

Newtown Parish council
Hampshire

**Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on Friday 24th April 2015
in Newtown Village Hall at 7.30pm**

Present: Parish Councillors with Tim Kelleher in the Chair
Borough Councillor, John Izett
17 residents and guests

In Attendance: Clerk: Kathy Summers

1. **Welcome**

Tim Kelleher welcomed those present and introduced members of the Parish Council and Borough Councillor John Izett.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from county councillor Tom Thacker, PCSO Abbey Carpenter and 3 residents.

3. **Approval of minutes**

The minutes of the last Parish assembly on 25th April 2014 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Chairman's report (assisted by other members of the council and clerk)**

The main item of note last year was the consultation on the felling. The common Management Committee was divided with six members being in favour and two against. The parish council was unsure whether this reflected the views of local residents and so the consultation took place. 59% of residents voted, 52% in favour of felling and 48% against. It was felt that the results were too close to proceed at the present time and hence the moratorium for five years. This will give ample time to show whether the common has regenerated in the area which was felled in 2012.

The water on the road near the church has also been a problem this year. A meeting was held in February at which I and the clerk attended together with John Izett, the landowner and a representative of Hampshire highways. A way forward has been agreed and we are now waiting for Hampshire highways to do the work.

Clerk - Lengthsman money has been really useful this year. Particularly as it has enabled us to have work done locally in a reasonable time scale without waiting for Hampshire to get around to doing it.

Tony Webb – Unfortunately Tom Thacker could not be with us tonight but he has given us an update on Superfast Broadband. “The Superfast Broad band team have indicated that most postcodes in Newtown will be in Wave 2, which is planned for 2016-18. I have included a table for Newtown parish postcodes, showing their status for Wave 2. I will be told more details regarding the timing later this year, once detailed planning has been completed. RG20 9AU, RG20 9AX, RG20 9BH, RG20 4EX will not be included.”

As regards Sandleford, we now know that the first phase will be 400 houses but we don't know when. We have asked for an environmental impact assessment and a meeting with West Berkshire planning Department.

The parish council is aware that the Jonathan Hill notice board needs replacing. A grant has been applied for. If we are unsuccessful the board will be replaced from parish council funds.

Finally, the Chairman expressed disappointment that so few people were at the parish assembly. We would all benefit from more people showing an active interest in the parish in particular at the common working parties.

5. Report from John Izett (Borough Councillor)

95% of my time is spent on matters to do with Basingstoke. Some of these matters are also relevant to Newtown.

A draft local plan was approved in March however this is likely to be amended to increase the commitment for new home building to 750 a year in the period to 2029. Changes to social housing will mean that only those with a local connection will be eligible.

Council tax rates have been frozen for the 5th year in succession but will have to increase next year by something under 2%.

Regarding the water by the church, I have been told that an order to do the work has been placed.

Regarding Superfast broadband, communication on this has been very poor and people are becoming very frustrated I will try to get the parish, county and borough councillors all together to find out what is going on.

7. Report from Tom Thacker (County Councillor), in summary

Apologies I am not able to be with you this evening.

Despite heavy cuts in the central government grant Hampshire county council has again frozen their element of the council tax bill.

Superfast broadband (see item 4. above), I will report further when I have more information. Hampshire highways hopes to deal with the diversion on the water into the gully and thence under the road, shortly.

8. PCSO Abbey Carpenter (Safer Neighbourhoods Team), in summary

Apologies I am not able to be with you this evening.

The Neighbourhood policing team now works from Tadley instead of Whitchurch.

Newtown comes under a large ward area which should be covered by two police constables and three PCSOs (although at this time there is just me, new PCSOs are due to start in June). Constables will be responsible for crime and offender management in the area, while PCSOs will deal with Anti social behaviour, troubled families and Crime prevention.

There are 3 new policing priorities for the area which are:-

1. Speeding/Traffic issues - We continue with the speed enforcement van attending at fairly regular intervals.
2. Burglary (Non Dwelling) - This is a significant issue across the Ward. We have seen 3 in the past month in Newtown alone. If this is a concern feel free to contact me for advice
3. Burglary (Dwelling) - Uncommon in our area but still a matter of concern.

9. **Open forum**

The following comments/questions were raised:-

- The safer neighbourhoods team had reported 30% of motorists on the C45 were doing something wrong
- Was there any more information on the installation of water meters? The clerk said she had heard nothing more from the water company. Some properties had had meters fitted, most had not.
- Can the broadband table be put on the website? Yes
- Five years seems along time to delay the felling
- The five year count should start from two years ago rather than now.
- The consultation document said the majority view would be implemented. The parish council has gone back on it's promise – is this legal? Liz Ellis said that perhaps with hindsight the consultation document could have been worded differently. The Chairman said that the main criteria for the consultation was not to have a deep division in the parish and legal advice was taken. There was a slender majority of 6 votes out of 136 voters and once the trees are taken down they cannot be put back up. We do have a mandate to proceed with the felling in five years time if the council decides that is appropriate.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed

Dated