

Report of the Chairman of the Council

The past year has been yet another very busy and eventful one for our council.

Costessey continues to expand rapidly with the developments at Queen's Hills and Lodge Farm. The Council will continue to assist and lobby wherever it can so that the residents of both estates can live comfortably in a pleasant environment.

It was decided by the Boundaries Commission that Queen's Hills would be a ward within the jurisdiction of Costessey Town Council and there would be three more councillors representing the area from 2019, making a total of 19 Town Councillors and 5 District Councillors. It was also decided for the District Wards that the part of Lodge Farm which at present is within the Bawburgh parish boundary would be transferred into Costessey as it is more practicable.

On the planning side. The Town Council is consulted by South Norfolk Council on the various applications, which relate to Costessey and the area and these are brought to council meetings every three weeks. We have fought tirelessly to oppose the development at Townhouse Road and although it was passed on appeal we continue to insist on conditions being implemented. We also have another contentious application on Farmland Road, which we oppose and will continue to do so as the site is located in the very sensitive valley of the River Tud.

We have been consulted and have commented on the proposed section of dual carriageway A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton.

We have liaised with Easton Parish Council on the huge proposed development there, and have attended meetings, which concerned the proposed Food Hub.

We will shortly be installing a Wig Wag pedestrian crossing at the entrance to the Costessey Centre, to give pedestrians priority at this point, especially school children.

We have expressed our concerns, sometimes quite forcibly, about the highways in our area, and their inability to cope with the traffic, which is now becoming intolerable and will probably only get worse in the future.

We will continue to press for the final, Norwich Western Link of the NDR to be completed connecting to the Southern Bypass at its western end. The Dereham Road/Longwater Lane junction has been widened city-bound with a view to improving the A1074 eventually all the way through Costessey.

We support a speed awareness scheme and the council is operating a moveable speed camera at various places in the town, which is not only flashing a warning to speeders but giving valuable feedback statistics. It is hoped that average speed cameras will be located in West End, and we are negotiating with the Speed Safety Partnership for their operation.

We have quarterly tours of Costessey with the highways engineer where we can point out places which need attention.

We have started a "Love Your Loke" scheme, and a popular loke between Grove Avenue and George Lowe Close/Gurney Road has been re-surfaced.

The Greenhills Wood project commenced in late 2016 and will continue through to 2019.

We are very much aware that our ever-increasing population is putting a great strain on local Health services, not just our doctors' surgeries, but also the local hospital and other medical services. Whilst the council has no powers in connection with these services, we have been able to help in small ways with suggestions and letters to MPs.

West Costessey Hall at Queen's Hills is now complete and is proving to be a very popular venue for the local community. Some residents have requested that the hall be renamed Queen's Hills Community Centre (or similar).

The halls at Breckland Road in New Costessey have been equipped with a TV screen and WIFI.

In Breckland Park the upgrading of the children's play area continues, with a new totally accessible roundabout and duo swing. The nest swing is also a popular addition. We will be providing a replacement centre piece for the toddler area, and are looking to provide more benches and a picnic table.

At Gunton Lane a memorial bench has been installed and we will be providing picnic benches for this popular area.

At Longwater Lane in Old Costessey, the Costessey Centre has received more new chairs and those in the gallery are being re-covered. The heating control system has been improved in order to both make the building more comfortable and to give more economies in fuel.

We have purchased new specialist equipment for grounds work. Old machines have been traded in for more efficient new or nearly new ones.

We are active and are consulted on various projects in the area, for example The Green Infrastructure Project, and the Queens Hills Country Park and we support The Friends of the Tud Valley.

We do, of course have a cemetery, which is at the top of Longwater Lane. We are looking at extending this area and have a large design project in hand which will include an area for Natural Burial.

Working in the community, we support Lola Stafford with the National Citizen's Service Projects, our Youth Services QUBE and Cossey Posse, Dementia Cafes, and support of services for more elderly residents.

Councillor Paul Cooper, together with Roy Howard deserve a special mention for continuing with their great work with our town history. Councillor Gary Blundell and his helpers also deserve thanks for their work with the Fete.

We have a thriving Costessey Sports Club with their annual weekend Football Tournament being extremely popular and a credit to the organisers for their year-round efforts.

I think it is safe to say that the workload in the past 12 months has been unprecedented and I wish to place on record a big thanks to the staff who have really been under quite a lot of pressure to process the legal and technical aspects of various issues, especially our Town Clerk, Hilary Elias who has provided most valued guidance to councillors on these matters.

I must mention a very important team who work with her. Nigel Bailey is our Deputy Clerk, who seems to know everything and if he gets stuck, he knows someone who can help. Able Assistants Maggie, Emma and Debbie are the friendly faces in the office who seem to cope more than well with all that is happening.

Barry Barber, our hardworking groundsman, has been joined by Steven Lester who helps Barry as well as undertaking general maintenance work.

Thanks are due also to our 16 councillors who are all volunteers who give up their time to attend meetings and to be involved in our community. Thanks also to our County and District Councillors.



**Patrick O'Connor
Town Council
Chairman since
May 2016**



**Artist's impression of the new play
equipment coming soon to
Breckland Park in the Autumn**



**We support the Costessey Memories
Group who were delighted to be
invited to a tour of the Ormiston
Victory Academy**