

Newington (Folkestone and Hythe) Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 4 May 2021

MINUTES

Present

Councillors: John Neale (Chairman)
Kevin Golding (Vice-Chairman)
Jill Sage
Cleo Smith
Craig Watt-Peters
Kent County Councillor Susan Carey
Shepway District Councillor David Godfrey
Vic Coleman (Newington and District Gardeners Association)
One member of the public

1 **Welcome from the Chairman of the Parish Council**

Cllr John Neale welcomed all present to the Annual Parish Meeting

2 **Apologies for absence**

KCC Community Warden - Gary Harrison
Kent Police - PCSO Nicholas Hazell
Friends of St Nicholas Church - Greta.Rajadhyaksha

3 **Agree and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20 May 2019**

The minutes were **agreed** and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

4 **Chairman's Report**

For the majority of the year, we have been either in lockdown or restricted in some way from normal life due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. As a result, Parish Council business has been conducted via Zoom and I would like to thank Cleo for arranging this. Whilst we have held fewer meetings than usual, I am sure you will agree that Zoom meetings have proved to be successful and have allowed us to continue our business.

I attended a Zoom Introduction to Chairmanship course hosted by KALC which was informative and gave me the opportunity to network and compare styles with other Parish Council Chairmen in attendance.

Following the resignation of Councillor Denise Miller, we co-opted Councillor Jill Sage on to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the King George V Playing Field and the play area. Thank you to Folkestone & Hythe District Council Councillor David Godfrey for arranging a Ward grant of £551.28 for a replacement seat in the playground. Works were carried out to replace the seat and in addition a basket swing has replaced one of the flat swings and we have a Dog on Lead, No Kite Flying and No Drones signs in place.

Eleclink carried out some work to reinstate the field surface, fencing and hedging in the play area. However, the works do not meet the arrangement agreed with

Balfour Beatty and Councillor Golding is in touch with ElecLink's representatives seeking to have the work rectified to an acceptable agreed standard.

Pot holes continue to be a problem and I am pleased to say that KCC Highways plan to resurface the Street and Newington Road from their 2021/2022 budget. Fingers crossed. Southern Water put in place a pumping operation to rectify the sewer overflow in Newington Village which has unfortunately damaged the road edge. KCC Highways plan to conduct repairs to this area too.

Fly tipping, illegal lorry parking and illegal travellers site have all been a feature of village life this year. We continue to report such matters to the authorities.

The Parish Council bought and laid a poppy wreath for Remembrance and have paid £50 towards maintenance of the War memorial.

The Parish Council grounds maintenance contract was tendered and awarded to Griggs & Partners until 31/12/2023.

I was delighted to present the KALC Community Award to Councillor Golding in recognition of his tireless and unwavering services to Newington Village for which we are all very grateful.

Thank you to Leigh Poppy from the National Office for Statistics who gave the Parish Council a presentation in January 2021 about the marketing campaign associated with the Census called "Helping Everyone to take part in Census 2021".

Emma Constantine the Channel Tunnel Contingency Planning Officer expressed her thanks to receive so many volunteers from the Parish for the Channel Tunnel Emergency Plan, hopefully never to be used.

As Chairman, I would like to say thank you to District Councillor Susan Carey, Folkestone & Hythe District Councillor David Godfrey and our Community Warden Gary Harrison for their support throughout the year. I would also like to thank fellow Parish Councillors for all their help and support over the last year and look forward to chairing a face-to-face Parish Council meeting soon.

Councillor John Neale MBE

5 End of year Financial Report

The Financial Report for 2020/2021 was reviewed (see Appendix A)

6 Presentations

Reports were delivered on behalf of the following organisations summarising their activities during the past year:

Kent County Council Councillor Susan Carey

It's been a remarkable year and I want to start by paying tribute to the local community, to the way people respected the lockdowns and helped their neighbours.

