

Newington Parish Council
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
Held at George's Barn, Newington on Monday 8th January 2024

Present: Councillor John Neale (Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Golding (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Sarah Wright
Clerk Jean Gilham

01	Appologies: KCC Councillor Susan Carey DCC Councillor David Godfrey	
02	Declaration of Interest None	
03	Public Participation/Questions None	
04	Minutes of the Meeting held on November 13 th 2023 to be received, approved and signed by the Chairman Done	
05	Planning None	
06	Co-option of New Parish Councillor Mr B Laslett was the only local candidate who came forward to join the Parish Council when the recent vacancy was advertised. Councillor J Neale proposed that Mr Laslett join the council and this was seconded by Councillor S Wright. The Clerk will forward all relevant documents to the Monitoring Officer.	JG
07	Grounds Maintenance Contract Three tenders were sent out to local companies. All three tenders were received back with varying prices for the works laid out in the tenders. The councillors reviewed each tender on its merits as known. The contract was awarded to Envisage – proposed by J Neale seconded by S Wright with a majority vote. This contract will run for 3 years (ending in January 2027). The Clerk will inform Envisage, and the other companies and thank them for their tenders.	JG
08	Precept The Councillors discussed the amount of Precept to be applied for year 2024/25. There has been a rise in the cost of running the amenities which the Parish Council are responsible for. It was decided that there would need to be an increase to ensure that the council could meet its payments. The 2024/25 precept to be applied for will be £8864.00 which is an increase of £1404.00 on the previous year. This was proposed by S Wright seconded by B Laslett and voted by all present. The Clerk will inform the Chief Financial Services Officer on behalf of the committee.	JG
09	Financial Reports Unity Bank – the Clerk was able to inform the Councillors that she now has access to the bank.	

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	<p>Payments made since last meeting (as agreed) were discussed.</p> <p>HMRC – the Clerk was able to inform the Councillors that this matter is now closed.</p> <p>Ratify payments for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clerks Salary - Hugo Fox (Web Site) 	
10	Defibrillator – an email has been received which offer a Defibrillator which the Parish Council could obtain FOC. The Councillors discussed the various sites at which it could be stationed due to the need for a constant electrical supply. It was agreed that more information would be sought before an application could be made.	JG
11	Tree Planting – the list of trees agreed are Lime, Wild Cherry, Spindle and White Beam. B Laslett informed the Councillors that he had access to fruit trees if they would be suitable, these include – Apple, Pear and Cherry. K Golding will consult with the existing Grounds Maintenance contractor for his opinion, regarding size/maintenance etc	KG
12	Effects of the Road Works – there has been extensive damage to all the verges of The Street throughout the village caused by the tanker lorries who are having to use the road on a very regular basis. Councillor Golding gave a very detailed report to those present relating the reasons for this traffic e.g: sewage overflowing and the reasons this is happening, to his meetings with the representatives from Southern Water. Councillor Golding will put together a written report which can be kept on file to ensure that all the ground works relating to the roads and their verges can be put back in a good order, and will form the basis of a strongly worded letter which will be sent to Southern Water.	KG/JN/JG
13	Councillor S Wright requested that Policy and Procedures should now be reviewed starting with the next meeting and also the addition of AOB should be added to the agendas	JG
AOB	<p>Resignation of Parish Councillor – Kevin Golding gave his resignation to the committee effective immediately. Mr Golding has been a long-standing member of the Parish Council and as such well be extremely missed. Members present wished him every success in his new venture when he moves away from the area,</p> <p>The clerk will inform Paul Buttler who will start the process to find a replacement for Mr Golding.</p> <p>Reports were given from: -</p> <p>KCC Councillor Susan Carey (1) - attached</p> <p>DCC Councillor David Godfrey (2) – attached</p>	JG

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The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Date of next meeting: March 11th 2024 at 7pm

(1) Report for Parish Council 08 January 2024

This is an edited version of a recent review of 2023 by KCC Leader Roger Gough which I thought would make a better report than anything I could produce.

