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# The Chairman's Annual Report 2025

## **A Year of Progress and Community Spirit**

The past year has been one of positive change, collaborative effort and continued investment in our community. First and foremost, I would like to thank my fellow councillors, our hardworking staff, our volunteers, and, of course, you – the residents of Costessey – for your ongoing engagement, feedback and community spirit.

## **Strengthening Our Team**

Our staffing structure has undergone important changes to ensure we have the right expertise and capacity to support a growing and thriving town. We welcomed several new staff members who have brought fresh enthusiasm and valuable experience to their roles. From administrative support to grounds maintenance and property management, we are now well positioned to meet the needs of our community and deliver on our ambitious plans.

## **Community Projects and Engagement**

We have placed a strong focus on **community engagement**, recognising that the best outcomes arise when residents are actively involved in shaping their town. Our free community events have continued to grow in popularity, thanks to the efforts of our Community Engagement Officer and the support of local businesses like Russen & Hill. From Christmas celebrations to health and wellbeing workshops, these events help to foster a sense of togetherness across all generations.

The success of Dadvengers and our youth clubs at both the Costessey Centre and Queen's Hills Community Centre has been particularly heartening, providing valuable social spaces and support networks for local families and young people.

We've also continued to support the Dementia Café, which offers ongoing support for carers and those living with dementia, strengthening Costessey's reputation as a compassionate and inclusive community.

## **Investing in Our Open Spaces**

As a town council, we are fortunate to oversee a diverse range of recreational spaces, woodlands and community facilities. Thanks to the tireless work of our Grounds Team, our green spaces remain welcoming, well-maintained and ready for residents to enjoy.

The ongoing Lodge Farm/Hampdens open space project remains a key strategic priority, with imminent community consultation helping us shape how this important area will be used in the years to come. Similarly, the transfer of recreational land at Queen's Hills is progressing, with the exciting prospect of local football coming to the area from September 2025.

We are also advancing plans to improve Longwater Lane Cemetery, ensuring we have space to meet future needs while preserving the site's tranquil and natural character.

### **Volunteering and Environmental Action**

Costessey has always been blessed with dedicated volunteers, and this year has been no exception. From the fantastic Hampdens Hedgehogs Litter Pick led by local young environmentalists to the Community Orchard lovingly tended by residents at Queen's Hills, these projects show the real power of grassroots action.

Our thanks also go to the Costessey Community Gardening Club, who work year-round to brighten our community with beautiful floral displays and environmentally friendly planting schemes.

### **Good Governance and Looking Ahead**

Internally, we continue to strengthen our governance processes to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability in everything we do. The Strategic Working Group, which I have the honour of chairing, plays a key role in ensuring that our services and facilities keep pace with Costessey's growing population, whilst protecting the unique character of our community.

We are closely monitoring the evolving local government restructure plans for Norfolk, and we will ensure that Costessey's voice is heard throughout this process. While much remains uncertain, we are committed to protecting the interests of our town and ensuring that residents remain well-informed and empowered to contribute to the debate.

### **A Town Council for All**

As always, we want every resident to feel that Costessey Town Council is here for them. Whether you attend our monthly meetings, join one of our drop-in sessions, or simply contact your local councillor directly, your voice matters.

We are also enhancing opportunities for volunteers to get involved in council-led projects, from event planning to environmental initiatives. There is a role for everyone, and we want to make sure that when you volunteer your time, you feel supported, valued and appreciated.

This has been a year of positive momentum, built on strong community spirit, careful planning and collaborative leadership. None of this would be possible without your continued engagement, feedback and support. Together, we will ensure that Costessey remains a vibrant, welcoming and forward-thinking community, a place where people are proud to live, work and raise a family.

Terry Laidlaw  
Chairman  
Costessey Town Council

## Costessey Town Council - Financial Matters Report

The management of the Town Council's finances is a balancing act between the known and the unknown. We have to set the precept only knowing the actual financial position for the first seven months of the financial year and a lot can change in the last few months.

However, we have examined the likely financial outcome for 2024/25 and using those figures created a budget for 2025/26 which has meant us raising the precept for a Band D property by 2.9% to £147.55 an increase of £4.22.

We do understand that any increase at all is not welcome in these financially challenging times but while we are not a council responsible for social care or child services, we are not immune to rising costs. Above inflation increases in wages and energy bills plus their impact on building and maintenance supplies continue to place upward pressure on our budget.

