

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 11th March 2025

Present - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr K Simpson, D Gibbs (Clerk), 8 parishioners

079/24 Apologies for Absence

Cllr R Moore, Cllr S King (CCC), Cllr B Barber (FDC), Cllr C Seaton (FDC)

080/24 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

081/24 Public Forum

A resident advised the Council that the power cable to the street light above the Village Hall door had been cut. The Clerk will investigate.

A member of the Village Hall Management Committee asked why the Clerk had contacted Lincolnshire Community Foundation regarding a funding application. The Clerk explained that he had been informed that there was a lack of clarity regarding the ownership of the building.

082/24 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th January be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

083/24 County and District Councillors Reports

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

District - Cllr Seaton submitted a report confirming that the District Council has voted to freeze their share of the Council Tax for the eighth year, but bills will rise due to the other bodies levying a charge. It was also agreed at full Council to approve Fenland Inspire, a program of investments designed to future proof the assets of Fenland before the proposed abolishment of the District Council in 2028. This investment will include major refurbishment of leisure facilities at Wisbech, March, Chatteris and Whittlesey. There is no further news on the forthcoming reorganisation of local government. The District Council is preparing its response to the proposals.

Cllr Clark confirmed that the reorganisation will be discussed at an extraordinary meeting of the District Council on 14th March.

084/24 Police Matters

The Clerk reported that no meetings had taken place with the Neighbourhood Sergeant. He advised Members that a female resident of the village had received a custodial sentence for a violent offence in Wisbech.

085/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a meeting with the new grounds maintenance contractor.

Correspondence included a traffic order for short closures of Little Ramper, confirmation of the relocation of the Wisbech Funfair, a Cost of Living Fair at March Library, invitation to a planning training session, information from Steve Barclay MP about his campaign for the Wisbech Hospital Community Diagnostic Centre, and Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

086/24 Outstanding Matters

- a) Accumulation of scrap in Colville Road - 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 - Members will visit the site shortly. It was noted that the fence between the allotments and the adjoining property has been realigned, reducing the size of the allotments.
- e) Village bus service - no further progress.
- f) Former Colville School site - awaiting contact from the owner.
- g) Magnifica House (formerly Chartwell School) - Cllrs S Clark and B Simpson and the Clerk will arrange to visit.

087/24 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Injury to swans from overhead power lines - The Clerk informed Members that a swan had suffered serious injury from a collision with overhead power lines at Church Lane Bridge on the North Level Main Drain, resulting in the amputation of a broken wing. There have been at least two similar incidents at that location, both of which resulted in the death of the swans. Members agreed to approach UK Power Networks to ask them to place bird deflectors along this stretch of line to make it more visible.
- b) Request from UK Power Networks to install a stay wire on Council land - The Chairman advised Members that he had been approached by UKPN to request permission to install a pole stay on the pole in the vacant High Road allotment. Members decided that this would have no detrimental impact on the use of the land and agreed to the request.
- c) Request from Village Hall charity to replace front Doors - Cllr S Clark declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as a Trustee of the Village Hall charity. Members debated the request, the condition of the current doors and options for replacement. They were unable to agree a solution and resolved to delegate authority to Cllrs Bradley, Humphris

and S Clark to work with the Trustees of the charity to explore alternative designs, obtain additional quotes and authorise the works.

- d) Litter bin outside former Woadman's Arms public house - it was noted that the bin no longer serves a useful purpose in its current location and suggested that it be relocated to the other side of the road adjacent to the bench. The Clerk will investigate the feasibility of this and report to the next meeting.

