

NEWENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held in St Peter's church on TUESDAY 2nd JULY 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Mr D Wheeler (DW) Chairman, Mrs V Robertson (VR), Mr A Garman (AG), Ms. G Dalton (GD) and Mr J Turnbull (JT).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L Dobson, Clerk and 7 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence.**
Cllr Walder and Cllr Hill.
2. **Declarations of interest.** Cllr Wheeler declared a personal interest in item 5iv.
3. **To consider and approve** the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 7th June 2024. The minutes were approved and signed.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes / action points from 7th June 2024** (*not covered elsewhere on the agenda*). None.
5. **Verbal reports / progress updates** from Council members and Clerk.
 - i. **Fundraising event – 29th June** – DW and VR reported a very successful event. Final figure still to be announced but likely to be around £2700-£3k. The PC expressed its thanks to Tavia Gethin and her team for the organisation, hosting and generous support. The money raised will be added to the new playground project fund.
 - ii. **Playground project – next steps** – Local resident, Mr Dennis Rose, has been asked to join a playground sub-committee to lend his expertise and time to the project, working with Cllrs JT and GD. He is considering and will make a decision once he has been through all the information. DW asked if the money raised so far could be based in a charity account to allow gift aid. As the PC isn't a charity this wouldn't be possible. However, as the Selmes Trust is a charity that can take gift aid a joint fundraising effort might be possible.
ACTION: Clerk to look into charity status and whether that is an issue.
JT questioned whether it would be sensible to have a ROSPA pre-inspection and health and safety report but it was later agreed the additional cost (£40), for equipment that will be replaced, wasn't justified.
DW has introduced a monthly fundraiser 'The Nibbler 100' at his cafe. All residents and visitors welcome to pay £2 for a number with the chance of winning a cash prize. All money raised will go to the playground project.
 - iii. **Gigaclear** – JT reported he attended an online meeting with other local villages. There are access issues in Newenden due to the culvert, but the middle of the village is nearly live. JT will share more information as he gets it.
 - iv. **Cricket club application for nets** – DW temporarily withdrew from the meeting and VR took over as Chairman to explain the application for nets was submitted under lawful development so comments were not invited. A decision is expected 20th July. Some additional measures have been put in place such as more signage during games, but spotters have not yet been seen. VR expressed disappointment that the application for nets doesn't include the A28 side of the pitch. It was noted that the amount of cricket appears to have reduced slightly in recent weeks, along with the force with which balls are hit.

- v. **Reinstatement of jetty** – the PC is concerned it is over two months since the jetty was removed. Latest position is the jetty is being repaired before being re-installed in a new location. Discussion about why the jetty can't go back to where it was originally, where councillors consider there to be better parking access and better access for those with mobility issues. It was pointed out that the bank in the original position has changed and become steeper which makes reinstatement more difficult. Cost to replace will be £1500. The Selmes Trust has liaised with the Environment Agency who have approved the new site and the cricket club have agreed to pay the costs. JT raised issue of disabled access being part of original sport England funding for the new pavilion and suggested this ought to include the river. Hugh Edmonds for the Selmes Trust stated that the reason the ST agreed to move the jetty was concerns around safety during cricket games. GD asked whether the parish wants a proactive or reactive approach to risks and if the former why was the river elevation not included in the original ball strike. DW asked why the Selmes Trust, as landowner, hasn't insisted on a risk assessment for the footpath / river side of the sports field before agreeing to move. It was understood by the council that the previous PC contributed £750* to the installation of the original jetty, giving the council grounds to contribute to the discussion on relocation. Councillors then voted on whether the jetty should be reinstated to its original position. 4 voted in favour with 1 abstention due to lack of information on the pros and cons of either position. **ACTION: Clerk to write a letter to the Selmes Trust** stating the view of the Council and asking for a written rationale for moving and evidence of any health and safety concerns.

