



# **NRS&NMHPC**

Newton Regis, Seckington and No Man's Heath Parish Council

*Three villages, one community*

## Annual Chair's Report May 2025

This year has been another one of change for the Parish Council with two of our councillors-our former chair Councillor Gary Hunt and a newly elected member Councillor Harry White resigning from their positions in October 2024. Their resignations were very sudden and came as a result of very negative personal comments being directed towards them when they were endeavouring to work alongside the Village Hall Trustees and Newton Regis Tennis Club to obtain funding to develop the recreation field. Unfortunately, there was a lot of misunderstanding surrounding their ideas and parishioners became concerned that the field was going to be lost as a big open space and voiced their opposition vociferously. After Councillors Hunt and White resigned, it was decided to abandon all such plans by the remaining councillors.

The two councillor vacancies were advertised, but only David Clarke applied to NWBC and he was duly elected as an unopposed councillor in December and I wholehearted welcome him to the team. I am hoping that we will be able to fill our final vacancy in the very near future by co-opting another Newton Regis resident.

The biggest project that has been undertaken during this year has been the desilting of the duck pond, which was five years in the planning but has finally been completed. The last time this was done was in 1976 and so well overdue. This major operation was masterminded by Gary Hunt and was undertaken in September 2024. The thousand or so fish were removed and kept in aerated tanks for the duration and the water gradually pumped out. A 13-ton digger was brought in to remove somewhere in the region of 200 tons of silt. Thankfully the rain held off for just long enough for the silt to be removed and the wall to be cleared of the overgrowth and then obligingly fell for 2 days to refill it. The ducks have now returned and some marginal plants have been planted.

The recreational or 'cricket' field has been well cared for by Rob Sculley during the last year and looks in lovely condition. It is used by Polesworth Flying Club, who fly their model aeroplanes and by Appleby Magna girl's cricketers. Renting this space out helps us to raise useful revenue to add to our precept.

Although some of the equipment in the children's play area is beginning to look a little tired and dated, it continues to be used by many children regularly. ROSPA undertake a detailed inspection of the play area, equipment and fencing annually and this report gives us a basis for our weekly inspections and helps us to make decisions regarding the safety of the equipment and the play area in general. During last year's report it identified that the rotator/spinner wasn't safe and although we originally condemned it a replacement at £4600 was well beyond our budget we managed to find a company to repair it for just over £500, which was a significant saving.

Unfortunately, towards the end of May last year our Kabuto Tractor was stolen from the lock up behind the Village Hall. It was obviously a planned theft and the criminals had clearly observed the mower being

put away. In order to gain access they came down the track from No Man's Heath, cut through the chain securing the gate onto the field with an angle grinder and then smashed two heavy padlocks to gain access to the lock up. Once inside they cut through heavy duty chains that were securing all of the equipment together. This equipment was then moved outside whilst they removed and drove the tractor back up the track to No Man's Heath. The insurers were satisfied that we had taken all reasonable steps to secure the tractor and paid for a replacement. The security in and around the lock up has now been stepped up and we hope there will not be a recurrence of this despicable theft.

Since taking over the former bowl's club pavilion and the bowl's green there have been many discussions and debates regarding what we should do with it. One of our options was to take down the building, clear the ground and return it to its original state as part of the recreational field. This would have been an expensive option and deemed to be a waste of our very precious precept money, so we engaged with residents to try to find a different solution. A new group of crafters (from the village of Newton Regis) has been started and they expressed a wish to use it for their base. A number of residents needed reassurance that the Parish Council would not be financially supporting the group and that they would be given sole use of the building which could not be sublet and once this assurance was given the councillors agreed that they should be allowed to take it over. We are very pleased that a decision has now been made about the future of this building.

Over the last few years we have become acutely aware of the number of trees that have been lost in the village for various reasons and when some funding through the King's Coronation Heritage Fund to plant a community orchard became available we successfully applied for it and the bowl's green has now been planted with a mixture of 25 fruit and nut trees. We are looking forward to this becoming established as a quiet reflective area of the village.

Cameron Homes have now completed and sold all houses on the Manor Farm development and we welcome all new residents to our Parish.

Permission has been granted for three dwellings at the back of St Mary's Grove, but to date building has not started. A planning application was made to NWBC for 39 dwellings to be sited at the side of the track and to the rear of Townsend Close. It was opposed by the PC and most residents and we were relieved when this application was turned down on 7<sup>th</sup> April.

During this year we have been able to support the News and Views, VE Day celebrations, the annual Christmas Lights Switch on and the New Year's Day Goose Walk and we would like to express our thanks and gratitude to FoNR, The Queen's Head, Newton Regis C of E Primary School for supporting these ventures. We have continued to undertake regular litter picks around the lanes and are always frustrated by the deliberate detritus left by others when passing through our area.

The annual audit of our accounts has been successfully undertaken and signed off by the internal auditor. Many thanks to Barbara, our clerk. I'm pleased that we have a healthy budget taking us forwards into next year.

The B4593 junction at Seckington remains to give us cause for concern due to the speed and volume of traffic and discussions have been held with Warwickshire Highways Department about how this can be made safer. To date there we are awaiting any decision or action by them.

No Man's Heath residents have continued to be frustrated by off-roaders churning up Salt Street and fly tippers leaving all manner of rubbish with impunity. The stalemate between Warwickshire and Leicestershire CC of adopting this ancient right of way has continued and unfortunately shows no sign of a resolution being reached.

And finally I would like to thank Marian Humphreys, our County Councillor who has represented us at county level and made sure that we, in the north of Warwickshire, don't get forgotten, to Councillors David Humphreys and Brynner Ririe who have been a great source of help and advice at NWBC and to all my fellow councillors for their help and support during this year.

Dilys Cox

Chair