

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 9th September 2025

Present - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr K Simpson, Cllr B Barber (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), 5 parishioners

038/25 Apologies for Absence

Cllr A Osborn (CCC), Cllr C Seaton (FDC)

039/25 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He informed the meeting that Cllr Roger Moore had resigned after 7 years as a Councillor and Vice Chairman. The Chairman asked the Clerk to convey the Council's thanks to Mr Moore for his dedication to the work of the Council. Following the advertisement of the vacancy, residents had petitioned for a public election to be held. The Clerk explained the process and likely timetable for the election and asked members to determine whether polling cards should be issued to residents. Members resolved not to issue polling cards.

040/25 Public Forum

A resident asked who is responsible for the trees in the churchyard. The Clerk confirmed that the Parochial Church Council is responsible.

The large pothole in Fen Road near the junction with Goredike Bank was highlighted again. The Clerk confirmed that a traffic order is in place to close the road and the pothole is due to be repaired on 16th September.

041/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8th July be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

042/25 County and District Councillors Reports

County - In Cllr Osborn's absence, there was no report.

District - Cllr Barber reminded Members of the availability of Electrical Safety First grants.

Cllr S Clark reported that a Golden Age Fair will be held in Wisbech St Mary on 26th September.

043/25 Police Matters

The Clerk reported that Nick Dean, the Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, is retiring at the end of September and his replacement will be Simon Megicks, currently the Deputy Chief Constable of Norfolk Constabulary.

The Clerk met with PC David Lovitt, the neighbourhood officer for Newton-in-the-Isle to discuss local issues and concerns.

044/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a meeting with the Police, an Ely Diocese webinar and a National Grid consultation.

Correspondence included traffic orders for closures of Fen Road from 1st September to 24th October, and occasional closures of Colvile Road from 1st October onwards, invitations to the District Council's Civic Reception and Charity Coffee Morning, and a report of a £400 fine issued to a resident for allowing waste to be fly-tipped.

045/25 Outstanding Matters

- a) Accumulation of scrap in Colvile Road - No improvement. The Clerk has reported untaxed vehicles.
- b) Dangerous path surface at St James Close - Awaiting a visit from Clarion Housing.
- c) Vacant properties - The Clerk advised Members that he had contacted Fenland District Council regarding the disposal of two Clarion Housing Group properties in the village. The properties are listed for sale due to the cost of bringing them up to a lettable standard. The District Council is seeking assurances from Clarion Housing Group that the proceeds of the sales will be reinvested into properties in Fenland, but it is unlikely that there will be any benefit to Newton-in-the-Isle. The loss of these two properties coincides with the sale of up to eight affordable properties by a private landlord in the village.
- d) Allocation of vacant allotments - Cllr Bradley will remove the concrete, metal and other rubbish on the site.
- e) Village bus service - no further progress.
- f) Former Colvile School site - A planning application is expected this autumn.
- g) Bird deflectors on overhead power lines - The Clerk is awaiting further information from UK Power Networks.
- h) Litter bin outside former Woadman's Arms - The District Council has relocated the bin.
- i) High Road overhanging vegetation - It is hoped that the trees will be cut back soon. The hedge around the BT exchange has been cut. Other garden hedges also need attention.

046/25 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Defibrillator training - The Clerk reported that a resident has asked about the possibility of arranging emergency first aid training. Members agreed that this would be beneficial

and asked the Clerk to contact the Community First Responders to make the necessary arrangements.

- b) Tree in Westfield Road - Cllr B Simpson reported concern from residents of Westfield Road regarding a large copper beech tree that was overshadowing properties and damaging telephone lines. All residents had been consulted and the consensus was that the tree was too large for its location and should be felled. Residents were also asked for ideas for future use of the space. A memorial bench to a former resident was suggested, possibly incorporating part of the tree trunk. The Clerk has obtained a quote for the removal of the tree and will provide further quotes for the next meeting to enable a final decision to be made. It was also suggested that the Council might seek contributions from residents to defray the cost.
- c) Thistles and ragwort - A resident complained about the proliferation of thistles and ragwort in fields to the west of the village causing widespread seed distribution on the prevailing wind and a potential danger of poisoning to horses. Cllr Bradley suggested that the land might be subject to an environmental management scheme. The field has recently been cut, but Members agreed to monitor the situation early next year and to discuss concerns with the landowner. The Clerk will research the legal position, particularly in relation to ragwort.
- d) Bonfire event - Following the success of last year's Bonfire Night event in the Playing Field, Members discussed the possibility of organising a similar event this year. It was agreed that last year's event had achieved its objective of bringing residents together and Members resolved to repeat it on the evening of Wednesday 5th November. Cllr B Simpson offered to make the necessary arrangements with help from other Councillors as required.
- e) Missing street light - A resident reported that street light Roman Bank PC1 at the junction of High Road, Little Ramper and Roman Bank had been removed without prior consultation. The Clerk advised Members that the District Council's new contractor appears to be acting outside the terms of the legal agreement and carrying out unauthorised work.

