

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 4 December 2019

At 7.30 p.m. in Nowton Village Hall, Nowton

Present: Councillor - Mrs Carol Perry (Chairman)
Councillor - Mr David Flatt
Councillor - Mrs Renee Farrow
Councillor - Mr Jon Green
Councillor - Mr Mike May
Parish Clerk - Mrs Pauline Stoddart

Prior to the meeting commencing, 10 Minute Public Forum – one member of the public was present who wished to express her concern over the withdrawal of the 375 bus service. She advised that she was currently effectively running a free ‘taxi service’ to children in Cooper Lane to ensure that over 16’s got to college or sixth form; the authorities were not responsible for providing transport for over 16’s, they were not allowed on the school bus and the public bus service had been withdrawn. The parishioner concluded by saying that the school bus was only half full, whilst many individuals were now having to drive their cars in order to get over 16s to their compulsory education.

The Chairman sympathised with the parishioner, advising that all these points had been made to the authorities. She advised that there was the possibility that the public would be allowed to use the school bus, although a different contractor would need to be used. The Chairman would keep the parishioner posted as to any progress made.

The parishioner also mentioned that the footpath, leading towards the Village Hall, was extremely narrow.

Report from County Cllr. Karen Soons: Cllr. Soons arrived after Item 11.4 and the meeting was adjourned to receive her verbal report. Cllr. Soons had sent her written December report, a copy of which the Clerk had provided to each Councillor; Cllr. Soons advised that the main focus at present was the election. With regards to the 375 bus service, which would be starting on the 15th January and operating on a trial basis of a Wednesday only service departing Nowton at 1015 to Bury St Edmunds and returning from Bury St Edmunds at 1315, Cllr. Soons advised that it was vitally important to make good use of this trial service, but that she had not given up and was still continuing to work for a service that could accommodate both school children and the public.

The Chairman mentioned the recent flooding in Fox and Pin Lane and other areas, some of which was due to overgrown ditches. Cllr. Soons advised that the Parish Council could write to the landowner of the ditches, if they were not owned by the authority.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – None, all present.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – none.
3. **Approval of the draft Minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 23 October 2019** – approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Councillor Flatt, seconded by Councillor May and duly signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 23 October meeting –

(9.1) The Chairman informed that she had again reported the damage to the white gates which had still not been repaired. Cllr. May offered to effect a temporary repair with strong cable ties. **Action: Cllr. May**

(9.2) The Chairman advised that she would ask the Park Ranger to cut the overhanging branches near the pond.

4.1 375 Bus Route – as previously discussed, the Chairman reported that as a temporary exercise, which would be monitored, there would be a Wednesday only service from Nowton to Bury St Edmunds and return, departing at 1015 and returning at 1315.

5. Annual Risk Assessment of Financial Management - copies of the risk assessment had been previously circulated and were taken as read. Councillors were of the opinion that no changes were required and they were satisfied with the safeguards already in place.

6. Annual Review of the effectiveness and systems of Internal Audit – copies of the systems of internal audit had been previously circulated and were taken as read. Councillors were of the opinion that no changes were required and they were satisfied with the safeguards already in place.

7. Annual Review of Internal Audit – Copies of the paper describing the work performed by the Internal Auditor had been previously circulated and were taken as read. Councillors were satisfied that the internal auditor was satisfactorily conducting the internal audit.

8. Statement of intent on internal control – the statement had been previously circulated and was taken as read. Councillors were of the opinion that no changes were necessary.

9. Annual Review of Assets Register – a list of assets had been previously circulated. Councillors agreed the list of assets was accurate with regards to the self-insured items. It was agreed to reduce the value of the laptop by 20% (and each year hereafter). An amended Assets Register would be produced for approval at the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

10. Annual Appraisal of Clerk and Salary, review of Contract of Employment – Councillors agreed that the Clerk had conducted her work efficiently during the past year and she was awarded a £100 per year increase in salary (to £1,300 per annum) to commence 1 April 2020.

11. Finance – Business Premium Account £5,495.98; Community Account £174.08
Total: £5,670.06

11.1 Consider request for donation to Redwoods Pre-School – after discussion Councillors were not of the opinion that parish funds could be justified for this particular project. The Clerk to respond accordingly. **Action: Clerk**

11.2 Four cheques were approved and signed:

100347	Village Hall, rent of hall for PC meetings	£54.00
100348	Website annual fee (repayment to Clerk)	£60.00
100349	Clerk, Sept-Dec. salary	£240.00
100350	HMRC, Tax re Clerk's salary	£60.00

- 11.3 Draft setting of the 2020-2021 Precept – to be ratified at the January 2020 meeting. A statement of the previous four years' budgets and actual spend under crucial headings had been tabled. Councillors went through the working paper to set the budget for 2020-2021.

Significant allocations: £100 per annum salary rise, Clerk; £200 Village Hall maintenance; £100 grit bin; £100 Headway Suffolk.

Total Precept £3,353 of which £400 to be taken from reserves. Request to be submitted in January 2020 = **£2,953.00**

- 11.4 Annual reappointment of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Councillors **agreed** that the Clerk should be reappointed as the RFO.

12. Planning – No planning applications to hand.

13. Road Safety, Crime/Public Nuisance – Cllr. Forrow had noticed a Police presence at the Village Hall one evening; no feedback as to any incident had been received.

14. Correspondence – The Chairman advised that LifeLink, a form of social prescribing which is currently available in Brandon, Haverhill and Mildenhall, would be expanding in the New Year to include Bury St Edmunds.

The magazine Clerks & Councils Direct had been received and would be circulated to Councillors.

15. 2020 Meeting dates – 16 January; 4 March; 8 April; 20 May (annual meetings); 8 July; 16 September; 21 October; 2 December. These proposed dates are subject to change.

Next meeting – Wednesday 16 January 2020, 7.30 p.m.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.25 p.m.

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Signed

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Date