

Nettleham Parish Council Report: 2023 -2024.

At the end of the last civic year several experienced Councillors retired from the Parish Council, notably Cllr John Evans who had served for twenty years. Councillor Colin Payne joined the four remaining Councillors after the May 2023 elections. Councillor Christine Johnson, Councillor Jess McGuire, Councillor Andrew Simpson and Councillor Anthony Crook were later co-opted. These new Councillors have brought different perspectives to the Parish Council and encouraged us to look at new priorities.

We have also welcomed new members of staff. Our new Parish Clerk, Lucy Waller, came into post on March 27, 2023, followed by our Responsible Financial Officer, Carl Thomas. As the hours of our Facilities' staff had been reduced for several years, we then appointed an additional handy man: Ian Felton.

We had agreed before the appointment of these new members of staff that the IT system needed to be updated as well as staff mobile phones. This has been completed and allows both the Clerk and the RFO to work part of their hours from home.

The refurbishment of **Mulsanne Pavilion** has attracted additional bookings so the Council has receipts above those projected in the budget. A new facility there is a large screen television which can be used for live screenings and presentations. The solar panels are working well, reducing our energy costs. Following police recommendations, there is now a CCTV system which records activity around the park.

Thanks to the Cricket Club who provided the funds for benches and a picnic table in memory of one of their cricketers.

The Council has also purchased several new signs to remind residents to keep dogs on the lead, here and every other play area and sports ground. Despite an article in Nettleham Matters and on Facebook, members of sports groups are still clearing the ground of dog faeces. A West Lindsey District Council Enforcement Officer has visited and will continue to visit and the Council will continue to monitor the situation.

The first part of the cemetery is maintained by West Lindsey District Council and the second part is administered by Nettleham Parish Council under their burial rules. Behind that is the field known as the **Swathe** which was purchased by the Parish Council in 1998 for an extension to the burial ground.

Following a long period of work by the Swathe Working Group, consideration of resident and Councillor concerns about the removal of trees throughout the Swathe at this stage, the Parish Council has agreed to commence work on the first phase which extends around sixty meters. The remainder of the Swathe will be maintained as a Green Space.

The Parish Council has successfully applied to WLDC for **Revenue and Capital grants** of £3K and £6K respectively. So we have a sound system and three gazebos, available for community use, along with three new notice boards and a planter for Mulsanne Park which will arrive shortly. The Council has recently heard of a successful £2K **Star Energy** application which will contribute towards the replacement of the fort, which has deteriorated, in Bill Bailey's. Thanks to Councillor Tony Crook for his work on this.

Aware and supportive of resident concern about **speeding** on and around the village, the Parish Council has purchased a solar powered speed awareness sign which is in place on Washdyke Hill. In the 2024 -25 financial year it is also planned to site two additional speed awareness signs on Lodge Lane and Deepdale Lane. The Council has lobbied the County Council who have the power to reduce speed limits and Lodge Lane now has a 40mph limit. It is also proposed to reduce to 40mph the speed limit along the A46 between Lincoln and Nettleham. On an inter parish online meeting with Lincolnshire Police every Parish Councillor who spoke complained about the speed of vehicles between and in villages and no one seemed happy with the Archer surveys presently provided.

The Parish Council is in the process of setting up a Community Speed Watch Group which, subject to the necessary training, should be active this year.

Nettleham Parish Council has also initiated a petition for a crossing of the A46 at the Nettleham roundabout which is presently a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists. Thanks to Councillor Jess McGuire for her suggestion and work on this.

There are plans to extend this roundabout and the Parish Council has asked our local County Councillor, Jackie Brockway, to continue lobbying for a crossing on our behalf.

The **Review of the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan** is now at the Regulation 16 examination stage. Details of the process can be found on the West Lindsey District Council website under Neighbourhood Planning. It has been a long process and the Parish Council had no power to decide the sites or the number of new properties proposed in our village. These were decided by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. It is hoped that the work of the Review of the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will contribute towards the quality of future developments, an awareness of environmental concerns and the protection of green spaces. The Parish Council thanks the members of the group, especially former Councillor Chris Higham who chaired the group and former Councillor John Evans who secured grant funding to support the work of consultants.

