

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 27th September 2023

Present: Councillor - Mr Henry Hopking (Chairman)
Councillor - Mr Michael May
Councillor - Mr Ross O'Hara
Councillor - Ms Abigail Smith
Parish Clerk - Mrs Pauline Stoddart

Prior to the meeting commencing, 10 Minute Public Forum – Two representatives of Nowton Cricket Club were present. Cllr. Karen Soons and the Chairman of Gt. & Lt. Welnetham Parish Council, by invitation of the Chairman, attended for item 12.

All agenda items were covered, with two changes in order, with the agreement of Councillors.

10–Minute Public Forum: The representatives from Nowton Cricket Club reiterated their apology for the way some members of the Club had behaved in the past. With the imposed curfew there has been a reduction in revenue, however, it was hoped to work together much better next season and show the respect the Club has for the community. The drinks licence had been updated, as had the glass recycling. There were three Safe Guarding Officers and six Qualified Coaches, and the Club had ECB certification. The boundary fence had been fixed and, should the Parish Council need volunteers for works within the village, the Club had 150 members, with a wide range of trades, who would be willing to help with projects and, thereby, help the NCC become part of the community.

The Chairman congratulated NCC on its successful season and offered space within Nowton Facebook to highlight the Clubs successes, which was accepted. The representatives left the meeting, with thanks from the Chairman for attending and speaking at the Public Forum.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – none.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – none.
3. **Approval of the draft Minutes from the previous meeting held on the 5 July 2023.** Having been circulated prior to the meeting, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Cllr. May, seconded by Cllr. Smith; duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5 July, not already on the agenda** –
 - 4.1 (8) Public Forum re Nowton Cricket Club, 6 July; the Chairman and Cllr. May attended. The Chairman reported nothing of relevance to the Parish Council.
 - 4.2 (12) The Chairman thanked Cllr. May for his work in renovating the Notice Board.
 - 4.3 (13.1) Communication with Parishioners – the Chairman advised that Nowton Court, now under a new Manager, was holding an Open Day on the 30 September. In order to improve communications with residents of Nowton Court it was suggested the Clerk email meeting agendas to the Manager, details of whom the Chairman would supply to the Clerk. **Action: Chairman/Clerk**
 - 4.5 (13.2) The Chairman reported that he and Cllr. Smith attended a site inspection with Matthew Fox of SCC Highways to determine possible places where VAS poles could be positioned. The prime location was near The Sanctuary, with two other places also identified. After discussion, it was agreed that the views of parishioners should be sought to establish the appetite for VAS equipment being erected within the village, whilst also recognising there was a need for the rural characteristics of the village to be preserved. The Chairman asked, as a starting point, for all Councillors to chat with their

neighbours informally about the proposal; Cllr. Smith suggested that a village 'get together' might also be held. **Action: All Councillors**

The Clerk was instructed to make initial enquiries regarding the requirements to site VAS poles with the Safety & Speed Team at SCC Highways; the Chairman suggested Matthew Fox may be able to supply contact details. **Action: Clerk**

5. **Public Forum** – no members of the public present for this item.
6. **Co-option to the Parish Council** – no applications had been received; this would remain a standing Agenda item until such time as the position was filled.
7. **Finance** - Current Account: £1,873.59; Business Account £6,436.85 Total: £8,310.44

Nine cheques were approved and signed:

100431 M. May, materials for notice board refurbishment	£61.69
100432 SALC, subscription underpayment error	.80
100433 H. Hopking, purchase of plants (from WSC grant)	38.93
100434 West Suffolk Council, uncontested election fees	81.91
100435 Clerk, reimbursement ink/stationery purchases	44.32
100436 Clerk, Q2 salary, July-September	560.00
100437 HMRC, Q2 Tax, re Clerk's salary	90.00
100438 Business Services CAS Ltd., Insurance premium	248.23
100439 Nowton Village Hall, recycling payment from WSC	344.64

7.1 Cllr. O'Hara accepted the Council's cashbook, chequebook, bank statements and receipts, in order to complete the Internal Report and Bank Reconciliation for the next meeting. **Action: Cllr. O'Hara**

7.2 The Clerk, having taken advice, reported that it was unviable to try and upgrade the laptop from its present Windows 7, and that a new Council owned laptop would need to be purchased in the near future.

8. **Planning** – DC/23/1497/HH Court Farm Cottage, Fox and Pin Lane, Nowton IP29 5LP
a) single storey side and rear extensions b) two storey side extension following demolition of existing single storey side structures. After discussion, Councillors unanimously agreed to SUPPORT this application. **Action: Clerk**

9. **Road Safety, Crime/Public Nuisance**

9.1 Road flooding - the Chairman reported that extensive work had been carried out on the Bury Road and that hidden drains had been discovered. In addition, the significant work required to clear road-side ditches in Low Green had also been completed; Cllr. O'Hara commented that the pond was now empty, which he had not seen before. The Clerk was instructed to send an email to Damien Parker at WSC thanking him and his team for all their hard work in completing the works, and also to include congratulations to Liam Judd and his team for Nowton Park's recent Green Flag award and Silver Award in the Anglia in Bloom competition this year. **Action: Clerk**

9.2 The Chairman reported that Andy Tucker attended the recent SNWA AGM and reported that the local policing model would be changing from December, to address the demands on neighbourhood policing. For the six parishes in Area B there would be a dedicated person, who would be more visible and gain local knowledge of the areas they serve. The Chairman commented on enquiries from two residents, concerning a 'Police presence' in the village recently.

