

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Newick Parish held
at 7.30 p.m. Wednesday, 17th April, 2019
at Newick Village Hall, Western Road, Newick.**

An audio recording was made of the meeting.

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman of Newick Parish Council, Cllr. Jenny Smerdon, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Lewes District and East Sussex County Councillor, Jim Sheppard, Parish Councillors Jean Sheppard, Ben Horsfall and Iain Nesbitt, and from Newick Badminton Club and Mrs Gordon-Wilson.

Approximately fifty parishioners attended the meeting including Newick Parish Councillors: Chris Armitage, Guy Clothier, Mario Halsey, Jenny Smerdon, Melanie Thew, Joe White, Cathy Wickens and Ken Wrench.

The Parish Council Clerk, Mrs. Sue Berry, was in attendance to take the minutes.

2. Approval of the Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held 18th April 2018

It was proposed (Ken Wrench), seconded (Melanie Thew) and agreed that the draft Minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th April 2018 should be approved as a true record of that meeting. Copies had been made available at the meeting and on the Newick parish website.

3. Presentation from Sussex Police Deputy Chief Constable, Jo Shiner, Sussex Police

DCC Jo Shiner introduced herself and explained that she had a background in policing rural areas and wanted to reassure those in rural communities that they were not forgotten. She explained that, whilst the more traditional types of crime such as theft and burglary were still happening, there had been a rise in crimes such as serious sexual offences, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and organised crime networks. This caused problems for police forces which had to decide how to prioritise their finite resources and how to respond to the many demands placed upon them. In its rural areas, Sussex Police dealt with thefts of vehicles, equipment and livestock, dog worrying, wildlife crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. DCC Shiner explained that the recent increase in the Sussex Police precept gave the force opportunities to significantly increase the number of officers, which was particularly valued by communities. She also acknowledged the value of information that could be obtained by Police Community Support Officers and said that efforts were being made to improve the 101 telephone contact service.

DCC Shiner answered questions from the audience on various subjects concerning Newick including drug dealing, Police Community Support Officers, antisocial behaviour, and dealing with mental health issues.

Inspector Ed Ripley, who was responsible for neighbourhood policing in Lewes District spoke later in the meeting.*

4. Presentation from Chiara Vagnarelli (Action in rural Sussex) on Good Neighbour Schemes

Chiara Vagnarelli gave a presentation on Good Neighbour Schemes that are being set up in villages like Newick with the support of Action in rural Sussex. There were eight schemes running in Lewes District all with a slightly different focus but all offered a friendly face and a helping hand to those in their community. The schemes provided a safety net for people who were isolated and lonely and helped to prevent them from developing mental health problems as a result. She outlined the support that AirS could offer such a scheme and asked anyone interested in setting one up to contact her for further information.

Chiara answered questions from the audience about insurance and funding for Good Neighbour Schemes.

*Inspector Ed Ripley gave an overview of his background in policing, specifically in rural areas. He said that he wanted to reassure the community that Sussex Police was still policing the rural areas despite recent changes and the fear that local knowledge was being lost. He said that all the officers in his team knew Newick, even though it had a lower crime rate than other parts of the District. The current issues being addressed included use of cannabis (believed to be for personal use rather than dealing), inhalation of CO2 from small cannisters (believed to be supplied by gang coming from outside the village), and speeding.

Inspector Ripley answered questions from the audience including where the money from speed camera fines goes to and how the police deal with antisocial behaviour (in the latter case this would be in partnership with the local authority). He also spoke about the Sussex Police Operation Blitz team which could be contacted to deal with incidents of antisocial behaviour on Friday and Saturday evenings and about the Lewes District Council Neighbourhood First Team.

Members of audience suggested that the Police could spend time speaking to school pupils (Insp. Ripley said that this was already happening) and congratulations were given for the way in which the Police dealt with issues on Bonfire Night at Newick.

5. Report from LDC and ESCC Councillor Jim Sheppard – Cllr. Jim Sheppard had sent apologies that he would not be able to attend the meeting, however, he had sent a written report on the activities of Lewes District Council and this was made available at the meeting and on the website. It was understood that Cllr. Sheppard was currently experiencing ill health and good wishes were extended to him during at this time.

