



Cllr. Martin King – Chair of Higher Kinnerton Community Council for 2025-2026

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of Higher Kinnerton Community Council (HKCC) for the year ending 31 March 2026 during which time I was Chair of HKCC.

HKCC is essentially a non-political Council comprising of nine Community Councillors who are named below with eight Councillors in 2024-25 being residents of Higher Kinnerton.

- Cllr. Martin King (elected as Chair at the annual meeting in May 2025)
- Cllr. Chris Upton (elected as Vice Chair at the annual meeting in May 2025)
- Cllr. Mike Allport
- Cllr. Carroll Nugent
- Cllr. Josh Swash
- Cllr. Joe Cooper
- Cllr. Fallon Turrisi
- Cllr. Peter Cottam
- Cllr. Klaus Armstrong-Braun

The Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer, Liz Corner, who had been in post since August 2009, resigned from the post with effect from 31st March 2026.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Council's only significant source of income is the precept. This is the amount that Flintshire County Council collects from Higher Kinnerton residents for HKCC as part of its Council Tax arrangements. The precept in 2025-26 was £36,584 which meant a charge of £40.95 for an average band D property. The precept is calculated in accordance with a detailed budget prepared by HKCC and the agreed budget is then reported to Flintshire County Council who arrange for the budget to be supported by the precept which residents contribute to via Council Tax payments.

In addition to the precept, other receipts included the allotment rental of £210.00 and newsletter advertising receipts of £1,070. Receipts from newsletter advertising partially offset the £2,390 total cost of producing the newsletter.

Expenditure excluding staff costs for the year totalled £ 45439.62. In terms of projects, the largest item of expense undertaken was the purchase and installation of the new village bench for the village at a net cost of £2794.00. Other significant items of expenditure included the village day event, the Christmas event, grants and donations to support village organizations and local community groups and the provision of the summer playscheme.

A full breakdown of income and expenditure is included in the Annual Accounts which are summarized within the Annual Return on HKCC's website.

RELATIONSHIP WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SCHOOLS

The Council works closely with the local Flintshire County Councillor, Mike Allport, who is also a member of HKCC. The Clerk and Councillors also have a positive working relationship with officers of Flintshire County Council, which has been fostered over many years and facilitates good working relations with many services.

HKCC has a close working relationship with the Village Hall Management Committee and with 1st Kinnerton Scouts and the groups provide mutual support to each other with collaborative work including organization of the Village Day, the Christmas Event and the summer playscheme.

The Council has close links with the local primary school with Cllr. Martin King and Cllr Mike Allport also being members of the school's governing body.

TRAINING PLAN

Councillors attend training courses as appropriate and HKCC is a Member of One Voice Wales which facilitates most of the training needs for local Councils. HKCC's Training Plan was approved by the Community Council in November 2025 and published on HKCC's website.

ACCOUNTS & AUDIT

Proper accounting practice for community councils is set out in legislation and the Governance and accountability for local councils in Wales – A Practitioners' Guide. The Practitioners' Guide requires that community councils prepare their accounts in the form of an Annual Return which comprises the annual accounting statements and the annual governance statement.

Each year the Council's accounts and internal controls are subject to a comprehensive internal audit by a qualified accountancy firm and are then further examined by Audit Wales as the external auditor for Town and Community Councils. The outcome of all audits, including previous year's audits, are published on HKCC's website.

In terms of the latest internal audit report for the year ending 2026, the internal auditor has concluded that HKCC's system of internal controls were in place, adequate for the purpose intended and effective. No internal control issues were identified and the internal auditor confirmed HKCC had maintained a robust set of books and records for the financial year.

At the time of writing and publication of this report, the full external audit for 2025-2026 by Audit Wales is pending. The latest report and audit opinion of the external auditor for the year ending 2025 further confirmed the Annual Return had been prepared in accordance with proper practice, relevant legislation and regulatory requirements and is consistent with the Council's governance arrangements and the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2026-2027

- To recruit a permanent Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. At the time of publishing this report, the Community Council has appointed Dewi Jones as the Council's locum Clerk with support being provided by the previous Clerk.
- To strengthen and streamline the newsletter advertising arrangements.
- To facilitate the provision of a Dragon Sports summer camp for children in the village.
- To continue to support village organizations and local community groups via donations and grants, to work collaboratively with the Village Hall Committee to organize and host the village Christmas event and re-visit the hosting of the Community Evening to ensure it remains local and focused on those who contribute to our village.
- To continue to robustly scrutinize planning applications and to make comments where appropriate.
- To continue to promote activities to enhance and improve biodiversity within the community. Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, community & town councils have a duty to set out how they are maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.
- To continue to engage with FCC regarding Street Scene matters in especially challenging times with the Council and the Clerk have been spending increasing amounts of time liaising with residents and chasing FCC regarding Street Scene matters on behalf of residents and noting HKCC have no remit to undertake Street Scene works.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Council organized and hosted the Village Day held on Saturday 9th August. With live musical entertainment, plenty of stalls and sideshows, all manner of activities for children of all ages, and the spectacle of the traditional races and tug of war there was plenty to entertain. It was wonderful to see so many smiles as villagers relaxed and chatted in the warm afternoon sunshine. The Council were especially thankful to 1st Kinnerton Scouts for hosting the barbecue and to all the local community groups who helped ensure the event was a success.

The Council facilitated the provision of the 2025 Dragon Sports summer camp by Aura Leisure, which was a great success with positive feedback and comments from parents. Detailed attendance and feedback reports had been prepared by Aura Leisure and duly reviewed by members at the October 2025 meeting.

Following support from residents, once the relevant permissions from FCC had been obtained, the Village Bench was delivered and is now placed on the corner of the Sandy Lane/Bennetts Lane for all to enjoy.

The Council arranged for publication of the monthly village newsletter throughout the year which is distributed via a network of volunteers whose contribution is invaluable. The newsletter provides an invaluable opportunity to share details about new projects and developments such as the Village Bench and village events and to share community news and updates along with other articles of interest.

The Council organized and hosted the annual Christmas event, with support from members of the Village Hall Committee, welcoming residents to enjoy an evening with mulled wine and mince pies and musical performances by Ysgol Derwen School Choir and Royal Buckley Town Band. The event was well attended and well received.

In support of HKCC's biodiversity initiatives and to enhance the village, the volunteer group kindly assisted with replenishing the flower planters around the village.

SUMMARY – by Cllr. Martin King – Chair of Higher Kinnerton Community Council 2025-26

HKCC has focused on achieving what was possible during this past year. For a small sized council with a part-time Clerk, Higher Kinnerton Community Council achieves a great deal on behalf of its residents including publishing and arranging for distribution of a comprehensive monthly newsletter, organizing events such including Village Day, the Christmas event and the summer sports camp, facilitating several village enhancements including biodiversity enhancements and play area improvements, responding to a wide variety of residents' concerns and suggestions for improvement, managing the allotments and supporting a team of volunteers who provide an invaluable contribution to the village.

In recent years Community Councils have faced challenges in the form of an increasingly complex audit regime and County Councils cutting back on traditional services to local communities and changes to the role Community Councils are expected to perform all of which have potential budgetary implications. The above provides an overview of the Community Council's activities, achievements, and budgetary processes during 2025-2026.

In May 2026, whilst I stepped down as Chair to HKCC, the Chair of HKCC for 2026-27 is Cllr. Josh Swash, a long-serving and committed member of HKCC. I wish to thank HKCC members and especially the Clerk for their support and contributions to our village during my tenure as Chair.

Further information relating to the Community Council, including financial and governance information, can be found on the Higher Kinnerton Community Council website.