

## Chairman Report 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

After what has seemed a very long time life, as far as the pandemic is concerned, is at last returning to some sort of normality. We can return to work and education, meet with friends and family and take part in all the things we have missed. We are, of course, very conscious of those we have lost and those still suffering with the after effects of Covid 19, but we must now look to the future. Unfortunately, the terrible events in Ukraine and its consequences lay heavily on our minds as we try to keep positive about the days ahead.

In Great Notley, the Parish council has managed to work as usual throughout last year and has tried to keep everyone up to date through our Facebook group and on our website. We are now back to in-person meetings and welcome those who wish to join us. Unfortunately, after the resignation of one of our councillors, we have yet to find a new member and as a small council we do feel the loss.

On a more positive note, we have finally taken over the newly refurbished RAFT after a final inspection. It has proved to be very well used and appreciated in the community. We were happy to see it is frequented by quite a range of age groups. The area is much more open and parents feel that is safer for their children who can use it with confidence. Recommendation following inspection of the Levens Way play area were also implemented to maintain this popular children's facility. A new map board has been erected in White Court and a memorial bench organised on the village green for a former Parish Councillor, a white Court resident, who was Chairman off the football club for many years.

Consideration of planning matters continued as did consultations such as the ECC bus strategy. The Health and Wellbeing group liaised with the surgery during the pandemic in order to assist in relaying information to residents. Meeting other than monthly Council were often online which made it easier for participants in many ways.

We also took the decision to change the format of both Remembrance Day and the Christmas Celebrations. We were so pleased at the positive reception met by both events and hope to repeat the success during the coming year. We cannot thank those who helped enough. The community spirit was strongly felt, especially after so much isolation.

Discussions with Braintree District Council about the provision of allotments continue but finding a suitable piece of land is proving difficult mainly because of the ease of access for both holders and water supplies, and the suitability of the land itself.

Problems around parking, speed and road safety are ongoing but repeated traffic surveys do show good compliance overall within the village, though we continue to speak with the police about their dealing with those who race cars on the A131. The safety issue on crossing that road at Panners roundabout is still being considered with Essex highways. Inconsiderate parking continues by a minority of residents despite the dangers and possibility of being fined after an increase in attendance by the Parking Partnership operatives. The police are hoping to start patrols of the village with councillors in May.

This year a new publisher took over the Great Notley Times producing a new front cover and some other changes in format. Unfortunately, there were some unforeseen problems with delivery by Royal Mail who apologised, but since it is also available on the website, we hope not too many were unable to see a copy.

We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful village and must thank our litter team for their hard work in keeping it so but we would like the community to be involved and have agreed to host a community litter pick in the Autumn. To maintain the condition of our Parish we continue to promote the scheme to recycle small electrical items, to book an Amenity vehicle for the use of residents, and to employ extra deep cleaning of areas not able to be reached by our litter team. New litter bins have also been acquired for use in the village.

We are also pleased to see Braintree are updating the tree and vegetation strategy though we still have no news on the work needed along Great Notley Avenue which will be in a separate report. Some work has been done by Braintree on hedges near Panners pond and a new fence has been erected. As part of the rewilding initiative, we are also looking into starting a community orchard and a wildflower growing project though plans are at a very early stage.

This year we were pleased to again win Local council Awards Foundation Status with very positive feedback from the Judging panel on our application. Thanks must go to Suzanne Walker, our clerk, for her hard work in ensuring we have met the required standards.

We look forward to the Queen's Jubilee in May when the NGCA Fete will lead the village's celebration. It will be a joy to be coming together to recognise an extraordinary achievement and something positive to lead us into a new fiscal year.

Dorothy Griffin  
Chairman of Great Notley Parish Council