

Annual Report of the Parish Council May 2018

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

Councillor Terry Clements took over the position of Mayor of St Edmundsbury and has successfully increased awareness of mental health through a variety of events. Having resigned as County Councillor he was succeeded by **Karen Soons** who has been equally supportive of the parish council and attended meetings on a regular basis.

Parish boundary changes have been confirmed and Nowton parish boundary is now the A134 leaving out the new development which is to take place over the next few years.

The impact of budget reductions on Local Authority spending continued to make a significant difference to the speed with which work was carried out.

A proposal to **create a single council combining St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath** was considered by the parish council. It was broadly supported with the hope that this would bring an improvement in services should it be agreed.

Reports from Councillor Soons and very rarely now from **Suffolk Police** have been received at council meetings and our thanks go to them for the work they do for us. Contact between parish councils and local police has been greatly reduced as police priorities and resources have changed.

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 application for a 60 bed Nursing Home in the grounds of Nowton Court was approved when it went to appeal. No start date has been made public yet.

The children's nursery at Low Green Barns opened during the year and the bakery there is now well established

Highways

Potholes continue to be a problem and although some repair work has been carried out roads in a village like Nowton are not considered a priority. Suffolk County Council has been given extra money, has changed its approach to repairs and is apparently using better materials but urban areas are to be given priority. The break up of road edges caused by lorries is a further problem with plans to resurface several of these but with no set time table. Reports by individuals is the only way Highways can be made aware of potholes.

Flooding, especially in Fox and Pin Lane, was again a problem but Highways do not consider the amount of traffic or number of residents sufficient to make it a priority. The Local Authority continued to refill the grit bins during the winter.

Parish Emergency Plan

This will be reviewed this year as it is every 2 Years. Details will be sent out with the June Benefice newsletter.

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. Meetings organised for parish councillors are also of value.

Involvement with the Local Community

a) The Parish Council continues to contribute £125 towards the cost of printing the **Benefice Newsletter** and in providing information about Parish Council work. It continues to be our main means of communication with everyone in the parish. The parish council now has a website on which are published meeting dates, agendas and minutes as well as contact details and financial information.

The **website** can be accessed through **onesuffolk.gov.uk** and clicking on parish councils.

The Council again contributed £100 towards the **upkeep of the churchyard**.

The village hall received £250 towards general maintenance and £800 towards the cost of new fire doors.

Thanks were received from all who benefitted.

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. Several parishioners pick up **litter** when they are out and about. Extra bark is laid on the permissive footpath.

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.

There are many such small instances of individual initiative which help keep the parish so attractive.

d) **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 repair of potholes in specific places, 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.

It was reported during the year that SCC spend £300,000 per year collecting rubbish from along the A14, A11 and A12.

Neighbourhood Watch

Councillor Michael May continues to co-ordinate this important work and Councillor Renee Forrow has responsibility for Low Green.

A number of incidents reported to the police have been investigated and it is pleasing to know that crime in Nowton is very low. Villages no longer have a

designated community police officer. Changes to police organisation in the last few years mean that there are fewer officers and most information comes via e-mail. Attendance at Neighbourhood Watch meetings has declined and 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.

Library van

This continues to park on the village hall car park once a month and dates are on the notice board there. The future of the service is uncertain as 3 new vans will soon be needed at a cost of £100,000 each.

Data Protection

New legislation regarding data protection comes into force on May 25th. How we contact individuals has now to be agreed with them. This will mainly concern people named in the Emergency Plan and further information regarding this will be sent out with the review papers in June.

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.

:- Councillors Clements and Soons

Carol Perry

(Chairman, Nowton Parish Council)

May 2018