

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 10th March 2026

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

099/25 Apologies for Absence

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

100/25 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

101/25 Public Forum

A resident expressed concern regarding the removal of the orchards to the east of the village and the potential impact on public rights of way. The Chairman agreed that the Council would investigate and clarify the plans for future access.

A replacement clothes recycling bin has been delivered to the Village Hall car park, but the Village Hall committee would prefer not to have it there. The District Council has asked whether there is an alternative location in the village. Members were unable to identify a suitable site, so the bin will be removed.

A resident asked about the Residents' Survey item on the agenda for this meeting. The Chairman explained that a decision had been made to revisit the survey in the spring. The new working group would consider options for the survey.

A resident enquired about the confidential agenda item relating to Council property. The Chairman explained that it met the definition of a confidential item contained in the Local Government Act.

A resident enquired about the current value of parish assets and whether there might be scope to adopt a more commercial approach to generating money for village projects to supplement funds raised through the precept. Is there anything the Council can do to bring back a shop and a pub to the village? The Chairman explained that the Council has limited scope compared to several of our neighbouring parishes, with minimal land holdings, no buildings and no parish charity.

102/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- a) RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th January be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

- b) RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 27th January be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

103/25 County and District Councillors Reports

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

District - Cllr Barber reported that the District Council is still embroiled in discussions on Local Government Reorganisation and a meeting will take place shortly to agree the District Council's response. Ward Councillors have submitted proposals for enhancements to children's playgrounds in their villages and these will now be evaluated by Members and Officers to facilitate the allocation of the funds from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund.

104/25 Police Matters

The Clerk stated that he believed that a new designated neighbourhood officer had been appointed, but no information has been circulated yet. A new PCSO has also joined the Wisbech Neighbourhood Team and will be attending community events in the villages.

Reports of anti-social driving in the village are being investigated.

105/25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including meetings with the North Level District Internal Drainage Board re the bench at Blackdike Bridge, with UK Power Networks re trees in the Playing Field, and with those involved in the former Colvile School development proposals, website accessibility training and a Cambridgeshire Highways 20mph scheme webinar.

Correspondence included the District Council Chairman's Afternoon Tea, the Fenland Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Survey, Cambridgeshire ACRE's Community Buildings Conference, Village Halls Week and a webinar on Energy and Water for Community and Parish Council Buildings, and notice from Norfolk County Council of forthcoming closures of the Pullover Roundabout, King's Lynn.

106/25 Village Hall Report

Cllr K Simpson reported that there will be a new dedicated phone number for hall bookings via a shared mobile phone. The latest water bill is being investigated as it appears to be inflated.

107/25 Clarion Housing Group and Longhurst Group

The Clerk shared information from Cllr B Simpson relating to her work with Clarion on a range of issues. The dead tree outside St James' Close will be felled shortly. A possession order has been granted for a property in Poppy Close.

Cllr Simpson is now working with both Clarion and Longhurst (now Amplius) to address the backlog of maintenance issues on individual properties.

The ownership of the overgrown land adjacent to 1 Poppy Close that has become a fly-tipping hotspot has been clarified and the landowner will clear the site shortly.

108/25 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field

Cllr Bradley reported that the roundabout has been repaired, the new bearing has been fitted, and it has been repainted to look like new. It is now ready for reinstallation.

The Clerk explained that the submission to the District Council for play equipment funding included the refurbishment and reinstallation of the roundabout, the replacement legs for the climbing frame and the aerial ropeway and the soft play surfacing. It also includes additional funding for a couple of new items of equipment. He explained that this funding had become available after the precept had been set, so if successful, the Council will be in a better financial position than originally anticipated.

No progress has been made on the list of outstanding works for the Playing Field, as these are either contained within the proposals outlined above or are weather-dependent.

109/25 Outstanding Matters

- a) Allocation of vacant allotments - An advertisement will be issued shortly.
- b) Village bus service - The survey will be circulated shortly.
- c) Former Colville School site - Cllr Bradley and the Clerk met with the site owner, the architect and the District Council's Principal Engineer to discuss aspects of the proposed development including surface water drainage and sewage.
- d) Bird deflectors on overhead power lines - The Clerk is still awaiting a response from UK Power Networks.
- e) High Road overhanging vegetation - The Clerk confirmed that the situation is being monitored. Some residents have not carried out the required work, so a second letter will be delivered. Cllr S Clark reported that the dead trees overhanging the A1101 south of Little Ramper have finally been cut back after many years of correspondence.
- f) Defibrillator training - The training session will take place on 18th March in the Village Hall. More than twenty residents have expressed an interest in taking part in the training.
- g) Gaymer's Cider sign - The Clerk has located the relevant paperwork which confirms that the sign was erected by the landowner and the Council has no responsibility for it.
- h) Bench at Blackdike Bridge - Cllr S Clark and the Clerk met with Huw Sharman of the North Level District Internal Drainage Board at the site and agreed a suitable location for the bench. The Drainage Board consulted the tenant of the adjoining land and unfortunately, the tenant is unwilling to support the proposal, so it will not be possible to install a bench.