088/24 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported that the Local Highways Officer has left her post. A new LHO will be appointed in due course. It appears that the budget for minor highway repairs has been fully committed for the current financial year, so works reported now may be delayed until April.
- b) Tydd St Giles Parish Council has applied to form a Community Speed Watch. Training could be provided jointly with a Newton group. A budget for equipment might be needed. The Clerk will liaise with Cambridgeshire Police.
- c) The Clerk reported that the County Council's 20mph scheme had reopened for another round of applications. Members discussed the scheme and resolved to resubmit last year's application.
- d) Members discussed the proposal to extend the 40mph speed limit at the eastern end of the village contained in planning application F/YR24/0811/F. They resolved to support the proposal and asked the Clerk to contact the agent to promote the proposal.

089/24 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 carried out the requested cut of the field, the copse and the dyke, including mowing over the snowdrops in the copse.
- ii) The paperwork required to bring a Community Payback team is still being finalised.
- iii) The Clerk has been unable to obtain further quotes for the installation of metal feet on the wooden play equipment.
- iv) Fenland Leisure Products have dismantled the carousel to check the bearing. A new bearing is required, but the manufacturer is no longer trading. The contractor has located a suitable replacement bearing at a cost, including installation, of £4,341. A replacement carousel, including installation, would cost £9,640, plus the cost of removal and replacement of the wetpour surface already included in the budget. Cllr Bradley offered to dismantle the carousel to better understand the mechanism and to clarify whether the bearing can be repaired.
- v) Painting of the teen shelter will take place as soon as 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 can now commence as the grass has been cut.
- viii) The dead or damaged trees in the arboretum will be replaced soon.

090/24 Residents' Survey

Cllr Humphris reported on the work of the Survey Working Group. A draft survey will be prepared for the May meeting with a view to distributing it in June with a two-week window for responses. The responses will be collated for presentation to the September meeting.

091/24 Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 28th May. Members asked the Clerk to invite the East Anglian Air Ambulance charity to speak about their work and to clarify whether District Council officers responsible for investigating fly-tipping and other environmental crimes are able to speak about their work.

092/24 Finance

a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of February, showing income of £17,391.39 and expenditure of £16,538.43, resulting in a surplus of £852.96 and total funds held of £33,092.95.

b) Members noted the following sum received:

R Kublik (rent) £ 378.40

c) Members considered suggestions for charitable donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The East Anglian Air Ambulance charity submitted a request for support. Members agreed that this was a worthy cause and resolved to donate £250. Members also discussed the important role of the local Community First Responders team in supporting the Ambulance Service and resolved to donate £250.

d) Members approved the following payments:

100807	<i>D A Gibbs (salary February and March)</i>	<i>£ 980.36</i>
100808	<i>D A Gibbs (expenses)</i>	<i>£ 369.85</i>
100809	<i>D Freeman (handyman).....</i>	<i>£ 18.00</i>
100810	<i>CAPALC (affiliation fee)</i>	<i>£ 416.61</i>
100811	<i>Newton Village Hall (rent).....</i>	<i>£ 210.00</i>
100812	<i>T A Blackamore Ltd (grounds maintenance).....</i>	<i>£ tbc.*</i>
100813	<i>East Anglian Air Ambulance (donation)</i>	<i>£ 250.00</i>
100814	<i>East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (donation for Community First Responders).....</i>	<i>£ 250.00</i>
		<i>£2,494.82</i>

** The Clerk explained that the invoice submitted by the grounds maintenance contractor included the scheduled number of cuts during the year, but there were periods when the grass was not cut, so the cost should be reduced accordingly. He will discuss this with the contractor.*

e) The Clerk advised Members that the hourly rate agreed with the Handyman would fall below the National Minimum Wage with effect from April. Members discussed the role and the significant contribution the Handyman has made to the work of the Council. They asked the Clerk to convey their thanks to the Handyman. Members resolved that

the success of the role warranted a re-evaluation of the rate of pay and agreed to increase the hourly rate to £15 with immediate effect.

093/24 Policies and Procedures

Members reviewed the following policies and procedures and resolved to re-adopt them:

- i) Equality and Diversity Policy
- ii) Homeworking Policy
- iii) Expenses Policy

094/24 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 13th May at 7.30pm.