Our staff have worked tirelessly to manage costs and secure best value for money while maintaining our service level and ensuring our buildings are fit for purpose. As you all know unlike most town and parish councils Costessey has three halls to manage, and as I have said numerous times in the past all such buildings inevitably lose money as councils have to walk a fine line between using them to provide a level of service to the community at an affordable price and meeting the ongoing costs of providing that service.

All this against a background of diminishing demand as our hirers both business and personal feel the impact of rising prices. To offset this, we are keeping our hiring fees unchanged so as not to further choke off demand.

Therefore, setting a budget has been a little fraught this year against the background of rising costs and falling demand. We do however have an adequate reserve cushion should it be necessary to support the income and expenditure account. Our General Reserve is comfortably within the Government guidelines of three to six months net expenditure, and we have 'earmarked' reserves to meet the maintenance costs of our buildings, street furniture and amenity land assets. But when an item of playground equipment can cost in excess of £50,000 they cannot be described as anything more than adequate. We will continue to work to keep a balance between holding down costs and maintaining a high level of service. If we do that, we will succeed in ensuring a secure future for local government in Costessey.

**Cllr Graham Jones, Chair of Finance and Governance Committee, CTC.**

# Toadwatch

Toads in Costessey need your help! Every year from January through to the end of March, toads will set out on a perilous journey moving from the fields & gardens to the West of West End, over to the ponds to the East by the river, which are the breeding grounds for the toads. This only occurs for roughly eight weeks when the temperature begins to rise after winter. The toads have been crossing at this point for many years, long before the houses and increase in traffic. Would you like to join our group of volunteers who come out, pick the toads and frogs up and release them safely on the other side of the road? You need to dress warmly, wear a Hi-Viz jacket, carry a torch and bucket. This patrol usually saves over 200 toads and frogs during this migration period, but unfortunately numbers are decreasing year on year. For more information email [Costessey@toadwatch.org](mailto:Costessey@toadwatch.org)

## HAMPDENS HEDGEHOGS COMMUNITY GROUP



In the previous year the Hampdens Hedgehogs has been very busy & successful in raising awareness of the plight of the Hedgehogs on the Hampdens estate in Costessey. We have brought together the community with our events, helped the wildlife and made our estate a more beautiful place to live. We have written a formal constitution and appointed a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. We have decided that the aim of the Hampdens Hedgehogs will be:

- To increase public awareness about hedgehogs and the hazards they face and to encourage children's interest in, and respect for, hedgehogs.
- To run various annual awareness stalls in the community and surrounding area raising awareness of the plight of the hedgehog and how endangered these mammals are.
- To engage within the community and support residents in becoming Hedgehog Champions.
- To engender public support for a monthly litter pick in Costessey, Norfolk and to expand that campaign across South Norfolk.

- To raise and administer funds for a litter pick campaign.
- To bring community together through varied events such community bulb planting, Tree Pit planting and creating pollinator pathways helping to create an environment that is hedgehog friendly
- To raise and administer funds for bulbs, plants & trees for community planting days.

We have made an application and been successful to secure a Community Bank Account and hope to be applying for grants in the near future to help us develop our community awareness projects.

Hampdens Hedgehogs ran a one off Keep Britain Tidy, 'Great British Spring Clean' in March 2024 which was a huge success. It was decided on the day that the community would like to run this event every last Sunday of the month come rain or shine. Since then, the group have run 12 litter picks and collect a huge 119 bags of litter from the estate. We aim to continue this and grow this group in numbers over this year. We would like to purchase our own litter picking equipment and advertise this more widely to encourage more volunteers to the group.

We ran our Hedgehog Awareness stall on Lord Nelson Drive Park and at Kens Stores in Taverham Garden Centre in May 2024. We sold biscuits, hedgehog food and sold tickets for our annual raffle. Over the two days we raised £598.50 which we donated to Hallswood Animal Sanctuary and British Hedgehogs Preservation Society. We also raised an additional £110 with Just Giving for British Hedgehog Preservation Society. This year we will be running our stall on Saturday 3rd May on the Hampdens Estate on the Lord Nelson Drive Park and on Bank Holiday Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May at Kens Stores, Taverham. This year we will be raising money to help our group develop more community projects on the estate and make the Hampdens more wildlife friendly.