110/25 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Anti-social behaviour - Cllr Giles reported renewed incidents of anti-social behaviour at a property on High Road, believed to be a dispute between neighbours. The Police have been informed.
- b) Precept increase - Cllr Bradley reported that two parishioners had contacted him to enquire about the recent precept increase. He provided the necessary explanation.

111/25 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported that the remaining potholes in Church Lane will be repaired tomorrow. Colville Road is being prepared for surface dressing. The surface dressing is due to take place on 21st and 22nd April.
- b) The Highways Project Officer is still awaiting feedback from UK Power Networks regarding the availability of a suitable power supply for the 2025/26 Local Highway Improvement project.
- c) Cllr Giles reported that he has applied to use all four of the MVAS locations for Speedwatch and they have been approved. He has placed an advert in the forthcoming village newsletter seeking more volunteers. Training will be provided in April by Cambridgeshire Constabulary's County Speedwatch Coordination Officer, who will bring the necessary equipment.
- d) Members considered the submission of an application under the County Council's 20mph scheme for 2026/27. Last year's application was placed in 21st place on the scoring list and the eleven highest placed schemes received funding, suggesting that the chance of securing funding is high. Members resolved to resubmit the application.

112/25 Finance

- a) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of February, showing income of £30,366.54 and expenditure of £26,789.01, resulting in a surplus of £3,577.53 and total funds held of £35,292.57.
- b) Members noted the following sum received since the last meeting:

HMRC (VAT refund)	£ 1,349.98
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- c) Members noted the following sum paid by direct debit since the last meeting:

HMRC (tax and national insurance)	£ 177.44
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- d) Members ratified the following payments issued since the last meeting:

100850	Fenland District Council (election charges)	£ 5,496.27
100851	Sam Johnson Landscapes (tree work)	<u>£ 1,200.00</u>
		£ 6,696.27
- e) Members considered donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. They resolved to donate £200 to the local Community First Responders to assist them in purchasing essential equipment and training materials.
- f) Members approved the following payments:

100852	D A Gibbs (salary February and March)	£ 916.44
100853	D A Gibbs (expenses)	£ 315.68
100854	D Freeman (handyman)	£ 142.50
100855	CPRE (subscription)	£ 36.00
100856	Tydd St Giles CC&RG (hall hire)	£ 36.00
100857	Newton Village Hall (hall hire)	£ 60.00
100858	CAPALC Ltd (affiliation fee)	£ 425.44
100859	East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (donation)	<u>£ 200.00</u>
		£ 2,132.06

- g) Three-year plan - The Chairman reported that Members attended a meeting to discuss issues and ideas. The Clerk is collating the responses from the initial session to formulate a 3-year plan and will present a draft document for discussion at the next meeting.

113/25 Consultations

Members considered the following consultations and resolved accordingly:

- a) Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - Members considered each of the four options. The consensus was that none of the four options offers an acceptable solution to meet the needs of rural Fenland communities. Creating larger councils with fewer councillors will be detrimental to local democracy.

They resolved to support Option 4, creating three new unitary councils including a Mid Cambridgeshire Council combining the current districts of Fenland and East Cambridgeshire with 17 wards from Huntingdonshire. They noted that Fenland District Council also supported this proposal. The Clerk will respond on behalf of the Council.

- b) Fenland District Council Local Plan scoping consultation - Members resolved to respond individually to the consultation.

114/25 Annual Parish Meeting

Members discussed potential speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr B Simpson has invited Clarion Housing Group to attend to talk about their work. Members also suggested Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Highways or the North Level District Internal Drainage Board.

115/25 Residents' Survey

Members resolved to establish a working group to finalise plans for the publication of a survey and to report to the next meeting. Cllrs Bradley, B Simpson and A Clark volunteered to form the working group.

116/25 Community Events

Following the Council's decision at the January meeting to support a programme of community events, the Clerk updated Members on Cllr B Simpson's plans. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt on 3rd April and a Colour Run on 23rd May. All Members are encouraged to attend and support these events.

117/25 Policies and Procedures

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

- a) Equality and Diversity Policy
- b) Homeworking Policy
- c) Expenses Policy

Members considered the following policy and resolved to adopt it:

- d) Website Accessibility Policy

118/25 Confidential Item

Members resolved to exclude the press and public from the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members considered matters relating to the future management of Council property. They resolved to explore opportunities to maximise the financial return from Council property and authorised the Clerk to take appropriate action.

119/25 Date of Next Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 12th May at 7.30pm.