

NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL held on TUESDAY 10th March 2026 7pm in St Peter's church.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs V Robertson (VR, Chairman), Mr D Holman (DH, Vice Chairman), Mr J Turnbull (JT) and Mr T Moody (TM)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ashford Borough Councillor Mr Guy Pullen, Mrs L Dobson (Clerk), PC D Laker and 10 members of the public.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence** – apologies had been received from Cllr Dave Wheeler who is unwell.
2. **Reports from elected representatives** – Cllr Guy Pullen, Ashford Borough Council committed to support the Newenden Village Hall project in any way he can and is open and willing to work with anybody and everybody to get the village hall finished. He also reported Tenterden Town hall will be finished this summer after lots of issues found during the building. Kent County Councillor (KCC) Wayne Chapman had sent a report (available on the PC website).
3. **Public Time** –to allow members of the public to address or ask questions to the Parish Council in respect of any item on this agenda (maximum 10 mins).

A member of the public voiced considerable concern regarding the lack of support the village appears to be getting from Kent County Council (KCC) for pedestrians trying to cross the bridge. There is very little time between traffic phases to get over safely. Pedestrians can't be seen over the hump – pedestrians aren't being prioritised and KCC need to step up and look after residents safety. The resident stated they would support any action the PC takes to try and improve the situation and suggested a consultation with all villagers might be helpful. Cllr Pullen voiced his support but is unable to take forward as KCC not ABC is responsible for highways. Another resident suggested getting Northiam to work with Newenden to try and get some movement. DH suggested a meeting with KCC to discuss the pedestrian issue only. Another resident pointed out that the railway barriers close for longer than 90s without issue. A consultation during the summer months when the population of the village triples would be sensible.

Action: Clerk to approach Cllr Chapman KCC to raise the pedestrian issue and seek a meeting to discuss. Resident consultation to be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

PC Laker reported catapult issues in Rolvenden and Tenterden have continued however youths aged 14-18 have now been identified. Residents are encouraged to call in any issues. Operation Galileo (hare coursing) is active and residents should report any issues to the hotline. PC Laker commended the PC for its plans to re-start speed watch in Newenden.

4. **Councillor vacancy** – to consider applications for co-option. Mr Tim Moody introduced himself. He is a retired police officer, has lived and worked in the village for the last 3 years and is very committed to doing what he can for the community. Cllr Robertson proposed and Cllr Turnbull seconded Mr Moody be co-opted. With a vote of 3:0 in favour the motion was carried. Mr Moody signed a declaration of acceptance of office and joined the Council for the rest of the meeting.
5. **Declarations of Interest** – there were no declarations of interest.
6. **Election of a Vice Chairman** – following resignation of the previous Vice Chairman Cllr Roberston proposed Cllr Holman as the new vice chairman. Seconded by JT and agreed by TM. Cllr Holman accepted.

7. **To consider and approve the minutes of the meetings held on 13th January and 2nd February 2026.** The minutes were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

8. **Matters arising** from the minutes / action points from previous meetings (not covered elsewhere on the agenda). There were none.

9. **Verbal reports from Council members**

- i. *Highways* – VR reported the bridge repairs to the parapet have been done well but the cap stones of the wall aren't yet back in place so one further weekend of closure. Helen Rowe from KCC has said they can't protect the parapet wall further due to traffic requirements. Damage has increased in last 5-10years. Cllrs discussed further protection measures.

Action: VR to ask Stuart Watkins (KCC officer) to explain why bollards aren't permissible and if lorries can be forced to only turn left.

Yellow lines will be put at the end of Lossenham lane if residents support, a survey has been delivered to the properties most affected. There will also be 'dog legs' by the post box, at the pinch point by the Dower House / Pear Tree Cottage, and by the children's play area. It was suggested another by the kissing gate would be helpful. 20mph will be introduced in Lossenham Lane in 26/27.

A resident had asked if the opening period for the Selmes Trust field car park can be increased from 28 days.

Action: Clerk to write to Selmes Trust to explore options but as the car park was allowed under permitted development rules 28 days is likely to be the maximum under the current permission.

VR reported parking is becoming a considerable issue for the village. The White hart has reported getting more and more non-customers parking which negatively impacts the pub business as its own customers can't park when they arrive and go elsewhere. Lime Wharf café often send cars to the Selmes Trust field car park when it is open but the village needs more parking for longer. Need a joint discussion on way forward.

- ii. *Resilience and drains* – DH explained the draft resilience plan is almost complete and would be used in the event of an emergency. Thanks to all the volunteers who have come forward. Drains have improved a bit on last winter but there are ongoing issues. Recent work that closed the road will have helped and the hill is improving but the new drain added by number 7 has added water to the entrance to the meadow that needs to be monitored.

Action: Cllrs to monitor situation and all residents encouraged to continue to report issues.

- iii. *Playground* – JT reported the park is being well used and is not flooded like it used to be but some feedback from younger Mum's is that a baby swing would be nice.

Action: Clerk to get a quote for a baby swing and speak to DW regarding one that was replaced.

10. **Finance and Governance**

- a) *Authorisation of accounts* – Cllrs approved payments since 13th January and noted the Council's current financial position (see Annex). There were no receipts in the period.

- b) *To consider and agree purchase of Councillor laptop and associated costs.* Cllrs agreed to purchase a laptop for Council use that will enable Cllrs to view documents and print more readily than is possible from personal phones. **Action:** JT to explore options and the functionality needed within a budget up to £500.

- c) *Audit arrangements 25/26 – to consider whether to apply for certificate of exemption from external audit for 25/26 and agree internal auditor.* For transparency the Council agreed to continue having an external audit along with an internal audit despite now being under the threshold for smaller authorities. **Action:** Clerk to approach previous internal auditor to make arrangements or find an alternative.

11. Planning - to consider the following planning applications received from Ashford Borough Council

- a) **PA/2026/0188** Eveden, Lossenham Lane, Newenden, TN18 5QD

Proposal: Proposed installation of a matt black stainless-steel twin-wall flue to the front elevation.

As an immediate neighbour to the property DH withdrew from the discussion. Councillors considered the application would have no material change to the property or surrounding area and voted 3:0 in support of the application (1 abstention).

Action: Clerk to submit support on ABC portal.

- b) **PA/2026/0331** Church Cottage, Rye Road, Newenden, Cranbrook, TN18 5PN

- c) **Proposal:** Provision of ground mounted solar panels on agricultural land, with associated works.

After a brief discussion Cllrs voted 4:0 in support of the application. **Action:** Clerk to submit support on ABC portal.

12. Annual Village Meeting 2026 – Councillors to agree date and format for the annual village meeting. Cllrs discussed and agreed to hold the annual village meeting on 12th May after the PC annual meeting. **Action:** Clerk to invite all village organisations to attend / send a report.

13. Correspondence – to note correspondence received since last meeting. The Clerk had received strongly worded objections from two residents regarding the PC's response to ABC in respect of the retrospective planning application for the village hall.

14. Date and matters for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting. The next meeting will be May 12th at 7pm and the agenda will include the statutory requirements of the annual PC meeting. This will be followed at 8pm by the annual village meeting.

Public time:

A resident recorded thanks to the PC for all the work done in the last 18months. The playground is coming into its own, thanks to all involved including last Council. All the highways work and the drainage improvements are appreciated.

The Friends of Newenden Flower Meadow are hosting a talk on Friday 13th March – 7pm in the church, cake donations welcome.

15. CLOSED SESSION - Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Councillors voted 4:0 to exclude members of the public from the final item on the agenda and the public left.

- a. *Councillors to consider and agree award of grass maintenance contract for next 3 years along with terms for 26/27 season.* The Clerk reported that despite best efforts the only interested party for the mowing contract was the existing contractor Scott Pemberton. Cllrs agreed Mr Pemberton has continued to do an excellent job and his prices remain very competitive. VR proposed the Council renew its contract with Mr Pemberton for a further 3 years, this was seconded by DH. The council voted 4:0 in favour.

Action: Clerk to send Mr Pemberton updated contract ahead of new season.

Cllrs discussed the contribution received from ABC towards mowing and requested the Clerk try again for an increase to cover actual costs. **Action:** Clerk to approach ABC and request an increase to the contribution received for 26/27.

The meeting closed at 20.25

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Annex – Financial position to 28th February 2026

Accounts from 13th January 2026 to 28th February 2026		
Balance as per bank statements 12th January 2026	£	
Unity Trust bank – current account	1604.36	
Unity Trust bank – general reserves	14624.38	
Unity Trust bank – playground funds	1477.43	
Total	17706.17	
Payments made	VAT £	Total £
Clerks salary		£ 402.50
Bank fee - December		£ 6.00
External audit fee for 24/25	£ 42.00	£ 252.00
Vision ICT - new councillor email	£ 2.67	£ 16.00
Selmes Trust - play area lease payment for 25/26		£ 50.00
Bank fee - January		£ 6.00
	Total out	£ 732.50
Receipts		
	Total in	£ -
Balance as per bank 12th January 2026	£	
Unity Trust bank – current account	1471.86	
Unity Trust bank – general reserves (includes £3k ring-fenced for VH)	14,024.38	
Unity Trust bank – playground funds	1477.43	
Total	16973.67	