

## NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Present:** Councillor - Mr Henry Hopking (Chairman)  
Councillor - Mr David Flatt  
Councillor - Mr Michael May  
Parish Clerk - Mrs Pauline Stoddart

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

**Attendees:** Cllr. Karen Soons - the meeting was adjourned from 19:10 to 19:30 to receive the December report from Cllr. Soons. Councillors asked for an update on the progress of the Abbots Vale development and also queried whether Nowton might be included in the S.106 funding, as clearly Nowton would be disadvantaged by the additional traffic using the lanes through the village, as a short-cut to Bury St. Edmunds. These issues had been previously raised with Cllr. Wiseman, whose work Cllr. Soons was now undertaking; the Clerk was instructed to send an email to Cllr. Soons regarding these issues. **Action: Clerk.** Councillors discussed with Cllr. Soons the SCC Highways policy in relation to agenda item 8.1, which aided their discussions on this item later in the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs. Smith and Peacock.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – None.
3. **Approval of the draft Minutes from the Parish Council meeting held 9 November 2022** – Approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr. Flatt, seconded by Cllr. May and duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting, not already on the agenda** –
  - 4.1 (5.1) The Clerk advised that the Bank had confirmed Cllr. Smith had been added as a cheque signatory.
5. **Annual Reviews, Assessments and Reappointments** – Councillors had been given the opportunity to study items 5.1-5.6 and raise any questions prior to resolving that no changes were necessary and that effective practices were in place.
  - 5.1 Annual Risk Assessment of Financial Management – Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Flatt. Duly signed by the Chairman.
  - 5.2 Annual Review of the effectiveness and systems of Internal Audit – Proposed by Cll. May, seconded by Cllr. Flatt. Duly signed by the Chairman.
  - 5.3 Annual Review of Internal Audit – Proposed by Cllr. Flatt, seconded by Cllr. May. Duly signed by the Chairman.
  - 5.4 Statement of Intent on Internal Control – Proposed by Cllr. Flatt, seconded by Cllr. May. Duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.
  - 5.5 Annual Review of Assets Register & Condition Risk Assessment – The bus stop and village sign had been repaired and painted during 2022 and both were now believed to be in good order. The lock on one noticeboard had been damaged and this would be repaired. One grit bin was damaged, but perfectly usable. Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Flatt. Duly signed by the Chairman.

- 5.6 Health & Safety Statement – Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Flatt. Duly signed by the Chairman.
- 5.7 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 the Chairman thanked the Clerk for her work during the past year. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. May.
- 5.8 Annual reappointment of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) – Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. May. Councillors resolved to reappoint the Clerk as the RFO.

**6. Finance** – Current Account: £1,333.78; Business Account: £5,298.25  
Total: £6,632.03 Two cheques were approved for signing:

100414 Spoilt cheque	
100415 Nowton Village Hall, rental for meetings	£54.00
100416 Clerk reimbursement, stamps/ink (£12.20/£35.76)	£47.96

- 6.1 Donation requests – the Clerk informed Councillors of the requests for donations received to date. Councillors resolved to consider donation requests at the January meeting. The Clerk to draft a Donations Policy paper for consideration at the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- 6.2 Initial setting of the Precept 2023-2024, for ratification at January meeting. A statement table 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 2023-2024.

Councillors were mindful of the present cost of living crisis, but were also aware that there could be a substantial liability of costs involved in the forthcoming elections in May 2024, which could be passed to Parish Councils by West Suffolk Council. Councillors resolved to use reserve funds to settle any cost that might be recharged to Nowton Parish Council, rather than increase the precept request.

There were no significant increases in allocations and by using £500 from reserves the precept request amounted to £3,769 which was £215 less than 2022-2023. The final request and precept figure needed to be submitted to WSC by 25 January, 2023.

The Clerk to circulate to Councillors the figures, agreed at this meeting, prior to the January meeting where the final Precept request would be ratified.

**Action: Clerk**

**7. Planning –**

- 7.1 DC/22/1992/HH & DC/22/1993/LB - Nowton Lodge Farm, Low Green. a) single storey rear extension b) first floor extension c) additional windows and glazed doors d) removal of staircase and lobby from main hall e) existing chimney extended. After discussion the Council unanimously agreed to support this application. **Action: Clerk**
- 7.2 The Chairman updated Councillors on the Breckey Ley application, which he understood was still ongoing and awaiting one final report/statement.

8. **Road Safety Crime/Public Nuisance** – Cllr. May reported that some pot holes had been repaired but, unfortunately, not all. The Chairman wished to remind parishioners to lock their sheds and garages as these were often easy targets for thieves, if left unlocked.

8.1 Warning road sign near entrance to Nowton Court, Bury St. Edmunds direction. A request had been received from a resident of Nowton Court, advising that there had been ‘near misses’ for drivers exiting the Nowton Court entrance to join the highway and turning right, in the direction of Bury St. Edmunds. The resident asked if a roadside sign could be erected in order to warn oncoming traffic of the concealed entrance to Nowton Court.

Councillors had discussed this issue with Cllr. Soons and it was thought extremely unlikely that SCC would be in the position to grant permission for a sign which Highways would need to maintain.

Other possibilities were discussed, these included privately purchasing a warning sign to place on private land, which would naturally require the landowner’s permission, or alternatively a mirror, again to be positioned on private land with the landowner’s permission, which Councillors thought might be more effective, as they were not convinced all drivers would be travelling within the speed limit, or taking notice of warning signs.

The Clerk would respond to the resident outlining the discussions from the meeting and, if wished, the Chairman would be happy to speak with the resident further. **Action: Clerk/Chairman**

9. **Correspondence** – the Clerk reported that email correspondence had been circulated to Councillors, as and when received.

10. **Next meeting – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 7 p.m.**

Further meetings:

22 February; 5 April; 17 May Annual Assembly of the Parish and Annual Parish Council meetings; 5 July; 13 September; 25 October; 6 December.

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

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Signed

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Date