to local organisations, we can also help with the provision of local services. We responded to a call from SGC to ensure that libraries remain as accessible as possible to the community, while helping to meet the ongoing budgetary constraints facing SGC.

The Town Council has been able to give a grant that will ensure that two weekly young children and parent sessions can continue, and we are collaborating with the library staff to bring a greater number of activities to the local residents. This includes regular craft sessions and are hoping to introduce walks and talks across the road in Kingswood Park.



FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

As Chair of this committee, I am particularly proud of the community grant scheme that was launched in May 2024, after the council had set its first operational budget. Giving back to the local community to make things happen in the neighbourhood is real local democracy at work. Your voice is heard, and funds can be put to good use to make a big difference. I am delighted that at the end of our first year we have awarded almost £50,000.

While it is rewarding to give out these awards, there is also a serious side to the Finance and Administration Committee, which is to ensure that the public funds that the council is custodian of are managed in a manner that is transparent, free of risk, and ensures that value for money is achieved and where possible the money is spent locally.

The council is funded via your council tax and the average Band D household pays Kingswood Town Council £8 per month. This is spent across a number of services and projects, that all have a direct bearing on as many people as possible: from the respected Remembrance Parade to the partnership work with the Kingswood Museum, to parents and toddlers activities in the library, to the provision of significant funds to support young people and their families manage the stresses and strains of everyday life. Our overheads and staffing costs are kept to a minimum, especially as the council does not have any office space currently and the staff hot desk locally.

As the council is still in set up phase, some of the funds are being put aside until the projects that we are supporting can get going. We are hopeful that in the coming years we will have a physical base that will act as a community hub, as well as negotiate with South Gloucestershire Council to take on some assets to manage at the most local level.

We receive developer funding, known as the Community Infrastructure Levy, and have made a





KINGSWOOD
TOWN
COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR VACANCY
KINGS CHASE NORTH WARD

Are you passionate about Kingswood?
Why not apply to become a town councillor?

It's a great opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the future of the town by getting involved in some exciting projects, as well as gaining new skills and meeting new people.



HOW TO APPLY:

Either phone, email, or visit the website for further details inc: criteria to be eligible to become a councillor and an application form.

Closing date for applications is :
2nd April 2025
Applicants must be able to attend the council meeting on:
8th April 2025 at 7pm

FIND OUT MORE:

0117 4576531
clerk@kingswood-tc.gov.uk
www.kingswood-tc.gov.uk
Come along to one of our full council meetings (dates on our website)

commitment to invest this back into public open spaces and play areas: the first award will be for play equipment in a local park.

Richard Bentham
Chair of the Finance & Administration
Committee 2024-2025

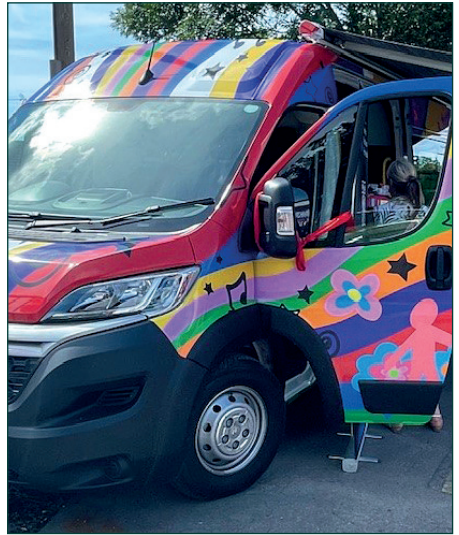
SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The town council's vision is that young people, children and their families should be central to its plans, and we have been working with partners to shape a package of services available to Kingswood residents and those who attend schools in Kingswood.

Working with South Gloucestershire Council Young People's Team, and with Creative Youth Network (CYN), we are funding two new roles: A full time Youth Worker and a full time Wellbeing Practitioner. The two roles will work together but offer different levels of support to young people. The Wellbeing Practitioner is specifically trained to work with young people with mild to moderate mental health issues and the can provide low intensity CBT and teach young people self-help tools which they can then continue to use later in life.

The youth worker will be attending youth clubs and be networking in schools and clubs to get to know young people, and identify their needs, in Kingswood.

The town council is also funding an additional one night per week of detached youth work, using "Doris", the mobile youth van. The team of youth workers will be out on Tuesday evenings in Kingswood and details of their route and timings can be found on the CYN website.



If you use the QR code (above) it will take you to the referral page on the CYN website.

PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

The Planning and Highways Committee meets monthly to consider planning applications in Kingswood, in the capacity of a statutory consultee. We view the plans online and will make a site visit, remaining on public land and not being intrusive. Our recommendations as to whether to support or to object to the application are based on both national and local planning policies.

