

NEWTON IN THE ISLE

PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Dave Gibbs, 358 High Road, Newton-in-the-Isle, PE13 5HS

Tel: 01945 870083 • Email: parishclerk@newtonintheisle.org.uk

Minutes of a Meeting of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 14th January 2025

Present - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr R Moore, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr K Simpson, Cllr B Barber (FDC), Cllr C Seaton (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), 7 parishioners

062/24 Apologies for Absence

Cllr S King (CCC)

063/24 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman paid tribute to former Parish Clerk Janice Barnard who passed away in December. Members observed a minute's silence in her memory.

064/24 Public Forum

A resident thanked the members of the Council who had attended the Carol Service in St James' Church. He also thanked the Clerk for providing him with the document pack for the meeting and hoped that this opportunity would be advertised in the newsletter for others.

A resident asked whether the Council has a planning policy. The Chairman explained that the Council is awaiting clarification of local and national policy changes.

065/24 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 12th November be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

066/24 County and District Councillors Reports

County - In Cllr King's absence, no report was received.

District - Cllr Seaton reported that there is a proposal to dissolve Fenland District Council in March 2028. The elections scheduled for May 2027 would be cancelled and current councillors will serve an additional year. A new larger unitary authority will be created, leading to the loss of the local voice in the villages. Further details will be available in the coming months.

Cllr Barber confirmed that parish councils will be unaffected by the new arrangements. She submitted a motion to the District Council regarding the preservation of Fenland landscape and recognition of the area of Fenland as a critical food producing area with a particular focus on energy generation and distribution infrastructure. The motion was approved at the December meeting.

067/24 Police Matters

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place with the Neighbourhood Sergeant. The Police have made a number of arrests for hare coursing offences.

068/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a Plunkett webinar on community-owned businesses, a webinar on the new Highways Capital Maintenance Prioritisation scheme, and a County Council budget briefing. Correspondence included the withdrawal of the electric vehicle charging scheme, the publication of the County Council's Community Energy Action Plan, a traffic order for short closures of Little Ramper between January and March, the launch of the District Council's Net Zero Villages grant scheme, a consultation on the District Council's draft Business Plan and Budget, plans for VE Day 80th Anniversary, support for local nature recovery plans for local councils from Cambridgeshire ACRE, a new Police and Crime Plan and consultation on Police funding, and the launch of the Probation Service 12,000 trees initiative.

069/24 Outstanding Matters

- a) Accumulation of scrap in Colville Road - there has been no change since the last meeting, but members continue to monitor the situation.
- b) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - awaiting a visit from Clarion Housing.
- c) Vacant properties - members continue to monitor several vacant properties around the village.
- d) Allocation of vacant allotments - there is still rubble on the High Road site preventing cultivation. Members agreed to terminate the tenancy and relet the overgrown Bank Gardens plot to Mr Kublik to clear the rubbish and bring it back into cultivation.
- e) Village bus service - another meeting with neighbouring parishes is planned to consider feedback.
- f) Former Colville School site - awaiting contact from the owner.
- g) St James' Church future plans - the Carol Service was well supported. The Diocese has asked for feedback.
- h) Magnifica House (formerly Chartwell School) - Cllrs S Clark and B Simpson and the Clerk will arrange to visit.

070/24 Members' and Residents' Issues

There are at least 4 street lights not working. Some have already been reported, but not repaired.

A resident has submitted a list of observations relating to aspects of the work of the Council. Members considered the list and asked the Clerk to respond in due course.

071/24 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported ongoing regular maintenance work. A full survey of white lines at junctions is required.
- b) More volunteers are required for a Community Speed Watch and an article will be included in the newsletter.

- c) The Clerk reported that he had submitted an application under the Local Highway Improvements scheme for lighting, signage and cats eyes at the junction of Little Ramper and Sutton Road. The scoring system prioritises active travel projects, so the application may not achieve the required score.

072/24 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field

The Clerk provided an update regarding issues relating to the management and maintenance of the Playing Field. They noted the following and resolved accordingly.

