

The other is to be a **children's nursery** for 42 children opening soon. The main concern raised by the Parish Council in its objection is the increase in traffic along the lane and parking on the site. A careful watch will need to be kept on this when the nursery is fully opened.

Highways

Potholes continue to be a problem and requests for repair are taking much longer to be met but usually are said to be not at "intervention level". The substantial work promised, especially in Fox and Pin Lane and Cooper Lane, has been further delayed as roads in a village like Nowton are not considered a priority. In November 2016 the criteria for intervention was revised. The depth and area of potholes considered for work increased and the speed limit was raised to 60 mph.

The breakup of road edges caused by lorries is a further problem with plans to resurface several of these but with no set time table.

The Local Authority continued to refill the **grit bins** during the winter though fortunately they were hardly needed.

Parish Emergency Plan

This was reviewed during the year, **updated** and distributed in October 2016. Thanks to all those involved in compiling this and to those who volunteer their skills, expertise and time. This is to be updated every two years and so a new edition will appear in 2018. The information leaflet was also updated and distributed with the Emergency Plan.

Councillor Training

A number of councillors have attended training throughout the year organised by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and St Edmundsbury. The sessions covered a range of issues relating to parish council work and rural communities including Planning and Budget proposals regarding policing, the fire service, highways, etc. These meetings are of value in keeping us up to date with legislation, in providing information about funding sources and the direction of future policy.

Involvement with the Local Community

- a) The Parish Council continues to contribute towards the cost of printing the **Benefice Newsletter** and it was increased to £125 this year. It continues to be our main means of communication with everyone in the parish. The Council again contributed £100 towards the **upkeep of the churchyard**.
- b) Money received from the Borough Council for the **recycling** bins has been passed from the Parish Council to the village hall committee.
- c) The **grass around the village sign and the village hall car park** continues to be cut regularly and the **bus shelter** is swept of leaves and litter. Several parishioners pick up **litter** when they are out and about and extra bark is laid on the permissive footpath. Thanks to all these people.
- d) **Nowton Park Rangers and Volunteers** have given some valuable time to the parish this year. This has included providing bark chippings for the permissive footpath, litter picking, trimming back overhanging trees, clearing the footpath from the village hall to the bus shelter, clearing ditches and removing dead trees. Several new trees have been planted, some on the village side of the park fence.

e)The **village hall fire doors** have recently been replaced and the Parish Council contributed £800 towards the cost.

A number of electors have contacted Councillors over the year and we hope this will continue. The Council needs to know the concerns of parishioners and suggestions for improvements will always be considered.

Requests this year have resulted in the trimming of overhanging trees and the removal of fly tipping in several places.

Fly tipping continues to be a problem but St Edmundsbury are very prompt in responding to requests for its removal.

e) Councillor Forrow and Mrs Jan Oldfield, the parish **footpath wardens**, continue to walk the parish footpaths on a regular basis to ensure they are kept in a good state of repair and that problems are reported promptly to the Rights of Way Officer. Our thanks to them for undertaking this work.

Neighbourhood Watch

Councillor Michael May continues to co-ordinate this important work and Councillor Renee Forrow has responsibility for Low Green. Both have attended **Neighbourhood Watch meetings** and taken the opportunity to raise concerns with the police.

A number of incidents reported to the police have been investigated and it is pleasing to know that crime in Nowton is very low. The most serious in November 2016 was a burglary linked to several others in the Bury area and possibly nationwide.

Changes to police organisation mean that there are fewer officers and most information comes via e-mail. Police officers are no longer attending council meetings unless a specific request is made. It is regrettable that this face to face contact is being reduced.

Finally- Thanks to:- all Councillors who have served this year and worked towards improving some aspects of the lives of the parishioners of Nowton.

- : - the Clerk and Finance Officer, Mrs Pauline Stoddart, for her continued hard work,efficiency and support.
- : - the internal auditor, Mr Douglas Heaton.
- : - Councillor Terry Clements

Carol Perry

(Chairman, Nowton Parish Council) May 2017

Annual Report of the Parish Council May 2017

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting the Parish Council has undertaken a variety of work on behalf of parishioners. Some of this has been rewarding and some frustrating but we continue to do what we can within our remit.

Changes during the year

A **laptop** for Parish Council use was purchased through a grant from the Transparency Fund. Agendas, minutes and reports, financial information, contact details and the complaints procedure all appear on the website. It can be accessed through **onesuffolk.gov.uk and clicking on parish councils**. Agendas and Minutes continue to be posted on the bus shelter and parish council noticeboards.

Parish boundaries were changed this year under the Community Governance Review. The changes take into account the housing developments around Bury. Nowton parish boundary now ends at the A134 and resulted in the loss of three properties to adjacent parishes. The parish council supported these changes. The new boundary reflects the geographical and population identities of the parish.

County Councillor Terry Clements stood down in May 2017 but continues as our Borough Councillor. We thank Terry for his support over many years and look forward to working with his replacement Councillor Karen Soons.

