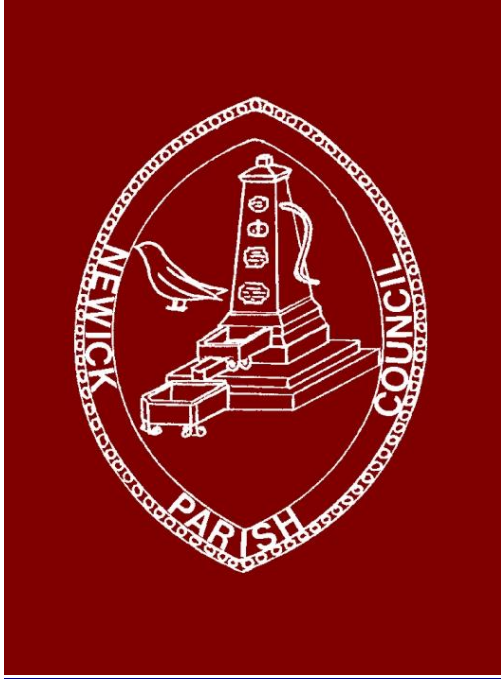


CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: YEAR TO APRIL 2017



The Parish Council

At the beginning of the council year in May we were an elected body of eleven councillors. Sadly, owing to ill health, Ross Houghton resigned in May 2016 and passed away in November. He was hard working and kept a watchful eye over the condition of our lovely village Green. Ross kept us on track and all meetings were moved 'swiftly on' when he was present! Rich Allum was co-opted to fill the vacancy.

In October

, Cris Allen left the Council when he moved to Eastbourne. We all miss his quiet reflectiveness. He had been a councillor for 6 years and helped steer the Neighbourhood Plan through, as well as numerous council policies. We can't thank him enough for the incredible number of hours he dedicated to restoring and painting ALL our village benches.

Sadly, at the November meeting of the Parish Council and as a result of the Secretary of State's decision on the Mitchelswood Farm Planning Appeal, six councillors resigned. The Council remained quorate and continued with parish business with the help and guidance of our Clerk, Sue Berry.

We are now back up to full strength (see below), having co-opted five new members in January and a further two at the March meeting. We are confident that we can now move forward to meet the challenges ahead.

Your Parish Councillors

Chris Armitage
Guy Clothier
Mario Halsey
Ben Horsfall
Jed Jones
Iain Nesbitt
Jean Sheppard (Vice Chairman)
Jenny Smerdon (Chairman)
Joe White
Cathy Wickens
Ken Wrench

Parish Council Precept

The work of the Parish Council is funded largely by a contribution from the Council Tax paid by parishioners to Lewes District Council. This is known as the precept. In 2016/17 the precept received amounted to £52,849 which worked out at £49.36 per annum for a Band D property.

School Crossing Patrol

A wonderful response from the village community meant we were able to get this started before the end of the 2016 Summer Term. Eleven volunteers embarked on some training and have been making a real difference to the safety of pupils of Newick Primary School and their parents.

The volunteer group, fondly named by the pupils as 'The Lollipop Gang', are doing an amazing job. In Newick we certainly do not have the antisocial parking issues that some villages experience and since starting the patrol we have noticed a reduction in speed and volume of traffic.

Allotments

It has taken a year, but the new site at Cornwells Bank is ready and some thirty plot holders are about to start digging their way to fitness as they prepare to plant for the season.

Thanks to landowners Mr and Mrs Fuller the Parish Council has been able to lease over an acre of gentle sloping, south facing land which will enable Newick residents to become allotment and leisure gardeners. The Cricketfield site with smaller plots will continue.

Centenary Stone

The Newick Branch of the Royal British Legion unveiled the Centenary Stone on The Green at a ceremony on Friday, 27th May, dedicating it to the servicemen of Newick who fell in both World Wars and other conflicts. It was a truly memorable and wonderful occasion.

Newick Food Fair

The first Newick Food Fair proved to be a huge success. The stall holders were thrilled to be asked and some sold more produce at Newick than at the South of England Show. It was great to see the Village Green being used in this way. Thanks are due to Alex Harrison, Emily Rae and members of Newick Rugby who, with help from the Council, organised the event so brilliantly.

The Street Organ organised by the Village Society enhanced the atmosphere of the Fair.

Newick Festival and Scarecrow Trail

What a wonderful weekend it turned out to be, with flags flying high, perfect weather and of course The Scarecrows!

Highlights of the Saturday included the stunning garden of Jean and Peter Vincent, Rootz guided walk to the Glass houses, the continuous game of football, bowls and tennis taster sessions and the WONDERFUL SCARECROWS which never cease to disappoint!

Sunday's Fun Day had a real community feel about it. We had a French Cafe, Songs of Praise and a History Walk to The Green. Friends and families enjoyed their picnics on the playing fields and during the afternoon children had fun, being creative and sporty. Later, the Church concert under the direction of Andrew Rees provided emotional and uplifting performances from our young people. It all finished with a Ceilidh and supper. We hope our French guests from Itteville took home happy memories of their weekend in Newick.