KCC faced three major challenges in the last year any one of which would be difficult at the best of times. The first was the pandemic where we had to adapt as many services as possible to be able to continue to deliver them. You'll all remember the early challenges in sourcing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

KCC procured 4.4 million items of PPE for our own staff and others in Kent providing care.

We set up a temporary mortuary to provide additional capacity to Kent's hospitals. Our coroners' service had a much increased workload and our registrars dealt with a 26% increase in death registrations.

The Government provided funding to support businesses, organisations and residents. £373 million of Government funding has been paid to businesses in Kent via the district councils. In addition to this, KCC worked with the Chamber of Commerce to fund a helpline for businesses and provided £3 million in interest free loans. We at KCC decided to pass most of the Government funding for community support we received to the district councils. My district council colleague, Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee deserves considerable credit for the success of the three community hubs that were set up at the Three Hills Sports Park in Folkestone (which supported Hawkinge), Age UK in Hythe and the Romney Marsh Day Centre. They proved a real lifeline to those shielding and were a great example of partnership working between local government, the voluntary sector and volunteers.

KCC set up Kent Together a 24/7 service available by phone or online where people could ask for help for themselves or for someone they were concerned about.

We also set up, with help from the Military, a network of symptom free testing centres for Covid (the Hawkinge Community Centre being one of these). They've now carried out over half a million tests. We are also working with care homes on infection control measures and providing Government grants to help the care sector cope with the extra costs they face.

The second crisis we faced was last August when the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children arriving in Kent became more than we could safely accept. This has been a longstanding problem and Kent taxpayers have had to meet a disproportionate share of the costs of dealing with UASCs because, unlike adults or families who arrive seeking asylum, they are not dispersed around the country. We resumed accepting UASC in December with a better funding package from the Government but no resolution of the issue of dispersal.

The third major challenge we faced was the end of the transition arrangements for our exit of the EU. KCC played a major role in the preparations for the much predicted traffic chaos but when the crisis came it was not delays from customs issues but a complete closure of the border with France on 20 December and the subsequent re-opening on 23 December with a requirement for HGV drivers to be tested for Covid. (This requirement was withdrawn on 24 March with a similar lack of notice.) The transition plans were adapted, testing centres set up and welfare measures put in place for those trapped by the closure.

Another longstanding problem for Kent has been the damage and disturbance caused by illegally parked HGVs. KCC has long lobbied for powers to clamp HGVs and, to help deal with EU transition, the Government has finally granted us these. Since January 2021 KCC has been employing specialist contractors to deal with this nuisance parking. By early April 2,187 HGVs were clamped (over 80% are foreign registered vehicles).

As KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment, I'm leading our work to reduce waste and increase recycling (less than 1% of Kent's waste now goes to landfill). We're

planting a tree for every resident in Kent and our innovative 'Plan Bee' for pollinators has attracted widespread support. We have projects in place to reach Net Zero for KCC's own services and buildings by 2030 and have won £23m in Government funding to make this happen.

Like everyone I've missed the usual round of village events particularly the summer fete and the events staged by the Friends of St Nicholas church but I have been able to keep in touch by email and phone with those who have needed my help. I've continued to write my monthly reports for Newington News and to attend the online meetings of the parish council whenever possible.

I'd like to thank my District Council colleagues David Godfrey, Philip Martin and Stuart Peall for their work at District Council for North Downs East and to David for his special care for Newington Parish. My thanks as well to all those who contribute to our community through Newington parish council (especially the super competent clerk Melvyn), St Nicholas Church and the Friends of St Nicholas Church, the Village Hall, the Gardening Society and the Elham Valley Line Trust. That's a great deal for a small parish

Folkestone & Hythe District Councillor David Godfrey

The last 12 months or so have been extraordinary for all of us in having to deal with the Pandemic whether as individuals, business owners or Councils but it does seem that there is light at the end of the tunnel,

Notwithstanding the difficulties caused by Covid the Council has continued to provide its services whilst maintaining a balanced budget which many District Councils have struggled to achieve. It has also received recognition for several services.

