

NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in ST PETER'S CHURCH on TUESDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2023 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs T Gethin (TG) Vice Chairman, Mr A Garman (AG), Mrs N Holland (NH) and Mrs V Robertson (VR)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L Dobson, Clerk and 4 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Councillor D Wheeler and accepted. County Councillor Mr M Hill and Borough Councillor K Walder also sent apologies.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. **To consider and approve** the minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2022. The minutes, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true record of the meeting. With one editorial change (*deletion of final highlighted sentence at point 10, highways*) the minutes were signed.

4. **Matters arising** from the minutes/ action points from 7 November 2022:

- **Outstanding contribution from Ashford Borough Council for grass cutting** – The Clerk reported that Cllr Kate Walder (ABC) had spoken to James Laidlaw who had suggested the invoice will be paid at the end of the financial year when the work is complete. As the work is already complete the Clerk will follow up for payment as soon as possible. **ACTION: Clerk.**
- **Newenden Bridge** – Cllr Robertson reported that there has been no further progress.
- **Flooding and drain clearance** – Cllr Robertson reported that there has been no further progress.
- **Road salt** – delivered 11th November.

5. **Verbal reports / updates** from Council members and the Clerk (if required).

Councillor Gethin reported that the PC had just received an update from the Selmes Trust regarding the children's playground. The Selmes Trust has agreed to renew the lease for another 20 years at a ground rent of £50 per year. There is one stipulation, following a safety concern raised by the ROSPA inspection, the Selmes Trust suggest the current entrance to Lossenham Lane is closed and the other entrance into the field becomes the only entrance and is gated to prevent dogs in the play area. The Trust also agrees to the hedge being lowered as a safeguarding measure. The Trust hopes to get the lease to the PC shortly but had sent some questions about the potential inclusion of adult exercise equipment. Cllr Holland explained that the lease needs to be in place before grant funding for new play equipment can be sourced.

There was some discussion as to who should pay any costs associated with re-writing the lease and the PC concluded that for the benefit of all parties, the previous lease should simply be re-drawn with the new stipulation. To avoid additional legal costs Cllr Holland offered to do this. Councillors also raised concerns about recent flooding in the field where a new gate might go so positioning would need careful consideration.

ACTION: Cllr Holland to respond to the Selmes Trust's questions about potential adult exercise equipment and agree the best way forward to get the lease re-drawn as quickly and cost effectively as possible.

Councillor Holland reported that the trees discussed at the November meeting of the Parish Council had now been pollarded as requested.

Residents were reminded that the Parish Council is hosting a Christmas evening for all on 23rd December and anyone who wanted to attend should email Tavia@Newenden-PC.gov.uk by the 15th of December to allow food to be ordered. Around 50 people have booked to date.

6. Accounts

The Clerk outlined the financial statement to 5th December. Receipts and payments up to the end of November 2023 were approved.

Payment	VAT £	Total £
Outgoing clerk salary arrears		128.31
Clerk salary		314.60
Reimbursement for SLCC clerk training	24.00	144.00

7. **Budget setting and Precept for 2024-25** – all Councillors were in receipt of a draft budget. Following discussion this was agreed as proposed by Cllr Gethin and seconded by Cllr Robertson. Based on previous years expenditure and recent admin increases, the budget required for the 2024-25 financial year is £9256. Council therefore unanimously agreed to set the Precept for 24-25 at £10,000, unchanged from 23-24. This was proposed by Cllr Gethin and seconded by Cllr Robertson.

8. **Planning** - No new applications had been received.

Planning permission granted: PA/2023/1905 Upway, Rye Road
PA/2023/1736 2 Church Cottages, Rye Road

9. **Matters for consideration** as an agenda item for the next meeting. The Clerk requested dates for meetings in 2024 are discussed and agreed at the next meeting. **ACTION: Clerk to propose dates for the next agenda.**

10. **Public Questions** – one member of the public asked that when the new village hall is finished the PC has an agenda item to consider contributing to the hall's insurance costs. Council agreed to consider when the time comes.

11. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 6th February 2024 commencing 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.07pm.

Chairman -----

Date -----