We also launched our Pollinator Pathway and Tree Pit initiatives on the Hampdens. We provided wildflowers seeds to residents who had a tree outside their house and encouraged them to plant wildflowers to increase the number of insects. We also work alongside Greenbelt management company to plant some wildflower pits and plant bulbs in green communal spaces. We planted spring bulbs on the roundabout on Lord Nelsons Drive and also along the new pathway from the bus stop on Dereham Road. We would like to use funds raised this year to continue with our 'pollinator pathway' projects further afield on the estate.

We continue to help and support residents on the Hampdens with caring for our prickly neighbours, advising them and taking injured rescue hedgehogs to vets and animal sanctuary when needed. We also have supported neighbours who supplementary feed nesting hedgehogs in the summer when they have gone on holiday or can't support the hedgehogs.

Kitty the founder of the Hampden Hedgehogs was nominated for the Young Diamond Award at the Royal Norfolk Show and also won the Young Achiever Award at the South Norfolk Council Community Award in July 2024. They two commendations were for her tireless effort in raising awareness of the decline and concern for the hedgehog in Costessey.

Further projects for 2025 will be fund raising for 'Slow Down for Hedgehogs' Signs to be erected on the estate. We have had had many hedgehog fatalities, due to speeding traffic and littering that is having a detrimental effect on the successful population of hedgehogs.

We would also like to erect some 'keep our estate litter free' signs and possible have some bins installed in certain areas of the estate where littering occurs frequently from taxi/delivery drivers and McDonalds customers who drive up, park and litter on our estate. We will continue with our monthly litter picks but would like to grow the group in numbers so we can achieve more litter picking across the whole estate each month.

We also hope to have a stall at the Costessey Fete in September where will be able to raise awareness further afield and help generate some more funding for further community led projects in Costessey.

Kitty Denny  
(Heather & Paul Denny- Parents)

## The Conservation Volunteers TCV – Queen's Hills

Every weekday our friendly group of volunteers goes out to protect and enhance some of Norfolk's many fine green spaces – working in partnership with Norwich City Council, Norwich Fringe Project and many others. We bring people together to create, improve and care for green spaces. Between April 2023 and March 2024 TCV have contributed over 800 person hours of work to protecting, restoring and connecting the wilder areas of Queen's Hills Community Park. Queen's Hills is an extremely important site for many nationally scarce insects, especially burrowing solitary bees.

As part of a management plan to improve biodiversity, some of the inappropriately planted trees are being removed from some areas in order to provide a link between existing areas of open heath at the site. Around 85% of our heathland has been lost in the last 150 years, and the mix of grasses, wildflowers, lichens and patches of bare sand here is especially good for some extremely rare solitary bees, plus butterflies and many other insects.

We found a Longhorn Moth on the slopes above the lagoon last summer, which had never been recorded in Norfolk before. You can help look after this special habitat. Meet between Longwater shopping area and Queen's Hills housing estate, where the surfaced path comes off Sir Alfred Munnings Road, Costessey, Norwich, nearest postcode NR8 5EY.

See [www.tcv.org.uk/norwich](http://www.tcv.org.uk/norwich) for task dates or contact:

Mark Webster [mark.webster@tcv.org.uk](mailto:mark.webster@tcv.org.uk) [www.tcv.org.uk/norfolk](http://www.tcv.org.uk/norfolk)

## Dadvengers

Dadvengers is a community interest company that inspires and champions fathers throughout their journey of parenthood. We are a community rich in diversity and transformative in our approach to reducing isolation, providing advice and building communities with peer-to-peer support at the heart of all we do.

Inspired by the experiences and challenges of founding director Nigel Clarke, who has faced many of the stigmas that are present in modern day fatherhood. Driven by his determination to ensure that fathers were not alone in their efforts to reach their potential as role models in their children's lives, Nigel brought together a dynamic team to form the first series of online Dad Chats and face to face Dad Walks in his local community.

Dadvengers envision a United Kingdom in which fathers and new parents are supported in all aspects of their lives thereby benefiting the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of their children and families. We operate with an ethos 'together we are stronger' and work tirelessly to ensure that all parents find their sense of purpose, support and belonging within our community and resources.

