

Newtown Parish council
Hampshire

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**Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on Friday 14th April 2016
Newtown Village Hall at 7.30pm**

Present: Parish Councillors with Tim Kelleher in the Chair
Borough Councillor, John Izett and County Councillor Tom Thacker
23 residents and guests

In Attendance: Clerk, Kathy Summers

1. Welcome

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

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the last Parish assembly on 24th April 2015 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Chairman reported that the Sandford park development was a major issue this year. The parish council has been focusing on the effect this will have on Newtown and making sure our voice is heard

Tony Webb reported the latest news from BT was that "all those on cabinet 17 (a large proportion of Newtown) will be guaranteed 24Mbps by the end of 2017". This would most likely mean a new cabinet near the Swan. Those residents on the Burghclere exchange should also get superfast broadband by the same date, Tony undertook to keep an eye on progress and in the meantime anyone who wished to receive email updates should give him their email address.

Simon Betts reminded the meeting that 2018 is the 800 year anniversary of the founding of Newtown. People are needed who are willing to pick up an idea and see if it is viable or not. It is envisaged that the process will be managed by a committee. There will be a meeting on Friday 3rd June 2016 at 7pm in the village hall, for all those who are willing to help in any way. (Subsequent to the meeting it was necessary to change the date to Thursday 2nd June)

The clerk reported that the lengthsman had done a lot of good work again this year, mainly clearing ditches to prevent localised flooding. This is a very useful scheme whereby the parish council can prioritise work which is important to local people.

Tim Kelleher was disappointed that at the litter pick last Sunday only 10 out of around 240 people turned up. Of those, half were parish councillors and most of the rest were married to parish councillors, clerks or former clerks! Perhaps rather than large organised affairs local

groups may wish to look after areas of common near where they live, clearing bramble etc? There seemed to be general agreement to this proposal.

Finally, after 26 years as a parish councillor Liz Ellis has decided to step down from the parish council but she has agreed to give a final report on the common.

Liz Ellis – We have done a lot of scrub clearance this year mainly carried out by Sparsholt students. At Adbury this will be a 15 year rotational scrub. We have had the heather mown and three hectares of bracken sprayed.

A reptile study was done last summer and the person doing it found the largest adder he had ever seen.

The Green Gym and winter working parties have been very effective this year, pulling pine and cutting holly and birch scrub.

Three councillors went on a tree survey and inspection course last April and so we have been inspecting the common.

I would like to thank the Common Management Committee for the time and effort they put in but especially Susan Wellman (who like me is stepping down this year) and Simon Melville who has been on the committee since its inception in 1983. Last summer Simon organised a Nightjar walk which was attended by over 40 people.

Liz welcomed Sean Curry to the parish council and said that although it costs a little money it is definitely worth having a parish council.

5. Report from John Izett (Borough Councillor)

As regards Sandleford, concern is centred around the impact of traffic. We have limited influence as we are on the wrong side of the boundary however Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane are working well together and have put representations to West Berkshire Council. West Berkshire highways are also concerned about the proposals. We have attempted to organise a meeting with the cabinet member in charge and hopefully this will happen.

There is a lot going on in Basingstoke. The population is increasing and the Government inspector has now approved our draft Local Plan and this will hopefully be approved by the borough Council in May. Under the plan new development will take place in and around Basingstoke, Overton and Whitchurch and there will be limited development in rural areas. The leisure park is to be rebuilt (doubling in size) and a new outlet centre is to be built also. Local authorities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have been looking at devolution. It is possible we will end up with a Southern group and a Northern group. This could lead to cost savings.

7. Report from Tom Thacker (County Councillor)

Last year Kit Malthouse organised a broadband summit and what came out of that very clearly was that BT and Hampshire were not communicating.

As regards Sandleford we have raised concerns about traffic on the A339 but West Berkshire seem to be hell bent on diverting all Newbury traffic down the B4640. The developer also needs to contribute to improving the Wash Water junction which is dangerously short.

The mobile library service is due to end. Anyone who relies on this should contact me.

There has been a boundary change and it is likely that Kingsclere will become part of my patch

On devolution, Hampshire County Council was hoping for a Hampshire wide arrangements but it looks like this will not happen. However things could still change.

8. **Village Hall Report**

This was given by Nick Adlam. The Hall is used approximately four nights a week. We do not charge very much, £20 for a half day. We need to find around £1,000 pa for general maintenance. The venture club and the curry lunch etc. contribute about £1,500pa. We are making an application to the Local Infrastructure Fund which is administered by Basingstoke and Deane. We are hoping to replace the heating system and maybe put in some secondary glazing. All work is done by volunteers and we would be grateful for any additional help.

John Izett said he would support the LIF application. Tom Thacker said that Hampshire Community buildings grants may also be available.

Open forum

The following comments/questions were raised:-

- Can anything be done about the bicycles which are “off roading” on the common in the evening? Apparently Banjo Cycles in Newbury are recommending Newtown Common as a good place to go.

Tom Thacker – Hampshire will down grade BOATs to footpaths if this helps.

John Roskill mentioned he had a contact who might be helpful.

- Can something be done about the leak near Newtown Court Farm?

The clerk undertook to look into this.

- Why are there notices saying dogs should be on leads and then at the same time the Common Management Committee is organising work to be done on the common. Surely this is disturbing the ground nesting birds?

Liz Ellis – We are required to put up the “dogs on leads” notices by Hampshire County Council and is it unfortunate that work on the common has to take place at the same time.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed

Dated