- i) The grounds maintenance contractor has not carried out the requested cut of the field and the dyke.
- ii) The paperwork required to bring a Community Payback team is being finalised, enabling them to help with the removal of bricks, concrete and metal from the site.
- iii) The Clerk has been unable to obtain further quotes for the installation of metal feet on the wooden play equipment and the replacement of the soft play surfacing.
- iv) Fenland Leisure Products have dismantled the carousel to check the bearing and a report will be provided soon.
- v) The Handyman has removed the loose paint and treated the rust on the teen shelter in readiness for repainting when the weather permits.
- vi) The Clerk is preparing a list of the signs required and will arrange for them to be produced. The Handyman will install them.
- vii) The monthly mole removal cannot proceed until the grass has been cut.
- viii) The Clerk has prepared and issued a specification for the grass cutting contract and conducted a tendering exercise with suitably-qualified contractors.
- ix) There are a number of dead or damaged trees in the arboretum that will need to be replaced.

073/24 Residents' Survey

Members agreed to establish a working group to develop the survey, comprising members of the Council and residents. Cllrs Bradley, A Clark, Humphris and K Simpson will be joined by Mrs Balaam, Mr Giles and Mr Jarred.

074/24 Planning

Members considered the following planning application and resolved accordingly:

F/YR24/1013/F - Erect a single-storey side and rear extension to existing dwelling - Two Acres, Gaults Chase, Elloe Bank, Harolds Bridge, Gorefield.

Members resolved to offer no objection.

075/24 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of December, showing income of £17,012.99 and expenditure of £15,162.85, resulting in a surplus of £1,850.14 and total funds held of £34,090.13.
- b) Members noted the following sums received:

<i>S Sands (rent)</i>	£	21.60
<i>S Yates (rent)</i>	£	51.84
<i>Donations (bonfire event)</i>	£	15.00
<i>Newton Village Hall (rent)</i>	£	1.00
<i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i>	£	<u>110.14</u>
	£	199.58

c) Members ratified the following payments:

100800	<i>Johnson's & Rose (tree work)</i>	£	1,450.00
100801	<i>Johnson's & Rose (tree work)</i>	£	<u>430.00</u>
			£1,880.00

d) Members approved the following payments:

100802	<i>D A Gibbs (salary December and January)</i>	£	980.36
100803	<i>D Freeman (handyman)</i>	£	45.00
100804	<i>Cambridgeshire ACRE (subscription)</i>	£	72.00
100805	<i>CPRE (subscription)</i>	£	36.00
100806	<i>Fenland Leisure Products Ltd (play equipment inspection)</i>	£	<u>278.22</u>
			£1,411.58

- e) Members discussed at length the pressing need for maintenance work on the children's play equipment, in particular the carousel and climbing frame, with an indicative cost of £13,000. An estimate of £4,400 has been provided for remedial work to the aerial ropeway. No alternative sources of funding have been identified. A field drain was proposed to reduce the amount of water entering the dyke behind the properties in Goodens Lane, potentially allowing the dyke to be filled in at a later date. No estimate has been obtained for this, but the sum of £4,500 was suggested. No other additional expenditure was proposed. Members resolved to proceed with the works to the carousel and climbing frame and to obtain quotes for the laying of a field drain, leaving the less urgent repairs to the aerial ropeway for the following year.
- f) Members considered the budget of anticipated income and expenditure prepared by the Clerk, which showed a deficit of £4,023. The additional expenditure agreed above increased the deficit to £21,523. Members resolved to increase the precept by £13,000 to £26,000 and to utilise reserves to cover the extra £8,523.

076/24 Policies and Procedures

- a) Members reviewed the following policies and procedures and resolved to re-adopt them:
- i) Data Protection Policy
 - ii) Publication Scheme
 - iii) Code of Conduct
- b) Members considered the draft Biodiversity Policy prepared by the Clerk and resolved to adopt it.

077/24 Confidential Item

Members resolved to exclude the press and public from this item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members considered nine tenders received for the grounds maintenance contract. They resolved to appoint Idverde Ltd to undertake the maintenance of the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field for a period of 3 years at an initial cost of £2,288 per annum.

078/24 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.30pm.