

Chairmans Yearly Report 2023/4

This time last year we were saying our farewells to Suzanne Walker as she took up her post as Clarke to a new parish. We were fortunate to find Elizabeth Winter who, though new to the work of a Parish Council, took up the challenge and fitted quickly into her position. She already knew the Parish quite well as her children attend school here. Her commitment and quality of work is much appreciated by councillors and residents alike.

At the start of the new civic year, elections for the Chair and Vice Chair took place as well as a review of committees and representatives. We also welcomed councillor John Cogswell to the group who has kindly agreed to act as an additional financial control by reviewing statements and invoices. Councillor Crawford remains an active member of the Patient and Participation Group for Great Notley and Little Waltham doctors' surgeries and he is also Planning Lead.

The council continues to deal with monthly financial business as usual, but there are other outstanding issues still awaiting a decision, often waiting for funding to be available, that are outside our remit. The transfer of land within the parish from Countryside Properties to Braintree District Council has been agreed with with only the future of the Unity Hand sculpture outstanding. On the other hand, the warning pedestrian sign on the A131 adjacent to the astronomer, the tree strategy for the Parish, and the 20 mph speed limit within White Court are yet to be addressed as is a site for the allotments. We are also still looking for a voluntary Tree Warden.

We always try to keep the village as residents expect, and continually review things such as the maintenance of the defibrillator at the church, the condition of the waste bins, the village entrance gates, the general street scene, and of course the play areas. Our litter picking team work hard all year and two have recently completed a course on Routine Playground Inspections. Planning matters relevant to the village are reviewed monthly, with added information from Councillor Crawford's inspections, and comments are sent to Braintree District Council as and when thought to be necessary.

In response to the continued concern about racing and noise disturbance PC Draper met with the council and some members of the community to talk about solutions. Though Police are clamping down they have limited effective resources and residents are asked to continue to report problems in order to build the necessary intelligence and statistics that could lead to a solution.

A new grant scheme called "The Rural Prosperity Fund" has opened to encourage small businesses and maybe even community-led repair workshops. Applications are encouraged.

Remembrance Sunday was a successful community event organised with the help, amongst others of Councillors, the Reverends Rachel Prior and Nicola Horsley, NGCA and Rachel Hockley Warner with refreshments provided by Tesco. The delightful choir from Notley Green School also joined us for the first time.

The Parish Magazine has been produced as usual with the cost of advertisements retained and problems in distribution have hopefully been addressed successfully.

The Community Christmas event was well attended and positively received by residents. The children's crafts, in particular, seemed to be a welcome addition. Thanks go to Notley Green WI, NGCA, Braintree and Bocking Concert Band the Scouts and all those who volunteered their time and efforts. We also appreciated The Reverend Rachel being with us to offer prayers. The Parish Council covered the costs for the event.

Finally, as published in the magazine, our approved budget this coming year will see a slight increase to the Band D calculation of £2.13 to £44.70 for Great Notley. This is a 5% increase on last year

May I take this opportunity to thank all Councillors, who volunteer to give up their time, as well as the litter team and of course the clerk, Elizabeth, for their support.