It has received a certificate of excellence from [iESE Public Sector Transformation awards](#) for its actions in setting up three HUBS to provide help at Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh.

It received a commendation for its Lifeline service which helps those on their own and the vulnerable

The Coastal Park, Military Canal, Brockhill Park and Radnor Park play area were all awarded Green Flag status

The Council is currently carrying out widespread consultations (closes 9th May) on the regeneration of Folkestone exploring bold and imaginative ideas for the future use of Folca (ex Debenhams) and the newly acquired site at Ship Street which has lain derelict for years.

A new waste collection contract has been negotiated with Veolia and residents will have received information on revised collections dates as a result of route changes to achieve greater efficiency

My own Cabinet Portfolio includes responsibility for Council Housing and this has been a particularly challenging area as we took back control of the Councils Council houses and Sheltered accommodation blocks from the now defunct East Kent Housing.

We have been restructuring the service to provide for greater tenant participation, we are in the process of a comprehensive stock survey all aimed at providing an exemplary housing service. We have an ambitious new build programme aimed

at providing 1300 new Council homes in the next ten years and have recently acquired 9 new units specially for the purposes of helping the street homeless. Through all of this we continue to press ahead with our Princess Parade and Otterpool Park developments.

Finally, I was pleased to provide support from my Ward budget to the Friends of Newington church for its signage project.

As we cautiously come out of Lockdown do have your vaccines as soon as you qualify as this is the quickest route to removing restrictions. My wife and I have had our second Pfizer jabs and no side effects.

Cllr David Godfrey
Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects.

Kent Community Warden Gary Harrison

With the continued onset of Covid 19 this time last year, it has been a very unusual time for me in my role, as most of my work is face to face talking to people to gain information, giving advice or visiting people in their homes.

Obviously, it has been very challenging to carry on doing that within the lockdown rules which have evolved over time and to make matters even more difficult, the base I work from for admin in Lyminge Library was closed and still is, so I have had to work from home, only visiting people if I felt it was necessary.

I continued to visit vulnerable people, albeit on the doorstep wearing a mask, or meeting with residents in a safe location outside to assist with any issues the community had and worked with the wonderful and efficient volunteers from Age UK to help the people who fell through the cracks.

Scams have continued to be a problem, with the criminals using covid as an excuse to target people via the internet and phone. There are many ways they have tried to get money from residents, but a common one was to offer an early vaccine for a fee.

Cold calling workmen have continued targeting elderly vulnerable residents throughout COVID, carrying out work at unreasonable prices. I urge anybody who spots workmen not known locally working at a property of an elderly or vulnerable neighbour, to report it to either myself or pop in and ask if they are happy with the workmen on site.

Dogs worrying sheep have been a problem with more dog owners during lockdown and although most owners are responsible, some do not understand the consequences of their dogs chasing sheep, especially during lambing. Some incidents involved sheep having to be destroyed which is upsetting for farmers.

Dog thefts around the area are happening all too often and I urge everyone to be vigilant and report any suspicious vehicles or people on 101 to Kent Police, Ideally getting the index of the vehicle.

I would like to finish by thanking the Parish Council for supporting me in my role, as without that connection I would not be able to do much of what I do.

Let's hope the year ahead will see us getting back to normal and this wonderful community thriving as always.

Kent Police (Local Policing North Downs East Ward)

Kent Police report for this month's town and parish council meetings, this report contains figures for the last month for the areas of North Downs East & North Downs West of incidents relevant to the public, the figures will feature on the Kent Police website if not already, there may be certain incidents not mentioned within this report but have been reported to Kent Police.

Before getting onto the usual content of this report, due to this being the annual Parish meeting, if I am unable to attend in person please see relevant figures specifically for Newington and Peene for the previous year. All in all this remains a very safe area to be, of course do not be complacent with your personal safety or home security, but an idyllic village setting.

