

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I am pleased to present this positive report on the activities of Nowton Parish Council over the past year. Our hard work and commitment have resulted in numerous achievements and we look forward to building on these successes in the coming year.

Nowton Park Collaboration: We have successfully engaged with the Licensing and Parks department over large events held in Nowton Park. This has fostered a positive relationship with the new Head Ranger whom we welcome to this meeting.

Crime Analysis: I undertook a detailed analysis of crime statistics for Nowton and Councillors agreed that it should be shared with the Parks Department, the Community Engagement Officer and the Licensing Committee. I would like to offer my personal thanks to Andy Tucker for his help with the statistics.

This brings me to the Neighbourhood Watch Teams, the representatives for Nowton being me and Mike May. The Council extends its gratitude to Andy Tucker, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, for his continuous efforts in liaising with the Neighbourhood Watch teams. He provides monthly figures from the Police, plus warnings and information on a daily basis.

Nowton remains a safe village, and we will continue to work closely with the Parks Department to ensure our involvement in decisions concerning larger events being held within our Parish.

Memorialising The Queen: Whilst we celebrated The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we solemnly marked The Queen's death. A cast iron tree sign, commissioned by the Parish Council, was placed beside an Oak tree within Nowton Park. Our thanks go to the Parks Department for accommodating the tree adoption at no cost to the Parish.

Road Conditions: We are proactive in reporting road issues and encourage others to do the same. Repairs are being made, despite the nationwide problem of poor road conditions.

Flooding on Nowton Road: The ongoing issue has been strongly challenged by the Parish Council and we hope for a final resolution from Highways soon.

Speeding: We continue to address the growing issue of speeding in the village and hope for additional resources from the police Kestral team. A Speed Indicator Device pole has been approved at the Town end of the parish and we thank the Community Speed Watch Team volunteers for collecting data.

Planning: There have been a number of planning applications considered by the Council during the past year. Application deadlines that occur between Council meetings are considered at additional Planning meetings or, if Councillors consider the application not to be contentious, they are dealt with by the Clerk under Delegated Powers, after consultation with all Councillors.

Finance: The Council set a cautious budget in December 2022 for the forthcoming year, enabling Nowton to be one of the few parishes in the country that actually lowered the amount of Council Tax its parishioners would pay. Donations of £100 each went towards the upkeep of St. Peter's Churchyard and St. Nicholas Hospice, a Charity which had helped several parishioners and their families during the past year.

Money from the recycling bins was passed to the Village Hall Committee for the maintenance of the hall.

Housing Development & Highways: We are aware of the large housing development set to begin across the Sicklesmere Road, just outside of the parish boundary. We will continue to work with Highways and the Police to minimise antisocial increased village road usage and maintain our road conditions.

Councillor Support: The Council receive regular newsletters and reports from our District and County Councillor, Karen Soons, who has worked diligently on our behalf and regularly attends our Parish Council meetings. We appreciate her support in granting £250 to enhance the beauty around our bus shelter and 'village green,' which is the area surrounding the village sign.

Litter: Several parishioners and Councillors collect litter when they are out walking; our thanks to all these individuals.

The **Library Van** continues to park on the Village Hall car park on the second Tuesday of each month from 3-3.15pm.

Retirement of Parish Councillors: We express our gratitude to David Flatt for his 21+ years of service to the Parish Council; his local historical knowledge and wisdom have been invaluable over the many years. Sarah Peacock has also retired from the Parish Council and, whilst she cannot compete with David's longevity of service, her valuable contributions have been very welcome.

It would be remiss of me not to also mention the sad passing of our previous Chairman, Carol Perry, who served as Chairman for over 15 years and was a great mentor to me when I first joined the Council.

Parish Council Vacancies: Due to the two retirees, we now have vacancies on the Parish Council that will be filled by co-option. We encourage residents to consider putting themselves forward to join the Council and thereby make a positive contribution to the life of the residents of Nowton.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all Councillors for their hard work over the past year, as well as our Parish Clerk and Finance Officer for her guidance in maintaining proper standards of operation, and the Internal Auditor Nicole Nicholls.

Together, we have made significant strides in improving our community, and we remain committed to ensuring Nowton remains a safe and vibrant village.

Thank you.

Henry Hopking, Chairman
17 May 2023