

# NEWTON IN THE ISLE

## PARISH COUNCIL

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### **Minutes of a Meeting of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Present** - Cllr D Nunn (Chairman), Cllr R Bradley (from 151/21), Cllr S Clark (from 151/21), Cllr D Freeman, Cllr R Moore, Cllr G Wilkinson (until 154/21), Cllr S King (CCC) (until 155/21), D Gibbs (Clerk), P Thatcher (Gorefield PC)

#### **149/21 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr E Jones and Cllr C Seaton (FDC)

#### **150/21 Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

#### **151/21 Public Forum (taken after 154/21)**

Mr Thatcher outlined his proposals to establish way marked routes including circular walks and new connections around Gorefield village. The proposal includes the publication of leaflets, maps or digital guides. Members discussed the opportunity to make connections between the two villages and agreed to support Mr Thatcher and to maintain a dialogue as the project develops. Cllr Nunn agreed to be the main contact for this purpose.

#### **152/21 Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

#### **153/21 County and District Councillors Reports**

District - The Clerk read Cllr Seaton's report regarding the Local Government Boundary Commission review of district ward boundaries in Fenland. The District Council agreed in December to adopt the proposal to increase the number of councillors from 39 to 42. If adopted by the Boundary Commission, this would result in Leverington being removed from Roman Bank ward to become part of a new Wisbech ward, Parson Drove becoming part of Roman Bank and the number of members being reduced from three to two, to take effect at the next district elections in May 2023.

County - Cllr King reported that he had raised concerns regarding the slow delivery of Local Highway Improvement and similar projects. The delays are caused by staff shortages, with between one quarter and one half of all posts currently vacant.

Following recent reports, Mill Lane potholes have been repaired, High Road drains are due to be jetted, a replacement sign will be installed at the junction of Fitton End Road, Goredyke Bank, Gote Lane and Black Dyke, a quote has been requested for renewing road

markings at the High Road junction with Fen Road, and Fen Road has been put forward for possible resurfacing.

The Highways and Transport Committee has agreed to the creation of a design guide for public rights of way to ensure that they meet the needs of all users. This resulted from Cllr King's intervention regarding the hard surfacing of paths making them unsuitable for equestrians.

The County Council's budget for the new financial year will include £5 million for community capital projects. Members discussed potential projects relating to the Village Hall. They asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting between the Council and the Village Hall Management Committee to consider options.

### **154/21 Police Matters**

The Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting with the Neighbourhood Sergeant in November. Inspector Lombardo has been seconded to Peterborough and replaced by Inspector Morris, who has previous experience of policing in Fenland. The Police have offered to their support in looking out for inconsiderate dog walking on the North Level Main Drain. Neighbourhood Watch has new online resources on anti-social behaviour and preventing burglary.

### **155/21 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received.

### **156/21 Members' and Residents' Issues**

- a) Abandoned vehicle in Colvile Road - awaiting DVLA intervention.
- b) Accumulation of scrap in Colvile Road - Clarion has agreed to address the situation.
- c) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - the Clerk will contact Clarion again to request resurfacing of the path and the possible removal of the tree causing the damage.
- d) School bus using Chapel Lane - the Clerk has contacted the bus operator to ask them not to use this road.
- e) Annual Parish Meeting - members discussed the possibility of inviting speakers from partner organisations to encourage a wider audience. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements. A Wednesday in April was chosen as the preferred date.

### **157/21 Policies and Procedures**

Members considered the following draft policy and procedure documents prepared by the Clerk:-

- a) Data Protection policy.
- b) Publication scheme.
- c) Code of Conduct.

They resolved to adopt the three documents.

### **158/21 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field**

- a) The Clerk reported that Jenny Windsor, Head Gardener from Peckover House, had visited to discuss options for the future management of the site. She offered to write a report on her findings at a cost of £60. Members agreed to proceed with this.
- b) In Cllr Wilkinson's absence, the RoSPA Playsafety inspection follow-up was deferred until the next meeting.
- c) The Clerk reported that work on the construction of the BMX track is ongoing.
- d) Several residents have contacted members of the Council regarding the possibility of planting a tree in the arboretum. Members agreed to consider this at the next meeting.
- e) The Clerk reported that he was awaiting confirmation from the fencing contractor regarding the installation of gate springs on the Playing Field gates.

### **159/21 Highways**

- a) The Privately Funded Highway Improvement application to extend the 40mph speed limits at both ends of the village is being processed. It is hoped that work will commence shortly.
- b) The Leader of the County Council has suggested a meeting with the Chairs of the five parish councils to discuss concerns regarding the assessment process for Local Highway Improvement applications. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements.
- c) The Local Highways Improvement application for 2022/23 to identify measures to enhance safety on the bends in Chapel Lane has been submitted. The Assessment Panel will convene on 2 February to consider the applications.
- d) Members considered the benefits of the signs highlighting the National Cycle Route through the village. The Clerk reported that he had received an indicative costing of £1,500 for these. Members resolved to purchase two signs to be placed on the High Road on either side of the Brewers Lane and Hogens Lane junctions.
- e) No further issues were identified in respect of signage on public rights of way.
- f) The Clerk has been unable to contact the Community Payback team and has asked the Police & Crime Commissioner's office for up-to-date contact details.
- g) Cllr Bradley reported that off-road vehicles continue to cause significant damage to parts of the byway network to the west of the village. The Clerk has discussed this situation with the Public Rights of Way officer. Winter closures of these routes are a last resort and the County Council would be unlikely to support an application. Further evidence is required before an application may be submitted, but members agreed to support the proposal in principle and to make the necessary provision in the budget.

### **160/21 Finance**

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of December, showing income of £15,283.90, expenditure of £13,345.30, leaving a surplus of £1,938.60 and total funds held of £42,537.17.

b) Members noted the following sum received:

<i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i>	£	0.30
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c) Members approved the following payment:

100716	<i>Cambridgeshire ACRE (membership fee)</i>	£	57.00
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d) Members considered the draft budget for 2022/23. They resolved to allocate the following additional sums:

<i>Playing Field (BMX track)</i>	£	200.00
<i>Emergency Plan (equipment)</i>	£	500.00
<i>Public Rights of Way (seasonal closure)</i>		<u>£3,100.00</u>
		£3.800.00

Members resolved to reduce the precept to £10,000, leaving a deficit in the region of £600 to be taken from the Council's reserves.

Members also agreed to work towards a longer-term plan to enable a more strategic budget-setting process in future years.

#### **161/21 Confidential Item**

Members resolved to exclude the press and public from the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Clerk to the Parish Council

#### **162/21 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 8 March.