

**NEWTOWN PARISH COUNCIL  
HAMPSHIRE**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Friday 13th April 2012 in Newtown Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors with Mr Bryan Clarke in the Chair  
Borough Councillor, Mr John Izett  
County Councillor, Mr Tom Thacker  
Chairman of Village Hall Management Committee, Mr Doug Ellis  
PCSO Dan Lines  
25 residents and guests

In attendance: Acting Clerk: Liz Ellis

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1. The chairman welcomed those attending.
2. **Apologies** had been received from Cllr Mrs D Anns, Mr Hugh Marriage, Mrs Annette Leach
3. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 15th April 2011**  
The minutes were approved as a true record, and signed by the chairman.
4. **Matters arising**  
New traffic calming measures on B4640: Concerns were expressed by one resident on the intrusive nature of the reflective bollards. The chairman explained that these had been installed as a result of consultation with HCC following requests for traffic calming measures from residents.  
Any other matters arising were covered by items on the agenda.
5. **Report by the Chairman of the Parish Council**  
Matters considered by the council during the year had included:  
Road safety and traffic calming  
Following consultation with HCC, traffic management works had been completed in March this year. This included road markings, reorganisation of road signs and reflective bollards on junctions along the B4640. These had been paid for by the parish council out of its fund reserved for traffic management. This came from a grant from Sainsbury's in 2007, when they were applying for a major distribution centre at Greenham Common.  
Councillors: In March this year, Ruth Ponting decided to retire from the Parish Council. The chairman thanked her for her hard work over the years.  
Mr Tim Kelleher had agreed to join the Parish Council and had been duly co-opted.  
Clerk: Mrs Ros Brandwood had decided to retire from the Council at the end of February after 9 years excellent service. As yet, no permanent replacement had been found.
6. **Newtown Common Management Committee report**  
Cllr Mrs Ellis, chairman of the Committee, thanked the other members of the committee for their support throughout the year.  
Higher Level stewardship: In October last year, an agreement was signed with Natural England which will provide funds to manage the heathland areas of the Common for the next 10 years. The tree felling which formed part of this agreement had met with some opposition and following a consultation meeting in December 2011, a revised plan had been drawn up. The details of the revised plan had been circulated in advance. Mrs Ellis explained that the felling in the revised plan was roughly half of that in the first plan. It would also be done in 2 stages.  
Mrs M Clarke proposed that the revised plan should be accepted. This was seconded by Mrs R Ponting. A vote was taken: 22 votes were cast for the proposal, no votes against and 1 abstention. The proposal was declared carried.  
The committee will now proceed to the next task which is to reapply for a felling licence so that the work can be done next winter.
7. **Report by County Councillor, Mr Tom Thacker**  
Cllr Thacker commented on the following:  
He had been pleased to take part in the December consultation meeting over the management of the common. HCC, as owners of the Common, supported the active management of the heathland on the common.  
The County Council had saved £55 million last year and was in line to save £45 million this year. Sadly this had involved job losses.  
Decisions on Adult Care were being reviewed and extra money made available.

£200,000 has been made available to fund Village Agent schemes, which are aimed at helping to maintain elderly people in their own homes.

The Clere School, which had been put into special administration, is now under new management and already improving. A new board of governors will be appointed before the end of the year. Sports facilities available to the primary school should not be effected.

HCC has offered an oak tree to all parishes in the County for the Diamond Jubilee.

There will be a beacon lit on Beacon Hill at 10pm on 4<sup>th</sup> June as part of the Diamond Jubilee weekend celebrations.

#### **8. Report by Borough Councillor, Mr John Izett**

Cllr Izett commented on the following:

He had enjoyed his first year as councillor and has been favourably impressed by the leadership of the Council and its officers. Basingstoke has the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest council tax in the country and there has been no increase in 2 years. It also has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest spend per head in the country, which is enabled by revenue from council owned property.

Since 2012, there has been a £5 million cut in costs and a further £5 million is to be cut over the next 3 years.

The councillor's job is to help residents and Cllr Izett encouraged people to seek his help if needed.

Cllr Izett sits on the Economic prosperity and performance committee, and the community wellbeing committee.

He is keen to secure funding to bring faster broadband to rural communities.

Sandleford Park: Basingstoke had put in strong objections to West Berkshire Council proposal to build 2000 houses just north of Newtown. This matter is now awaiting a decision by the Planning Inspectorate.

Work on the replacement bridge on A339: both Cllr Izett and Cllr Thacker had objected to the Highways Authority about the length of time scheduled for this work, and the traffic disruption this would cause. The start date was still uncertain. They would continue to monitor this.

#### **9. Village Hall Report**

Mr Ellis made the following points:

The Village Hall is run by the Trustees of the Village Hall which is a body independent of the Parish Council.

During the year, the toilet block has been rebuilt, with grants from BDBC and HCC and a contribution from the hall's own funds.

The Venture Club provides valuable funds for the running of the hall and anyone who was not a member was encouraged to contact Mrs R Ponting to join.

#### **10. Report from Police Safer Neighbourhood Team**

PCSO Dan Lines gave an update on local policing matters, which included:

The last year had seen a reduction in reported crime in the year 25%.

Theft of metal from buildings is still a problem.

The three policing priorities were likely to remain as: speeding, theft from outbuildings and anti-social behaviour. A portable speed camera is used periodically on local roads.

The local neighbourhood police team now have an office above the stables at Highclere Castle.

The Police Authority have to make 20% savings over 4 years but this should not effect us locally.

Some police departments have merged with Berkshire which should make cross border policing better.

In rural areas, it is good to have a clear obvious name plate on a house.

Anyone wishing to receive neighbourhood watch emails should contact Dan, who provided cards with his email address on.

PSCO Lines was thanked for his attendance.

#### **11. Update on Diamond Jubilee Celebrations**

Sarah Beecroft reported that there had been no response to her attempts to organise a Newtown event.

After some discussion, it was decided that an informal tea party would take place at the Village Hall on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Mr Ellis agreed to decorate the hall and asked those who wished to come to bring a plate of food to share. The event would be advertised in the News from the Villages.

#### **12 Open Forum**

No matters were raised.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed:

Dated: