NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING of NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL held on FRIDAY 23 MAY 2025 in St Peter's church

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs V Robertson (VR) Chairman, Ms. G. Dalton (GD), Mr J Turnbull (JT) and Mr D Holman (DH)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L Dobson (LD, Clerk), 5 members of the public

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Welcome from VR (vice Chair) who opened the meeting and reminded all to turn off phones.

1. **Election of a chairman for the ensuing year** *and to receive his/her declaration of acceptance of office.* DH nominated VR, GD seconded, all in favour. VR accepted and signed acceptance of office.

2. **Election of a vice-chairman for the ensuing year** *and to receive his/her declaration of acceptance of office*. JT nominated GD, VR seconded, all in favour. VR accepted and signed acceptance of office.

3. **Apologies for absence.** Kent County Councillor Wayne Chapman had sent apologies.

4. **Declarations of interest whether personal or personal/pecuniary regarding matters on the agenda.** Members were reminded that they should review their current declared interests displayed on Ashford Borough Council's website and let the Parish Clerk know if there are any changes to what has been declared (Localism Act 2011).

5. **Allocation of responsibilities** *between councillors and appointment of any other Committee that the Council agrees should be constituted for the coming year*. The following responsibilities were agreed:

    a) Planning – DH / GD
    b) Highways – VR / GD
    c) Playground - JT
    d) Finance / bank transactions – VR / GD working with the Clerk
    e) Website, social media and communications – Clerk (website) / VR (Facebook)
    f) Employment sub-committee - VR
    g) Safeguarding officer - DH
    h) Environment - JT
    i) Resilience lead - DH

6. **Membership of External Bodies**
    a) *National Association of Local councils and Kent Association of Local Councils. £186.08 subscription.* All agree to renew for another year.
    b) *To choose a representative to attend area KALC meetings as required by inviting nominations from councillors / voting on a representative*. After discussion it was agreed Cllrs agreed to attend on a rota. Share on a rota. First meeting on 28th May VR will attend. **ACTION:** Clerk to ask for dates for rest of year.

7. **Annual review and adoption of:**
    a) *Standing Orders* – having reviewed Cllrs agreed to sign off.
    b) *Financial Regulations* – having reviewed Cllrs agreed to sign off.
    c) *Code of Conduct* – having reviewed Cllrs agreed to sign off. KALC training in Appledore 10th June – it was agreed VR and DH would attend.

d) *Asset Register* – the draft asset register was discussed and updated based on whereabouts of items. Councillors discussed the merits of possibly getting a second defibrillator and more traffic cones. Agreed to revisit at a later date.

8. **To agree a schedule to adopt and review policy documents over the forthcoming year.** A schedule was agreed (see Annex). Cllrs also requested a record be kept detailing when each document was last reviewed.

9. **To review and agree the schedule for meeting dates in the forthcoming council year.** All meeting dates agreed (see Annex) – **ACTION:** clerk to share with church bookings, Selmes Trust and place on website.

Meeting finished 7.50pm

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Commencement of ordinary PC meeting

10. **Public Questions** – the meeting was paused to allow members of the public to address or ask questions to the Parish Council in respect of any item on the agenda.

1. A resident asked if there was any news on the bridge? VR responded. No, but more holes have appeared. And the bridge is so covered in mud that it is hard for pedestrians to cross without going into the road. Members of the public were encouraged to report issues too.
2. A resident asked if footpaths come under highways – the footpath to the corner of Copthall is lethal, who is responsible? KCC – **ACTION:** VR to find out who responsible and pass on details.

11. **To consider and approve** *the minutes of the meeting on 4th March 2025*. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

12. **Matters arising** from the minutes/ action points from 4th March 2025 (*not covered elsewhere on agenda)*
    - List of KCC / ABC contact emails – action outstanding, also a regular update for the parish magazine was requested. **ACTION:** Clerk
    - Resilience plan – DH outlined why a plan is needed. Looking for volunteers with equipment and also need to know of any vulnerable residents. PC will send a letter round to residents. **ACTION**: DH and Clerk.
    - Hedgerows and trees – there has been no response to the letter sent to Mr Cister, Cllrs suggested it be re-sent **– ACTION:** Clerk.
      Selmes Trust hedges – Clerk to write and ask ST to consider lowering hedge to height of the other one and ask again about the hawthorns plan. GD thanked residents who have recently cut back their hedges on the main road.
      A resident mentioned an ash tree on Rye Road suffering from Ash die back – think its KCC owned. **ACTION**: Write to KCC re Ash.

