

Newchurch Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting 2024-5 held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in-person and in-public at The Community Room, Newchurch Village Hall, Romney Marsh, TN29 0DP. At 7.30 pm the Chairman Alison Youd welcomed all present and opened the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

| Unique Minute Number  | Agenda Heading   | Record  | Action by whom and within what timescale  |
|---|--|---|---|
| 2024-5-1  | Persons Present  | <u>Councillors</u> Alison Youd, Antony Youd, Deborah Woollard, Colin Woollard, Tony Goode; 4 members of the public, <u>Officer</u> , Mr Michael Sharpe (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer/RFO to Newchurch Parish Council/ NPC) The meeting was quorate, with 5 Parish Councillors.   |   |
| 2024-5-2  | Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2024/25             | As current Chairman, Alison Youd conducted the election of her successor. One nomination, for Colin Woollard, was received, proposer Antony Youd, seconded Alison Youd, elected unanimously. Tony Goode was proposed as Vice Chairman by Alison Youd, seconded Deborah Woollard, elected unanimously. Both signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms in the statutory wording immediately, in the presence of the Clerk.   | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to notify relevant bodies as convenient, and keep Declarations on file. |
| 2024-5-3  | Apologies  | Colin Woollard took the Chair, and the Council noted apologies from invited speakers Kent County Councillor Tony Hills, Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC) Cllrs Tony Cooper and Tony Hills (the latter 'double-hatted'), and Police Constable Steve Putland. Also apologising was a member of the public.  |   |
| 2024-5-4  | Declarations of Interest                                   | The Chairman reminded all Parish Councillors to declare any conflicts of interest in the business before them. No declarations were made.   |   |
| 2024-5-5  | Approval of minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting | The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 8th April 2024 were examined, discussed and unanimously APPROVED. Proposed Antony Youd, seconded Deborah Woollard. The Clerk placed the signed copy in the Minutes Book straightway.   | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to update website by 28 <sup>th</sup> May.                              |
| 2024-5-6  | Matters Arising  | None.   |   |
| At this point one more member of the public walked in and joined the meeting. |  |   |   |
| 2024-5-7  | Invited speakers and public participation                  | An email from District Cllr Tony Cooper was read to the meeting. This encouraged the Parish Council to apply for a Member Ward Grant towards playground maintenance and refurbishment, from the application opening date of 20 <sup>th</sup> May. An apology email but without attached reports had been received from Cllr Tony Hills (KCC and FHDC). During the public interval, queries were raised on the mode of commemoration for the D-Day 80 occasion; the prevalence of potholes within the parish; and the liability for vehicle damage caused by road use accepted on a previous basis by KCC as the Highways Authority. |   |
| 2024-5-8  | Street lighting  | Councillors were notified by a resident that a street lamp had been removed physically by a FHDC contractor from the highway outside his property on the southern approach to the village. On notifying this as a fault on the online Kent Highways Portal, reference number 804926, the Parish Council received a reply from FHDC Engineers: " <i>This asset</i>   |   |

