

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 the Annual Meeting of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 12th May 2026

Present - Cllr B Simpson (in the Chair), Cllr A Clark, Cllr S Clark, Cllr K Simpson, Cllr C Seaton (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), 8 members of the public

001/26 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026/27

Cllr Bradley was nominated by Cllr S Clark, seconded by Cllr K Simpson and duly elected. It was agreed that he will sign his declaration of acceptance before the next meeting.

002/26 Election of Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026/27

Cllr B Simpson was nominated by Cllr S Clark, seconded by Cllr K Simpson and duly elected. She signed her declaration of acceptance, witnessed by the Clerk.

003/26 Apologies for Absence

Cllr R Bradley, Cllr I Giles, Cllr K Humphris, Cllr B Barber (FDC)

004/26 Chairman's Announcements

None.

005/26 Public Forum

A resident reminded the Council that the survey forms printed last year are available for distribution. This will be considered by the Survey Working Group.

A resident enquired about the value of assets on the Council's asset register, particularly relating to the land held by the Council. He suggested current market values should be ascertained.

006/26 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

- a) Delegation to committees - Members discussed options for delegating decision-making to committees and resolved to continue with the current arrangements.
- b) Terms of reference and membership of committees - Members reviewed the terms of reference and membership of the Planning Committee.
- c) Standing orders and financial regulations - The Clerk confirmed that the Council's standing orders and financial regulations are based on the latest model document. Members resolved to re-adopt them.

- d) Insurance - The Clerk advised members that the Council's insurance policy with Ansvar Insurance is due for renewal on 1st June under a 3-year agreement to 2027.
- e) Subscriptions to other bodies - The Clerk reminded members that they currently have subscriptions to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils, Cambridgeshire ACRE and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Members resolved to continue with these subscriptions.
- f) Appointment of a Trustee to the Newton Village Hall charity - Cllr K Simpson offered to continue in the role and was duly appointed.
- g) Register of assets - Members reviewed the register which has been updated to include recent purchases and the total value of assets now stands at £133,010.
- h) Meeting dates - Members agreed to meet on the second Tuesday of alternate months, namely 14th July, 8th September, 10th November, 12th January 2027, 9th March and 11th May. All meetings will commence at 7.30pm.

007/26 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 10th March be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

008/26 District Councillors Reports

Cllr Seaton reported that the District Council is awaiting the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation, but is already working towards the transition. The process will be extremely costly and it remains to be seen whether it provides the promised savings in the longer term.

Cllr Clark reminded Members that this year's Pride in Fenland awards are open for nominations until 1st June.

009/26 Police Matters

Cllr B Simpson explained that she had received several calls regarding suspicious nighttime activity in the village, but residents should contact the Police, not the Parish Council. She stressed the importance of reporting to provide the Police with a clearer picture of unlawful activity and residents' concerns. A number of incidents have been reported including machinery thefts, a white transit van with no number plates, quad bikes on private property and motorbike riders without helmets.

010/26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including Speed Watch training and the internal audit. Correspondence included traffic orders for the closure of Church Lane, Cross Drove and Hassock Hill Drove from 22nd to 28th June, the launch of the County Council's Close Pass campaign to highlight Highway Code rule 163, the rollout of the heating oil support scheme, the Combined Authority concessionary bus pass scheme and Cambridgeshire ACRE's Closing the Gap: Cancer Awareness and Early Diagnosis webinar.

011/26 Village Hall Report

Cllr K Simpson reported that the new Village Hall website is live, although there have been a few teething problems. The Village Hall charity will help to fund the purchase of equipment for a Community First Responder if a volunteer comes forward.

012/26 Clarion Housing Group and Amplius (formerly Longhurst)

Cllr B Simpson reported that she continues to work with both housing associations on issues relating to properties in the village and is also helping residents to address issues with their properties. Following the grant of a possession order for a property in Poppy Close, eviction is anticipated shortly.

013/26 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field

- a) The Clerk and Cllr Imafidon reported that money has been allocated from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund for play equipment in the Playing Field. Funds will be released after the ongoing public consultation. The new signs have been delivered and will be installed shortly. The new mound has been created, thanks to Mr Proctor and Cllr Bradley, and will be sown with grass, however the dry weather has delayed this.
- b) The annual inspection of the play equipment by Playsafety Ltd contained no unforeseen issues. The issues highlighted will be addressed as part of the works mentioned above. Members agreed to reconsider the report in the autumn after the renovation works are completed.

014/26 Outstanding Matters

- a) Allocation of vacant allotments - No update.
- b) Village bus service - No update.
- c) Former Colvile School site - No update.
- d) Bird deflectors on overhead power lines - No update.
- e) High Road overhanging vegetation - The Clerk confirmed that work is ongoing to address the outstanding locations.
- f) Defibrillator training - The training session was well supported and received positive feedback. Members agreed to support another course in the future.

015/26 Members' and Residents' Issues

- a) Dog exercise enclosure - Cllr B Simpson has been approached by several residents to see whether a dog enclosure could be created in the Playing Field similar to the one managed by Tydd St Mary Parish Council. Members agreed to give this further consideration.
- b) High Road speed limit - Cllr B Simpson reported that a resident had asked about the possibility of lowering the speed limit on the High Road to 30mph. The Clerk confirmed that this would need to be addressed through the Local Highway Improvement scheme.

