

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 8th March 2022

Present - Cllr D Nunn (Chairman), Cllr S Clark (from 167/21), Cllr D Freeman, Cllr E Jones, Cllr R Moore, Cllr G Wilkinson, Cllr S King (CCC), D Gibbs (Clerk)

163/21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr R Bradley and Cllr C Seaton (FDC)

164/21 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman noted that an additional item had been added to the agenda at 174/21(h).

165/21 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

166/21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11th January 2022 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

167/21 County and District Councillors Reports

County - Cllr King reported that the County Council's share of the Council Tax will increase by 4.99% this year, of which 3% is ring-fenced for adult social care. An additional £400,000 has been allocated for 20mph speed limits and criteria will be developed for these schemes. Staff shortages are still delaying the delivery of LHI and PFHI schemes. Funding has been allocated for temporary staff.

The damaged chevrons on the A1101 will be replaced in the new financial year, as well as the replacement sign at the Black Dyke - Fitton End Road junction, lines at the Fen Road - Mill Lane junction and the jetting of the High Road drains. Resurfacing of Fen Road is also scheduled.

The County and Fenland District Councils no longer support the provision of skips for villages as this is not considered to be an effective way of dealing with a waste and fly-tipping problem. FDC will work with local councils where particular problems occur.

The repainting of the Cross Keys Bridge at Sutton Bridge has commenced and will continue until 7 July. Temporary traffic lights will cause delays and diversions. Some overnight closures will be planned in May.

Cllr Jones expressed concern regarding the recent pothole repairs in Mill Lane, which are already failing. Cllr King will ask Highways to investigate.

District - Cllr Clark reported that she had met with the management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to strengthen links between the District Council and the hospital. Regular meetings will follow. The hospital has received an improved rating from the CQC following the latest inspection and news of funding for a replacement building is expected soon.

168/21 Police Matters

The Clerk reported that he had attended a meeting with the Neighbourhood Sergeant in February. The refurbishment of the Police Station is complete and two new Constables have joined the team. The Community Safety Partnership has launched a range of new initiatives and resources and has received funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Fenland Police social media channels now have over 21,000 followers and local councils may share relevant information with these sites to publicise their work.

169/21 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received.

170/21 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Abandoned vehicle in Colvile Road - no further progress.
- b) Accumulation of scrap in Colvile Road - no further progress.
- c) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - no further progress.
- d) School bus using Chapel Lane - the situation is being monitored.
- e) Fencing of Playing Field - a resident has asked whether a fence could be installed to prevent dogs from straying into the churchyard. Members felt the cost of a fence could not be justified. They resolved to require that all dogs using the Playing Field are kept on leads.

171/21 Armed Forces Covenant

The Council has been invited to sign the Armed Forces Covenant to demonstrate a commitment to current and former service personnel. Members resolved to sign the Covenant.

172/21 Policies and Procedures

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

- a) Equality and Diversity policy.
- b) Homeworking policy.
- c) Expenses Policy.

They resolved to adopt the three documents.

173/21 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field

- a) Members discussed the report from Jenny Windsor, Head Gardener from Peckover House. They resolved to remove the wildflower meadow and to replant it elsewhere. The Clerk will discuss this with the funder when submitting the grant monitoring report.

Cllr Moore noted that the report includes advice regarding the groups of closely-planted trees around the site. The report suggests the removal of the majority of these trees to allow those remaining to thrive. Members agreed to proceed with the removal of these trees. It was also noted that there is a dead elder near the southern entrance to the Playing Field. Members agreed to the removal of this too. Cllr Moore will contact a tree surgeon to address these matters.

- b) Cllr Wilkinson updated members on matters raised in last year's RoSPA Playsafety inspection. The trip hazard in the play area and the cleaning of the shelter are yet to be addressed. Cllr Wilkinson will endeavour to find a contractor to undertake the latter. The Clerk confirmed that another inspection is scheduled for April.
- c) The Clerk reported that the next phase of the construction of the BMX track will take place shortly.
- d) Cllr Wilkinson confirmed that the next phase of the creation of the arboretum will take place in the autumn. Members thanked Mrs Hepworth for attending to the damaged trees.
- e) The Clerk will contact the fencing contractor again regarding the installation of gate springs on the Playing Field gates.
- f) The contractor has proposed a cost increase of 4% for the new season. Members agreed to accept this. Additional works were agreed, including regular mowing of the copse and strimming around trees in the arboretum and orchard as necessary and periodic strimming along the churchyard boundary. The Clerk will meet with the contractor to discuss these amendments to the contract.

