

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 22nd February 2023

Present: Councillor - Mr Henry Hopking (Chairman)
Councillor - Miss Sarah Peacock
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.

In Attendance: Cllr. Karen Soons. The meeting was adjourned during Item 6 to take Cllr. Soons's report. Discussions included locality budgets, crime statistics, speeding and the use of VAS/SID units, highway pot-holes and ditch clearing. Cllr. Soons requested a copy of the Chairman's Crime Data Analysis report (Item 9) **Action: Chairman**

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs. Flatt and May.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – None.
3. **Approval of the draft Minutes from the Parish Council meeting held 11 January 2023** – Having been circulated prior to the meeting, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting, not already on the agenda -**
 - 4.1 (7) The Chairman advised that a larger wheelie bin had already been delivered to the Village Hall, prior to making a suggestion for same.
5. **Public Forum** – no members of the public were present.
6. **Finance** – Current Account: £238.67; Business Account: £5,298.25 Total: £5,536.92
 - 6.1 Internal Control Report, Q3 – Cllr. Peacock submitted the Q3 statement and confirmed there were no issues to report.
 - 6.2 Budget Review, Q3 – the budget review had been previously circulated and Councillors found no issues of concern.

Three cheques were approved for signing:

100421 St Peter's churchyard maintenance [s.137]	£100.00
100422 Clerk, postage, reimbursement	£16.98
100423 Clerk, ink/stationery, reimbursement	£60.55
7. **Planning** – no planning applications received.
8. **Potential Projects for 2023, subject to additional resources**
 - 8.1 Grassed area surrounding the Village Sign – Councillors discussed ways of protecting the grassed area, where damage by vehicles was eroding the edges. Types of street furniture, edge marker posts, bollards etc. (which would require a Highways licence) as well as reflective strips were all considered, without decision, for ongoing discussion.
 - 8.2 Area surrounding the Bus Shelter – Councillors were keen to enhance the appearance of the area around the recently refurbished bus shelter, with the addition of improving the soil and planting shrubs and flowers.

As the Council had set a cautious budget for 2023-24, funds were not immediately available to undertake desired works in 8.1 and 8.2. However, with help from volunteers, rather than using contractors, the Chairman estimated that enhancement works could be completed within a £250 budget and it was resolved to make a request for this amount to Cllr. Soons, from the Locality Budget of the previous Borough Councillor, the work of whom was presently being undertaken by Cllr. Soons. The Clerk was instructed to make this request for funding as a matter of urgency. **Action: Clerk**

- 8.3 Proposal for a Book Exchange in the Bus Shelter – the H&S and insurance implications had been looked into by the Clerk, who advised that the company presently covering this Parish Council asset had advised that this activity would not be covered under the policy, the main issue quoted as being the increased risk of arson.

9. Parish Council Elections, 4th May 2023

- 9.1 The Clerk had previously circulated a Zoom conferencing meeting video concerning the forthcoming elections, plus guidance notes from the Electoral Lead at WSC, together with a briefing paper the Clerk had produced giving crucial dates and reminder bullet points re the completion and delivery of Nomination Forms. Printed copies of the Nomination Form were given to those Councillors present. The Clerk would provide the Polling District and Elector Number for each Councillor's households. **Action: Clerk**

10. Road Safety Crime/Public Nuisance –

- 10.1 Nowton Crime Data Analysis – the Chairman had produced a Report, which had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllrs. noted that there had been a spike in the crime statistics in August 2022. It was resolved that the Chairman should share this report with the Parks Department, the Community Engagement Officer, and the Licencing Committee in order for it to be on file. **Action: Chairman**
- 10.2 Speeding was an on-going problem and the Chairman outlined the work being undertaken on the town/parish boundary. With the possibility of funding from Cllr. Soons's Highways budget, Councillors agreed that quotes should be sought to establish the cost of VAS and SID units, with a view to making a request for funding. **Action: Clerk**
- 10.3 The Clerk was instructed to invite the Head Ranger of Nowton Park to the Annual Assembly of the Parish on the 17 May. **Action: Clerk**
- 10.4 The Chairman offered to place information concerning the reporting procedure for pot-holes on the noticeboard, and he would also take a photo of the faded white lines at the Sicklesmere junction to send to Cllr. Soons. **Action: Chairman**
- 10.5 Ditches – work had been undertaken by Nowton Park staff on the ditches within Nowton Park itself, and confirmation that the work at Low Green would be undertaken had been received; this would entail a temporary road closure and confirmation of when this work would start was awaited.

11. **King Charles III, Coronation Day 6th May** – Councillors resolved that £100, as budgeted for in the requested precept, be allocated towards music/entertainment [LGA 1972 s.145] to those organising village activities to celebrate the King's coronation.

- 12. Correspondence** – the Clerk reported that incoming email correspondence had been circulated to Councillors, as and when received. A card had been received from King Charles III, in response to the Council’s letter of condolence sent to him upon the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.
- 13. Next meeting – Wednesday 5th April 2023, 7 p.m.**

Further meetings 2023:

17 May Annual Parish Council and Assembly of the Parish meetings (7pm & 8pm)

5 July; 13 September; 25 October; 6 December.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.35 p.m.

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Signed

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Date