Newington and Peene 01/04/2020- 31/03/2021

2X Public order incidents

1x Threats to commit damage

1X Theft

Reported Crime February 2021 (most recent figures):

North Downs East

18X Harassment

14X Assault without injury

8 Vandalism

North Downs West

3X Distraction burglary

3X Vandalism

2X Harassment

Here is a link to the latest figures:

<https://www.kent.police.uk/a/your-area/kent/shepway/north-downs-east/?tab=StatsAndPreventionAdvice>

<https://www.kent.police.uk/a/your-area/kent/shepway/north-downs-west/?tab=StatsAndPreventionAdvice&topreportedcrimes=distractioburglary>

Other Information or advice:

The hot topic crimes remain the same as last month.

- Catalytic converters – There has been a rise in theft specifically targeting the catalytic converter on vehicles, seemingly a preference for those on Honda and Toyota vehicles, but of course not limited to these brands only. Consider security options for your vehicle such as, property marking kits, CCTV and dash cams.
- Vehicle security – There have been several reports throughout the year of unattended vehicles being broken into and valuables taken from within. This has predominantly happened in the rural lanes near to well-known walking trails and parking locations, but can be just as prevalent in urban areas. Officers have patrolled locations when possible but are still finding a large amount of persons leaving valuables on display in cars. If anyone witnesses anything suspicious or untoward then please contact police via 101, or visit the Kent Police website if time has passed.
- Fraud Vaccines – A number of warnings have been released in relation to fraudsters attempting to get money from people by fraudulently offering out

vaccines. They then subsequently ask for bank details giving some flimsy excuse as to why they would need these details.

- Fraud – There have been a number of attempts recently to defraud people with fraudulent telephone calls, perpetrators claiming to be from a reputable business or organisation. Recent calls have been purporting to be from BT, claiming that money is owed and service will be cut off if the money is not transferred immediately. If you fall victim to one of these scams it must be reported to Action Fraud, this can be done online or by phone. It is also advised to contact your bank and attempt to freeze payments or in some case recover them.

Please find advice on these issues and crime prevention on our website at: <https://www.kent.police.uk/>

If you have any worries, concerns or information you would like me to know, please contact on 101 (non-emergency) and the information will get to me.

PCSO Nicholas Hazell 59007 and PCSO Daniel Mills 58997
North Downs East, North Downs West

Newington Village Hall Committee

Cllr Kevin Golding presented the Newington Village Hall Annual Report to Parish Council:

Prior to the COVID pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns the village Hall continued to be very popular with regular bookings including: Folk Dancing, Line Dancing, Dance Classes, Exercise Classes, Yoga, Gardeners Association (Meetings and Shows) and Hindu Services.

Of course, there were plenty of one-off bookings including Children's Parties, Family Parties, Wedding Receptions, NHS Training, Children's Activity Mornings and Polling Station for Elections.

Following the busy year of improvements reported at the last Annual Parish Meeting there was less major work undertaken, although the lighting has been replaced with LED lighting.

One important event which has unfortunately not taken place for the last two years is the Annual Fete, which raises a significant income to allow major refurbishment work to be carried out.

This was cancelled in 2019, due to the over-running of the work to lay a new cable from the Channel Tunnel to Sellindge, which passes under the playing field and the field opposite which is used as a car park. Fortunately, after much negotiation, the developers made a donation equivalent to the amount raised at previous fetes, so even though there were a lot of disappointed people who couldn't attend, all was not lost.

Unfortunately, in line with the Government guidance due to the pandemic, the Hall has been unused for the last 15 months, Sadly, this meant that last year's fete also wasn't held and for the same reasons it will not be held again this year, as there is no time to organise it. The committee is therefore extremely grateful for the grants provided by the Government and FHDC, which have enabled the bills to still be paid.

