

## Lowick & Slipton Parish Council – Chair’s Report for the Annual Parish Meeting – May 2025

As Chair of Lowick & Slipton Parish Council, I am pleased to present this report outlining the Council’s activities over the past year. It has been a year marked by continued commitment to service, attention to community well-being, and careful financial stewardship.

### Council Membership and Meetings

Following the resignation of Cllr S Barton in April 2024, the Council has remained active and engaged. I would like to thank all councillors, both past and present, for their contributions. William Page was co-opted to the Council in January 2025 to represent Slipton Ward.

The Council met regularly throughout the year, including additional meetings to manage key matters. The May 2024 meeting was inquorate but all business was efficiently carried forward to the rescheduled meeting. Regular meetings have been well-attended and have demonstrated strong collaborative working.

### Governance and Finance

The Council has maintained sound financial practices. The 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return was approved and submitted. The Internal and External Audits highlighted no significant issues, though a separate bank account was opened for Pocket Park funds, as recommended.

We set the 2025/26 precept at £15,000, reflecting prudent budgeting and strong reserves management. Reserves have been allocated for specific future projects, including biodiversity, defibrillator maintenance, traffic calming, tree care, and potential election costs.

All key policy documents, financial regulations, and standing orders were reviewed and approved.

### Projects and Community Assets

Significant progress has been made with the Pocket Park. Fencing was repaired and replaced, a new gate was installed, and improvements were made to enhance biodiversity. A dedicated budget has been established for continued investment in the park, and inclusive playground equipment is under consideration.

Weekly safety checks of Pocket Park equipment and defibrillators have continued reliably thanks to designated councillors. We are grateful to them for their commitment.

The Council approved a Biodiversity Plan, with measures such as leaving unmown meadow strips and the planned installation of an owl box. Hedging work near the brook is scheduled for autumn.

We also approved the purchase and installation of traffic-calming gates for Lowick and Slipton, with grant applications submitted and installation taking place as I write.

### Planning and Highways

The Council has reviewed and commented on several planning applications over the year, always with a view to preserving the character and heritage of our villages. We raised concerns about the materials used at the Samuel Pepys development and monitored progress closely.

Highway issues, especially repeated vehicle strikes on Robbs Lane, have been a recurring concern. The Council has actively liaised with North Northamptonshire Council and other partners, though many proposals (such as high kerbs) were not supported by NNC. We continue to advocate for resident safety.

### **Flood Management**

Flooding remains a key area of concern. Our Flood Warden, Adam Hughes, has continued to report regularly, highlighting issues with the culvert on the far side of the A6116. We have submitted grant applications to fund a culvert inspection and to acquire a community flood kit, and will continue to work where possible to improve the situation.

### **Events and Community Engagement**

The Council approved support for village events and continued traditions such as the laying of wreaths for Remembrance Sunday. A new portrait of His Majesty King Charles III has been displayed in the Germain Rooms.

### **Conclusion**

On behalf of the Council, I extend sincere thanks to all members of the community who have participated, volunteered, or engaged with us over the past year. I would also like to express appreciation to our Clerk, Nicki Phillips, for her diligent and professional service.

We look forward to another year of working together to support and enhance life in Lowick and Slipton.

Cllr W Childs

Chair, Lowick & Slipton Parish Council

May 2025