

NEWTON IN THE ISLE

PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Dave Gibbs, 358 High Road, Newton-in-the-Isle, PE13 5HS
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Minutes of a Meeting of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 11th July 2023

Present - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr S Clark, Cllr D Freeman, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr S King (CCC), Cllr C Seaton (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), E Jones

021/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr B Barber (FDC)

022/23 Chairman's Announcements

None.

023/23 Public Forum

None.

024/23 Membership of the Council

Mr Simpson had previously indicated that he would like to join the Council, but was unable to attend the meeting. Mr Jones also indicated his willingness to be co-opted. Both were proposed by Cllr Freeman, seconded by Cllr Clark and duly co-opted. Cllr Jones signed his declaration of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk. Mr Simpson will sign his at a later date.

Cllr Jones offered to continue the monthly councillor surgeries on the first Saturday of each month.

025/23 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.
- b) RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7th June 2023 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

026/23 County and District Councillors Reports

County - Cllr King reported that the Senior Flood Risk Officer had submitted his report on the flooding issues along the High Road. He confirmed that any drain runs in this area are the responsibility of the residents and no records exist of the piping or infilling of the former open watercourse when the bungalows were constructed.

The Council's Local Highways Improvement funding application for a kerb build-out at the junction of High Road and Fen Road was unsuccessful. The next round of LHI will be open for applications between 27th October and 12th January, with the results due to be announced in September 2024.

The County Council has launched a new Priorities Capital Fund, offering grants to local councils and community organisations for projects aligned to the County Council's current strategic priorities.

District - Cllr Seaton advised members that he met with the Elloe Bank Residents Association to discuss the two solar farm proposals and the recent sale of land adjoining Harold's Bridge. David Bailey, the District Council's Equality & Diversity Manager also attended the meeting. It was suggested that the residents might engage a planning consultant to advise them regarding the solar farm proposals.

Following recent issues with potentially unsafe trees, Cllr Seaton advised the Council that such matters should be referred to the Planning Enforcement team for an immediate response.

The Combined Authority is considering options for the future of the village bus service, following the decision of the current operator to withdraw. Members expressed their frustration that no official notification had been issued and the Combined Authority had not responded to enquiries, so the Council first heard of this on Facebook and had to rely on conversations with the bus drivers for clarification. Conversations with neighbouring parishes and a public consultation were suggested.

Cllr Clark reported that a resident had contacted her regarding the condition of the wildflower meadow in the Playing Field. The Clerk confirmed that he had spoken to the contractor about the need to clear the site.

027/23 Police Matters

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place with the Police, but a meeting is scheduled shortly.

028/23 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended, correspondence received and local issues, including a Back to Nature event and planning training arranged by the District Council, the announcement of the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a consultation event regarding the proposed Treading Bank Solar Farm in Tydd St Giles and an invitation to join the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Members asked the Clerk to include the CPRE membership proposal on the agenda for the next meeting.

029/23 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Abandoned vehicle in Colvile Road - awaiting update from Clarion Housing Group.
- b) Accumulation of scrap in Colvile Road - awaiting update from Clarion Housing Group.
- c) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - awaiting update from Clarion Housing Group.
- d) Former school site - awaiting update from the District Council.
- e) Appointment of Village Hall Trustee - Cllr Clark offered to undertake the role and was proposed by Cllr Bradley and seconded by Cllr Freeman.

- f) Committee membership - members discussed the role of the Highways and Amenities Committees and resolved to suspend both until further notice, with all business being conducted by the Council at its regular meetings.
- g) Vacant properties - Cllr Clark reported that a number of housing association properties in the village had remained unoccupied for many months. She has asked the District Council to investigate and is awaiting a response. Members were encouraged to note any empty properties they become aware of.
- h) Village bus service - see 026/23 above.
- i) Sycamore tree in the Playing Field - members resolved not to remove the tree, but to allow the owner of the adjoining property to remove overhanging branches back to their boundary line.

030/23 Amenities Committee

- a) Wildflower meadow - the contractor has not cut the meadow. Members noted that cutting it now would leave the seeds for regrowth, however neighbours have complained. Cllr Bradley offered to cut and mulch the entire meadow ready for further work in the coming months.
- b) Planter around village sign - Cllr K Simpson has offered to replace the planter. Members agreed to this proposal.
- c) High Road bench - members considered several options and agreed to purchase a Kedel Irwell 3-seater bench at a cost of £438 plus VAT and delivery, with a budget of up to £600 if required. They also agreed to place the spare metal bench in the Playing Field.
- d) Allocation of vacant allotment - members agreed to visit the allotment site and consider options for dividing it into a number of smaller plots.
- e) Village Hall Management Committee event in the Playing Field - the Clerk reported that the event had been successful and there were no matters requiring the attention of the Council.

031/23 Highways Committee

- a) Byway winter closures - the Clerk advised members that he had received the paperwork relating to the application for the closure order. Cllrs Bradley and Clark will meet with the Clerk to work through the process.
- b) Hedgerow around telephone exchange - the BT contractor has cut back the hedgerow.
- c) Blackdike bridge - the Clerk advised members that the repair work to the bridge is due to take place in early August.
- d) Local Highway Improvements assessment panel results - see 026/23 above. Cllr Jones reminded members that the long-awaited National Cycle Route signs have not been installed. The Clerk agreed to follow this up.
- e) Mossy pavement in Westfield Road - the residents have removed some of the moss, but further work is required. The Clerk will attend to this.

- f) Village Handyman - members noted that the Handyman has not kept up with the planned grass cutting schedule. They asked the Clerk to include this item on the agenda for the next meeting.

032/23 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of June, showing income of £7,093.18 and expenditure of £4,159.79, resulting in a surplus of £2,933.39 and total funds held of £37,618.39.

- b) Members noted the following sums received:

<i>Fenland District Council (concurrent functions grant)</i>	£ 1,968.00
<i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i>	<u>£ 25.18</u>
	£ 1,993.18

- c) Members ratified the following payments issued since the last meeting:

100761	<i>Auditing Solutions Ltd (audit fee)</i>	£ 294.00
100762	<i>ProEdge Construction Ltd (path repair)</i>	£ 1,248.00
100763	<i>Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i>	<u>£ 30.00</u>
		£ 1,572.00

- d) Members approved the following payments:

100764	<i>D A Gibbs (salary June and July)</i>	£ 895.60
100765	<i>Fenland District Council (street lighting)</i>	£ 3,900.98
100766	<i>Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i>	<u>£ 10.00</u>
		£ 4,806.58

- e) Members resolved that the list of authorised signatories for the new NatWest bank account should comprise Cllrs Bradley, Freeman, Clark and the Clerk.
- f) Review of fees and charges - Cllr Clark declared a pecuniary interest and left the room during the discussion of this item. The Clerk circulated details of the current charges for allotment rental and the drainage pipe licence. Members considered a range of options, but resolved to leave charges at the current level. The Clerk was asked to confirm the terms of the agreement regarding notification of rental increases. Cllr Clark returned to the meeting.

033/23 Annual Parish Meeting

Members reviewed the recent Annual Parish Meeting. They agreed that it had been successful and resolved to retain the format for next year's meeting.

034/23 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 12th September at 7.30pm.