This year Dadvengers hosted two FREE kids disco on the 9th February, 13th April 2025 in association with Costessey Town Council at the Queens Hill Community Centre. The events have reached over 80 families so far, and we reach capacity within hours of announcing them.

We also host weekly Dad walks at the local park, where Dads and kids come together for an hour or so of chat and play.

## Costessey Youth Clubs – CYP & The QUBE

Costessey has two youth clubs which are provided by your Town council. Giving young people in the community somewhere safe to meet friends or make new ones. Both clubs open every other week in term time only. Members can choose to attend either club or both, giving them the opportunity to access the youth club weekly. They open in the West Costessey hall or the Costessey centre. We continue to only charge £1 for 2 hours of activities, ensuring this club is financially accessible to all members of the community.



The activities change each week and are service user led. These include arts and crafts, tabletop games, sports, cooking and themed nights. We are supported by adult and young volunteers who help supervise and set up activities. Our youngest volunteer is working towards their D of E award and gaining the voluntary section through the youth club.

## Costessey Memories Group

Costessey Memories Group meetings start at 10:30am on the first Monday of the month, in Breckland Hall, Costessey, unless it is a bank holiday, it will then be the second. Most of our members are older Costessey residents. We have talks, slide shows and regularly show documentaries of times gone by, mainly featuring Costessey, Norwich and East Anglia. The charge per individual is £1 to cover the hire of the room, tea/coffee, purchasing DVDs, the odd piece of equipment and fees for occasional guest speakers. We are now getting between 45-55 local residents attending our meetings, this has increased from last year when it was 40-45. At our February meeting we had over 60 attending as we had a very interesting speaker (Peter Goodrum) giving us a detailed talk all about the history of the well-known city shop Jarrold's, another very well-presented speech enjoyed by us all. Paul is the chairman with me vice chair now that Roy has stepped back from running the group. All the event organising is done by Paul and myself.

We are especially thankful to have Irene Dinneen and her daughter Angela who provide the teas / coffees and organise tombolas and raffle fundraisers.

The December Christmas event was exceptionally well attended with many being able to enjoy Roy's wife's tasty sausage rolls. This was followed by a comedy film made up from old sit coms from times gone by. We extremely appreciate the Town Council obtaining a film licence for Breckland Hall, this has now enabled us to show many local documentaries we were unable to show because of the copy right law, this is a real game changer, Thank You Costessey Town Council.

We would also like to thank Terry Laidlaw for securing a grant to replace our 9-year-old Projector, this is now used by us and the Memories Movies group for all our in-house events, and some Costessey Society events.

Our small team are looking forward to providing interesting and varied meetings for the coming year. Eddie Pentin mans the Memories Group stand at community events and schools, showing our picture albums, books and artifacts. The Memories Group albums are now available to view at Costessey library during opening hours.

**Paul Cooper and Quentin Mair**

## Costessey Movies and Memories Group

The group started up at the end of last year with the two films created by Paul Cooper on Costessey Hall. We have now formed a committee to decide on films, organise the setting up and clearing of the room and refreshments.

We will be showing films once a month except for July and August when the light and holidays will impact the shows.

So far this year, we have focussed on classic films, (Calamity Jane), and films of local interest such as 'Summer in February' which is about the life of Alfred Munnings and 'The Dig' which was about the findings at Sutton Hoo. Our April film is a documentary called "The Bodies in the Well" which is about findings during excavations for Chapelfield. We have a membership of 35 and the evenings are also attended by a number of visitors. We would like to thank the Costessey Town Council for obtaining the licence for us which enables us to show these films.

## The Costessey Society

Another busy year for the Costessey Society. A fully paid up membership of 60 with an average attendance of 53 meeting up on the first Friday of every month for nine months of the year at the Costessey Centre. We are a non-political group of Costessey residents meeting in a spirit of friendship to enjoy presentations, videos and talks. Some of our presentations are very Costessey focused and others further afield. For me, recent highlights have been cyclist Martin Philpot 'From Norwich to Everywhere' (all over the world) and Steve Purvis 'The Great Hospital 2022 with slides and music'.

This year we have contributed to a blue plaque presented to Debbie and Gary at the Bush Public House in recognition of painter Sir Alfred Munnings who was a frequent visitor. This was a joint venture with Costessey Memories group. The Society also made a financial contribution to the 'work in progress' of the model manufacture of Costessey Hall.

