

Newington (Folkestone and Hythe) Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 9 May 2022 at 7pm at Georges Barn Newington MINUTES

Present

Councillors: Kevin Golding (Vice-Chairman)
Jill Sage
Cleo Smith
Sarah Wright

Folkestone & Hythe District Councillor David Godfrey
Vic Coleman (Newington and District Gardeners Association)
Sally Coleman (Newington and District Gardeners Association)
Two members of the public

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

Cllr Kevin Golding welcomed all present to the Annual Parish Meeting

2 **Apologies for absence**

Councillor John Neale (Chairman)
Kent County Councillor Susan Carey
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 4 May 2021**

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

4 **Chairman's Report**

(Read at the meeting by Councillor Golding)

I would like to start with apologizing for not being able to attend this evening, I am currently in Lisbon attending a security conference with the Foreign and commonwealth office. I do hope this will be my last one, and I can continue to enjoy my retirement!

At long last we have all come out of lockdown and have returned to some sort of normality! It has been a pleasure to meet face to face again after what seems an age!

Craig left us last year and we have been fortunate to have co-opted a new councillor, Sarah Wright. Sarah lives in Frogholt and now we have another area of the parish represented. This is good news, as we need to cover as much of the parish as possible. We still have a space for one more councillor, so let's hope we can fill that spot this year.

My dear friend, neighbour and Clerk, Melvyn, finally left us this year. Melvyn has moved to Nottingham to be near his grandchildren. I am of course still in touch with him and he often asks about the Parish!

We have been lucky to find a wonderful replacement who has really hit the ground running, Welcome to Sharon. She has a very difficult job, in chasing me to make sure I'm doing exactly what I am supposed to do. No mean feat as I'm sure my wife will testify! (this report has been left to the last minute!)

Works have continued over at the playing field. I think the original cable works were due to take a few months, however we are now heading towards the third year. I would like to thank Kevin for all his efforts in getting the works done to a standard that the village expects. Hopefully we can get a full handover done soon.

The village is looking in a rather excellent condition. This in part is due to our contractors Griggs and Partners, and I would like to thank them for their help around the village, going far beyond the works of their contract. Recently a large tree had fallen down in Danton Lane near Crete Road West. It was cleared in record time and the road reopened. Not sure FHDC would have got there as quick!

The roads through the village were due to be resurfaced this year, but as yet not happened. Hopefully this project will be carried out soon.

Fly tipping is still a problem in the area, but doesn't seem as bad as in previous years. Maybe it is because people are now reporting it quicker. Once reported the rubbish etc. is cleared very quickly.

I have received quotes for small works to the phone box. I will be in touch with the contractor on my return so we can get the phone box in the village fitted out for a small library. Hopefully people from the village will start to use this and it will become a centre point of village life.

I attended a remembrance service in November at the memorial in the centre of the village. It was well attended and with the current troubles in Eastern Europe it has reminded us just what these brave people gave to us from previous generations. The Parish Council provided a wreath and I laid a wreath on behalf of Bargrove residents.

Next month will see big celebrations for Our Queen. She is a truly remarkable lady, and I do hope we all enjoy her jubilee. We are all part of her amazing journey and I, along with the Parish Council wish her well.

I would like to thank Susan Carey from KCC for her continued support this year, along with David Godfrey from FHDC. Both have helped the Parish council over the past year and I know they are there to support as and when we need it.

Just one last thank you, to all the councillors. We are doing an amazing job and I am very grateful for all your support. Once again I'm sorry I'm not there in person, but will see you all soon at our next Parish council meeting later this month.

God save the Queen!

Cllr John Neale MBE

5 End of year Financial Report

The Financial Report for 2021/2022 was reviewed and no concerns were raised. (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

(Read at the meeting by the parish clerk)

I am pleased to report that Kent returned a Conservative majority in the Kent County Council elections on 06 May 2021 (60 Conservatives out of 80 places). Our own election here in Elham Valley was postponed until 17 June following the sudden death of the Labour candidate. I was re-elected on this date with just over half the votes cast. My thanks to all those who voted.

The last year has continued to be dominated by Covid-19 and its effects on our health and economy. KCC has worked closely with the NHS, the district councils, the voluntary sector and other partners on measures to encourage vaccination uptake, testing for Covid, tracking contacts, supporting the vulnerable and offering help where needed. **KentTogether** is our 24/7 online and telephone service where people can turn to for help and **Release the Pressure** is our long-standing helpline for those facing stress.

As we have emerged from Covid-19 restrictions there has been a surge in demand for social care and for Special Education Needs assessments. This has placed considerable financial pressures on KCC's budget and has meant we have had to reduce some of our discretionary services such as the level of subsidy for the Kent Travel Saver (although those on low incomes are unaffected) and subsidies for uneconomic bus services.

At KCC I have a particular responsibility for our Environment work and am pleased to report that many of the projects I have been leading have had the added benefit of reducing costs by reducing energy use. In March 2021 KCC won a major grant from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for projects that had to be delivered by April 2022. The most significant of these was the purchase of a 21MW solar park which will reduce our energy use by 30% and also reduce our annual energy costs by around £760,000 a year for the next 40 years.

KCC's Plan Tree Strategy has just finished its public consultation report. Plan Tree proposes the establishment of an extra 1.5 million trees in Kent and as part of this each KCC Member will be allocated trees for their own division. I'd be very pleased to hear from people with ideas for suitable sites here in Newington Parish.

