

# Newtown Parish council

## Hampshire

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### Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7:30pm Due to the COVID situation, this meeting was held virtually via Zoom

Present: Chair – Cllr Tony Webb  
Councillors - Sean Curry, Jo Exelby and Tom Reseigh  
14 residents

In Attendance: Clerk, Rebecca Cloke

#### 1. Welcome

Cllr Webb welcomed those present and acknowledged that due to the ongoing COVID situation the 2020 assembly had been cancelled and the 2021 had needed to be held virtually. He hoped that the 2022 assembly would be able to be held in person.

#### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Thacker and Cllr Izett. Cllr Izett and Cllr Thacker were unable to attend the meeting due to the pre-election 'purdah' period.

#### 3. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the last parish assembly on 9th April 2019 were approved by the meeting, proposed by Cllr Curry, seconded by Cllr Reseigh and will be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

#### 4. Matters arising from the 2019 Parish Assembly

Cllr Webb proposed to comment on matters arising from the prior assembly as he gave his Chairman's report.

#### 5. Chairman's report / 6. Report from Borough Councillor, Cllr Izett / 7. Report from County Councillor, Cllr Thacker

Cllrs Thacker and Izett had provided reports and Cllr Webb stated that he would amalgamate their reports along with his own on some key areas.

##### a. Council Tax increase

The annual council tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,350.45 – an increase of £1.23 per week, equating to 4.99%, of which 3% is for adults' social care – a Government request.

##### b. Recycling

Cllr Webb explained the history of North Hampshire residents using West Berkshire's Household Waste Recycling Centre and the issues over the last 6 years. In November 2015 HCC decided that it would not continue to fund the access and Hampshire residents would need to visit a Hampshire HWRC facility. The Parish Council campaigned for the instatement of a pass system. In July 2016 an agreement was reached for Hampshire residents, within a defined radius of the Newtown Road HWRC, to continue to have access to use the centre for a year. The agreement has since been extended annually but is currently scheduled to end in July 2021. Last year Basingstoke and Deane borough funded half of the charge due to West Berkshire and has offered to do the same for the coming year. The parish council has raised their concerns regarding the expiring agreement with both B&D and Hampshire. Hampshire County Council are looking at finding a site for a new HWRC in North Hampshire however a site has yet to be confirmed. B&D have confirmed that they are willing to continue the borough contribution to maintain access for Hampshire residents until a permanent solution can be found. Newtown Parish Council will continue to campaign for an extension to the existing agreement.

### **c. Newtown Common**

**Fallen Trees** - Following successful lobbying by Newton Parish Council, supported by B&D, HCC has now accepted responsibility for fallen trees on the Common. The system is working well and recent incidents have been dealt with swiftly.

**Bicycle riding on the common** – Cllr Webb stated that there had been an increase of bicycle riding on the common especially on the West side. In a particular area, the earth had been dug and jumps and a bicycle track had been created. The Parish Council has employed a contractor to level the jumps and make good the ground. Signs will be erected reminding individuals that cycling on the common is against the byelaws. Cllr Webb briefed those present that previous signs that had been erected had been removed or defaced and that as cycling is not a criminal act, little could be done to police the issue.

### **d. Planning**

Cllr Webb referenced the three planning applications that been approved for new homes to be built within the curtilage of existing properties.

Cllr Izett's report stated:

*This issue has caused the most controversy. There are residents who want to build new homes or benefit from winning planning consent and, generally in opposition, there are those including the PC, who are against for a number of reasons. Decisions by the courts on how laws should be interpreted have had national implications and particularly how gardens are defined for planning purposes, including as brownfield land in the countryside and therefore available to being built on. These decisions are hard to agree with and have up ended the borough's Local Plan policies with regard to building in the countryside. As the courts' decisions take precedence the local planning authority has been left pretty powerless. This is unfortunate and regrettable as it was not what residents generally thought was the case given the intentions of our Local Plan and therefore I understand the depth of local feeling.*

*What I am seeking to achieve as a personal priority, because it is what the vast majority of Newtown residents want, is that in the Local Plan update from 2023 the plan's wording of policy on homes in the countryside should prevent this happening in future. I will report back on progress as the process of making the new plan takes shape. In the meantime I will support residents' objections to unsuitable infill garden development proposals.*

### **e. Newtown Village Hall**

Cllr Webb briefed those present of the project to improve the parking facilities at the Village Hall. Work is due to commence in the next month. The project has been funded by grants through the Good Exchange and contributions from Newtown Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee. It is hoped that improved parking and access will increase the level of use and those present were asked to encourage those in and around the community to use it more.

## **6. Open Forum**

A resident queried whether the Village Hall work would include an upgrade to the track and it was confirmed that it would.

A resident commented on the significant work that had been carried out on the West side of the common. He commended the work carried out by Simon and Sue Melville clearing holly and stated that it had made a measurable difference. Thanks to Simon and Sue were recorded.

A resident queried whether the parish council had considered creating a Local Neighbourhood Plan, and whether if there had been one in place, it would have helped prevent the recent planning applications. Cllr Webb stated that the parish council had considered a Neighbourhood Plan but considered that Newtown Parish Council did not have the means to carry out the work involved. It has also been considered as to whether it would be possible to be included as part of the Burghclere local plan however this has not been fully explored as yet.

A resident queried whether the Neighbourhood Plan could be a higher level plan but Cllr Reseigh stated that the process was quite specific and there wasn't really a simpler process that could be followed.

A resident commented whether overspill from the Jonathan Hill car park may use the new Village Hall parking. It was commented that the village hall parking would not be overly obvious from the road but signage could be erected if there were concerns.

A resident queried how many spaces would be created by the work. Cllr Reseigh commented that there would be spaces for approximately 12 cars depending on how they park. It was commented that this would be a significant improvement.

A resident queried the posts that had been erected at the Jonathan Hill car park. Cllr Reseigh stated that they had been put in to curtail the parking area and prevent damage to the common by vehicles parking outside the designated parking area.

Cllr Curry thanked Cllr Reseigh and the Clerk for their fundraising efforts for the Village Hall car park.

## **7. Close**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 19:56pm.

Signed

Dated