

NOWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish held 22 May 2024

At 8 p.m. in Nowton Village Hall, Nowton

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

In attendance and presenting reports: Andrew Tucker, Sarah Peacock, Marijke Heatrick.
One report was taken out of agenda order (Item 5, taken after 2).

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr. Karen Soons; Liam Judd; PC 1239 Emma Macduff.
2. **To ratify the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on the 17 May 2022**, as approved at the meeting held 5 July 2023. Resolved and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Annual Report of the Parish Council**, by the Chairman of the Parish Council.
The Chairman covered issues faced during the past year - potholes, flooding, speeding traffic - and outlined the progress made and ways in which these problems were being addressed by the Council.

The SCC Self Help Scheme, which would empower residents to be more proactive in the care of our roadside areas had currently been put on hold, as the Scheme must be community led and there was presently an acute shortage of volunteers.

The Chairman touched on the topics of crime and policing, finance, planning, maintenance of village property and communication.

Thanks were given to Cllr. Karen Soons for her continued help and support, and Andy Tucker, Area B Safer Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, for his tireless work in keeping everyone so well informed. The Chairman acknowledged the hard work undertaken by all Councillors, the Clerk/RFO and the Internal Auditor, and thanked them for their support over the past year.

Finally, with one vacancy for a Parish Councillor, the Chairman encouraged parishioners to consider putting themselves forward to join Nowton Parish Council, to help make a positive contribution to representing and improving our community.

The full report can be read in Appendix 1.

4. **Annual Financial Report of the Parish Council** - by the Responsible Financial Officer, Pauline Stoddart. A detailed Income & Expenditure paper, which also showed the figures from the previous financial year for comparison, had been prepared for all those present. The RFO had prepared the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2023-2024 (AGAR) and sought the approval of the Parish Council that evening at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. Residents on the electoral role have the right to view and question the annual accounts during a consultation period between 3 June and 12 July. The notice of public rights will appear on the Parish Council noticeboard and on the Parish Council website (nowton.onesuffolk.net)
5. **Annual Police Report** – the Police no longer produce written reports for this meeting; data can be found on the website police.uk

Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Report – by Andrew Tucker, SNWA BSE Area B Network Coordinator. Andy began his report by advising that recorded crimes were up, 19 last year compared to 16 the year before, although this he advised was on a par with the rise in other parishes too. He reported that 49% of all reported crimes were classed as violent/sexual, virtually all of which occurred in the home. It was pleasing to learn that crimes across the area were generally very low.

Cybercrime continued and Andy advised everyone to forward suspect emails and messages to the Government department set up to tackle this type of crime, *report@phishing.gov.uk*. Andy reported that he was now electronically reaching more than 4,600 residents and the network was working well.

Having written to the Home Office regarding how crime statistics were recorded and presented to the public, Andy was pleased to report that changes had been implemented and statistics would be shown in a more meaningful and accurate way in the future.

Andy concluded his report by advising that Suffolk, having being the sixth lowest last year, was now the fourth lowest in terms of crime, so definitely moving in the right direction.

The Chairman asked if the Parish Council could do anything to further inform people, particularly those that do not use email or social media. Andy suggested posting the monthly crime figures on the noticeboard, include details in any newsletter, add Neighbourhood Watch details to the Information leaflet and also suggested a formal invite to PC Macduff to park at the Village Hall carpark to informally meet parishioners, which he knew she had undertaken at some other villages within the area.

7. Informal Reports/Discussions

7.1 Nowton Village Hall Committee – by Sarah Peacock on behalf of the Village Hall Committee. Sarah began her report by thanking Cllr. Smith for her work as the former Chairperson of the Committee and her work carried out to update the seating, kitchen equipment, outside bench, sourcing a painter, as well as dealing with bookings and enquiries during her tenure.

Sarah outlined the work that had recently been completed and future projects in the pipeline. She thanked Henry and Josh for all their help with the upkeep of the grounds around the Hall.

Bookings were now taken via an online booking system and the Hall was being used by a number of regular users, as well as other groups and for one off parties; however, the Committee would shortly be confirming new prices as, due to rising costs, the income was no longer covering expenses.

The Committee would welcome any villagers interested in joining them to help build the Village Hall up into a popular community facility.

Presentation -

The Chairman then made a presentation of a framed portrait of His Majesty King Charles III, which the Parish Council had applied for and received cost free from a Government funded scheme, for display in the Village Hall. On behalf of the Village Hall Committee, Sarah gratefully received the portrait.

7.2 Nowton Park – Liam Judd had sent his apologies as he was unable to attend.

7.3 Nowton Cricket Club – by Marijke Heatrick on behalf of NCC. Marijke began her report by saying after a winter of net training, all the players were glad to be back on the field. She outlined the makeup of the many teams, including a woman’s team, and advised that all the teams had made a good start to the season. In particular, the Youth teams were very strong and had a healthy number of players, indicating no need to actively seek additional youth players at the present time.

Marijke reported that lots of work had been carried out, to the pavilion and the changing rooms, the boundary fence had been repaired and painted and there was now a new NCC sign. Future projects included the improvement of training facilities with fixed nets, although Marijke advised this was proving challenging.

To conclude, Marijke reminded everyone that Nowton residents were invited and warmly welcomed to sign up for free Social Membership to NCC.

The Chairman thanked Marijke for the NCC report and asked whether there were any safety issues experienced when leaving the NCC ground. Marijke explained that the overgrown nettles were sometimes a potential problem in obscuring the oncoming traffic. The Chairman mentioned the SCC Self-Help Scheme and enquired as to whether this was something that volunteers from the NCC might be interested in. Marijke said that she would put this to the Committee and the Clerk was instructed to send her the details of the Scheme. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman offered to pin the NCC fixtures to the village noticeboard and Cllr. Smith enquired as to whether the NCC might be interested in being included in a regular newsletter or biannual booklet that the Parish Council were considering. Marijke advised that reports were routinely written and saw no reason why NCC would not wish to be included.

Marijke asked for the contact details of PC Emma Macduff; the Clerk would email the contact details to her. **Action: Clerk**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50 p.m.

Signed(original signed) Date3.7.2024.....