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| 2024-5-8<br>(continued) | Street lighting (ctd)                        | <i>was removed from the upgrade programme as not only does it not appear on any FHDC inventory but the location meant it was only illuminating a small area with no other assets nearby. There was no power supply to the asset and this means it was not in operation for some time, probably well over a year. "Councillors considered this an unsatisfactory response for a number of reasons, and RESOLVED after due debate to press for the reinstatement of this street lighting.</i>  | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to correspond further with Kent Highways and FHDC Engineers, copying in Cllrs Hills and Cooper, by 28 <sup>th</sup> May.   |
| 2024-5-9                | Review of Council Policies                   | As required in NPC Standing Orders, the Parish Council reviewed the operation of NPC policies and found them to be satisfactory.<br>Mr Sharpe notified Councillors of a recent update to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Financial Regulations, the 18 pages of which he is currently poring over, to adapt these to NPC's needs in Financial Year (FY) 24/25 and beyond. No NPC Committees were created. Councillors RESOLVED to attend the Romney Marsh Forum (RMF) depending on personal availability.  | <u>ACTION Clerk/RFO</u> to read and inwardly digest 'Mod Fin Regs' document, and bring proposals for any changes to September meeting.   |
| 2024-5-10               | Jubilee Field Playground remedial actions    | Councillors shared more concerns about minor hazards on the timber edging to the central area of the playground, as well as the resurgence of weeds throughout. They thanked Cllrs Youd and Youd for taping off the affected area, and reviewed the list of urgent remedial works which the local preferred contractor is in a position to complete within the month of June. They RESOLVED to tackle priority items first, in advance of the July playground inspection, the expenditure for this inspection (around £125) was authorized. Further suggestions were mooted about funding for phase 2 refurbishments, organising volunteer tasks, and passing maintenance responsibility to a separate Trust which might seek access to extra funding. | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to finalise specification for minor works with contractor, and expedite within June.<br><u>ACTION Clerk</u> to arrange safety inspection through preferred advisor, and share report with councillors by email, by end July. |
| 2024-5-11               | D-Day 80 commemoration                       | The final to-do list for 6 <sup>th</sup> June was shared by Cllr Alison Youd, who asked for volunteer help with tasks – Cllrs D Woollard and Antony Youd agreed to do most of these, including serving of drinks at the Spinney and lighting of small candle-lights. Others are prepared to help with a sound system and bell-ringing in the church.   | <u>ACTION Alison Youd</u> to continue to help organise the event, and submit financial claims to the RFO as appropriate.   |
| 2024-5-12               | Renewal of Parish Council Insurances 2024-25 | Mr Sharpe reported that of the 3 specialist Local Councils brokers who had offered quotes, the current provider Clear Councils (previously BHIB) was lowest at £359.87, although this exceeded the budgeted figure of £320 (last year's payment was £290.80). After due debate Councillors RESOLVED to renew the policy from 1 <sup>st</sup> June with Clear Councils.   | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to renew policy, print relevant Certificates and administer, in time for 1 <sup>st</sup> June.   |
| 2024-5-13               | FINANCIAL REPORT                             | Mr Sharpe as RFO informed Councillors that the monies at bank on 13th May totalled £7,054.64, according to the online statements. The Bank reconciliation against the NPC accounting records was duly signed.  | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to post cheque and update Receipts & Payments  |

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| 2024-5-13 (ctd)      | FINANCIAL REPORT (ctd)  | A cheque for insurance renewal (Item 12 above) was signed: Clear Councils <b>£359.87 (no VAT)</b><br>Councillors also ratified the payment of 2 cheques in between meetings under NPC Financial Regulation 6 (6): Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), Dover <i>Yearly subscription £155.15 +VAT £31.03 = £186.18</i><br>Newton Newton Flag & Banners Makers Ltd, Skegness <i>D-Day 80 Flag for The Spinney £24 +VAT £4.80 = £28.80</i><br><b>3 cheques totalling £574.85</b>  | spreadsheet by 16 <sup>th</sup> May.   |
| 2024-5-14            | Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process                              | As Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), Mr Sharpe reported that the Internal Auditor had completed his remote and telephone audit the previous week. Councillors viewed the completed and printed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 from Mulberrys. Mr Sharpe as RFO then presented the signed Accounting Statements 2023/24 for approval. After due debate, Councillors then RESOLVED to approve and agree the Section 1 Annual Governance Statement, which the Chairman signed with the appropriate countersignature from the Clerk; and the Section 2 Accounting Statements. Finally the Council considered the Receipts and Payments figures for FY23/24, both under £25,000, and RESOLVED to consider itself exempt from an external 'limited assurance review' having met all of the relevant conditions. The RFO and Chairman duly signed the exemption certificate. | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to scan and email Exemption Certificate to external auditors Mazars by 17 <sup>th</sup> May.<br><u>ACTION Clerk</u> to organise publication on website and Notice Board of AGAR documents and Notice of Public Rights. |
| 2024-5-15            | Declaration of a casual vacancy on resignation of two Councillors & succession planning | The Chairman welcomed 2 members of the public to the meeting who had indicated an interest in standing for the Parish Council. The Chairman received the resignations in writing of Deborah Woollard and Antony Youd, and the Council DECLARED these two casual vacancies, where the statutory legal electoral process is to be followed, conducted by Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC). Sitting Councillors extended their thanks for all which the 2 retirees had contributed to the Parish Council, and wished them well. A general discussion of succession planning for Councillors and Clerk / RFO over the next 2 years then took place.  | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to notify casual vacancies to FHDC Elections by 15 <sup>th</sup> May and arrange for display of Notices of Vacancy on website and Notice Board without delay.  |
| 2024-5-16            | Date, time and place of future NPC Meetings   | The Council RESOLVED to hold the next Ordinary meeting on Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June at The Old Wool Store, and then follow the established pattern of Monday meetings up until May 2025.   | <u>ACTION Clerk</u> to prepare and distribute agenda by Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> May.<br><u>ACTION Clerk</u> to post dates on website, by 28 <sup>th</sup> May.  |

The Chairman Colin Woollard thanked all those present for their contributions, and declared the Parish Council meeting to be closed at 8.58 pm. END.