****NB: since the meeting, records have been checked and it is clear that the original jetty was funded solely by the Selmes Trust, there was no contribution from the previous parish council.***

- vi. **Village sign**- DW explained the current sign is very rotten at the bottom. Some discussion as to whether oak from the old wharf might still be available to replace but a member of the public thought not. Cllrs discussed whether the bottom of the post could be better protected. **ACTION: Clerk to obtain three quotes for replacement posts ahead of next meeting. DW to put supports in for now to stop it falling over until replaced.** Jillian Eldridge kindly volunteered to paint the sign while it's down and Alan Seal offered a scaffold tower.
- vii. **Kent County Council budget consultation** – Cllr Dalton explained the county council has a consultation underway regarding a proposed 3% increase in council tax along with a 2% adult social care levy for 2025-26. This 5% increase is the maximum that can be introduced without need for a referendum. With the budget under immense pressure, holding a referendum to increase beyond 5% has not yet been ruled out. GD pointed out that, compared to other areas, Newenden isn't getting a lot for current council tax and urged residents to respond to the consultation. **ACTION: GD to lead a response for PC and encourage residents to respond individually too. Closing date 7th August.** One area that has diminished in recent years is police presence in the village. Darren Laker is current contact and VR will be meeting him later in the month.

6. Finance

- i. Authorisation of accounts – the following payments and receipts were noted and approved for the period 7th June to 2nd July. The clerk explained that the process of new signatories for the bank had not yet been completed so currently the PC bank account was frozen and there were several payments outstanding.

Payments made	VAT £	Total £
Clerk salary – June		323.34
Grass cutting – to 5/6/24		559.00
Website updates – invoice 1046 12/06/24		18.75
Total		901.09

Payments Outstanding since bank access cut off (24/06)		
Day of action equipment – Cllr Wheeler		31.56
Defibrillator aftercare	41.58	249.48
Fundraiser – reimburse Cllr Wheeler		195.62
Internal audit – invoice		100.00
Email hosting – Vision ICT	24.00	144.00
Total		720.66
Receipts		
none		

- ii. Quarterly budget review and financial statement for first quarter, April – June 2024. The Clerk went through the financial statement and forecast, based on anticipated expenditure, to the end of March 2025. At the end of Q1 there is an overspend of £1106.08 against the budget but overall, the position remains positive with a healthy balance anticipated at year end.
ACTION – VR to visit bank to speed up new signatory process.

7. **Planning** – to consider any planning applications received from Ashford Borough Council and any other planning matters.

PA/2024/0996

The Old Granary, Lossenham Lane (Conversion and alterations to existing ancillary building to provide annex accommodation). The consultation for this application closed on 28th June and the PC did not comment.

PA/2024/1176

1 Lossenham Farm Cottages, Lossenham Lane (Lawful Development Certificate - Existing - Use or development for the occupation of 1 Lossenham Cottages by non-agricultural workers). The consultation for this application opened on 28th June so mentioned in the meeting for information only. The PC will consider and respond before the 19/07 deadline.

JT expressed concern that a decision remained outstanding on retrospective planning application PA/2022/2709. **ACTION: Clerk to contact ABC for latest position.**

8. To consider and approve:

- i. Draft General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and privacy policy
- ii. Draft privacy notice – website use
- iii. Draft Freedom of Information publication scheme

Councillors had been provided with copies of the documents ahead of the meeting. All drafts were approved with one amendment – GD asked for timescales to be added to the draft Freedom of Information publication scheme. **ACTION: Clerk to make agreed changes and publish on website.**

9. Matters for consideration as an agenda item for the next meeting on 3rd September 2024.

The following were raised for consideration at the next meeting:

- i. A resident has asked if the PC can investigate whether double yellow lines or similar could be placed at the A28 end of Lossenham lane to alleviate some of the congestion that causes traffic to back up on main road.
- ii. Can the PC provide an update on plans to manage surplus water run off onto the Rye Road.
- iii. Playground project update.
- iv. Bridge – residents to note the road will be closed 10/11th August – further update to be added to agenda for September meeting.
- v. Update on jetty.
- vi. Cllr Dalton keen to discuss the cricket club's ball strike assessment and the height of nets needed to avoid personal injury.

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

- a. Residents raised concerns that where the footpath has been diverted, a cctv camera has appeared and is watching the public, is this allowed? Provided the landowner has a licence, yes.
- b. Borderforce officers have been seen regularly on the riverbank recently – does anyone know why? No.
- c. The larger gate from Selmes Trust land to Thorsons Farm land has been locked, though the pedestrian gate remains open. This is a Selmes Trust boundary and part of the bridle way so shouldn't it be left open? Selmes Trust will approach landowner.
- d. Can meeting dates go on notice board? Yes, **clerk to action**.

11. Date of next meeting: 3rd September at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 21.15.

Signed: _____ Chairman

Date: _____