- c) Building site working hours - Cllr B Simpson mentioned that residents had approached her regarding site hours, but this is a matter for the District Council as the Planning Authority.
- d) St James' Church - Cllr B Simpson welcomed Cllr Sidney Imafidon, the heritage portfolio holder at Fenland District Council for a discussion about the future of St James' Church. He had looked at the outside of the building and noticed several panes of glass either broken or missing. Following the cessation of services at St James' volunteers joined an action group to look at the future of the church. He mentioned St John's Church, Parson Drove, which is used for a regular programme of community social events. It was noted that running a programme of events in the church could duplicate activities currently taking place in the Village Hall, to the detriment of both. It was noted that the Diocese has commissioned contractors to repair the gutters and downpipes to prevent further deterioration.

Members agreed to arrange a meeting at the church to invite residents to join the conversation about the future of the building.

016/26 Highways

- a) The Clerk reported that some potholes have been repaired, but those in Goodens Lane are unfilled. The surface dressing of Colville Road has been completed. The annual clean of the roadside drain gullies is scheduled for June. Members expressed concern about the new British Telecom inspection cover outside Croft Grange protruding onto the carriageway. The Clerk will discuss this with Highways.
- b) A new Project Officer has been assigned to the 2025/26 Local Highway Improvement project. There is no further update regarding the availability of a power supply.
- c) Cllr B Simpson conveyed a message from Giles that the Speedwatch equipment has been delivered and four volunteers attended the training session. The first speed watch will take place in early June.
- d) The Clerk advised Members that the application under the County Council's 20mph scheme for 2026/27 was submitted and the outcome will be known when the agenda for the relevant County Council Highways and Transport Committee meeting is published at the beginning of October.

017/26 Street Lights

- a) The Clerk reported that the contractor had carried out structural testing of the Council's streetlights. No new significant issues were found.
- b) Members approved the quote of £1,045.27+VAT for the replacement of PC1 Roman Bank which was removed without consultation by the contractor.

018/26 Finance

- a) Members approved the internal accounts for the 2025/26 financial year.
- b) Members approved the statement of reserves as at 31st March.
- c) Members reviewed and adopted the final budget for 2026/27.

- d) Members considered the Council's fees and charges. They resolved to defer this item to the July meeting.
- e) Members reviewed the mandate for the Council's bank accounts. The Clerk suggested that additional signatories be added. Members resolved to add Cllrs Bradley and B Simpson.
- f) Members reviewed and approved the Governance and Management Risk Assessment. At the suggestion of the Internal Auditor, an additional column has been added to show residual risk. Members approved the revised document.
- g) Members considered and approved the Internal Audit Report. They agreed to adopt the following recommendations:-
- i) The annual budget will be published on the Council's website;
 - ii) A residual risk column will be added to the Governance and Management Risk Assessment; and
 - iii) A reserves policy will be prepared and published.
- h) Members reviewed and approved each of the statements on the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and authorised the Chairman to sign it.
- i) Members reviewed and approved the Accounting Statements 2025/26 and authorised the Chairman to sign it.
- j) Members resolved that the period for the exercise of public rights be from Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July.
- k) The Clerk explained the internal audit process and expressed his satisfaction with the arrangements. Members resolved to reappoint Helen Symmons as Internal Auditor for 2026/27.
- l) Members considered the adoption of a Chairman's Allowance and/or Parish Basic Allowance, based on the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel. They resolved not to implement either allowance.
- m) Members agreed to defer the consideration of the 3-year plan to the July meeting.
- n) The Clerk presented an updated financial statement as at the end of April, showing income of £20,600.00 and expenditure of £177.59, resulting in a surplus of £20,422.41 and total funds held of £53,681.03
- o) Members noted the following sums received:
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| <i>Barclays Bank (interest)</i> | £ 98.11 |
| <i>Fenland District Council (precept instalment)</i> | £20,500.00 |
| <i>J McGregor (licence fee)</i> | <u>£ 100.00</u> |
| | <u>£20,698.11</u> |
- p) Members noted the following direct debit payment since the last meeting:
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| <i>HMRC (tax and national insurance)</i> | £ 177.24 |
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- q) Members approved the following payments:
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| 100860 <i>D A Gibbs (salary April and May)</i> | £ 907.24 |
| 100861 <i>D Freeman (handyman)</i> | £ 261.81 |
| 100862 <i>Newton Village Hall (room hire)</i> | £ 60.00 |

100863	SJA Pest Control (mole removal)	£	172.00
100864	A1 Engraving Ltd (signs).....	£	239.04
100865	Andrew Deptford (defibrillator pads).....	£	86.34
100866	Playsafety Ltd (play equipment inspection)	£	118.80
100867	Business Services at CAS Ltd (insurance).....	£	695.81
100868	Helen Symmons (audit fee)	£	<u>269.00</u>
		£	2,810.04

019/26 Consultations

Members considered the following consultation and resolved accordingly:

Fenland District Council Wisbech Public Spaces Protection Order - Members considered the proposals and resolved to respond individually.

020/26 Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk advised Members that it had not been possible to find a guest speaker for the Annual Parish Meeting. Members suggested inviting Cllr Imafidon and Paul Unwin, who manages St John's Church, Parson Drove, to talk about ideas for the future of the church.

021/26 Residents' Survey

The Survey Working Group has not met.

022/26 Community Events

Cllr B Simpson reported that the Easter Egg Hunt on 3rd April was very successful, with around 40 children taking part. A Colour Run is planned for the afternoon of 23rd May. Future plans include a Halloween Disco, and a Christmas Party. All Members are encouraged to attend and support these events. The Village Hall Committee has a Treasure Hunt on 21st June.

023/26 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 work with others to achieve their long term objectives and authorised the Clerk to take appropriate action.

024/26 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 14th July at 7.30pm.