Unfortunately, over the last year there have been a number of personnel changes to the committee, which left us with some important gaps to fill. Bob and Jenny Laslett had both been on the committee for many years, with Bob as the Treasurer and Jenny, very capably taking on the demanding and sometimes thankless role of Letting Secretary. Mark Howard has also stepped down from the committee after many years of sterling effort, latterly as the chair and Tracy Brudenell has also stepped down as Secretary.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for all their hard work over a long time, which has ensured that the hall has been and still is a popular venue.

Fortunately, Mandi Hayes and Cherry Berkin have both joined the committee with Mandi taking on the role of Treasurer and also temporarily the role of Secretary and Cherry taking on the role of Letting Secretary, who I am sure will soon be very busy as there have been a lot of requests for bookings in anticipation of reopening.

Elham Valley Line Trust

As there was no Annual Parish Meeting last year, I will cover both 2019 and 2020 in this report.

2019 was another successful year for the Trust.

Visitor numbers maintained a similar level to the previous year, with good numbers coming from our returning visitors with family memberships.

As usual we had a very busy year, some of the highlights include -

A new pirate themed weekend on the August Bank holiday, which proved very popular, although it was probably helped by the very good weather. We will however be looking to hold another one and we are also considering other themed weekends.

The Military event was again very successful, with the intimidating sight of Gurkhas wearing full camo gear in a latest spec armoured vehicle with a big gun on top. No kids, big or small could resist climbing up and getting behind the gun.

Sadly, weather wasn't our greatest friend in 2019 causing reduced visitor numbers for some of our big weekends. The Miniature Steam weekend was very cold and one of the Apple Pressing days was very wet, so despite pressing a bumper amount of juice, we weren't able to sell it all.

Our Spooky evenings were back by popular demand, and were much appreciated by all those who were brave enough to turn out in the most revolting weather. I guess we should be grateful that this was the first wet spooky weekend we had had in 5 years and we were particularly grateful to our volunteers for persisting, despite getting freezing cold and soaking wet.

We did however have better weather for the two weekends of our Christmas Fayre, which were again extremely successful and provided us with nearly 15% of our annual income.

In our last report I mentioned that we were joining the Wheels of Time scheme, which is a badge collecting scheme for youngsters, whereby they receive a badge

for visiting each of the 40 participating sites of interest across Kent with awards for visiting certain numbers of sites.

This proved extremely successful at drawing in new visitors and a number of youngsters made a point of coming back to us to be presented with scheme awards, providing us with further publicity. We will definitely be continuing to be part of this scheme and this year it has added a virtual aspect, allowing visitors to the websites of participating sites, to complete on line challenges to achieve awards.

Moving onto the last 12 months. Sadly, like many places, 2020 was less successful for us, as we were unable to open at all, due to the lockdowns caused by the COVID pandemic and the difficulties with making our very tight site COVID secure.

We are therefore extremely grateful to FHDC and the government for making grants available, which have enabled us to continue paying the bills, which do not stop just because we do not have visitors and will enable us to purchase and install screens and sanitiser stations in anticipation of reopening in June. Without these, it is likely that we would have struggled to ever reopen, let alone in June.

It would perhaps have been a bit more positive if I could be reporting that we had spent all the down time carrying out lots of repairs and developments, but unfortunately many of our volunteers fell in to the vulnerable categories so were either unable or unwilling to spend time volunteering at the Trust.

However, I can report that despite the difficulties and the fact that we have two winter's worth of clearing and cleaning to do, we have also managed to make progress on a variety of items including the refurbishment of the loco, which is currently having a shiny new coat of paint applied and the replacement of the old miniature railway tunnel with a new enclosed weather proof tunnel to improve this very popular attraction.

We have also invested a lot of time refurbishing the very large 35 year old model of the Channel Tunnel terminal, which used to be in the Channel Tunnel Exhibition Centre and is an important piece of local modern history.

It is clear that when we do reopen this year, many things will be different and we will almost certainly need even more volunteers to implement effective controls and manage the crowds of visitors we will hopefully see.

