



Minutes of the Newton and Biggin Parish Council (PC) Meeting Thursday 30th January 2025 at 7.30pm

Ref	Minute	Record and Resolution	Action by
1	NPC25/01/0001	<p>Present – Councillors (Cllrs) Ian Davis (Chair) (ID), Rick Crane (Vice Chair) (RC), Anne Davis (AD), Bob Threadgold (BT) Andy Newnham (AN), Warwickshire County Councillor (WCC) Adrian Warwick (AW)</p> <p>In attendance – Rebecca Barry (RB), Clerk Members of Public - Three</p>	
2	NPC25/01/0002	Apologies and acceptance of reasons for absence – Rugby Borough Councillor (RBC) Eve Hassell (EH)	
3	NPC25/01/0003	Declarations of Interest – None.	
4	NPC25/01/0004	Agreement of minutes from the previous meeting - Minutes of the meeting held on 28 th November 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
5	NPC25/01/0005	<p>Matters Arising and updates from previous minutes, not specifically on this agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Update on Ellis Gardens streetlights – The Chair reported that confirmation had been received from Paul Fowler at WCC confirming that the streetlights will be adopted and maintained by WCC, therefore no further action is required by the PC. II. Update on Noticeboard for Coton Park - The Chair reported there is no update on this item. III. Update on Website upgrade and Cllr email addresses – The Clerk reported that she had sent details of all the quotes for Cllr Andy Newnham to review, and the item would be discussed again at the next PC meeting in February. Ahead of that meeting, Cllr Andy Newnham will send out a summary of his views. IV. Update on Traffic Speed Survey - The Chair reported that the traffic speed survey has been completed in three of the four planned locations. The final set was delayed due to access issues but is now in place. The results will be released when all the data is available. The Chair added that he recently attended a session with Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership, which covered a central reporting system for speeding concerns in Warwickshire. As this alternative system was not mentioned when he initially arranged the speed survey, he will see if the cost of the survey can be reassessed / reduced / waived. 	<p style="text-align: center;">AN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ID</p>

		<p>V. Update on Missing Hedgehog Sign – The Clerk reported that she had contacted the producer of the original signs for a quote and a replacement sign could be produced for £170 exc VAT, which the PC resolved to fund from the contingency cost code. The Clerk will chase the supplier.</p> <p>VI. Update on works at Coton Farm, Newton Lane – The Chair recapped the history with this item, and reported that works were voluntarily stopped whilst working with WCC to meet the planning conditions, therefore no stop order was required.</p> <p>VII. Review of Christmas Celebrations – The lights switch on and service went well and was well attended. Unfortunately, the event was delayed by a week due to harsh weather, which meant it was held close to the village hall carol service. Points for the Clerk to note for next year: 1) consider sourcing a tree from Welford Christmas Tree Farm or 2) Contact Clifton PC to see who their supplier was as their tree was a generous size and shape.</p>	<p>RB</p> <p>RB</p>
6	NPC25/01/0006	<p>Suspension of Standing/ Orders in order to let the Public raise any issues of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	
7	NPC25/01/0007	<p>As there were no further issues raised by the public, the Standing Orders were resumed.</p>	
8	NPC25/01/0008	<p>Neighbourhood Plan (NP)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General update – The Chair reported that the plan is progressing well. Theme Groups update – Housing & Environment - The work for both theme groups is well underway, and both are making timely progress with a plan being drafted. The next stage is to convene a meeting of the whole committee and sign off the draft plan. A second exhibition / consultation will then be arranged and amended based on any feedback / comments. Then the plan will go to the Planning Authority, followed by independent examination, and then will finally go to a referendum for local residents to vote on whether to adopt the plan. 	
9	NPC25/01/0009	<p>2025-26 Budget</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the budget for 2025-26 – The Chair explained all the work that has been undertaken with budget preparations since November. The proposed budget of £27,590 includes the usual running costs of the PC and inflationary increases as well as the existing budgetary commitments such as the Five Arches wildlife site and a few one-off projects / events such as the refurbishment of the bus shelter and celebrations in Newton and Coton. The precept is proposed to remain the same as last year but as the tax base has dropped slightly (-2.82%), this means a slight increase to council tax of 2.9%. This is an increase of £1.28 a year for the average Band D property. The difference between the budget and the precept is to be funded by drawing £350 from the Tax Base Smoothing Ear Marked Reserve (EMR). The PC resolved to approve the 2025-26 budget of <u>£27,590</u> including the EMR movement. 	