“There are significant challenges we as an authority, like many others across the country, are facing. We are not a council that has been reckless with its finances, far from it, and our sound decisions have given us the best possible chance to stave off what has been coming down the track at us. However, we are not immune to the impacts.

Increased costs and demands on our services have meant we have had to face some very hard budgetary decisions. In Kent we have specific issues, such as travel disruption at our ports, and the response to migration and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Despite what we shoulder, central government funding has fallen far short. There is no doubt that times are exceedingly tough.

We cannot focus only on survival but on continuing to change and innovate, while delivering good services to the people of Kent. Looking back on 2023, there have been some notable moments, some of which have seen us rising to support our residents through shock after shock, not least the cost-of-living crisis and helping people in the most difficult circumstances.

Our solid collaboration with the NHS has seen some excellent work on seasonal campaigns and the development of the Integrated Care Strategy. Our task in 2024 will be to start turning this into practical delivery across our county and our communities.

RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) entered the common vernacular in 2023. Our swift action following the change of national rules, helped in no small part by the rapid flexibility of our school community, kept disruption to a minimum.

We are a key partner in the Kent Resilience Forum, responding to the pressures on our extensive and much-travelled road network with Kent Police, National Highways and others. Our highways and other staff respond to emergencies on our own road network in all weathers.

We have an exceptional record in responding to the diverse issues of asylum, migration and resettlement, including responding (across many parts of our organisation) to the referral of more than 2,000 unaccompanied asylum-seeking

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children into our service in the last year, and working with district and borough colleagues in response to the requirement to empty the Afghan bridging hotels in the late summer.

We are committed to the environment, balancing everything we consider with nature's voice and its unrivalled positive impact on health and wellbeing, and preserving the enduring appeal of the Garden of England. I look forward to taking forward our initiatives, such as Making Space for Nature, in 2024.

These could be viewed as the 'big ticket items' and are only a small selection of the services that KCC provides. I am incredibly proud that some of the greatest effects of our work can be felt in the quiet, often unseen, interactions full of kindness, compassion and thoughtfulness from across all of our teams.

Roger Gough, Leader, Kent County Council"

I send my best wishes to you and the parish for the year ahead.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council

(2) From District Councillor David Godfrey

Happy New Year 2024,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Christmas break despite the rain: I was fortunate enough to spend Christmas with my youngest daughter and her family in Texas where the weather was much kinder.

Work has continued on the 24/25 budget for which will be voted on by the full Council on 18th February 2024. Inflationary pressures have put all Councils under financial pressure which will require increases to Council tax and fees broadly in line with inflation plus some possible cuts to non-statutory services. Whilst I accept and support the need for some increases, I am personally opposed to proposals to cut back on street cleansing and reduction in waste bins around the district as I feel these will ultimately lead to additional costs in dealing with fly tipping and a general deterioration on the appearance of the district.

I was further disappointed in the Council's decision not to support a Conservative Motion to support the case for possible installation of Small Modular Reactors or Advanced modular Reactors at Dungeness when they become available. The two large scale nuclear power stations at Dungeness have served the Country well in providing clean sustainable electricity for more than 50 years and benefited the local economy to the tune of some £30 million pounds per annum. The controlling

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coalition of the council consider that additional wind farms and fields of Solar Pannels across the District to be preferable. My Conservatives colleagues and I consider this to be a misguided decision which is a gross disservice to the residents of Marsh in particular as well as the whole District and the Country in terms of security of supply.

On brighter note for the Marsh A skills event aimed at encouraging both students and other Marsh residents to seek training and career opportunities is making a welcome return.

The third annual Romney Marsh Inspires will take place at The Marsh Academy (TN28 8BB) –on Tuesday 26 March between 10am and 4.15pm.

Cllr David Godfrey

North Downs East