A floral presentation and Certificate of Community Recognition were made in the Summer of 2024 to June and Cedric Flood at their home. Thank you to June and Cedric for all your past and continued support to many Costessey community projects. In May 2025 The Costessey Society will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday at our AGM. Quite an achievement and worthy of a celebration. Thank you to Costessey Town Council staff and Councillors for your continued support throughout the year.

**Vivienne Bell Chairman, Patricia Penny Treasurer, Sheila Hinton Secretary, Tony Perry Events Organiser, Sally and Bryan Ulph - Committee Members**

## Neighbourhood I Officer PC 665 Andy Sneddon

A neighbourhood officer is a local police officer whose aim is to keep your neighbourhood safe to live, work in and visit. Your neighbourhood officer engages with local communities and works to solve issues and priorities within the areas that you live and work. Priorities are set at a district level and a local level by the beat managers. The priority for Quarter 2 will remain as road safety including speeding, anti-social vehicle use and drink/drug driving.

Throughout the year speed enforcement has been conducted across the area including Dereham Road, Norwich Road and Queens Hill. Section 59 warnings has been issues in relation to anti-social vehicle use. Any further reports may result in those vehicles being seized. A roads policing operation was conducted in Costessey involving the following departments and partner agencies:

Road Policing, Community Support Unit, DVSA, Taxi Licensing, HMRC, Immigration

62 vehicles were escorted to the Showground for further checks resulting in:

- 3 arrests
- 8 vehicles being seized
- 45 traffic offence reports being issued for various offences - 2 failed breath / drug tests

### Crime

Old Costessey and New Costessey has seen a 23% reduction in recorded crime for the period 1 April 2024 to 10th March 2025 (the date of this report). Please encourage everyone to report crime. As with a lot of areas, people will post on social media and tell others, but they do not always report it to the police. Reporting crime has never been easier. Reports can be made online via the Norfolk Constabulary website or through 101. For any crimes in progress then use 999.

Intelligence is information which the police receive or collect. It could be information about drug dealing in your community. It could be information about suspicious behaviour. Or it could be information about a possible drink driver. Specialist officers look at the information and assess the risk to a person. We then decide if, and when, we need to act on this information.

Something you've seen or heard may seem insignificant. But your information could be the missing puzzle piece we need. It could help us to catch a criminal and keep people in your community safe. We need you to tell us what's going on where you live or work. Intelligence can be passed to your local beat manager or in one of the following ways:  
Tel: 0800 555111 [SNTCostessey@norfolk.police.uk](mailto:SNTCostessey@norfolk.police.uk) [enquiries@norfolk.police.uk](mailto:enquiries@norfolk.police.uk)  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)



## The Royal British Legion in Costessey

The Royal British Legion is at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community. We're here through thick and thin – ensuring their unique contribution is never forgotten.

We are the country's largest Armed Forces charity, with 180,000 members, 110,000 volunteers and a network of partners and charities; helping us give support wherever and whenever it's needed.

1. You may think that that the Royal British Legion is just for servicemen and women and their families, but you'd be very wrong. It's true, the funds we raise do help serving and ex-serving people and their families, but the Legion does so much more.
2. Membership is open to everyone; you don't have to be a serving or ex-Service person. If you have an interest in the work of the Legion and want to help and support those who have served and their dependents, come and join us. We welcome people of all ages, whether they have served in the Armed Forces or not.
3. Firstly, **you do not have to have served or have any association with the military to become a member.** The Costessey & District Branch has fewer ex-service personnel than those that have never served. The RBL in Costessey is an active branch with **a very strong social programme**, so there is something for everyone.
4. **Our meetings are kept deliberately short** (ideally 30 minutes maximum) so that our social time together can be optimised. The branch also has **an active Community Support programme**, which results in direct support being offered to those in need of help locally. This can involve telephone calls or occasional visits to those who feel lonely, hospital visits and even the odd shopping trip, if required. Our volunteer programme is there to help when we can, regardless of background.
5. As a charity we are bound by the terms of our Royal Charter when it comes to the use of RBL funds, so only our formal beneficiaries can receive financial support, but that does not stop us from playing our part when it comes to supporting the community. Anyone can become a member if they support the aims of the RBL - to support our service and ex-service people and their families.

