



Minutes of the Newton and Biggin Parish Council (PC) Meeting

Thursday 25th January 2024 at 7.30pm

Ref	Minute	Record and Resolution	Action by
1	NPC24/01/0001	<p>Present - Ian Davis (Chair) (ID), Councillors (Cllrs) Rick Crane (RC), Bob Threadgold (BT), Andy Newnham (AN) Warwickshire County Councillor (WCC) Adrian Warwick (AW)</p> <p>In attendance – Rebecca Barry (RB), Clerk</p> <p>Members of Public - Three.</p>	
2	NPC24/01/0002	<p>Apologies and acceptance of reasons for absence – Cllr Anne Davis (AD) due to holiday ACCEPTED</p> <p>Rugby Borough Councillor (RBC) Eve Hassell (EH)</p>	
3	NPC24/01/0003	<p>Declarations of Interest - There were no Declarations of Interest expressed relating to any items on the agenda.</p>	
4	NPC24/01/0004	<p>Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting - Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
5	NPC24/01/0005	<p>Matters Arising and updates from previous minutes, not specifically on this agenda:</p> <p>I. Update on Butterfly Information sign – The Chair reported that the artwork has now been tracked down and Nuneaton Signs has been contacted for a quote, however no response has been received. The Chair will phone and chase up.</p> <p>II. Review of Christmas Celebrations – It was noted that the community tree was smaller than expected, so the PC have been given £50 credit towards a tree for next Christmas. The Christmas event was well attended with over 30 people, and also in attendance was Adam Wallis, MD of Alcohols Ltd, who kindly covered the cost of the Christmas tree for Newton village. One point to note for next Christmas is that more mulled wine will need to be purchased.</p> <p>III. Update on Phone Box refurbishment and grant application – Cllr Rick Crane advised an approximate cost of £500. County Cllr Adrian Warwick shared the news that the grant application was successful with an award of £235, for which the PC expressed their thanks, especially considering the large number of applications received. Other councils have received quotes in excess of £5,000 to refurbish phone boxes, so the PC agreed to Cllr Rick Crane drafting a more formal quote for consideration at the next meeting.</p>	<p>ID</p> <p>RC</p>

6	NPC24/01/0006	Suspension of Standing/ Orders in order to let the Public raise any issues of concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues were raised 	
7	NPC24/01/0007	As there were no further issues raised by the public, the Standing Orders were resumed.	
8	NPC24/01/0008	Neighbourhood Plan (NP) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General Update - The Chair reported that there had not been much progress in December, but a zoom meeting was held with AECOM regarding Design Coding. Next meeting of the advisory committee is planned for 1st February. 	
9	NPC24/01/0009	2024-25 Budget / Precept <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the budget for 2024-25 – The Clerk reported that Cllrs had attended an informal meeting to discuss next year’s budget and reviewed all known costs for this year and proposed a budget for 2024-25. The 2024-25 tax base (projected number of properties in the parish) was confirmed by RBC as having increased considerably (+26%) as it was underestimated in 2023-24. The draft budget was then reviewed and amended by the Clerk and the Chair, with a final draft circulated to Cllrs and a provisional precept request was submitted to RBC. The Clerk explained that the budget and precept total values are the same, as the PC has no other sources of income and there is no projected carryover of funds from 2023-24 into the new budget year (any carryover will move into General Reserve). The Clerk and the Chair the explained the proposed investment in a new gov.uk PC website and associated cllr email addresses; a defibrillator for the parished area of Coton park; funding for events in Newton and Coton; possible costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan; and a new street lighting maintenance contract. This is in addition to the usual running costs of the PC, as well as the existing budgetary commitments such as the Five Arches wildlife site. The PC resolved to approve the 2024-25 budget of £27,240 To approve a precept request of £27,240.00 – This is a large increase, year on year, of 28%, but driven by the large increase in the tax base. An average Band D property will only see an increase of 1.99% (£0.86 a year or £0.02 a week). The PC resolved to approve the precept demand of £27,240. The Clerk will submit a confirmed precept request to RBC on 26th January and will also publish the budget details on the website. 	RB
10	NPC24/01/0010	To approve virement of £200 from ‘Christmas Celebrations’ cost code to ‘Coton Community Fund’ cost code – The Chair reported that the contribution of the community Christmas tree in Newton village by Alcohols Ltd resulted in the possibility of balancing of funds between the two cost centres. This was approved . The Clerk will make the necessary adjustments in Scribe, and the Chair will inform Coton Park Residents Assoc (CPRA).	RB / ID
11	NPC24/01/0011	Plans for Winter Warm Hub 2023 – The Chair reported, on behalf of Cllr Anne Davis, that the warm hub will recommence on 6 th February. The session will run every Tuesday in Newton Village Hall between 2pm and 4pm and	AD