		<p>ii. To approve a precept request of £27,240 - The PC resolved to approve the 2025-26 precept demand of £27,240. The Clerk will submit a confirmed precept request to RBC on 31st January and will also publish the budget details on the website.</p>	RB
10	NPC25/01/0010	<p>Ellis Gardens Open Space – Joint PC / RBC letter to Lioncourt – The Chair recapped the history with this item, explaining that it has taken from July to early January to receive a proposed letter from RBC. The draft has been reviewed and rewritten by the Chair to strengthen it. The Chair then proceeded to read out the letter verbatim. Cllrs discussed the revised version and agreed that the final paragraph needed to be more direct and state when a response is required. The Chair will make some changes and reissue a definitive version for review ahead of sending to RBC.</p>	ID
11	NPC25/01/0011	<p>Government’s Devolution White Paper – The Chair reported that the government wants to devolve power to local areas for certain things, but they cannot do this with the current structure as some areas sit with the County Council and some with the Borough Council. Some areas have Unitary Authorities, and some have Combined Authorities with Mayors. The Govt wants to have uniform structure with Unitary Authorities, with Local Authorities within them being amalgamated into one tier. Warwickshire have made a bid to be in the first tranche. Warwickshire County Cllr Adrian Warwick reported that 17 local authorities have expressed an interest in the joining the Devolution Priority Programme, but only 10 would be selected. This raises the question of how PCs would interface with large authorities, and would PCs have to take on extra responsibilities? There are no answers as yet, but the Chair will keep the PC updated.</p>	ID
12	NPC25/01/0012	<p>Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean campaign 2025 – The Clerk reported that she had received correspondence from RBC about the campaign and whether the PC wish to take part. Cllrs agreed to signing up and provisionally earmarked Sunday 30th March as the date for the litter picking event. The Clerk will response to RBC to confirm this and request litter picking equipment.</p>	RB
13	NPC25/01/0013	<p>Discuss a debit card for the Lloyds Community bank account – The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Lloyds who confirmed that this was possible, and they have sent links to the relevant forms. The PC resolved to approve an application for a debit card, but that this would only be for the Clerk as RFO, not for Cllrs. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements. Financial Regs will also need to be reviewed to ensure that debit card usage is covered, and this will be actioned as part of the adoption of the new NALC Financial Regs (item 15). County Cllr Adrian Warwick left the meeting at 8:15pm due to other commitments.</p>	RB
14	NPC25/01/0014	<p>Annual review of the Emergency Plan – The Chair reported that a review of the document has been completed with only minor updates required. The Chair will seek guidance on who to list as contact for the Good Shepherd and let the Clerk know. The Clerk will reflect this and the addition of another name under 4x4 / tractor owners and then send the revised version to the Resilience Team.</p>	ID / RB

15	NPC25/01/0015	New NALC Financial Regulations – The Clerk reported that new financial regs were released by NALC last year and explained that she was in the process of trying to compare the current regs vs. the new model template. This is time-consuming but the Clerk is using Copilot to assist where possible. The Clerk explained that items in bold in the new regs cannot be changed, but that items in brackets can be tailored to individual councils. A draft version will be sent out to Cllrs as soon as possible and the PC noted that the Internal Auditor will ask whether the new regs have been adopted as part of the audit.	RB
16	NPC25/01/0016	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 PC agreed that the Chair and the Clerk should complete the review using the approved template and report findings at the next meeting.	ID / RB
17	NPC25/01/0017	General Assessment of Risk I. To approve updated General Assessment of Risk Template – Cllrs approved the readoption of the policy and template. 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.	ID / RB
18	NPC25/01/0018	Appointment of Internal Auditor 2024-25 - The Clerk reported that she had contacted last year’s auditor, Bill Wooliscroft, to see if he is able to fulfil the role again this year. A response has not yet been received so the Clerk will chase. Cllrs discussed whether to look for an alternative auditor but decided that it was late to commence this process now, so would continue to use Bill W if he is still available. The Clerk will make a note for the summer to approach other auditors for review for the following year.	RB
19	NPC25/01/0019	Approve the Clerk completing SLCC course ‘Principles of Internal Auditing Local Councils (PIALC) – The Clerk explained that this was a newly launched course suitable for Clerks either wishing to upskill as auditors, or Clerks who want to understand more about the audit process and best ways of working etc. The PC budgeted £200 for training this year which has not been touched. The PIALC course is £120 exc VAT. The PC resolved to approve the Clerk completing this course.	RB
20	NPC25/01/0020	To note the results of the Quarter 3 Asset Inspection – Cllr Bob Threadgold reported that the inspection had been completed and the only points to note were 1) the missing hedgehog sign, which is being replaced and 2) the bus shelter requiring renovation, which has been budgeted for in the 2025-26 financial year. No other action required.	

