

Newton PC report for the Newton Annual Parish Assembly 26/4/17.

At last year's Annual Parish Assembly I reported that the workload of Councillors had increased significantly. This year has been no different and it was definitely a sensible decision to move to 11 meetings per year. We have been getting through our agendas more efficiently and normally can conclude our meetings at a respectable hour. Councillors remain totally committed to developing and maintaining high standards of engagement with our community and working for the good of the parish of Newton. They have selflessly discharged their duties with integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and honesty. On your behalf, I would like to thank them all for their hard work and for the support they have offered to me.

Once again NPC has been supported by its very experienced Clerk, Mr. Dave Crimmin. He provides the team with excellent advice, guidance and, when appropriate, clarification on procedural matters. Most of you will know that after twelve years of outstanding service, he will step down from his role with NPC at the end of June 17. We know he will very smoothly and expertly hand over the reins to his successor Jane Hatton. We are also looking forward to Dave's contribution at future NPC meetings. In addition to Dave, we are extremely fortunate to receive advice and guidance from both James Finch, our Suffolk County Council representative and our District Councillor, Lee Parker; we are indebted to them for the commitment they show to our village.

We are fortunate that crime in Newton remains a rarity but, nevertheless, we cannot become complacent and we really appreciate the reports and advice given to us from our community police officers.

Villagers will be aware that minutes of every meeting are published on the NPC website and a hard copy appears in the monthly Newton Village Newsletter. Therefore, for the sake of time and brevity, the following is a synopsis of the main things that have affected our village over the past months.

1. The number of planning applications has remained similar to the previous year but there are signs that the nature of the applications is beginning to change. We know that Babergh's Core strategy means new housing is on the way for Newton but we hope that any development will reflect the feelings of villagers. The building of 8 new dwellings opposite the Saracens Head has started and we are sure that similar applications are in the pipeline.

2. Highways .

Our County Councillor has been campaigning for lowering the speed limits from Sudbury to Stoke by Nayland on the A134. Clearly this is a complicated issue and there are many differing perspectives that need to be considered. However, we know that our CC will have the interests of all the villages affected by excess traffic speeds at heart.

3. At the annual Parish Assembly in 2015 I reported that Hastoe Housing Association was working on behalf of NPC to identify and secure land to be used for 4 new affordable dwellings. After lengthy negotiations, I am pleased to announce that a site has been identified with a local landowner. Final details are now being drawn up between Hastoe and the landowner and once completed, NPC will confirm the position of the site. A public meeting to review the outline development will then take place. These rented properties will be available to villagers who have significant links to Newton; none of the afore mentioned properties will be available for purchase.

4. NPC Byelaws. Our updated Newton Byelaws seem to be dissuading people from selling vehicles from the layby on the A134. However, vigilance is the watch word and villagers are encouraged to report any suspected illegal selling to our Clerk as soon as possible. Please try to take a picture of the vehicle and the registration number.

5. Village amenities.

It is wonderful to see our village pub doing so well. It seems to be bucking national trends and appears to be going from strength to strength. As it featured so positively in our most recent Parish Survey, we wish Beverley and her team, all the very best for the future.

More homes now receive faster broadband speeds but for those villagers who still lag behind, we will be asking our County Councillor to campaign for that situation to be rectified as soon as possible..

In partnership with the Golf club, there is now a Defibrillator unit situated on the outside of the clubhouse.

After many years lovingly tending to our village War Memorial, the work became too much for Harry Buckledee and he had to retire. We thank him for all his efforts. Tony Langley has kindly taken on that responsibility and the PC is investigating grants to professionally restore the memorial to its former glory.

6. Finance. The expenditure budget for 2016/17 was set at £11,207.85 and the Parish Precept was set at £9380.00. Our accounts continue to be audited by Heelis and Lodge.

7. Newton PC Trust representatives..

Cllrs Bower and Poole are the NPC representatives on the Newton Trust and Cllr Schwenk sits on the Village hall committee; they provide monthly feedback to the PC on matters relating to those organisations.

8. Christmas Festivities.

Despite the teething troubles with tree lights we hope villagers enjoyed the Christmas tree decorations erected on the approach road to the Golf club. We are grateful to the Newton Trust for allowing the site to be used and for Beverley Faulkner, Landlady of the Saracens Head, for providing the electricity.

9. Fireworks 5/11/16

Another extremely successful event; despite the normal cold, windy conditions, good numbers of villagers and friends enjoyed the 20 minute display. This village tradition is now here to stay! Many thanks to all the villagers who joined the Councillors to help make this such a great evening.

10. We have made financial donations to our local church, All Saints to help pay for the upkeep of the churchyard and to the British Legion Poppy appeal

11. Newton footpaths and grass areas around the village hall. We remain very pleased with the way our footpaths have been maintained this year and also the grassed areas around the Village Hall and we thank both contractors for their efforts. G. Flowers and D. Gotts have been given their contracts for another year.

12. Autumn and Spring Clear ups. These have taken place and I would like to thank those residents who turned out to pick up litter. They worked very hard and thoroughly deserved their bacon rolls. I would also like to thank all those residents who are picking up litter throughout the year, your efforts are noticed and they do make a difference!

Finally, I would like to thank all the villagers who do so much for our village. It would be inappropriate to name individuals; you know who you are. Instead, I would prefer to simply say that without your commitment and enthusiasm Newton would be in danger of losing not only its sense of community but also its heart.

Paul Presland
Chairman