		will be run by a team of 12 volunteers. They will co-ordinate their actions via a WhatsApp group. The Clerk will inform WRCC to they can include the warm hub in their list of locations.	RB
12	NPC24/01/0012	To note application for funding for Community Orchard – The Chair reported that this is part of the Coronation events, and the PC have submitted a bid for 4 to 5 fruit trees that will be planted on the small piece of land by the Five Arches car park. If successful, the grant funding will cover the cost of purchasing the trees, but the PC will need to put in place a method of watering the trees until established.	ID
13	NPC24/01/0013	Plans for Joint Police / Parish Council Meeting – The Chair reported that PCSO Tony Winter wishes to set up joint meetings with Clifton, Churchover and Newton. These meetings would be in addition to his attendance at a PC meeting a few times a year. A date of Monday 19 th February has been proposed and we await full details. It will not be a public meeting. Cllrs are asked to let the Chair or the Clerk know if they would like to attend. Whilst discussing police matters, the Chair also reported further vandalism with a heavy bladed weapon in the Coton play area (outside the parish boundary).	All
14	NPC24/01/0014	Plans for Spring refresh of village planters and purchase of garden centre vouchers – The Clerk reported that 3 x £25 vouchers are to be purchased and distributed to sponsors of the planters to allow a spring refresh. Cllrs approved purchase of the vouchers by the Clerk and subsequent reimbursement. If paper vouchers are purchased, then small denominations would be preferable. Next refresh will be planned for May / June.	RB
15	NPC24/01/0015	Ellis Gardens Update – The Chair recapped the history with this item, reporting that responsibility for the open spaces still lies with the developer, Lioncourt. The PC could take on responsibility but are under no obligation, and a commuted sum of money from the developer would be available. The last meeting with Lioncourt was approximately 2 years ago and several issues were discussed such as failing trees; hedge boundary and maintenance strip problems; and balancing pond infested with weeds. An email has recently been received from a new contact at Lioncourt and the Chair has shared the ongoing problems and history with them, and informed RBC. The PC await further contact.	ID
16	NPC24/01/0016	To approve formal response to RBC Local Plan Consultation – Cllrs approved the formal response that was circulated before the meeting. The Clerk will submit to RBC and also post a copy of the PC response on the website.	RB
17	NPC24/01/0017	To re-adopt Emergency Plan (annual review) – Cllrs approved the re-adoption of the Emergency Plan with no changes required. The Clerk will send to the Resilience Team.	RB
18	NPC24/01/0018	Internal Controls I. To re-adopt Internal Controls Policy and Template (annual review) – Cllrs approved the re-adoption of the policy and template. II. Plans to complete the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control – The Clerk reported that this review must be completed before year end and will form part of the Annual Governance statement. The Chair and the Clerk will complete the review using the approved template and report findings at the next meeting.	ID / RB

19	NPC24/01/0019	<p>General Assessment of Risk</p> <p>I. To approve updated General Assessment of Risk Template – The Clerk reported that the template had been updated to reflect the recently introduced payment controls for internet banking. Cllrs approved the updated template.</p> <p>II. Plans to complete the assessment of risk - The Clerk reported that this review must also be completed before year end and will form part of the Annual Governance statement. As there is some crossover between the assessment of risk and the internal controls, the Chair and the Clerk will also complete the assessment of risk using the approved updated template and report findings at the next meeting.</p>	ID / RB																				
20	NPC24/01/0020	<p>Appointment of Internal Auditor 2023-24 – The Clerk reported that WALCs plans to standardise internal audits has not been completed so had contacted last year’s auditor, Bill Wooliscroft, to see if he is able to fulfil the role again this year. Bill has confirmed he is available but is waiting for guidance around fees. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.</p>	RB																				
21	NPC24/01/0021	<p>To note the results of the Quarter 3 Asset Inspection – Cllr Bob Threadgold reported that the asset inspection had been completed and circulated to Cllrs. There were no items of concern, and Cllrs noted these results.</p>																					
22	NPC24/01/0022	<p>To note planning applications received and PC response to consultations:</p> <p>I. None</p>																					
23	NPC24/01/0023	<p>Parish Council Financial Report</p> <p>I. Financial report for Q3 and bank reconciliation report - The Council reviewed the detailed financial report for Q3, and this is also available on the PC website: http://www.newtonparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-24-Q3-Finance-and-Budget-Update.pdf</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Council’s finances and bank account are in a healthy position, with a year-end prediction of approximately £1,000 surplus. Any underspend at year-end to move into the Council’s General reserve. Ear Marked Reserves now include a Neighbourhood Plan Earmarked Reserve (EMR) which was created in Q3 to set aside the grant funds for this piece of work. There has been movement of £1,000 after settling the first consultancy invoice, leaving £9,000 remaining in the EMR. No movement in any other reserves.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="555 1145 1393 1374"> <tr> <td colspan="2">General Reserve</td> <td>£13,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="5">Earmarked Reserves</td> <td>Burial Committee</td> <td>£750.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coton Noticeboard</td> <td>£1,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warm Hub Grant balance</td> <td>£424.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ellis Gardens Open Space</td> <td>£2,586.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Future Enhancements to Open Spaces</td> <td>£3,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Neighbourhood Plan</td> <td>£9,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">TOTAL RESERVES</td> <td>£30,760.77</td> </tr> </table>	General Reserve		£13,000.00	Earmarked Reserves	Burial Committee	£750.00	Coton Noticeboard	£1,500.00	Warm Hub Grant balance	£424.37	Ellis Gardens Open Space	£2,586.40	Future Enhancements to Open Spaces	£3,500.00		Neighbourhood Plan	£9,000.00	TOTAL RESERVES		£30,760.77	
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Scribe Accounts vs Lloyds bank account have been reconciled by the Clerk, and approved and signed by Cllr Rick Crane. Lloyds account balance at the end of October was **£37,396.91**

