

## NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
At 7.30 p.m. via Zoom/Conference Call

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

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

In attendance: County Councillor Karen Soons and District Councillor Terry Clements. The meeting was adjourned whilst Cllrs. Soons and Clements presented their reports, after which they left the meeting, with thanks from the Chairman on behalf of the whole Council for all their continuing hard work and support.

**Report from Cllr. Clements** – whilst Cllr. Clements could not give any detail from recent meetings due to confidentiality, he advised that the public were promptly made aware of decisions when made. He highlighted the Council's business grants that were available and also the excellent work undertaken by the 'Home but not Alone' scheme, which he encouraged more use of, reporting that it was a scheme that was really delivering.

Cllr. Clements drew attention to the number of car parking offences being committed, despite the present rules to stay at home unless travel was essential; however, he assured Councillors that PCNs were being issued and drivers were being prosecuted.

From a mental health perspective Cllr. Clements highlighted 'Time to Talk Day' on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, where people were being encouraged to take a 'tea and talk' break during the day. He would be encouraging this in the locality, suggesting that those local businesses currently open under the Covid-19 restrictions, might offer a free cup of tea and encourage people to stop and talk together, whilst naturally abiding by all social distancing rules.

Cllr. Clements concluded his report by saying that children were in many ways now helping their parents in these difficult times, particularly in areas such as the use of computers.

**Report from Cllr. Soons** – Cllr. Soons highlighted several points from her January newsletter, which had been previously circulated to Councillors, including: in addition to the excellent 'Home but not Alone' scheme, Cllr. Soons reported that there was now also support payments available, for those on low incomes who had been told to self-isolate. A fund of over £2.5M was earmarked for seven new community-focused initiatives across the county, including ANPR devices which would be used in a pilot scheme involving many villages.

Cllr. Soons reported that she had been involved in the new £100K pedestrian crossing in Newmarket, but assured Councillors this did not mean she was not concentrating on the local area. The move for the crossing came after widespread support and campaigning for a safe crossing on Exning Road, following a serious accident to a child.

Cllr. Soons invited questions and Cllr. May enquired as to whether there had been any news with regards to the stolen Nowton Victorian post box; Cllr. Soons reported there had been no progress as yet, but was mindful that Post Office staff were suffering very high sickness rates at the moment.

The Chairman queried how schools in the County were presently being affected, particularly in light that the list of eligible pupils had been extended. Cllr. Soons responded that there was a much higher rate of critical and key worker's children attending, plus vulnerable children and those that did not have facilities to study at home.

Cllr. Hopking asked whether opting-in to the ANPR pilot scheme might perhaps facilitate a speed monitoring system for Nowton. Cllr. Soons said the speed indicator devices would be moved around the County at the discretion of the County Council, further advising that Highways would approve the sites. She said the scheme was on the cusp of change, particularly with regards to gathering information, and that it might be sensible to see how the trial goes and what can be learnt from it.

The Chairman confirmed that the traffic data survey for Nowton was still awaited; lead-in time was originally given as eight weeks but, understandably, given the present circumstances, this would now undoubtedly be longer.

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 2 December 2020** – approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr. Green, seconded by Cllr. May. The minutes would be signed by the Chairman when the Parish Council next physically met.
4. **Matters arising from the Minutes of 2 December meeting** –
  - 4.1 (4.2) The Chairman confirmed she has spoken to the Park Ranger concerning additional bins; no update to report.
  - 4.2 (14) Cllr. May reported no update concerning the cars parked in the Village Hall car park.
5. **Finance** - Account balances: Community £1,281.25; Business Premium £4,700.01  
Total: £5,981.26

Three cheque payments were approved:

100370	Nowton Village Hall, meetings x 2 in 2020	£12.00
100371	<i>Cancelled cheque</i>	
100372	Parochial Church Council	£100.00
100373	Headway Suffolk	£100.00

5.1 Bank/Cheque signatories – Cllr. Hopking agreed to be added to the list of Bank signatories. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Green, unanimously agreed. The Clerk to request the necessary forms from the Bank. **Action: Clerk**

5.2 Setting of the 2021-2022 Precept - a statement of the previous four years' budgets and actual spend under crucial headings had been previously circulated. Councillors went through the draft working paper, prepared by the Clerk, to set the budget for 2021-2022 mindful that the COVID-19 pandemic would have an increase in claimants of Local Council Tax Reduction Support, but also taking into consideration the Government's one-off Local Council Tax Support Grant to West Suffolk Council, which it was in turn

passing to Parish Councils and, whilst the overall allocation was not sufficient to cover the full impact, went some way and was well received.

Significant allocations 2021-2022:

- A total of £400 was allocated for repair and maintenance, including a new noticeboard, of the Bus Shelter.
- £250 was allocated for the repair and maintenance of the Village Sign.

All other allocations were in line with previous usual expenditure. After discussion Councillors agreed that £1,000 should be used from reserves to reduce the 2021-2022 Precept request. Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Hopking, all in agreement.

Total Precept £3,439 of which £1,000 to be taken from reserves.

Request to be submitted by 25 January 2021 for the amount of £2,439. **Action: Clerk**

From the 2020-2021 Precept meeting, at which payment allocations were decided, it was agreed that the following two payments would now not be made:

- Village Hall maintenance (£200 allocated) – the Chairman advised Councillors that following a Government grant the funds for the village hall were presently robust.
- Benefice Newsletter (£125 allocated) – the Chairman advised Councillors that the newsletter was no longer being published and it was uncertain when/if it would be again; an allocation had been made in the 2021-22 budget, should it be needed next year.

The Clerk was instructed to circulate to Councillors the final figures for the working budget and Precept request. **Action: Clerk**

**6. Planning** – DC/20/2117/FUL – Garden Cottage, Nowton Court, Nowton. Change from residential use (C3) to self-catering holiday let accommodation (C1).

Councillors supported the application, albeit with one observation that was of serious concern to them, that being the security of Nowton Park at night, which at present was by locked gates. Obviously, holiday rental guests would require access to and from the property 24/7 and Councillors stressed that adequate measures needed to be in place in order not to compromise the security, particularly at night, of Nowton Park. **Action: Clerk**

**7. Emergency Plan** – the Chairman advised that the Emergency Plan was usually updated every two years, the last issue of the Plan being delivered to every household in September 2018. However, due to the pandemic and the restrictions this imposed she proposed that the updating of the Emergency Plan be carried forward to this year. The Chairman was pleased that with the first lockdown in March, the Plan was in place and communications worked well.

**8. Road Safety Crime/Public Nuisance** –

8.1 Cllr. May reported a sheep's head had been found in Green Lane; the ear tag had since been removed in an effort to find and inform the owner.

8.2 Pot Holes – Councillors were of the opinion that pot holes in the roads were getting worse and, whilst some had been repaired quickly after being reported, the condition of many road surfaces, which included subsidence, was now considered dangerous in places and complete re-surfacing was required. The Chairman encouraged Councillors

to continue reporting pot holes and road damage, emphasising the danger to life aspect.

**9. Correspondence** – The Clerk advised that the January issue of *Clerks & Councillors Direct* had been received and an open letter from NALC had been circulated to Councillors. It was noted that present Community Engagement Officer was retiring, his successor was yet to be appointed.

**10. Next Meeting** – Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 7.30pm via Zoom in line with guidelines.

Further meetings for 2021: April 7; May 12 (*Annual Parish Council & Annual Parish Assembly meetings*); July 7; September 22; October 20; December 1.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

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Signed

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Date