21	NPC25/01/0021	To note planning applications received and PC response to consultations: None																																																																															
22	NPC25/01/0022	<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/2025/01/2024-25-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 £420 surplus. It was noted that that the Contingency Fund could end the year considerably underspent which would change the year end position dramatically. Any underspend at year-end to move into the Council’s General reserve.</p> <p>General Reserve stands at £14,900 and Ear Marked Reserves (EMRs) total is £13,595.26. The only movement in the EMRs is in the Neighbourhood Plan and Warm Hub Grant lines.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="533 592 1877 1066"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reserve</th> <th>OpeningBalance</th> <th>Transfers</th> <th>Spend</th> <th>Receipts</th> <th>CurrentBalance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="6">Earmarked</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ellis Gardens Open Spaces</td> <td>2,586.40</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2,586.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Burial Committee</td> <td>750.00</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>750.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Future Enhancements to Open Spaces</td> <td>3,500.00</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>3,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coton Noticeboard</td> <td>1,500.00</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warm Hub Grant balance</td> <td>342.12</td> <td></td> <td>125.58</td> <td></td> <td>216.54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neighbourhood Plan - Grant</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4,500.00</td> <td>8,000.00</td> <td>3,500.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tax Base Smoothing</td> <td></td> <td>682.47</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>682.47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neighbourhood Plan - Budgeted</td> <td></td> <td>1,000.00</td> <td>140.15</td> <td></td> <td>859.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tota Earmarked</td> <td>8,678.52</td> <td>1,682.47</td> <td>4,765.73</td> <td>8,000.00</td> <td>13,595.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENERAL RESERVE</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>14,900.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL RESERVES</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>28,495.26</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Scribe Accounts vs Lloyds bank account have been reconciled by the Clerk and approved and signed by the Vice Chair. Lloyds account balance at the end of the month was £38,005.38</p> <p>II. Q3 VAT update</p> <p>The Clerk reported that a claim was submitted for Q3, and this has been received into the Lloyds account on 15th January, totalling £252.70.</p>	Reserve	OpeningBalance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	CurrentBalance	Earmarked						Ellis Gardens Open Spaces	2,586.40				2,586.40	Burial Committee	750.00				750.00	Future Enhancements to Open Spaces	3,500.00				3,500.00	Coton Noticeboard	1,500.00				1,500.00	Warm Hub Grant balance	342.12		125.58		216.54	Neighbourhood Plan - Grant			4,500.00	8,000.00	3,500.00	Tax Base Smoothing		682.47			682.47	Neighbourhood Plan - Budgeted		1,000.00	140.15		859.85	Tota Earmarked	8,678.52	1,682.47	4,765.73	8,000.00	13,595.26	GENERAL RESERVE					14,900.00	TOTAL RESERVES					28,495.26	
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III. The Council APPROVED the following payments:

Payments for approval			NET	VAT	TOTAL
Ethical disposal of Christmas Tree – Reimburse R. Barry			£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
YourLocale – Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy Fees			£1,000.00	£200.00	£1,200.00
Christmas event refreshments – reimburse Cllr Anne Davis (retro)			£51.10	£0.00	£51.10
Payments for approval – (Made under Scheme of Delegation)					
Webgrowth – website maintenance			£90.00	£0.00	£90.00
E.on – streetlight maintenance quarterly invoice			£48.00	£9.60	£57.60

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

December 2024			NET	VAT	TOTAL
SO – 02/12/24	NPC24/04/0064	Honorarium – picnic area gates	£110.25	£0.00	£110.25
FPO – 05/12/24	NPC24/05/0079	Staffing	£602.28	£0.00	£602.28
FPO – 05/12/24	NPC24/05/0079	HMRC - Staffing PAYE	£144.00	£0.00	£144.00
DD – 05/12/24	NPC24/05/0079	BT Broadband for Village Hall	£28.72	£5.74	£34.46
DD – 27/12/24	NPC24/05/0079	Npower – electricity for street lighting	£93.55	£4.68	£98.23
SO – 30/11/24	NPC24/04/0064	Honorarium – grass cutting	£33.07	£0.00	£33.07
January 2025			NET	VAT	TOTAL
SO – 02/01/25	NPC24/04/0064	Honorarium – picnic area gates	£110.25	£0.00	£110.25
FPO – 06/01/25	NPC24/05/0079	Staffing	£589.11	£0.00	£589.11
FPO – 06/01/25	NPC24/05/0079	HMRC - Staffing PAYE	£140.80	£0.00	£140.80
DD – 03/01/25	NPC24/05/0079	BT Broadband for Village Hall	£28.72	£5.74	£34.46
DD – 25/01/25	NPC24/05/0079	Npower – electricity for street lighting	£97.12	£4.86	£101.98
SO – 28/01/25	NPC24/04/0064	Honorarium – grass cutting	£33.07	£0.00	£33.07

V. Receipts were noted as follows:

December 2024 / January 2025		
FPI – 02/12/24	VHC – Village Hall Internet Provision 01/04/24 to 31/03/25	£252.58
FPI - 15/01/25	HMRC VAT form 126 refund (Q3)	£252.70

23 NPC25/01/0023 The meeting concluded at 8:25pm. Next meeting – 27th February 2025 at 7.30pm, Newton Memorial Hall