II. **VAT update** – The Clerk reported that Q3 VAT form 126 has been produced, submitted to HMRC and funds already received into the Lloyds account. The total was **£290.18**

III. **The Council APPROVED the following payments:**

Payments for approval	NET	VAT	TOTAL
SLCC – FILCA training for the Clerk	£120.00	£24.00	£144.00
SLCC – ChatGPT training for the Clerk	£20.00	£4.00	£24.00
WALC – AGAR training for the Clerk	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00
Butterfly Conservation (Five Arches Project)	£746.29	£149.26	£895.55
Christmas refreshments (reimburse Cllr Anne Davis)	£48.25	£0.00	£48.25
Christmas Tree Lights (reimburse Cllr Ian Davis)	£20.00	£4.00	£24.00
Ethical disposal of Christmas Tree	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Kitchen Unit for Village Hall (reimburse Cllr Bob Threadgold)	£123.09	£24.62	£147.71
YourLocale Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy Invoice	£1,500.00	£300.00	£1,800.00

IV. **Direct Debits and routine payments (with pre-approval) were noted as follows:**

December 2023			NET	VAT	TOTAL
SO – 01/12/23	NPC23/04/0632	Honorarium – picnic area gates	£105.00	£0.00	£105.00
FPO – 04/12/23	NPC23/08/0710	Staffing	£501.08	£0.00	£848.44
FPO – 04/12/23	NPC23/08/0710	HMRC - Staffing PAYE	£205.60	£0.00	£205.60
DD – 21/12/23	NPC23/08/0710	Plusnet Village Hall Internet	£18.00	£3.60	£21.60
DD – 27/12/23	NPC23/08/0710	Npower – electricity for street lighting	£90.54	£4.53	£95.07
SO – 28/12/23	NPC23/04/0632	Honorarium – grass cutting	£31.50	£0.00	£31.50
January 2024			NET	VAT	TOTAL
SO – 01/01/24	NPC23/04/0632	Honorarium – picnic area gates	£105.00	£0.00	£105.00
FPO – 05/01/24	NPC23/08/0710	Staffing	£545.96	£0.00	£545.96
FPO – 05/01/24	NPC23/08/0710	HMRC - Staffing PAYE	£130.20	£0.00	£130.20
DD – 21/01/24	NPC23/08/0710	Plusnet Village Hall Internet	£18.00	£3.60	£21.60
DD – 25/01/24	NPC23/08/0710	Npower – electricity for street lighting	£95.11	£4.76	£99.87
SO – 28/01/24	NPC23/04/0632	Honorarium – grass cutting	£31.50	£0.00	£31.50

		V. Receipts were noted as follows: <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="background-color: #d9ead3;">December 2023</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">06/12/23</td> <td style="width: 60%;">Funding for Newton Christmas Tree from Alcohols Ltd</td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: right;">£180.00</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="background-color: #d9ead3;">January 2024</th> </tr> <tr> <td>11/01/24</td> <td>HMRC Q3 VAT form 126 refund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£290.18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15/01/24</td> <td>Contribution for Village Hall Kitchen Unit from VHC</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£123.09</td> </tr> </table>	December 2023			06/12/23	Funding for Newton Christmas Tree from Alcohols Ltd	£180.00	January 2024			11/01/24	HMRC Q3 VAT form 126 refund	£290.18	15/01/24	Contribution for Village Hall Kitchen Unit from VHC	£123.09	
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24	NPC24/01/0024	The meeting concluded at 8.20pm. Next meeting – 29 th February 2024 at 7.30pm, Newton Memorial Hall (No meeting in December).																