We have considered almost 140 applications in the last 12 months, and we consider the impact on the local area, that adequate parking is provided, that the design is not out of keeping with the area and that planning policy is followed. To this end some of the applications are not supported. Councillors and the town clerk keep up to date with the changing landscape of planning policy by attending training seminars.

Members of the public can attend these public meetings, with all the details being on our website. Thanks to Elsie, the dog of Councillor Massey who has never objected to any of the plans: he gets to walk the pavements of Kingswood while his owner visits the properties.

Street Naming: Bringing Our Boys Home

One of our first projects was to consider our approach to Street Naming. When invited to name a new street, the council would like to acknowledge Kingswood's heritage and select a name from the Town War Memorial.

This idea gained momentum around the time of the 80th anniversary year of the D-day landings, when the council's first request was made, and the Bringing Our Boys Home project took shape. The first name selected was Wilfred Osborne who is buried in the Kranji war cemetery in Singapore. The small development near Grimsbury Farm currently under construction will be named Osborne Close in his honour.



Jim Corrigan

*Chair of the Planning and
Highways Committee 2024-2025*

In order to make things happen, you need people, and they are the backbone of this council, from our 15 councillors, to our two members of staff.

Charlotte Littlewood, our full time town clerk has been with us since November 2023, initially setting up the business side of the council (bank account, systems, implementing procedures and generally getting us to a point of operating). She then guided us through lengthy discussions to shape our purpose, vision, and focus to create our first Strategic Plan and is now implementing our projects.

There is a serious side to Charlotte's job, which is ensuring that the cycle of council meetings, where all discussions take place, all decisions are made and all spending authorised, has momentum, ensuring that the council website is kept up to date, that councillor vacancies are filled, that the councillors are given training opportunities, that the public are regularly informed and have the opportunity to speak at meetings and that the council's finances are properly managed, with a focus on reducing risks and being transparent. It's a busy job.

Charlotte was joined in July 2024 by Alice Twinn, our full time Community Engagement and Events Officer, who has been busy organizing a programme of exciting events and activities, networking with organisations and individuals to bring ideas to life and generally finding out what makes people in Kingswood tick.

Alice also has to ensure that there are policies in place to protect people at events, that they are captured for prosperity with good imagery, that the public know what is going on through a range of mixed communications, and ensuring that where possible, funds are spent in the local area. No day is ever the same.

We are lucky to have this staffing team, who are both qualified in their respective fields, and bring a real zest and energy to the council. Charlotte is a Fellow Member of the Society of Local Council Clerks, having worked in town councils in Wiltshire and Somerset. Alice has experience bringing people together and in

former roles has managed large events and venues, she also ran her own walking food tour company in Bristol.

Sean Rhodes

Chair of the Staffing Committee 2024-2025



Sean Rhodes



Charlotte Littlewood



Alice Twinn

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL



KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCILLIORS



**KINGSWOOD
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Councillors as of
1st May 2025**



Diane Bentham
Kings Chase North
cllr.d.bentham@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Richard Bentham
Kings Chase North
cllr.r.bentham@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Hazel Alsum
Kings Chase North
cllr.h.alsum@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Sean Rhodes
Kings Chase South
cllr.s.rhodes@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Kenneth Rabone
Kings Chase South
cllr.k.rabone@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Tracey Kovacs
Kings Chase South
cllr.t.kovacs@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



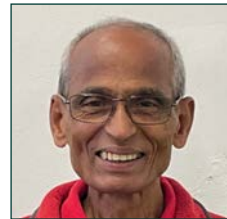
Alison Evans
Woodstock
cllr.a.evans@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Maria Ingram-Cotton
Woodstock
cllr.m.ingram-cotton@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



James Corrigan
Woodstock
cllr.k.rabone@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



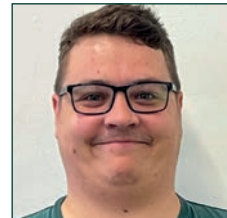
Rafick Ackbar
Warmley Hill
cllr.r.ackbar@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



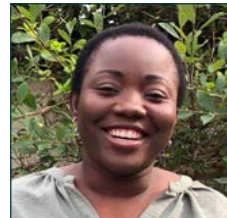
Alex Massey
Warmley Hill
cllr.a.massey@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



James Hackett
New Cheltenham
cllr.j.hackett@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Stephen Forsythe
Lower Soundwell
cllr.s.forsythe@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Comfort Iyiewuare
Lower Soundwell
cllr.c.iyiewuare@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



Steve Evans
Lower Soundwell
cllr.s.evans@kingswood-tc.gov.uk



KINGSWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

www.kingswood-tc.gov.uk

Email: clerk@kingswood-tc.gov.uk Tel: 0117 4576531



Website



Facebook



Instagram



Creative Youth Network