It is expected that the referendum on the Review of the Nettleham Neighbourhood Plan will take place in June or July 2024.

The **Property Committee**, chaired by Councillor Dave Newsam, has worked with the Facilities' Manager to oversee the needs of the Council's property, both buildings and grounds. As Chair, I would like to thank them for the continual drive to maintain and improve facilities.

One of their initiatives was the defibrillator training course for village sporting and activity groups which had an attendance of 25 people.

The Working Groups of both the Property Committee and the Parish Council have been active this year.

The **Climate Change** group led by Councillor Christine Johnson planted bulbs and wild flowers in the quarry on Washdyke Lane. The March meeting of the Parish Council agreed to the sites of seven areas of reduced mowing to provide environment for wildlife and fauna and the **Biodiversity Policy** is out for consultation. Also, there will be an information board at the Cube in Bill Baileys' Playing Field.

Councillor Johnson assisted the planting of over a 100 trees provided by Nettleham Woodland Trust at Minster Fields. There is now a Nettleham Parish Council Tree Policy and tree surveys were carried out in Green Lane and in the Swathe. Volunteers led by Councillor Colin Payne have worked in **Green Lane** and **Vicar's Wood**, clearing some of the ivy which was covering many of the plants on the ground. There is a new path through Vicar's Wood and it is planned to replace some of the side fencing and do a tree survey here.

The village was again affected by flooding so the Beck working group has become the **Beck and Flood Resilience Working Group** led by Councillor Peter McNeill and Councillor Andrew Simpson. Councillor volunteers, in particular Councillor Dave Newsam and Councillor Andrew Simpson, and Facilities staff supported residents, delivering aqua sacs and sandbagged the end of the path at Vicarage Lane in order to prevent flooding. Riparian owners have been leafleted and letters sent to Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and the East Mercia River Trust. There was also a meeting with Lincolnshire County Council representatives and possible mitigating measures were discussed.

The **Conservation Area** has not been formerly reviewed since it was set up in 1985. With Councillor Andrew Simpson, Nettleham Heritage Association's Pearl Wheatley and West Lindsey Conservation Officer, Chris Bradley, I walked around the area one morning in June 2023. This has been followed up by meetings of the Conservation Area Working Group led by Councillor Simpson. Recommendations have been sent to West Lindsey of unlisted buildings which are of interest and other inclusions to the Conservation Area. The group hopes to improve the environment for the Conservation Area, especially around the Green.

Thanks to District Councillor, John Barrett, who has worked on a further two **Blue Plaques** for the Institute and the Black Horse.

There will be an increase of 1% in the **Parish Precept** for the year 2024/25. For a band D property this equates to £1.22p per annum. There has not been a percentage increase since the 2021-22 civic year. The Council agreed that in the light of inflation it was time to make a small increase in order to accommodate higher costs and avoid larger future higher increases. However, the Council is expecting to receive CIL payments as more properties have been built in the parish, so this will increase the tax base and reduce the impact in future years.

The Parish Council recognises the contribution of volunteers to the community and each year presents a **Ray Sellars Community Award**. This year's worthy recipient is Lulu Wood who has led the development of the Buddies Dementia Cafe for seven years. Other nominees were thanked on behalf of Nettleham Parish Council and included Nichola Lord, Tony Lawson and Pete Rowlett for their work for Nettleham Scouts, Allison Faulkner for Village Hall, Community Hub and particularly litter picking and John Thornton for his work for the Football and Tennis Club.

A former Chairman and District Councillor, Alf Frith, died this year. His years of service with that of other Chairmen since 1974 is recognised on the new Chairman's Board in the Parish Office.

I would like to thank former Councillor Alan Henderson for his support as Vice Chair and all other Councillors for their service to the parish of Nettleham this year.

We would like other residents to join us so that we have a full complement of 12 Councillors. If you are interested please contact us at clerk@nettleham-pc.gov.uk

Finally, our thanks are due to our Clerk, Lucy Waller, who has helped us improve our organisation supported by Carl Thomas, Responsible Financial Officer, Jane Ashby, Facilities Manager, Claire Ward, Assistant Clerk, Louise Bromfield Accounts Assistant, Kevin Pyrah and Ian Felton, Village Handymen.