047/25 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported that Julie Skinner has been appointed as the new Highway Maintenance Officer and he will be meeting her shortly to discuss local issues. The long-awaited new highway fault reporting and management system is to be launched later this month.
- b) Members discussed the data report from the MVAS speed monitoring device located at the east end of the High Road. The data is broadly in line with expectation, showing a small number of motorists driving at dangerous speeds well in excess of the speed limit. The MVAS will be relocated elsewhere in the village shortly.
- c) The Clerk reported that he is working towards establishing a new Community Speed Watch group. Training materials will be circulated to the volunteers and locations agreed with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

- d) The tour of the public rights of way in the Parish requested at the July meeting has not taken place. Members expressed a preference for a Sunday afternoon. The Clerk will circulate suggested dates.

048/25 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) Bricks, concrete and metal around the perimeter of the field - This has been gathered together by the Community Payback team and needs to be removed from the site. Cllr Bradley will remove this.
- ii) New field drain - Quotes for the work are still needed.
- iii) Carousel bearing - The carousel has been removed to be dismantled to clarify the remedial work required. The hole has been filled with soil to make it safe for the duration of the works. Members agreed that the carousel should be reinstalled no later than March to enable the play equipment repairs to be completed for the summer season. An Easter re-opening event was suggested.
- iv) Soft play surfacing - Awaiting completion of the carousel bearing repair.
- v) Teen shelter - The Handyman has painted the shelter.
- vi) Moles - The contractor has completed the initial phase of work to remove the moles, but there are still moles present. The contract has been extended.
- vii) Signage - To be purchased shortly. The Handyman will install the signs.
- viii) Grass cutting - The new contractor has made significant progress in improving the site, with the grass now cut to the specified length. The annual cut of the wildflower meadow and the copse will take place later this month.
- ix) Arboretum - One dead tree still to be replaced when a suitable replacement can be located.
- x) Orchard - Several of the fruit trees were vandalised overnight on 12 July. One tree was cut down, another badly damaged and the apples were removed from several more.

049/25 Residents' Survey

Cllr Humphris reported that she had received the final proof of the survey, which is now ready for printing. The total cost will be well within the budget agreed by the Council. The survey forms will be delivered in a ziploc bag with a leaflet confirming collection arrangements. A two-week deadline for collection was agreed with a target to have all forms collected by mid-October.

050/25 Consultations

Members considered the following consultations and resolved accordingly:

- a) Local Nature Recovery Strategy - The consultation period fell between meetings of the Council, leaving insufficient time for a considered response. Members were invited to respond individually before the deadline in two days' time.

- b) Local Government Reorganisation Option A - Members noted the County Council's preference for this option, uniting Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Fenland District Council in a new single unitary authority.

051/25 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of August, showing income of £15,316.13 and expenditure of £12,987.30, resulting in a surplus of £2,328.83 and total funds held of £34,043.87.
- b) Members noted the 2025/26 Local Government pay settlement.
- c) Members noted the confirmation of the completion of the audit for 2024/25.
- d) Members noted the following payments issued by direct debit:

<i>HMRC (tax and national insurance)</i>	£	44.63
<i>North Level District Internal Drainage Board (drainage rates)</i>	£	57.37
	£	102.00

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

<i>100832 Idverde (grass cutting)</i>	£	358.80
<i>100833 Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i>	£	30.00
	£	388.80

- f) Members approved the following payments:

<i>100834 D A Gibbs (salary August and September inc backpay)</i>	£	961.40
<i>100835 D Freeman (handyman)</i>	£	367.50
<i>100836 Idverde Ltd (grass cutting)</i>	£	358.80
<i>100837 SJA Pest Control (mole removal)</i>	£	258.00
<i>100838 Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i>	£	30.00
<i>100839 T A Blackamore Ltd (grass cutting)</i>	£	1,526.40 *
	£	3,502.10

* *Members considered the revised invoice from T A Blackamore Ltd. Whilst there remained some doubt about the actual sum due, they resolved to settle the account to bring the matter to a close.*

052/25 Policies

Members considered the draft Information Technology policy provided by the Clerk. They resolved to adopt the policy.

053/25 Date of Next Meeting

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