10. **Suffolk County Council, Self-Help Scheme for Town & Parish Councils** – a briefing paper, prepared by the Clerk, had been previously circulated. The Chairman outlined the four options to enable communities to undertake various maintenance works on highways. After consideration, Councillors agreed that using community volunteers, with relevant training provided by SCC for ‘lead’ volunteers, was the best option. The Chairman asked that all Councillors chat with their neighbours and report back at the next meeting as to parishioners’ thoughts on joining this Scheme; the Chairman reiterated that the work within the village should not all be undertaken by Councillors, volunteers were needed. **Action: All Councillors**

11. **Update on Nowton village Enhancement Project** – the Chairman reported that the use of wooden posts on the green surrounding the village sign was not recommended by the Highways representative during their recent site meeting, but instead the use of planters was suggested. A licence would be required for ‘street furniture’ which would cost in the region of £130 and this, added to the cost of the planters and their contents would need to be considered carefully before any decision was made by the Council. The Chairman recommended that the area continued to be kept looking tidy, which would be a good deterrent for people not to drive vehicles over the green.

Cllr. Smith gave a brief update on the works planned for the Village Hall.

12. **Abbots Vale Development** – the Chairman of Gt. & Lt. Welnethan Parish Council, Cllr. Peter Royce, had been invited by the Chairman to join the meeting for an exchange of information between neighbouring parishes on the effect of the development, particularly with regards to increased traffic; whilst the development was outside the parish boundary, it was felt that the consequences would be experienced in neighbouring parishes, without enjoying any of the benefits, i.e. Section 106 funding. Cllr. Royce stated that all opinions expressed during the meeting were his own personal opinions, not those necessarily of his Parish Council.

Cllr. Royce had undertaken extensive data collection of volume of traffic and shared this with the Chairman; electronic copies would be circulated to all Councillors following the meeting. **Action: Clerk**

After lengthy discussion, particularly concerning the narrow road past the bakery, which was totally unsuitable for large vehicles and which Councillors feared would become even more of a ‘rat run,’ it was agreed that concerns should be raised as Highways issues, rather than Planning. The Clerk was instructed to make a formal request to Cllr. Soons for a three way traffic survey to be undertaken in Nowton village. Cllr. Soons requested a map be provided with the relevant points marked, which the Chairman would provide to the Clerk. The cost would be £675.00 (£375+£150+£150) and Cllr. Soons was unsure as to the availability of funds. **Action: Chairman/Clerk**

Cllr. Royce advised that his Parish Council owned its own VAS/SID and it might be possible for Nowton to borrow this, obviously subject to the consent of his Council.

Cllr. Royce advised that he had been campaigning for cycle paths, from the new development, but the cost had been seen as prohibitive. He also advised keeping an eye on the Council’s planning website, in case there were any changes and, should there be changes to the original plan to contact Cllr. Soons; Cllr. Soons advised that everyone would need to make their thoughts known.

Cllr. Smith suggested possible ways of restricting HGV’s and would look into a scheme she had heard about in Ipswich. The Chairman suggested keeping a log of all ideas and see how, and to whom, they could possibly be presented to.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Royce for his time in attending the meeting and for his informative advice and offered help from Nowton PC in the future, to work together as neighbouring parishes on issues of joint concern. Cllr. Royce then left the meeting.

13. **Review – Emergency Plan and Information Leaflet** – In the past the Emergency Plan and Information Leaflet had been provided to parishioners, direct to their homes, in paper form. The Plan and Leaflet are reviewed and updated every two years, together with sending a questionnaire and consent form to every household to establish what equipment or specialist skills they could offer in case of an emergency; with the cost of printing and postage, for the return of the questionnaires, this was quite an expensive exercise. After discussion, it was agreed that it was likely that the elderly and venerable were most likely to continue to prefer paper copies and these would continue to be supplied. The Plan and Leaflet would also be put on the website and notices would be posted on both the bus stop and PC noticeboards advising of this, stating that if any parishioner required a paper copy they should contact the Clerk. A supply of the Plan and Leaflet would be provided by the Clerk to all Councillors, who would then be in the position to deliver copies to those who had requested them. **Action: Clerk**

The Plan and Leaflet would be provided to all new parishioners in paper form, together with a questionnaire and consent form, in order that they could be added to the rota of helpers, should they so wish. The Clerk to provide paper copies of the Questionnaire and Consent Form to all Councillors. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman took receipt of the master list of those who had offered equipment and specialist skills in order that he could update it; to be returned to the Clerk at the next meeting. **Action: Chairman**

14. **Correspondence** – all email correspondence had been circulated to Councillors as and when received by the Clerk. The Clerks & Council Direct magazine would be circulated to all Councillors. A new laminated photograph, as requested, of Jo Churchill MP had been received for posting on the PC noticeboard. **Action: Chairman**

Details of SALC’s conference being held at The Hold in Ipswich on the 29th November had been previously circulated to Councillors; one place was available per Parish Council at a cost of £15. It was proposed by Cllr. O’Hare and seconded by Cllr. May that the Chairman should attend on behalf of Nowton PC and the Clerk would make the necessary registration. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had attended a WSC planning meeting via Teams on the 19 July, and he and the Clerk attended a joint SALC/WSC forum meeting via Zoom on the 5 September.

15. **Next Meeting – Wednesday 1st November, 7pm, Nowton Village Hall.** *(The previously scheduled meeting of 25 October was changed in order to better facilitate all Councillor’s attendance.)*

Further meetings 2023: 6th December.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.50 p.m.

Original signed by the Chairman

1st November 2023

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Signed

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Date