A really BIG THANK YOU to all the local clubs, societies and organisations, who together with local businesses and individuals, came together and worked so hard to make it a festival to remember.

Village Appearance

Sandra, our handy person continues to keep our village looking good. We held our first 'Twritten Tidy Day' on 1st April and the Council would like to thank those who came along to help clear litter and cut back the sidings.

Fingerposts

Match funding from ESCC has been agreed for two of the three fingerposts the council has identified as needing to be replaced and this

work will be done in the next few weeks. The post supporting the village sign on the green will be replaced too. The cyclical programme for maintaining fingerposts and benches will ensure that all benches and fingerposts are reviewed on a regular basis.

New signs have been installed at all the entrances to the playing fields and a new dog and general waste bin for the lower entrance near Church Road has been ordered.

We continue to work with East Sussex County Council, through our Strengthening Local Relationships meetings, with regard to road safety and highways work.

Parish Office

The office is now at the Community Centre and it is open to visitors on Mondays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 12:00 a.m. If you have any queries regarding village matters then do pop in during those times to speak to the Clerk.

Parish Website (Newick.net)

Towards the end of last year we launched a new website. As well as getting a refreshed look, we have also consolidated what was two websites into one. We hope that this makes it easier to find the information you need on the business of the council. Our intention is that this website will continually evolve as more content becomes needed, and we welcome your feedback in this process.

Neighbourhood Watch

As most people know, Newick lost its PCSO, Sally-Ann Reed, last July. We now have no-one we can contact direct if we need to report concerns or crime in the village. We now have to ring 101 or send an email to Sussex Police. The response is usually sympathetic but there's often

nothing that they can do except give you a crime number. For real emergencies people should still ring 999.

Because of this the local Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators often only hear of incidents from people who contact them direct.

There have been a few burglaries in the village. Thieves seem to be looking mainly for jewellery or money and entry is often gained by breaking glass doors or windows or forcing locks at the rear of properties. Police advise that residents should be careful what they put on social media and never advertise the fact that they are away.

We still have the usual door to door salesmen calling round. Unfortunately, they also know that "No Cold Calling" signs are not legally enforceable.

People offering to tarmac or repave driveways come round occasionally. If you want this kind of work done make sure you get everything in writing, especially the price, before they start work.

Always make sure you lock vehicles, even if you're only leaving them for a while. Opportunist thieves have stolen wallets, phones and photographic equipment from vehicles, some parked in driveways.

Apart from this, Newick still seems to be a fairly safe place to live.

Community Speed Watch

No doubt many of you will have seen the Community Speed Watch volunteers in their high-vis vests with the speed camera, normally on the village Green where the highest number of speeding motorists are caught. The team tries to operate at least once a week, weather permitting. Every Speed Watch site has to be vetted and approved by the

Police, but the team can also operate on the Newick Hill junction and on Allington Road at junctions with The Ridings and South Rough.

The prime objective is to persuade traffic to drive at or below the speed limit through our village and their mere presence is normally enough to slow most drivers down. Having said that, every time they operate they always catch vehicles driving at more than 40mph and it is surprising how few drivers bother to slow down when they see them.

Every vehicle caught driving in excess of 35mph is reported via DVLA to Sussex police and everyone caught receives at least a warning letter and reprimand from the police. It is known some local residents have been caught speeding and are now driving very carefully when they see the team in action.

If you would like to join the group and help to try and slow down traffic through our village, please look at this website for more information (<https://www.communityspeedwatch.co.uk>) or email iain@nesbitt.eu and join them for a sample operation.

Neighbourhood Planning

The committee will continue to monitor the situation regarding national and local issues, legislation and emerging legislation together with relevant court proceedings and local developments as they affect Newick and report back.

Newick Hill Play Area

The play area to be provided as part of the new development in Newick Hill was under threat when developers, Thakeham Homes, applied to reduce the amount of section 106 contributions because

the acquisition of the SANGS site had been very costly.

With help from District Councillor, Jim Sheppard, the Council managed to secure the under-fives play area and has agreed a design for it. This has now been passed by Lewes District Council and agreed with the developers.

Post Office Update

For the last eighteen months, Cllr. Jean Sheppard on behalf of the Parish Council has been trying to help prevent the closure of the Post Office.

The main problem is the type of contract provided by Post Office Ltd. It requires whoever takes it on to run a business alongside the Post Office and the Post Office would have to be open the same hours as the business.

Several people have expressed an interest but all found that it would not be financially viable.

However, recently we have been contacted by Mr Alan Young who moved to Newick last year. He was, for many years, the Chief Officer of a Council for Voluntary Service in North East Scotland, supporting local community groups, charities and other "non profit" organisations in the area.

Mr Young believes that he may be able to help find a way of keeping the Post Office open for the community and has agreed to explain more about this at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Jenny Smerdon,
Chairman Newick Parish Council
19th April 2017