

# NEWTON IN THE ISLE

## PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Dave Gibbs, 358 High Road, Newton-in-the-Isle, PE13 5HS  
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### **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**Present** - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr R Moore, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr K Simpson, Cllr S King (CCC), Cllr C Seaton (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), 3 parishioners

#### **001/24 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr B Barber (FDC)

#### **002/24 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/25**

Cllr Bradley was nominated by Cllr S Clark, seconded by Cllr Moore and duly elected. He signed his declaration of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk.

#### **003/24 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/25**

Cllr Moore was nominated by Cllr Bradley, seconded by Cllr S Clark and duly elected. He signed his declaration of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk.

#### **004/24 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reminded Members about the consultation on the future of St James' Church and asked them to encourage as many people as possible to respond. He also congratulated nine-year-old village resident Shyla Brown on her sponsored cycle ride that had raised over £4,000.

#### **005/24 Public Forum**

Mrs Wallis expressed concern regarding the removal of vegetation from the highway verge adjacent to her garden. She asked the Council to extend her fence to the end of her garden. The Chairman explained that the Council is unable to undertake work on private property.

#### **006/24 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

- a) Delegation to committees - Members discussed options for delegating decision-making to committees and resolved to continue with the current arrangements. They also resolved to allocate key portfolio responsibilities to individual members for a trial period until the September meeting.
- b) Terms of reference and membership of committees - Members reviewed and readopted the terms of reference and membership of the Planning Committee, with all members except Cllr S Clark.

- c) Standing orders and financial regulations - The Clerk introduced the latest version of the model standing orders with only one amendment to the previously adopted model. He explained that the new version of the model financial regulations had been released too late to be adopted at this meeting. The Council adopted the new standing orders and agreed to defer the adoption of the financial regulations until the July meeting.
- d) Insurance - The Clerk advised members that the Council's insurance policy with Zurich Municipal is due for renewal on 1 June and the 3-year agreement ends this year.
- e) Subscriptions to other bodies - The Clerk reminded members that they currently have subscriptions to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils, Cambridgeshire ACRE and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Members resolved to continue with these subscriptions.
- f) Appointment of a Trustee to the Newton Village Hall charity - Cllr S Clark offered to continue in the role and was duly appointed.
- g) Appointment of an Armed Forces Champion - Cllr K Simpson agreed to accept the role.
- h) Register of assets - The register has been updated to include recent purchases and the total value of assets now stands at £130,539.
- i) Meeting dates - Members agreed to meet on the second Tuesday of alternate months, namely 9 July, 10 September, 12 November, 14 January 2023, 11 March and 13 May. All meetings will commence at 7.30pm.

#### **007/24 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

Cllr Humphris requested amendments to the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April relating to issues raised by members of the public present at the meeting. The amended minutes will be presented to the July meeting. Further comments relating to these matters will be submitted to the District Council's Planning Portal.

#### **008/24 County and District Councillors Reports**

District - Cllr Seaton reported that the Combined Authority has recently welcomed Judith Barker as the new Executive Director of Place and Connectivity. A new Bus Service Improvement Plan bid has been submitted after the previous bid was rejected. New services are being introduced using funds from the mayoral precept, but no new routes are proposed in the Wisbech area. Stagecoach Midlands will take over the operation of the Wisbech 68 route from FACT after a retendering exercise. A new dial-a-ride trial in south Fenland is being launched at a cost of £300,000.

County - Cllr King reported that a new online reporting system for highway defects will be introduced at the end of the year. He has met with the Local Highways Manager to discuss the backlog of unresolved issues. The new Local Highways Officer, Alex Edgoose, has joined

the team. Local Highway Improvement applications for 2024/25 are due to be presented to the Highways and Transport Committee's July meeting. The grips in the verge opposite 158 High Road have not been cut, but the resident has undertaken work in their garden to help alleviate the flooding issue.

