

Chairman's report 2022/23

This year The Parish Council has managed to work successfully throughout the year and kept residents up-to-date through our Facebook group and on our website. The Magazine has been delivered mostly as usual, but there have been some problems in that Royal Mail has been unable to deliver to every address in our post code. We are aware of it now and have taken steps to make sure no one is left out. We have also directed people to the Patient Participation Newsletter published for the local doctors' surgery which is available online.

We held an engagement meeting at Tesco's in May in order to talk to residents who may not be able to join us at council meetings. We have also met residents at the event introducing us to the DigiGo travel on demand which has proved to be a valuable asset helping everyone to get around the area. Community 360 which is an independent charity aiming to improve people's quality of life have also visited Great Notley to explain the numerous resources which are available.

Our Litter Team work hard to keep the village looking so good and we have also engaged a specialist deep cleaning team for the areas in hedges and ditches which are hard to access. Braintree District Council have also cleared leaves on the pathways which has made walking a lot safer. Keeping our roads up to standard has employed the keen eye of local people who have reported potholes and helped in having them repaired. Thanks to Councillor Butland and our Clerk Suzanne Walker who have passed on the reports to the relevant authorities.

The issues raised most often by residents are the inconsiderate parking of cars and the noise from cars racing along the roads around the village. Both have also raise questions of safety and we are in constant contact with both the Police and the Parking Partnership. The Police need evidence and are urging local people to provide it whenever they can. Recently, an advert for a meeting of cars was advertised on local media and reported to the Police and the Parish. Following representations from the Parish Council via the local County Councillor to Braintree District Council and the local Police a dispersal order was put into place. The Parish Council will continue to lobby for the issue to be effectively addressed.

Disappointingly, our request for a reduction in speed limit on the A131 has been refused, as was the request for a 20mph limit in White Court. The latter, at least, is being looked at again. We have also requested tactile paving on Bridge End Lane near the white gates.

The results of a survey of residents affected by parking at the end of Cuckoo Way and Wood Way was part of an application to the North Essex Parking Partnership for parking restrictions but, due to the lack of response, the NEPP will not be able to progress the application.

Noise from the racecourse has also been an issue and is being raised at the appropriate authority by our Councillors. Again the Police say they need proof which means they need to be there with the appropriate equipment when it happens. The police have invited councillors to join a patrol of the village but it is yet to be arranged.

We are still trying to find a suitable site for an allotment and are meeting regularly with Braintree District Council. Our plea for a sign warning of people crossing by the Astronomer since the refusal, on the grounds of cost, of an actual crossing is awaiting consideration. So too is our plan for some areas of rewilding along the central footpath and the tree strategy along Notley Green.

Our Remembrance Sunday event went ahead as usual with refreshments donated by Tesco and provided by the Great Notley Community Association. Thanks must go to the Reverend Roman, Rachel our bugler, Great Notley WI, the Scouts and Brownies and pupils of Notley Green school.

After the Christmas pantomime, to which the Parish Council was pleased to give a grant, the Community Association stepped in to offer Carol Singing Around The Tree. As it is not feasible for the Parish Council, WINGs have offered to host this event next year having been a great help in decorating the tree and helping with the celebrations, alongside the Scouts. We are so very grateful for their continued support. The Christmas tree and the replacement memorial tree have been paid for by the Braintree Councillors' Fund. Grateful thanks are extended to them.

We have yet to find a new Councillor to replace a resignation several months ago and as a small council we have felt the loss this year. There is an election in May and we hope people may wish to stand to join the Parish Council. Information is available on the Parish Council website and also within the magazine.

The budget for the year 2023/24 can be found on the website and shows an increase in expenditure which is predominantly down to two reasons - the increase in staffing costs as a result of the increase in the legal minimum wage and the reduction in the payment to be received from Braintree District Council towards litter picking in the Parish. Of course this will mean a small increase in the Parish precept.

Finally I am pleased to say we have been successful in achieving Council Quality Award status. This is an award that only a few councils achieve and is, in no small way, an indicator of the diligent work of our clerk, Suzanne. Thanks must go to our Councillors too, and the litter team, for all their hard work this year.

