

## **KWMCC Report for Annual Town Meeting – April 25/26**

### **Overview 25/26:**

It has been an excellent year for all at KWMCC. We have really worked hard on hosting free or low-cost Community Events for all residents, improving our overall facilities, looked at more accessibility in and around our centre and created ‘something for the diary’ experiences for residents of all ages to look forward to.

### **Facilities:**

We have been highly successful in improving our facilities both indoors and outdoors over the last 12 months.

With our new Groundsman Simon now fully underway in his role, we have seen the quality of our outdoor pitches move from ‘adequate’ to ‘very good’ which is testament to his hard work. With grants from the FA and other partners our machinery equipment has been upgraded and storage facilities purchased so that Simon has the best tools required to make outdoor sports grounds the best they can be in Suffolk.

Steven our Facilities Manager has spent the past year repainting and redecorating each room and we can be very pleased with how the entire site is currently looking, with a total refresh of the Stour Room to become a conference-like facility. We now have state of the art projectors in each room, which is great for our hirers, and shortly a large projector to be installed in our Ropes Hall for the big screen.

Our Ropes Hall has seen major work on the flooring which will give it many more years of life, to which we thank SPARK for their funding to do so. Their help and support is invaluable and indeed working in partnership with their Trustees we have been able to improve other facilities as well (see below).

### **Wheelchair Access / Sports:**

Last year I mentioned that we were looking to improve access facilities and sporting options for residents and visitors of all abilities. I am pleased to say that we are moving full steam ahead on that front. With thanks to East Suffolk Communities funding programme, we now have fully accessible doors to the Sports Hall. Opened by Kesgrave’s Olympic Paralympian Kevin Curtis at the end of the year, these doors provide space to gain entrance to the many indoor sports we host.

With thanks to support from SPARK, we have two new Table-Tennis Tables which are of International Table Tennis Federation Standard for families and friends to play indoors. These are also wheelchair friendly which is a great asset to all residents.

We have also created wheelchair openings on both sides of our Petanque Piste and have already seen this used in our Pétanque local leagues, another good news story.

Finally, with thanks to ESC Locality budget, we will shortly have wheelchair access doors to our Bowls Pavilion!

We have a larger project in the planning phase currently where we could see 2 x Padel Courts (one of the fastest growing sports in the UK) here on site. In partnership with the Tennis Club & SPARK we are hopeful that this could come to fruition later in the summer of 2026. There is a long way to go yet but we are hopeful to provide this facility to the residents of Kesgrave as it's a sport for all ages.

This again shows how far we have come over the last 12 months and future planning, so that sports at KWMCC can be played by people of all ages and abilities.

### **Staff Updates:**

Molly our Marketing & Events took time out for maternity leave last year and she is now back working, so congratulations to her and her young family.

We have had several caretakers retire since the last report, but we have recruited well so that there is always a caretaker on site during the whole of the working day 8am – 10pm and thanks to them all for their hard work for the community.

### **Events:**

Our **Centre of Networking** has proved popular again throughout the year for local businesses with 30+ attendees at each event. We have a guest speaker every other month, and everyone is invited to swap business ideas/solutions/contacts to enable the sharing of information locally. Our Charity of Choice Project this year is **Brave Futures** (a specialist service for youngsters locally)

**Chinwag** continues to go from strength to strength and hosts approx. 150+ elderly residents on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in the month for free entertainment, refreshments and home-made cake. Our very own Fiona Farrell hosts this on our behalf of KWMCC, and along with her band of 20+ volunteers, all of our guests are always welcomed with a cup of tea and entertainment. Long may these Chinwag get-togethers continue as a key part of the social diary for those who attend.

Our **Time Together Tuesdays** which is a free community event for younger children and their parents/carers/grandparents in the school holidays, are well attended and we have circa 50+ youngsters and families on a regular basis. This year we received a £1,500 boost from the Blue Token scheme from Tesco's. This money is being used to provide free fruit for all attendees, so the families have a bag to take home with them. Thanks to all residents who put their blue token in the slots for us to win, as it means so much.

This will continue throughout the year and summer holidays and it's great to see so many local residents use this free event to play, interact and have fun with the younger children involved.

**Music in the Bandstand** was a real success with over a thousand people attending throughout the day last summer. Another free event with thanks to support from SPARK, as we hosted local musicians and a wide range of music/bands took place, with families especially enjoying the free activities from bubbles to crafts and balloon making. This year's event will again be free and thanks to SPARK for their help and support and will take place on **Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup>** so one for the diary!

### **Communications:**

We have a new **KWMCC Website** that was launched late last year and received very good feedback. [www.kwmcc.co.uk](http://www.kwmcc.co.uk) We have made it easier to book sports on-line for those that fancy a game of badminton or pickleball etc at short notice, and we have seen a big rise in numbers of residents using our facilities by keeping fit and having fun.

Our Facebook and social media continue to grow with the increase in Events we host here for young and old alike. Our Events team inc Molly & Fiona have created such a wide range of things to attend from Line Dancing to Comedy Nights / Tribute Bands and entertainment so that there is always something to look forward to at KWMCC.

So, I'd like to thank all residents who use our facilities and give such great feedback on a regular basis, the working partnerships we have including Kesgrave Town Council, the Police, Charities such as SPARK and our local Councillors. I'd also like to thank Richard Baird (Chairman), Rod Gibson (Charity Secretary) and the Board of Trustees who give their time, support and expertise free of charge, to maintain the highest of standards.

Our Charity continues to give as much back to the community as we can in excellent facilities, with many free or low-cost get-togethers, exciting events each month and resident advice and support inc Citizens Advice, Police Surgeries and MP visits.

Well done to everyone involved.

Stuart Lawson - General Manager KWMCC