#### **009/24 Police Matters**

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place with the Neighbourhood Sergeant. Someone set fire to a heap of fly-tipped household and garden waste on land adjacent to the High Road and the Fire Service were called to extinguish the fire.

#### **010/24 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on meetings attended including a training session on procurement. Correspondence received included a traffic order for a closure of Goodens Lane from 17-19 June, an offer of electric vehicle charging points from the County Council, successful prosecutions for fly-tipping from the District Council including one in Cross Drove, and another National Grid consultation on the Eastern Green Link that will run north of Tydd St Mary.

#### **011/24 Outstanding Matters**

- a) Abandoned vehicle in Colville Road - Cllr S Clark has contacted Clarion Housing again for an update.
- b) Accumulation of scrap in Colville Road - Cllr S Clark has contacted Clarion Housing again for an update.
- c) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - no update received.
- d) Vacant properties - several properties remain empty awaiting refurbishment. Residents of one of the St James Close bungalows have been placed in temporary accommodation whilst underpinning work is carried out.
- e) High Road bench - the new bench has been installed.
- f) Mossy pavement in Westfield Road - This matter has now been partially resolved and no further work is proposed.
- g) Allocation of vacant allotment - Cllr A Clark will prepare the ground for cultivation. Another resident has expressed an interest in renting part of the site. Once the site is prepared, members agreed to measure it and discuss options with the potential tenants.
- h) Wildflower meadow - the Clerk will remind the contractor.
- i) Arboretum - the replacement trees have been planted and all trees have been re-staked.
- j) Byway winter closures - the Chairman is preparing the paperwork to enable the closures to be implemented in time for next winter.
- k) Village bus service - the meeting with neighbouring parishes will take place in June.

- l) Former Colvile School site - no update received.
- m) Playing Field dyke - members discussed the condition of the dyke. They resolved to obtain quotes to clean out and reprofile the dyke, removing all waste from site. The Clerk was asked to contact suitable contractors.
- n) Welcome packs - Cllr S Clark will continue to deliver the packs.

#### **012/24 Members' and Residents' Issues**

- a) St James' Church - the Clerk outlined the plans for the public consultation on the future of the church. The survey is being promoted via a leaflet drop to every home in the village and surrounding area, on social media and in the Village Hall newsletter, with paper copies of the documents available in the Village Hall. All residents are to be encouraged to respond.
- b) Former Woadman's Arms site - the Clerk reported that the site has been sold to a local developer. Members discussed the redundant access covenant across the site and asked the Clerk to write to the agent to invite them to consider removing this to reduce the potential for waste dumping and anti-social behaviour.
- c) Lorry collision with street light - the Clerk reported that a lorry had reversed into a street light in Fen Road on the afternoon of 2 April, knocking it over. Residents witnessed the collision, which was recorded on their CCTV. The vehicle owner initially denied responsibility, so the Clerk reported the collision to the Police and the Council's insurer. An admission of liability was received shortly thereafter. The Council's lighting contractor visited the site that evening to disconnect and remove the light and the full cost of the emergency callout and replacement will be recovered by the insurance company.
- d) Annual Parish Meeting planning - the meeting will take place on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The Clerk reported that he had been unable to find an external speaker to attend.
- e) Village Hall Charity - the Clerk explained that the Trustees had asked whether the Council would provide a new set of doors for the Hall. Members considered this request but agreed that the current condition of the doors did not warrant replacement. Cllr S Clark reported that the Trustees had requested a contribution towards the cost of publishing the newsletter. No financial information was provided, so members were unable to consider this request.
- f) Street Pride - the Clerk notified Members that he had been elected to the role of Secretary of the Street Pride group. A consultation amongst the members of the group had resulted in the date of the regular litter picks being moved from the fourth Thursday of each month to the last Tuesday. The group also volunteered to take on the regular upkeep of the floral planters along the High Road.
- g) Portrait of His Majesty King Charles III - the portrait has been hung in the Village Hall.