6. Our meetings take place on the **first Thursday of every month at the Bush Public House on The Street in Old Costessey**. The **meetings start at 8.00pm** but most of us get there just after 7.00pm to enjoy the socialising. So please, come along, there is no compulsion to join. Attend a few meetings and events and see how you like it? before committing to membership. The branch is widely known to be friendly, open, and welcoming - so why not give it a try and widen your circle of friends in Costessey, we look forward to seeing you.

**Iain Shuttleworth**  
**Chairman RBL Costessey & District Branch**

## Costessey Town Council Archives

Archives are a collection of historical documents and records providing information about a place, institution or a community. Our records are mainly in the form of paintings, maps and photographs of Costessey and to a lesser extent in written records. However, the written archives do contain a copy of the Gunton Papers painstakingly annotated by Paul Cooper. This is an incredibly valuable source for local history.

The bulk of the collection is housed in the Collison Room and of course many of the paintings are on display in the Rymarz Gallery both of which are located on the floor above.

My predecessor Paul Cooper did a tremendous job in cataloguing what we hold and following that, my aims are twofold firstly to make these records more easily available. For example, we are in the process of acquiring a map chest to enable our collection of historical maps to always be accessible. Secondly, we plan to identify gaps in the information and endeavour to fill those gaps. I recently wrote a short report on the Roundwell Monument at the top of Longwater Lane for the council's newsletter and had difficulty in finding any old image of the monument beyond that used by Ernest Gage in his book 'Costessey - A Look into the Past'. Others must exist and I would like to find them to improve Costessey Town Council's archives.

It is monuments and buildings on this more modest scale that I would like to concentrate on. We do have a great deal of written and pictorial information about Costessey Hall, its history and its inhabitants but less about other buildings and people. Aside from the Hall; Costessey both Old and New and very new has an interesting history and I would like the archives to fully reflect that history and of course be an accessible resource for anyone who is interested in learning more about our area.

If you have pictures, documents or records of any kind related to the history of Costessey which you would like to share with the Town Council, then please do get in touch.

Similarly if you wish to view the records, please get in touch with the office to make a viewing appointment.

**Graham Jones, Honorary Archivist**

## Queen's Hills Community Orchard

The Queen's Hills community orchard project began back in 2019 when in response to a growing public awareness of the climate emergency a public meeting was held at the Costessey centre, the purpose of which was to look for local solutions to mitigate against global warming. The outcome of that meeting was the formation of a group of volunteers with a focus on practical solutions and a decision was made to establish a community orchard. With the support of Pauline Williamson (Costessey volunteer tree warden at the time and now sadly passed away) and Helen Sibley (Green Infrastructure Officer, South Norfolk council) we were allocated a patch of land on Queens Hills.

In February 2022 with the involvement of Queen's Hills primary school and the generous support of South Norfolk council the trees were planted. They are mainly heritage varieties from the East of England Apples and Orchards Project. It is a small informal orchard with apple, pear, cherry, plum, medlar, mulberry and quince trees. In addition to looking after the orchard we also maintain the meadow between the trees by late summer scything and raking to encourage wildflowers.

### **Developments for 2025**

The group meets on the first Saturday of each month at 10.00 for two hours. During the course of 2024 we made such good progress on general maintenance (weeding, mulching, feeding and pruning) that we decided to attempt a survey of the wildflower meadow area between the orchard trees (report attached). This took place over June, July and August. This was very much a trial to get some idea of the variety and numbers of wildflower species present. We are very much amateurs and none of the group are botanists. We relied heavily on field guides and manuals to identify the flowers. In the light of this trial it was decided to try and get some professional help for a further survey. We have enlisted the support of an expert from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to help develop our survey methods. This is planned for the spring / summer of 2025.

The long-term aim of this survey is to generate some baseline data of the flora and see how it compares year by year and with other similar sites for which data is available.

Location of the orchard: Adjacent to the loop path at the entrance to Queen's Hills off Sir Alfred Munnings Road near the pump house car park; w3w sudden/punk/patrolled.

We are grateful for the generous support of South Norfolk Council and the guidance from Helen Sibley (Green Infrastructure officer).

I continue to be grateful to the small core of dedicated volunteers who support this project in all weather and without whose hard work this orchard would not have been viable.

For further information or to express interest in the orchard contact Chris Young at [chris.qhco@gmail.com](mailto:chris.qhco@gmail.com).

For further information about the management and volunteer opportunities for Queens's Hills Community Park please contact [Helen.Sibley@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Sibley@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk).

## Friends of the Tud Valley

The Friends of Tud Valley have 25 signed up members including the CTC. We have regular meetings and investigate planning applications which affect the valley. We prevented a development on Farmland Road for 70 dwellings. We keep in touch with the Environment Agency who monitor water quality. Regrettably the populations of white crayfish have deteriorated and have been overtaken by American crayfish.

**Cllr John Newby (Chair)**

## Costessey Community Gardening Club

Costessey Community Gardening Club is well into its 4th year. Membership numbers remain stable at 30 and we regularly have 2 to 3 visitors at our meetings. We launched our Facebook page last year 'The Costessey Community Gardening Club' as a source of up-to-date information about the club, along with our more traditional methods of communication.

Members enjoyed a varied programme of speakers and entertainment in 2024 which were well attended. In keeping with our objective to support the local community we held a successful plant stall at the 16th Norwich Sea Scouts fete in July 2024 and we will be returning this year. For our Christmas social event we asked a Costessey-based catering company 'Teapot Catering' to provide us with a buffet for the evening. The club is affiliated to the Norfolk & Norwich Horticultural Society and we supported the Spring and Autumn shows held at the Costessey Centre last year and achieved some success in the affiliated show bench classes.

The Well-Beeing and Sensory raised beds at the Costessey Centre and the raised bed at Breckland Library continue to be looked after by volunteers from the club and there have been many positive comments about the quality and colour of the beds throughout the year. Towards the latter part of last year we responded to a request from the East of England Ambulance Service for help with a small garden at their Longwater site which although popular with ambulance crews had become a bit overgrown and neglected. Volunteers have quickly restored some order to this small and discreet garden and will continue to do so. One of the club's original projects at Brooklands Nursing Home has come to an end as a new gardener has been appointed, and the gardening services of the club are no longer required.

At the Club AGM in September 2024 the committee were pleased to report our bank account remained healthy and members voted to keep the annual subscription unchanged at £12.00 per person for 2024/2025.

A full programme of speakers and events has been organised for 2025 and at the time of writing Costessey Community Gardening Club will continue through 2025 and into 2026 with confidence.

## Costessey Conservation Volunteers CCV

The Battle of the Brambles and Bracken in East Hills Wood and Green Hills Wood continues to take up most of our time, but the results are worth the effort. The volunteer group continue to meet once a week (weather permitting) during the Autumn, Winter and Spring months with a well earned break during the summer months.

Both woods have become more popular and the work we do does not go unnoticed by regular walkers and occasional visitors. There is no doubt that our efforts are appreciated. We always have time for a chat with interested passers by and have acquired a regular 4-legged following who check on progress!

### **East Hills Wood**

Despite the group's small numbers, we are managing to keep the larger glades clear in East Hills Wood to give the blue bells maximum space to thrive. Once the blue bell season gets started, we will tidy up the Recreation Area and continue to clear areas of the wood not blessed with blue bells.

Those of you who remember Pauline Williamson and the work she did in East Hills Wood may be interested to know a rustic seat and plaque has been placed in Pauline's favourite glade overlooking the valley. The words on the plaque were chosen by her daughter and are a quote from one of Pauline's favourite books.

Jamie Henry, the Community Assets Officer from South Norfolk Council who own and manage East Hills Wood, continues to support our group with regular visits to see what we are up to and keeping us supplied with ample pairs of thorn proof gloves.



### **Green Hills Wood**

In the past work in Green Hills Wood has concentrated on keeping the new tree planting clear of weeds and brambles. These trees, although not thriving are putting on some new growth each year. There has been time this year to concentrate on the fringes of the newly planted area, clearing brambles and unwanted sycamore and birch saplings, and keeping a couple of popular pathways clear of encroaching brambles.

### **Grant Funding**

We are grateful to Councillor Sharon Blundell for awarding us a grant of £550.00 to purchase some specialist tools 'Extractigators' to use in both woods. They will be extremely useful for removing unwanted sycamore and birch saplings and more tenacious brambles - roots and all.