6. Newick Parish Council – Chairman’s Report

Copies of the Parish Council Chairman’s report were circulated at the meeting. The Chairman’s Report covered items with which the Parish Council had been involved during the year including Parish Council finances, neighbourhood planning and planning updates, the opening of Reedens Meadows, problems of anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood watch, Remembrance Day 2018, Newick Festival and Food Fair 2018, the primary school crossing patrol, the Christmas tree on The Green, update of the Clubs and Societies leaflet, management of public spaces, joint working with East Sussex Highways, Community Infrastructure Levy, Newick Rootz, the newly appointed Parish Clerk and the parish website.

7. Reports from Newick Clubs and Societies

The following representatives of Newick Clubs and Societies gave reports on their club/society activities over the previous year:-

Chailey Repair Café

Mr McAlley spoke about his involvement with Chailey Repair Café, which operated from Chailey Village Hall on the second Saturday morning of every month. The Repair Café had 37 volunteers whose aim was to repair all kinds of broken items free of charge (although donations are welcomed). He reported that many items had already been repaired and that those attending the café included a large number of Newick residents.

Solo Friends

Mr Reekie spoke about a newly formed group for people living on their own who might otherwise be excluded from social activities. The group, which meets twice a month at a local café, has already enjoyed a number of social activities and many more are being planned.

Newick Village Hall & Newick Cinema

Mr Berry, treasurer of Newick Village Hall Management Committee, gave a report on the use of the hall over the past year and on the Committee’s plans to further upgrade the facilities. He thanked the hirers, the hall caretakers and the bookings secretary for helping to keep the hall going.

Mr Berry also spoke about Newick Cinema, a community initiative run by the Village Hall Management Committee with help from Newick Amateur Dramatic Society. He said that attendances were growing and that any profits were being put towards the upkeep of the hall.

Newick Table Tennis Club

Mr Mayes reported that Newick Table Tennis Club, which had been formed two years previously, now had between 12 and 15 players and was participating in the East Grinstead league. The Club had a few younger players and it was hoped to put on a second practice night each week specifically for youngsters.

Newick Twinning Association

Mr Wilson gave a presentation on the activities of Newick Twinning Association, reporting that the highlight of the previous year had been a visit from representatives of Newick's twin town, Itteville, in France. This had coincided with the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle which the French visitors had enjoyed watching on a big screen at King George V Playing Field.

St Mary's Church Pastoral Support

Mrs Bailey spoke on behalf of Rev'd Paul Mundy about the pastoral support work undertaken by volunteers from St Mary's Church. She said that there were a lot of people in Newick who needed help of some kind and that just a small amount of time could make a big difference to the lives of those people. She appealed for new volunteers to contact her if they had time and skills to offer.

Newick Rootz

Mr Mayes spoke about the work of Newick Rootz, a volunteer group which helped to maintain the public footpath network within Newick Parish. He said that Rootz now had approximately 40 enthusiastic volunteers who also undertook wildlife surveys at Newick Common and Reedens Meadows.

NEASSA

Mr Jackson introduced a new group called NEASSA which had been formed after the local branch of the British Legion was disbanded. The purpose of NEASSA is to offer a support network for current and former members of the armed forces and emergency services including the Coast Guard and Search and Rescue Services. They had resources at their disposal for counselling services, pastoral care and financial assistance and Mr Jackson asked to be made aware of anyone within the community who could benefit from this help.

Newick Food Fair – Marquee for volunteer organisations

Councillor Smerdon stated that there would be a marquee at the forthcoming Newick Food Fair for volunteer organisations to showcase their services.

Cllr Chris Armitage spoke about the fact that there would not be an election for Parish Councillors on 2nd May because there had been insufficient nominations. He said that although there are eleven seats on the Parish Council only four people had put themselves forward for election. These candidates had been elected unopposed and the Parish Council would be actively seeking further volunteers for co-option to the Council.

Cllr. Smerdon thanked all Councillors who had worked together to serve the community and wished them well. She also thanked the Clerk, who would be retiring from her post in a few months' time and presented her with a card, flowers and a voucher from current and former councillors.

8. Question and Answer Session

The following questions were asked during the question and answer session:-

- What is happening about the Post Office as this has not been mentioned? Cllr Smerdon said that Cllr. Jean Sheppard had worked tirelessly for over two years to try to get a Post Office facility back in the village and she was delighted to hear that a contract had recently been signed between the Post Office and the proprietors of Newick News for Post Office Local facility to be operated from within their shop.

- What are the reasons as to why only four people have stood for election as Parish Councillors this time? Cllr. Smerdon said that she did not know of any particular reason but that all those who had stood down had their own reasons for doing so.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for light refreshments.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

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