

## PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022/23

**COUNCILLORS:** We have 8 seats of which 7 were all filled at the end of the year. Our current Councillors are Paul Reedman, Stephen Davies, Steve Howat, David Hall, Antonia Collins, Margaret Anderson and Paul Woobey. Thanks to all Councillors for their work in the last year but particularly to Stephen Davies as Vice Chairman and to Rachael Johnston who stepped down half way through the year.

**MEETINGS:** In the year we have had 10 normal meetings and a finance sub-committee meeting. All meetings were held in the Methodist Chapel other than the finance sub-committee which was held by Zoom.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish which involves residents, clubs and village organisations was held in All Saints Church in May.

**QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE PARTY:** Despite all of the careful planning by the Jubilee Committee, the street party on School Lane and games on the school field were thwarted by the weather. It was forecast to rain heavily and it did!

After some hectic last minute replanning by the Jubilee Committee everything was moved to the village hall as soon as it became available after a morning birthday party. The event was well attended and turned out to be a brilliant success.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** 12 planning applications of various types have been examined and commented upon including a controversial large self build house adjacent to the Royal Oak which was considered at our March meeting

**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY:** We received no additional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions

**GRANTS:** The only grant awarded by the Parish Council during the year was £2,000 towards the upgrade of the village hall heating system.

**PLAY AREA:** The covered blue seating unit was refurbished and repainted. Thanks to the team of councillors who carry out weekly inspections of the play area.

**GRASS CUTTING:** 2022 was the 3rd and final year of our two grass cutting contracts. Maximow continued cutting the village hall playing field and Countrywide Grounds Maintenance continued to cut road verges, the churchyard, the play area, the area adjacent to the village hall car park, the 3 battlefield viewing sites, the public open space adjacent to Hammonds Mews and the off road paths from High Street alongside the allotments and between the village hall and Cottesbrooke Road.

New 3 year contracts covering years 2023 to 2025 were awarded in February to Maximow again for the playing field and to Thompson Groundcare for the road verges, the churchyard etc.

**BUSES:** Buses operated by UNO provided a 60 service from Naseby to Northampton on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and 59 service to Market Harborough on Tuesday and Friday. Parish Councils along the routes contributed to the operational costs with the balance provided by West Northamptonshire Council. Naseby's contribution was £1,604. West Northants Council have confirmed that the two services will continue into 2023/24 but could be subject to review following delivery of a consultants transport study.

A 14 seat hopper bus has started up serving Naseby and surrounding villages on one day per week. Places have to be pre booked and destinations have included Moulton Aldi and Rushton Lakes Shopping Centre.

Bus passes can be used on the 59 and 60 routes and on the hopper bus.

**BOOK EXCHANGE:** The book exchange was formally opened on the 1st July by our local Member of Parliament, Chris Heaton Harris. Kelmarsh Wind Farm Trust funded the cost of the shed and a mass of books were donated by the village. Many thank for the efforts of Chris Woods who had the idea and made it happen.

**MARKET CROSS:** The Market Cross is a listed monument which was moved to its current position, close to the Methodist Chapel 30 years ago. Most of its plinth stones had severely weathered over time and have been replaced with matching new stones. A large conifer was also removed and replaced with a slow growing conifer. The official unveiling was carried out by our Chris Heaton Harris MP on the same day that he opened the Book Exchange.

**KELMARSH WIND COMMUNITY BENEFIT:** The charity has 8 trustees who are nominated by their respective parish councils and serve for a period of 3 years. There are two each from the qualifying parishes of Kelmarsh, Haselbech, Clipston and Naseby.

Richard Nicholson and Stephen Davies served as our two trustees during the year.

**DEFIBRILLATORS:** A second defibrillator has been installed at the village hall. This was funded by a Kelmarsh Wind Farm grant to Naseby Football Club and has been adopted by the Parish Council who will maintain it.

**PRECEPT:** The Parish Council precept has been set at £29,395 for 2023/24, a reduction on the £31,500 for 2022/23..

**VILLAGE HALL:** The Village Hall Committee have refitted the kitchen including new cookers, cupboards and work surfaces.

Following steep increases in electricity costs a major scheme to reduce the costs of heating has been completed by the Village Hall Committee. This included the installation of air source heating and a lowered insulated ceiling. A Parish Council grant of £2,000 was made towards this work.

**GYM EQUIPMENT AREA:** Progress has been made investigating the provision of a small outdoor exercise area within the village hall playing field, including the completion of a resident survey. A decision to proceed has been made but this is subject to finding grants.

**TREE PLANTING:** An additional 30 whips were planted within the tree planting areas on the village hall playing field.

**CREATON MIGRANT HOSTEL:** A proposal to use the Highgate House Hotel at Creaton to house migrants was announced in early January which led to much anxiety from Creaton residents whose population of 500 would almost double with potentially 400 male migrants trapped in the village with virtually no local facilities. Public meetings were held which were attended by large numbers of residents from Creaton and surrounding villages including Naseby. With the assistance of West Northants Councillors and Chris Heaton Harris MP the proposal was stood down.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION:** West Northamptonshire Council is approaching the end of its 2nd year and has just set its precept for 2023/24.

Signs of changes are beginning to be seen which including a decision to close the former District Council offices in Daventry, harmonisation of rates across the three former council areas and creation of a single planning department based in Towcester.

Financial savings are reported to have already been made, but there is much more to be done over the coming years.

West Northamptonshire Council became operational on the 1st April 2021 with its 93 councillors elected in May 2021. Naseby currently sits within the Brixworth electoral Ward and our 3 Councillors are Jonathan Harris, Cecile Irving-Swift and Kevin Parker who have all attended one or more Parish Council meetings.

The Local Government Boundary Commission is currently reviewing West Northants Council with a public consultation under way to rationalise the electoral wards and the number of councillors. The new boundaries will take effect at the next set of local elections in 2025 and will reduce the current 93 councillors to 76.

A survey of West Northants Council assets within parishes and of the services provided to parishes has been undertaken. It covered very diverse elements including monuments, war memorials, waste bins, street lighting, public open space etc together with ownership and maintenance liabilities. The survey was undertaken in cooperation with parishes but so far no changes to historic responsibilities have been proposed or identified for passing down from West Northants to parish level.

**VOLUNTEERS:** Many thanks to

- Geoff Capell for moving and maintaining the speed information display unit.
- Roger Carter for the weekly defibrillator inspections.
- Margaret Anderson for organising the Xmas tree event.
- Liz Capel and the team who deliver Naseby News.
- The Naseby Good Neighbours Group for arranging help, support and assistance for families adversely affected by Covid restrictions including loss of employment.
- The Jubilee Committee for organising the Platinum Jubilee event.

**PARISH CLERK:** Many thanks to Josie Flavell our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for her sound advice.

Paul Reedman  
Chairman  
Naseby Parish Council

31st March 2023