### **Deborah Flowerdew**

#### **Costessey Conservation Volunteers**

**15.02.2025**

## **Costessey Dementia Cafe**

The Café meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at the Costessey Centre. We have around 16 people attending, comprising of people with dementia, those who care for them and volunteers. A representative of the Alzheimer's Society is usually in attendance. We serve coffees, teas and biscuits at no charge. We play games including chess, dominoes and quizzes. Occasionally we have special visitors including a singer.

### **Cllr John Newby**

## **St Helen's and St Edmund's Costessey**

We're a friendly, family church in Costessey wanting to share the good news of the love of Christ. There's a wide range of activities that run throughout the week. There really is something for everyone - a toddler group on Monday mornings, a children's group for 7-11 year olds on Tuesday after school, a monthly craft and chat group meeting on a Friday evening, monthly local walks on Sunday afternoons to name but a few. The highlight of the week for us is gathering together on Sunday mornings. They are friendly and relaxed. We'd love you to come and try out a service. Our services times are 9am at St Edmund's Church on The Street and 10:30am at St Helen's Church on Gurney road with groups running for 3-11 year olds. You can find out more about what's going on our website. If you have any specific questions do get in touch with us:

## Friends of St Edmund's Church, Costessey

The Friends of St Edmund's Costessey continues to pursue its aims of restoring and improving the fabric of the church building, and providing leisure facilities on behalf of the inhabitants of the area. In 2024 a grant was given towards the refurbishment of the vestry, and it was agreed the Friends should support the restoration of the Ten Commandments board and the Peal Board.

Two events were held at the church in 2024: a Community Event in June, and a brass band concert with the City of Norwich brass band in November.

The church porch needs attention, and the following events have been arranged for 2025.

### **Community Event Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

To include a range of stalls and activities, plus refreshments.

### **Heritage Open Day Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2025.**

To include tours of church and refreshments.

### **Concert Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Concert with the Norwich Singers, accompanied by Jason Lambert, organist at St Edmund's, and featuring Hannah Long as guest soloist.

### **Brass Band Concert – Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

The City of Norwich brass band will return to give a seasonal concert.

## Costessey Sports Club

We are growing with over 500 registered players across 30 teams (26 youth teams) for the upcoming 2025/26 season. More than 1000 parents, grandparents and family members, predominantly local Costessey residents.

Ladies and girls' football: To add to our already established U16, U15 and U10 girls teams we had a new ladies 11 aside team last season, this gives us a clear pathway to offer opportunities for girls of all ages to take up football. Our vision is to continue to grow and expand our female provision and we are attracting new teams, with the addition of a new U13s team next season.

We have added a pan disability team for the 2025/26 season.

Adult men's football: Our first team achieved their highest league position for 41 years last season and are fighting for promotion again this year. Last season the Costessey men's team also won the coveted team of the month award from the Anglian Combination

League which is awarded predominantly for good behaviour. This was the first time in our history, and they have just won it again this year. They are sponsored by local businesses, Norfolk forklifts and the Crown public house.

## Hampdens Area Neighbourhood Watch



We set up our Neighbourhood Watch group in Sept 2023.

### Our objectives are:

- To build a strong, supportive, inclusive community.
- -To improve our resilience and reduce crime.
- -To reduce anti-social behaviour, by engaging positively with our young people.
- -To reduce loneliness and isolation.
- -To improve our environment for the benefit of our residents and wildlife.

### These objectives are being met by:

- ❖ quarterly meetings. (Next meeting is 24th April 18.30 at Costessey TC offices).
- ❖ Street, bin and house signs.
- ❖ Regular communication via our Facebook page and the National Website.
- ❖ strong links with Hampden Hedgehogs, supporting monthly litter picks.
- ❖ A newsletter, delivered to 900 households in the Hampdens area
- ❖ Community meetings and events: Community Family Day 29th June 10-2.

**Current membership:** National scheme:58. Facebook Group:164

We welcome new members from the Costessey area.

## Costessey Flower Club

Costessey Flower Club continues to meet at Breckland Hall on the first Thursday of the month. We are a friendly welcoming group who hold monthly demonstrations of flower arranging people of all experience will appreciate. In addition we arrange an annual Christmas themed all day workshop and other flower related events such as a visit to a local open garden in the summer months. In March this year we held a very successful Charity Fund raising day which raised over £1600 which will be split between the club and the charity LILAC. All details of meetings are on the website; [costesseyflowerclub.org](http://costesseyflowerclub.org)