174/21 Highways

- a) The Highways Project Officer visited the village on 25 January to survey the Privately Funded Highway Improvement works. The new signage should be installed in the coming months.
- b) The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had met with the Leader of the County Council and the Chairs of four neighbouring parish councils to discuss concerns regarding the assessment process for Local Highway Improvement applications. The Leader acknowledged that there are issues with the current process and agreed to consider alternatives and to meet again in two or three months' time.
- c) The Clerk reported that he had presented the Local Highways Improvement application for 2022/23 to the Assessment Panel on 2 February. The likely outcome will be known when the agenda for the CCC Highways and Transport Committee's April meeting is published.
- d) The Clerk reported that the National Cycle Route warning signs have been ordered.
- e) The plan to clear the build-up of vegetation and overhanging trees and shrubs in St James' Close remains on hold until the Community Payback teams are able to travel again.

- f) The Clerk circulated photographs of a build-up of ivy in the two large trees above the bench on the High Road near Common Cottages. He reported that several branches had fallen from these trees during the recent storms. Ownership of the trees is unclear and Cllr King offered to discuss the matter with Highways. Members also noted that the two planters adjacent to this bench had not been maintained. Cllr Moore agreed to raise this matter at the Street Pride AGM and to report to the next meeting.
- g) In Cllr Bradley's absence, the issue of byway maintenance and winter closures was deferred to the next meeting.
- h) The Clerk presented a summary of the data obtained from the MVAS speed monitoring device at two locations on the High Road. Members noted that the average speed at each location was below the speed limit, but expressed concern regarding the maximum speeds and the number of drivers exceeding the limit by a significant margin. Further analysis of the data may allow targeting of individual drivers.

175/21 Strategic Planning and Administration

- a) Members considered the possibility of drafting a longer term plan for the work of the Council to assist with budget preparation. They agreed to arrange further discussions on this topic.
- b) The consensus was that bi-monthly meetings led to slow progress on projects, but each of the more regular alternatives showed drawbacks. Members agreed to consider this matter as part of wider discussions.
- c) The Clerk outlined how committees and sub-committees might be used to undertake specific functions on behalf of the Council, with delegation of duties and in some cases, budgetary responsibility. Members agreed to consider this matter as part of wider discussions.
- d) Members discussed the many types of information the Council might wish to share, the audience and how they might access information. They agreed to consider expanding the remit and content of the website and introducing a Facebook page.
- e) The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 20 April in the Village Hall. The Clerk has invited several speakers and will invite village groups and organisations to discuss their work.

176/21 Planning

Members considered the following planning application:-

F/YR22/0166/F - Erect 1 x dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) and a detached garage with hobby room above - Land West of 241 High Road, Newton-in-the-Isle

They resolved to offer no objection.

177/21 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of February, showing income of £15,691.74, expenditure of £13,902.30, leaving a surplus of £1,789.44 and total funds held of £42,388.01.

b) Members noted the following sums received:

<i>Newton Village Hall (rent)</i>	£	0.30
<i>A Yates (rent)</i>	£	51.84
<i>S Sands (rent)</i>	£	21.60
<i>B Brown (rent)</i>	£	21.60
<i>P Elliott (rent)</i>	£	21.60
<i>R Kublik (rent)</i>	£	189.20
<i>Anon (donation)</i>	£	<u>100.00</u>
	£	407.84

The Clerk confirmed that the anonymous donation was from a resident of the parish and could be used for any purpose. Members resolved to purchase a bench to be placed in the Playing Field near the orchard or arboretum.

c) Members approved the following payments:

<i>100717</i>	<i>Auditing Solutions Ltd (audit fee)</i>	£	210.00
<i>100718</i>	<i>T A Blackamore Ltd (grass cutting)</i>	£	1,536.00
<i>100719</i>	<i>CAPALC Ltd (affiliation)</i>	£	383.77
<i>100720</i>	<i>D A Gibbs (expenses)</i>	£	123.33
<i>100721</i>	<i>Mrs J Windsor (Playing Field report)</i>	£	<u>60.00</u>
		£	2,313.10

d) Members considered the interim internal audit report for 2021/22. They noted the issues raised and the recommendations made in the report and agreed to ensure full compliance in future.

178/21 Date of Next Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 10 May. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 20 April.