

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 1st December 2021

Present: Councillor - Mrs Carol Perry
Councillor - Mr David Flatt
Councillor - Mr Mike May
Councillor - Ms Abigail Smith
Parish Clerk - Mrs Pauline Stoddart

Prior to the meeting commencing, 10 Minute Public Forum – no members of the public were present.

1. **Election of Chairman** – Cllr. Hopking, although unable to be present at the meeting, had expressed in writing to the Clerk his willingness to put his name forward for the position of Chairman. Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. May. Councillors unanimously voted Cllr. Hopking to the position of Chairman. In Cllr. Hopking's absence, Cllr. Perry chaired the meeting. The Clerk to arrange for the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman to be signed and witnessed. **Action: Clerk**
2. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr. Hopking
3. **Declarations of Interest** – none.
4. **Approval of the draft Minutes from the meeting held 20 October 2021** – Approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Smith; duly signed by the Chair.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes 20 October –**
 - 5.1 Electric Vehicle charging points at Nowton Park – a response received from WSC stated that there were no immediate plans for installing charging points; the response had previously been circulated to Councillors.
 - 5.2 (5) (8.3) At the Village Hall AGM a new Chairman, Secretary and Booking Clerk had been elected; the new Committee would, therefore, be discussing the points raised for action during the 22 September Council meeting.
6. **Annual Reviews, Assessments and Reappointments** – Councillors had been given the opportunity to study items 6.1-6.6 and raise any questions prior to resolving that no changes were necessary and that effective practices were in place.
 - 6.1 Annual Risk Assessment of Financial Management – Proposed by Cllr. Perry, seconded by Cllr. Flatt.
 - 6.2 Annual Review of the effectiveness and systems of Internal Audit – Proposed by Cll. May, seconded by Cllr. Flatt.
 - 6.3 Annual Review of Internal Audit – Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. May.
 - 6.4 Statement of Intent on Internal Control – Proposed by Cllr. Flatt, seconded by Cllr. May.
 - 6.5 Annual Review of Assets Register – Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Flatt.

- 6.6 Annual Appraisal of Clerk and Salary, review of Contract of Employment – no issues were raised as to the Clerk’s performance of her duties and Cllr. Perry thanked the Clerk for her work during the past year.

The Clerk had made a formal request, which had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, for an increase in the contractual working hours to be increased from two to four hours per week. Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. May. Councillors resolved to agree to increase the contractual working hours of the Clerk to four hours per week, effective from 1 April 2022.

- 6.7 Annual reappointment of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Proposed by Cllr. Perry, seconded by Cllr. May. Councillors resolved to reappoint the Clerk as the RFO.

7. **GDPR, email addresses** – The Clerk proposed, following recommendation from SALC, that a gov.uk email address be sought to use for all Council business, rather than her personal email address; the Clerk advised that there would be a cost relating to the implementation of this. Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. May. Councillors resolved that a gov.uk email address should be applied for. **Action: Clerk**

8. **Finance** – Community Account £842.16; Business Premium Account £5,492.43
Total: £6,334.59

Two invoices approved for payment and cheques signed:

100390	Nowton Village Hall (meetings x 3)	£18.00	(LGA 1972 s111)
100391	SALC, training Cllr. Hopking	£150.00	(LGA 1972 s175)

The Village Hall cheque was handed to Cllr. Smith to deliver to the Village Hall Treasurer.

- 8.1 Setting of the Precept 2022-23, for ratification at the January meeting. A statement of the previous four years’ budgets and actual spend under crucial headings had been previously circulated. Councillors went through the working paper, prepared by the Clerk, to set the budget for 2022-2023.

Significant increases in allocations 2022-2023:

1. Clerk’s salary - due to the increase in paid working hours the Clerk’s salary would increase by £1,300 per annum
2. The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations – £500 was allocated
3. Councillor Training – £200 was allocated

All other allocations were in line with previous budgeting. The initial figures amounted to £4,984 although it was hoped to reduce this amount from reserves; the final request and precept figure needed to be submitted to WSC by 25 January 2022.

The Clerk was instructed to circulate to Councillors the final figures for the budget prior to the January meeting where the final Precept request would be ratified. **Action: Clerk**

9. **Training via SALC courses** – Cllr. Hopking had attended some SALC on-line Councillor training sessions and had also booked future sessions. Where permissible, he had already shared these recordings with Councillors and the Clerk encouraged all Councillors to take advantage of these ‘free’ sessions as they would only be available

to view for 30 days. Future Councillor Training would be booked through the SALC Portal, and whilst the Clerk would continue to circulate training dates, Councillors were requested to contact the Clerk to make the actual bookings for them. **Action: All**

10. **Planning** – no planning applications had been received.
11. **Lorry Map Review in Suffolk** – after discussion Councillors agreed that no response was required from the Parish Council.
12. **Road Safety, Crime/Public Nuisance** – Cllr. May reported that pot hole filling and white lining had been carried out in a few places.
13. **Correspondence** – relevant email correspondence had been circulated by the Clerk to Councillors as and when received. The publication Clerks & Councils Direct was passed to Councillors to read at their leisure.
14. **Meeting Dates for 2022** – the following dates were agreed, although all dates are subject to change:
12 January; 2 March; 6 April;
18 May - Annual Council & Annual Assembly of the Parish meetings;
6 July; 21 September; 19 October; 7 December.

Next Meeting – Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.10 p.m.

Cllr. Perry was presented with a bouquet of flowers, as a small token of appreciation by Councillors and Clerk, for all her hard work over the past 15 years in her role as Chairman of Nowton Parish Council.

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Signed

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Date