13. **Verbal reports / progress updates** from Council members.

    i. **Highways –** VR and GD summarised progress. HIP is ongoing, liaising with Kieran Doble (KCC) to prioritise what gets done this financial year. PC will send out a consultation letter about 20MPH in Lossenham lane. **ACTION:** VR and GD
    ii. **Drains** – DH still keen for a DIP plan. **ACTION**: DH to ask new KCC if something village should be dealing with.

iii. **Playground**

Play area now almost complete. PC will be putting a new gate in for Scott to access for grass cutting. Selmes Trust offered a galvanised gate. **ACTION:** JT to check if suitable.

a. To consider funding and maintenance of a pedestrian path adjacent to play area hedge. Cllrs discussed the offer from the Selmes Trust to put in a path. 4/4 councillors voted against so won't go ahead. **ACTION:** Clerk to reply to ST offer.
b. To consider maintenance schedule and Playdale inspection package for new equipment. Cllrs discussed and agreed to have the ROSPA inspection in July as independent of the new equipment so can provide an objective starting position. **ACTION:** Clerk to contact Playdale to find out what's involved in the operational inspection and annual inspection.

14. **Annual Return: Accounting and Governance Statement** - *To receive and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year ending 31 March 2024.* The Clerk explained the process and went through each section of the form and next steps.

    a) Section 1 of the AGAR – Cllrs reviewed and approved.
    b) Section 2 of the AGAR – Cllrs reviewed and approved.
    c) Notice of elector's rights – It was agreed to set commencement date for exercise of Public Rights as 3rd June, finishing on 14th July.
    d) Internal auditors report – there were no comments to note.

15. **Finance.**
    a) Authorisation of accounts – *to approve payments and note receipts since 25th February*. All payments and receipts noted / approved.
    b) *To consider community grant application for £500 for the Newenden Fun Day organisers.* Due to a conflict of interest (being a member of the organising committee) DH sat out of the discussion. Councillors discussed the application and agreed the fun day will support a future community amenity and is also a socialising event for the village. Grant will cover bouncy castle and BBQ subsidy for residents. Cllrs asked if local businesses have been involved in the planning – both pub and Nibbles have been approached regarding catering. Agreed, 3 in favour, 1 abstention.
    c) Vision ICT renewal – Cllrs agreed to pay £78 for the .gov.uk domain until May 2027.
    d) Gate – Cllrs agreed to spend some of the remaining playground grant money on a gate if the one the Selmes Trust has offered isn't suitable.

16. **Planning** – *to consider any planning applications received from Ashford Borough Council and any other planning matters.* The following recent applications were mentioned but none required discussion as the closing date for each had passed.
    a) Rother valley bungalow
    b) Lossenham farm – change of office
    c) Farm shop – Hexden channel

17. **Matters for consideration** *as an agenda item for the next meeting.*
    ABC community awards. Fun day.

18. **Date of next meeting**:
    15th July 7pm.

Meeting closed 9.15pm

Signed: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Chairman

Annex

Newenden Parish Council

Meeting schedule 2025-26

All meetings will be held in St Peters Church, at 7pm *(unless otherwise stated)*

23 May 2025

15 July 2025

16 September 2025

11 November 2025

13 January 2026

10 March 2026

12 May 2026

Public welcome. For further details, please telephone Lauren Dobson, Clerk to the Parish Council, on 01797 260364

Agendas will be published on the village noticeboard and the website (www.newendenparishcouncil.org.uk) at least 3 full days before each meeting.

There will be time for public questions and comments at the start of each meeting.

The email address for Newenden Parish Council is:

Enquiries@Newenden-PC.gov.uk

NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

SCHEDULE OF POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEWS 2025-26

Month of Meeting	Council business	Policy documents to review / adopt
May	• Election of Chairman / vice Chair • Allocation of responsibilities and agree meeting dates for year • Internal auditors report and annual assurance review	• Standing Orders • Financial Regulations • Code of Conduct • Membership of external bodies • Asset Register
July	• Public inspection of accounts • 1/4ly budget review (Q1) and financial statement	• Data protection • Privacy policy • FOI policy • Retention Policy • Media / press policy
September	• Publish audited AGAR and notice of completion • Annual inspection of playground report	• Insurance cover • Risk management – review register
November	• 1/4ly budget review (Q2) and financial statement • Agree 26-27 draft budget ahead of precept setting	• Grants protocol • Accessibility statement
January	• 1/4ly budget review (Q3) and financial statement • Precept setting	• Resilience plan • Complaints procedure
March	Prepare for year end – final quarter budget review	• Safeguarding policy • Health & Safety