The impact of budget reductions on Local Authority spending continued to make a significant difference to the speed with which work was carried out. Reports from Councillor Terry Clements and Suffolk Police have been received at council meetings and our thanks go to them for the work they do for us. The main areas of this year's work are highlighted under the headings below.

Planning

There have been several minor individual planning applications over the last year with no objections being raised to any of them.

The main issue of concern from last year was the application for a 60 bed Nursing Home in the grounds of Nowton Court. After failing to gain approval for a similar application three years ago some changes were made to the original plans. The response from many members of the public, the parish council and the Local Authority led the elected members to reject the new application on the grounds that it was too big, would dominate the present building of Nowton Court and would be visible from the footpath in Nowton Park.

As expected the application went to appeal and was approved by an independent inspector in March 2017.

Two other significant applications this year both involved a change of use of units at **Low Green Barns**.

One has led to the establishment of a **bakery** with a change to the hours of operation.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Report 2016/17

I will start by saying it would be easy for me to just take last year's report and just change the numbers or percentages. Well at least it is consistent and shows that St Edmundsbury has a sound financial plan. We are continuing to keep Council Tax as low as possible 1.96% this year. Whilst still maintaining services and I would say enhance services as well. We continue to make Capital funds work for you by investing in what you the residents need. The latest is a joint venture with Forest Heath and Suffolk County Council called Barley Homes. This is making maximum use of mostly County land to build much needed affordable homes in West Suffolk. £12 million pounds has been put into the plan from both St Eds and Forest Heath to deliver the first 96 homes. We have always said that we will won't be providing homes without jobs. We have created Enterprise Zones at Suffolk Park Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Research Park, Haverhill.

Staying with Planning we all had the chance to take part in recent Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan which closed on 21st April. There was more than 1,000 responses with several ideas and suggestions, this will become a formal Supplementary Planning Document to give guidance on local plans.

We have just agreed a new deal with Abbeycroft Leisure which will provide even more leisure facilities for residents at a lower cost than the Council could provide them for. The new deal also involves providing extra building with Abbeycroft picking up the equipment costs and working to a zero subsidy.

Building, you will see that areas of development have passed through Development Control Committee just recently the latest being Marham Park between Bury St Edmunds and the Fornhams. This plan had to be changed because Members insisted on various amendments. These being space standards, walking /cycle links parking provision and adequate road widths. Obviously there will be 30% affordable homes in all developments across St Edmundsbury.

The waste hub will be an interesting one because there is a lot of opposition from local residents about the use of local roads, personally I would have preferred an entrance off Sugar beet roundabout.

You will have seen that St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are working even closer together under the name of West Suffolk I. We already have joint staff sharing with one Chief Executive Officer. There has already been a saving of £4 million across the two Councils but further savings are needed. The next step must be a joint Council but this won't happen overnight because there has to be an agreed plan to have a mutual Council Tax base.

Thanks for the support this last year sorry but I can't see anything on the horizon that will radically change my next year's report but then like I said at the start that is good cos with good planning there shouldn't be too many surprises.

I have made the most of any Locality Funding that has been available to me and unless you hadn't heard I am due to be Elected Mayor of St Edmundsbury next week.

County Councillor Report

Monthly report (2 weeks actually)

Having been elected only two weeks ago I will give you my summary of the last two weeks.

I have been asked to take on a special responsibility for the council. This will be made public on Thursday this week. Sadly it is not Highways.

Highways

I visited the Eastern Relief Road site this week thanks to the invitation of Ian Richardson, Major Schemes Assistant Project Manager. The scheme is on schedule for opening later summer 17. Latest 1st September. Sow lane is now open to access to Rougham village to and from the A14. buterr.co.uk Site contact 07493 754839

Cullum Rd BSE improvements - Suffolk Highways will be carrying out junction improvement works on Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds between Monday 5 June 2017 and Saturday 2 September 2017. The work will involve replacing the existing double mini roundabout with a single roundabout, the installation of a new footpath and toucan crossing and an upgrade to the street lighting and traffic signals.

Traffic management – road closure. Westgate Street will be closed between Guildhall Street and the Cullum Road roundabout for the duration of these works. Temporary traffic signals will be in place along the A1302 Parkway and Cullum Road to support the closure, to ensure a safe working area and to manage traffic levels and speed. During the closure there will be no access for vehicles, cyclists or emergency service. Pedestrians will still be able to access the area.

Highways will undergo a major reorganisation and the consultation period is about to commence. New structural arrangements should be in place by the autumn. One suggestion under consideration is local highway wardens covering a few local districts.

Details of both these projects are on my public face book, see the link below my signature.

Potholes continue to be of concern to me in this parish. The online reporting tool www.suffolk.gov.uk/potholes is the best way that residents and parish councillors can keep the pressure on highways about the particular problems facing them. Please feel free to report problems multiple times on this site. It has had a proven track record in Barrow of such determined and collective reporting. (12 fixed in 10 weeks).

Karen Soons LL.B (Hons)

County Councillor

Thingoe South Division

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