Fortunately, we have had a good response to returning from our regular volunteers and, whether it is the improved community spirit approach to life, or the boredom caused by lockdown, I am pleased to say that a number of people have approached us during the lockdown with offers to help.

Let's hope that we can hang on to those that have already started helping and that at least some of those who have offered to help when we reopen, go through with their offers.

Given the difficulties for everyone over the last 18 months, it is obviously good that I have been able to report some positives, but I will end with my usual plea, if anyone is interested in joining us, or knows anyone who might be, please get in touch, either via our website or via Facebook.

Thank you for listening.

Friends of St Nicholas Church

The Friends of St Nicholas church is a secular charity concerned with the maintenance of our beautiful church. We are not involved with the religious side of the church.

As with all other charities The Friends of St Nicholas have been unable to hold any of our fundraising events for the past year because of Coronavirus. Through generous donations we have however managed to raise sufficient funds to replace our noticeboard in the church grounds which is falling to pieces.

Some income has been achieved from our Membership scheme. If anyone would like to support this – a single membership for the year is £10, membership for a couple £15 and any additional donation is much appreciated. My telephone no. is 01303 488091 – email: greta.rajadhyaksha@tiscali.co.uk. I can post a membership form if you are interested.

Our lovely volunteers have still managed to keep the churchyard tidy with regular Saturday morning work parties. We always welcome volunteers.

We hope later this year to organise some events. It is planned to have our annual full day conference in conjunction with the Sauniere Society on the 24th July Coronavirus rules permitting.

Let's hope for a much better year this year and we can all get moving again.

Greta Rajadhyaksha
Trustee and Treasurer

Newington and District Gardeners Association

Vic Coleman presented the annual report on behalf of Newington and District Gardeners Association:

Just a short update. First to remind you all that 2019 did exist. We had a good year with a selection of monthly meetings in the Newington village hall, a garden visit, 2 shows plus a joint show with Hawkinge Gardens at Hawkinge, and raised over £1000 for our 2019 charity of the year Folkestone Rainbow centre. Then to top of the year we had a very nice Christmas dinner at Folkestone Indoor Bowls Club.

2020 started in February with our AGM where 37 members re-joined for the year where we reported a full year of events and speakers. Then if you can remember... 'it' started to happen, we did hold a meeting in March at the village hall mainly with a positive attitude that 'it'... wasn't going to happen to us and to give out potatoes for member to grow for the Summer Show that was obviously going to happen in July 2020. The speaker and 50% of the members thought different!
The next week lockdown.

We managed to make the potato bucket challenge happen in July with the kind support of Ann Vincent opening Grove Farm to us. More lockdown, but we were again lucky enough to make another special yearly event happen with the Heaviest Pumpkin challenge again in the fresh air at Grove Farm, don't worry all necessary points were covered masks, social distance etc etc.

For 2021 so far, we have managed to get an AGM and accounts confirmed via letter and email, but have cancelled all events until July in the hope that the prime minister will keep to his road map. Fingers crossed it may happen. We have carried over the 37 paid up members for 2020 to 2021 along with the charity chosen' Mind'. We hope the second half of 2021 will bring us all together again in Newington Village Hall for a return to some Garden topics and gossip over a tea and biscuits. Those were the days.

Thank you

Vic Coleman
NDGA Show Secretary
May 2021

7 Public Forum

There were no matters raised by parishioners

8 Next meeting

It was agreed that the 2022 Annual Parish meeting will take place on the 9th May 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Chairman's Signature

Date

Appendix A

NEWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Finance Report 2020/21

The income and expenditure for the Parish Council during the 2020/21 financial year (preliminary figures) was:

Income (precept and VAT reclaim):	£7,242.00
Expenditure (see below):	£7,985.00

Expenditure

During the year, major items of expenditure were:

Grounds maintenance:	£2,189.00
Insurance:	£415.00
Staffing costs:	£3,368.00
Playground improvements:	£749.00

The balance in the bank as at 31st March 2021 = **£6,916.43**