- h) Electric vehicle charging points - the County Council has offered to provide charging points in community building car parks at no cost to the host venue. Members discussed the offer and resolved to submit an expression of interest.
- i) Residents' survey - Members discussed a proposal to conduct a survey of residents to inform future strategic planning. They resolved to establish a working group to consider the options for the format and content of the survey.

#### **013/24 Highways**

- a) The Clerk reported that Highways officers have objected to the extension of the proposed pavement to be provided as part of the development between 118 and 156 High Road. The developer proposed to continue the pavement into Rectory Road, but Highways will only allow the pavement across the frontage of the development. Members resolved to challenge this decision and asked Cllr King to facilitate a site meeting.
- b) The Clerk confirmed that he had submitted an application to the County Council for a 20mph zone comprising the current 30mph zone around Goodens Lane and Church Lane. Applications will be presented to the Highways and Transport Committee's July meeting.

#### **014/24 Play Equipment Safety Inspection**

- a) Members considered the inspection report received from RoSPA Playsafety Ltd. They resolved to commission a suitable contractor to service the roundabout bearing. The Clerk will discuss the condition of the ropeway with the original supplier and Cllrs S Clark and B Simpson will look at the shelter to ascertain how to clean it.
- b) The Clerk will discuss routine inspection requirements with Cllrs B and K Simpson.

#### **015/24 Finance**

- a) Members approved the internal accounts for the 2023/24 financial year.
- b) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment.
- c) Members considered the Internal Audit Report. They rejected recommendation R1 as it is factually incorrect. They noted the other procedural recommendations.
- d) Members reviewed and approved the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 and authorised the Chairman to sign it.
- e) Members reviewed and approved the Accounting Statements 2023/24 and authorised the Chairman to sign it.
- f) Members reviewed and approved the Certificate of Exemption for 2023/24 and authorised the Chairman to sign it.
- g) Members resolved that the period for the exercise of public rights be from Monday 3 June to Friday 12 July.

- h) Members resolved to defer the appointment of an internal auditor for the 2024/25 financial year.
- i) The Clerk advised Members that the renewal quotation for the insurance package amounted to £914 for one year or £845 for a three-year agreement. Members asked the Clerk to compare the renewal quotation with quotes from other providers, to select an appropriate provider and to report to the next meeting.
- j) Members resolved not to publish a paper copy of the annual report, but to include information on the Council's website and the new Facebook page.
- k) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of April, showing income of £6,611.98 and no expenditure, with total funds held of £38,851.97.

l) Members noted the following sums received:

<i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i> .....	£ 55.32
<i>HMRC (VAT refund)</i> .....	£ 1,827.26
<i>R Kublik (rent)</i> .....	£ 189.00
<i>D A Gibbs (repayment)</i> .....	£ 11.98
<i>Fenland District Council (precept instalment)</i> .....	£ 6,500.00
<i>J McGregor (licence fee)</i> .....	<u>£ 100.00</u>
	£ 8,683.56

m) Members ratified the following payments:

<i>100780 T A Blackamore Ltd (grass cutting)</i> .....	£ 2,112.00
<i>100781 D Freeman (maintenance tasks)</i> .....	£ 101.46
<i>100782 Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i> .....	<u>£ 30.00</u>
	£ 2,243.46

n) Members approved the following payments:

<i>100783 D A Gibbs (salary April and May)</i> .....	£ 947.60
<i>100784 Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i> .....	£ 10.00
<i>100785 Playsafety Ltd (play equipment inspection)</i> .....	£ 112.80
<i>100786 Auditing Solutions Ltd (audit fee)</i> .....	£ 312.00
<i>100787 CAPALC Ltd (affiliation fee)</i> .....	<u>£ 420.84</u>
	£1,803.24

#### **016/24 Village Handyman**

The Clerk reported that D Freeman had been appointed as Village Handyman and that the list of tasks had been amended to include the monitoring of the defibrillators and assisting the Clerk in relocating the MVAS speed monitoring sign.

#### **017/24 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm.