

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 November 2025

Present - Cllr R Bradley (Chairman), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr I Giles, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr B Simpson, Cllr K Simpson, Cllr A Osborn (CCC), Cllr B Barber (FDC), PC D Lovitt (Cambs Police), D Gibbs (Clerk), 9 parishioners

057/25 Apologies for Absence

Cllr C Seaton (FDC)

058/25 Vacancy for a Councillor

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Ian Giles to his first meeting. The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Giles had signed his declaration of acceptance of office.

059/25 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked those who had contributed to the Bonfire event, which was a great success and those who attended the wreath-laying at the war memorial.

He reminded those present that meetings are conducted in accordance with the Council's standing orders. Members of the public may raise issues during the Public Forum, but may not participate in the meeting.

060/25 Public Forum

A resident expressed concern regarding the condition of some of the pavements in the village and overhanging vegetation. A question was asked about the new entrance gateway on the High Road north of the village. The parking of contractors' vehicles on the High Road outside the building site at the eastern end of the village was also raised. The Clerk was asked to respond in due course.

A resident suggested that no charges should be levied for use of the Village Hall for Council meetings or community events, as the Parish Council owns the Hall. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council has no control over the Hall as it is let to the Village Hall charity, so variations to the lease could only be considered as part of the renewal process.

A resident suggested that the minutes of the previous meeting were lacking in detail regarding the decision not to issue polling cards. The Chairman explained that the minutes are a record of decisions rather than discussions.

A resident asked about the Council's plans to issue the residents' survey. The Chairman indicated that this would be revisited in the spring.

061/25 Election of Vice Chairman

Following the resignation of Cllr Roger Moore, the position of Vice Chairman has become vacant. The Chairman once again recorded his thanks to Cllr Moore for his contribution to the Council over many years. Cllr B Simpson was proposed by Cllr S Clark and seconded by Cllr A Clark. Cllr Giles was proposed by Cllr Humphris. There was no seconder for this nomination. Cllr B Simpson was duly elected and invited to sign her declaration of acceptance at the end of the meeting.

062/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) Cllr Humphris suggested that the minutes of the September meeting were incomplete in relation to the discussion regarding the removal of a tree in Westfield Road. After discussion, Members RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 9th September be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.
- b) RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 1st October be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

063/25 County and District Councillors Reports

County - Cllr Osborn reported that the County Council had voted to support Option A of the Local Government Reorganisation proposals, bringing together Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough in a single unitary authority. CityFibre is working to install fibre optic cables throughout the village as part of the Government's Project Gigabit programme.

District - Cllr Barber reported that the District Council is reluctant to support any of the proposed options for the Local Government Reorganisation, but considers Option D to be the least bad option, as it brings together Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and part of Huntingdonshire in a rural-only unitary authority.

Cllr S Clark reported that the Christmas Golden Age Fair will be held on 12th December and the gift appeal has been relaunched. Any leftover gifts will be given to the social prescribers for distribution.

064/25 Police Matters

The Chairman introduced PC Lovitt to the meeting. He explained that he hopes to attend meetings on a regular basis, as well as visiting coffee mornings and similar community events. If he is unable to attend a Council meeting, he will provide a written report.

Recent incidents include one hare coursing report, the theft of a digger from a work site and a keyless car theft. Residents are asked to report all hare coursing and other suspicious activity. Contractors are encouraged to secure plant and machinery or remove it from site if possible. Keyless car theft is becoming more common, but can be prevented by storing keys in a Faraday case. Finally, PC Lovitt offered to assist with the Speedwatch group once it is established.

065/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including meetings with Clarion Housing Group and the new Highway Maintenance Officer.

Correspondence included traffic orders for closures of Park Lane from 1st to 7th December, Chapel Lane from 15th to 19th December and Roman Bank on 16th December, re-registration information for the Community Gritting Scheme, an invitation to the District Council Chairman's Carol Service, and NHS Older People's Healthwatch Partnership Board vacancies.

066/25 Village Hall Report

Cllr K Simpson reported that the Village Hall charity is planning to create a new website. Dates are being confirmed for next year's events. A new post box has been installed outside the building.

067/25 Clarion Housing Group Issues

Cllr B Simpson reported that following constant chasing, she is now working with Clarion on a range of issues. Repossession proceedings are ongoing to terminate one tenancy. The tenant appears to have vacated already. Overgrown vegetation in Poppy Close will be removed as it is not on a regular maintenance contract. An unregistered and untaxed vehicle on Clarion property will be removed shortly. The gardens of the properties now being sold will be maintained to avoid any detrimental impact on neighbours and the street scene. The uneven pavement outside St James's Close requires resurfacing, as Clarion's previous repairs have not resolved the issues. Pressure is being applied to ensure that the work is completed to a satisfactory standard. A dead tree in a communal area in St James's Close will also be removed.

Cllr Simpson has also made contact with Longhurst Group regarding issues on their properties within the village. They will inspect the hedge alongside 19A Goodens Lane that blocks the pavement in Colvile Road and visit their properties to identify any other potential issues.

068/25 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 removed.
- ii) New field drain - No progress. Cllr B Simpson offered to contact contractors.
- 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. No further progress.
- iv) Soft play surfacing - Awaiting completion of the carousel bearing repair.
- v) Teen shelter - The Handyman has finished painting the shelter, but it appears to have been vandalised. Hard to repair, but can be left as it is.

- vi) Moles - The contractor is still working to remove the last few moles. A heavy roller is needed to consolidate the surface.
- vii) Signage - No further progress.
- viii) Grass cutting - The new contractor has made significant progress in improving the site, with the grass now cut to the specified length. The Handyman has removed the brambles and nettles in the copse. More bulbs and wild flowers could be planted.
- ix) Arboretum - There are now two dead trees to be replaced when suitable replacements can be located.
- x) Orchard - Several of the fruit trees need to be replaced following vandalism and most of them require proper staking.

CLlr Giles offered to assist with tree planting and any other manual tasks that need to be carried out in the Playing Field.

069/25 Outstanding Matters

- a) Allocation of vacant allotments - The Clerk reported that a resident has applied to rent one of the allotments. The family satisfies the criteria for a tenancy and are able and willing to take it on in the current condition. This will reduce the Council's responsibility for the preparation of the site. Members agreed to offer the tenancy and asked the Clerk to prepare the necessary paperwork.
- b) Village bus service - Tydd St Giles Parish Council has drafted a survey on bus usage which can be made available both online and on paper. The Clerk suggested that the survey be extended to Newton to provide data for future discussions with the Combined Authority about the service. Members agreed to join the survey.
- c) Former Colvile School site - A planning application is expected this autumn.
- d) Bird deflectors on overhead power lines - The Clerk is awaiting further information from UK Power Networks.
- e) High Road overhanging vegetation - CLlr S Clark asked whether there is a letter template that can be used for properties whose hedges overhang the pavements. The Clerk confirmed that there is a letter that has been used on previous occasions.
- f) Defibrillator training - No progress
- g) Tree in Westfield Road - The Clerk has obtained one further quote for the removal of the beech tree and the prunus alongside it. A third contractor has failed to respond to the request. The Council is under no obligation to maintain the tree, but the tree has no owner. CLlr Humphris suggested that the Council could pay half of the cost but ask the residents of Westfield Road to contribute the other half. The Clerk informed Members that the Council had previously removed trees for which it had no responsibility, as no owner could be identified.

CLlr Bradley proposed that the Council remove the tree due to the impact it has on the quality of life of residents in Westfield Road, but explore ways to reduce the cost further in negotiation with the contractor and the residents. CLlr S Clark seconded the motion which was passed by a majority of those present. The chosen contractor is Sam Johnson Landscapes.

070/25 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Gaymer's Cider sign - Cllr S Clark explained that the Council was involved in the project to replace the sign at the junction of Little Ramper and the A1101. It is unclear who owns the sign and is responsible for maintaining it. The Clerk has located the minutes of the Council's March 2013 meeting in which the unveiling of the sign is mentioned, but not the minutes of previous meetings or the accounts for 2012/13. The sign does not appear on the Council's asset register. Further investigation is required.
- b) Cherry tree opposite former Colville School - Cllr B Simpson reported that a resident had asked her for help in resolving an issue with the tree. The tree is believed to have been planted by the Council in 1977 as part of the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations. It was planted adjacent to a telegraph pole carrying the telephone lines to a number of houses nearby and the tree interferes with these lines. A request for a new broadband connection to one property has been refused by the provider due to the proximity of the tree. The tree was topped around 10 years ago, but has grown up since and needs to be pruned again. This may not require the services of a tree surgeon. Further investigation is required.
- c) Anglian Water works in Fen Road - During the recent works, several concrete marker posts have been installed at the side of the road, close to the carriageway, presenting a possible safety hazard. One has already been hit by a vehicle. The Clerk will investigate and discuss with Anglian Water. Full reinstatement of the grass verge will also be required.
- d) Cllr Giles raised a number of issues that people had discussed with him during the election campaign, including water pressure, mobile phone signals, the digital phone switchover, speeding, and allocation of allotments. Some of these issues fall outside the remit of the Council, but there is an opportunity to provide information to enable residents to pursue matters for themselves. The Clerk explained that a water main pressure test can be arranged, but a full list of properties is required beforehand to enable Anglian Water to prepare for the test. Cllr B Simpson suggested a Council Facebook page to share useful information with residents. Members resolved to set up a Facebook page and Cllr B Simpson agreed to manage it.
- e) Cllr B Simpson mentioned that she and Cllr S Clark are hosting a Christmas Party for children from the village on 7th December in the Village Hall.

071/25 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported that he and Cllr S Clark met with Julie Skinner the new Highway Maintenance Officer for a walkabout to discuss some of the major issues, including the encroachment of verges onto the High Road leading out of the village, and flooding in Mill Lane, Hogens Lane and Ferry Lane. It was a positive meeting and the issues will be discussed further in the coming weeks.
- b) The Clerk advised Members that the results of the 2025/26 Local Highway Improvement round have been announced and the project to install a street light and associated works at the junction of Little Ramper and the A1101 has been awarded funding.

- c) The Clerk advised Members that the results of the 2025/26 20mph scheme have been announced. The Council's application was unsuccessful, however it has moved up from 27th place on the priority list to 21st place, with the top 11 applications receiving funding this year. It is also the highest scoring Fenland application. A decision on whether to resubmit the application will be required at the March meeting.
- d) The Clerk presented a data report from the MVAS speed monitoring device located at the west 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.
- e) The Clerk reported that no further progress has been made towards establishing a new Community Speed Watch group. Training materials will be circulated to the volunteers shortly and locations agreed with Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The Neighbourhood Team will support the work of the group. Cllr Giles offered to act as the Coordinator for the group.
- f) Members were asked to nominate suitable projects for submission to the Local Highway Improvement scheme for 2026/27. The deadline for submission is 16th January.

072/25 Wisbech Incinerator Campaign

Members considered a request to lobby local councillors to oppose the awarding of future waste processing contracts supplying waste to the proposed Wisbech Incinerator. They resolved to ask the Clerk to write to each of the local councillors representing the Parish in support of the campaign.

073/25 Planning

- a) Members considered the following application and resolved accordingly:
F/YR25/0775/VOC - Variation of condition 7 (list of approved drawings) of planning permission F/YR22/1153/F (Erect 1 x dwelling (2-storey 4-bed) and a detached garage with hobby room above, including formation of a new access) - Land West of 241 High Road, Newton-in-the-Isle.
 Members resolved to offer no objection.
- b) Members noted the following application:
F/YR25/0821/AG1 - Erect a fertiliser storage tank - Land East of Seaford Farm, Cross Drove, Newton-in-the-Isle.

074/25 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of October, showing income of £28,501.77 and expenditure of £16,681.37, resulting in a surplus of £11,820.40 and total funds held of £43,535.44.
- b) Members reviewed the quarterly financial reconciliation for the period to the end of September.
- c) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:

<i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i>	<i>£ 112.20</i>
<i>Fenland District Council (precept instalment).....</i>	<i>£13,000.00</i>

<i>S Sands (allotment rent)</i>	£	21.60
<i>S Yates (allotment rent)</i>	£	<u>51.84</u>
		£13,185.64

d) Members noted the following payment issued by direct debit:

<i>HMRC (tax and national insurance)</i>	£	191.97
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e) Members ratified the following payments issued since the last meeting:

<i>100840 Cheque cancelled</i>	£	0.00
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f) Members approved the following payments:

<i>100841 D A Gibbs (salary October and November)</i>	£	916.24
<i>100842 D Freeman (handyman)</i>	£	167.98
<i>100843 Idverde Ltd (grass cutting)</i>	£	717.60
<i>100844 Newton Village Hall (hall hire)</i>	£	<u>30.00</u>
		£ 1,831.82

g) Members considered potential projects for inclusion in the budget for 2026/27. Members also resolved to develop a 3-year plan to clarify the expenditure needed for these projects and consider potential sources of additional funding to facilitate the timely delivery of the proposals. A meeting will be arranged to start the process of formulating the new plan.

075/25 Policies and Procedures

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

- a) Complaints Procedure
- b) Grievance Policy
- c) Disciplinary Policy

076/25 Date of Next Meeting

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