My Environment brief also covers waste disposal - the 12 district councils in Kent collect the waste, KCC disposes of the collected waste and runs the Household Waste Recycling Centres. KCC has been able to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to just 0.2% (this is asbestos which must by law be deep buried). What can't be recycled is turned into energy at an incinerator in Allington, Kent. Last year we held a consultation on whether to keep the booking system for the

HWRCs that was introduced during Covid-19. There was a clear margin in favour of keeping the booking system (available both online and at our call centre 03000 41 73 73) and by the end of April same day bookings were introduced at all 18 HWRCs. Recycling rates are up at our HWRCs and a 19th HWRC opened in Allington today (09 May).

The disruption to our local road network and people's lives whenever there is disruption to Cross Channel traffic has become intolerable. KCC does not control the ports or the motorways but Kent Highways is part of the Kent Resilience Forum together with National Highways, Kent Police and other public sector partners. We continue to lobby the Government on this as it is a national problem requiring a national response.

A similar issue is that of the continued high level of illegal entries into Kent by those seeking asylum. Adults and families are dispersed around the country but other local authorities must volunteer to take any under 18 year olds who arrive on their own. This has led to unsustainable burdens on KCC in dealing with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and twice in the last year we have had to declare we were unable to safely accept any more meaning we were in breach of our statutory duty. This has led to a temporary compulsory dispersal scheme to other local authorities around the country. This does not resolve the underlying problem but has relieved some of the immediate burden for Kent.

The invasion of Ukraine in February has been another crisis where local government has been expected to respond swiftly. Information for both Kent residents and Ukrainian refugees can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/ukraine Queries about the Ukraine Families Scheme can be emailed to Ukraine@kent.gov.uk or by calling the dedicated helpline 03000 412424 which has a translation service. The latest information I have on numbers is that 2,475 refugees have been matched to 982 sponsors here in Kent; the Ukrainian refugees are overwhelmingly women and children. Around 8,000 households in Kent have volunteered to be part of *Homes for Ukraine*, one of the highest number in the UK, so we can expect to see many more Ukrainian people here in Kent. As with the Covid-19 emergency we are working closely with the District Councils, the voluntary sector and other public sector partners to provide the necessary support.

Folkestone & Hythe District Councillor David Godfrey

District Councillor David Godfrey report for Newington Annual 9th May 2022

It is a pleasure to finally get back together after the past couple of difficult years. The District Council staff have worked hard to deliver its services during the last year and some of the key highlights are.

Council Housing

As Cabinet Member responsible for Housing, I am pleased to report good progress since we took back control of our housing stock at the end of 2019. New processes and policies have been developed putting our tenants needs firmly at the heart of the service. Following delays due to Covid we have started to deliver on our target of 1200 new energy efficient council homes over the next 10 years.

We have developed a robust Housing Asset management strategy to ensure our properties meet homes plus standards and have successfully won £2 million from the levelling up fund to begin retro fitting 109 of our least energy efficient homes. I was pleased to learn on Friday that since the Council adopted its important Core Strategy* DLUHC(dept for Levelling Up Housing and Communities) have recalculated our housing test score and the result is now 97%, compared with 85% for 20/21 which means we will not have additional housing requirements placed on us over and above the existing high levels placed upon us.

*Core Strategy

Over the past few years, the Council has been developing its Core Strategy (previously adopted in 2013) which is a long-term plan for the future development of Folkestone & Hythe district which includes major sites such as a Otterpool Park in the North Downs. This was reviewed and approved by Government Inspectors which enables to retain control of development.

Parking payments

The option to use contactless payment is to be added to 35 of Folkestone & Hythe District Council's 60 pay and display machines - all of which will still be able to accept cash. The council will also trial ANPR in one or two car parks which I pressed for when Transport was part of my Portfolio.

Grounds Maintenance

The use of chemicals in all parks, gardens and play areas owned by Folkestone & Hythe District Council has been drastically reduced. There are still a limited number of situations where chemicals will still be needed, such as to treat invasive weeds like Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed. Officers will continue to check for new technology and best practice to further reduce the use of pesticide & herbicides.

Ukraine

The District's residents have responded magnificently to the Ukrainian appeals for help whether providing food, first aid supplies or cash donations. More than 70 homes have been put forward to house refugees all of which have been inspected by Council officers and families are beginning to arrive. The Council has produced an information handbook in Ukrainian to help them as they settle among us.

Finally it is good to see events re-commencing at the railway museum and Georges Barn and my wife and I enjoyed a visit to the recent miniature steam event

I was also pleased to allocate some of my 21/22 Ward budget for Friend of St Nicholas toward painting the church.

I am happy to take questions and would ask that you receive and note my report.

Cllr David Godfrey

Cabinet member for Housing and Special Projects.

Kent Police (Local Policing North Downs East Ward)

(Read at the meeting by the parish clerk)

Good evening and apologies to all in attendance that we could not be here in person to present this report. I am pleased to report that another year has passed with the reported crimes within your parish remaining low, I can only comment on those which fall within the public domain, there are of course a few more reports but these are not relevant to the public at large. In particular this refers to those occurring on the grounds of the Euro Tunnel site which do show on the Kent Police website, so if you have ever looked over the statistics map on our website you may have seen some other offences displayed in the locality of Newington & Peene.

Otherwise this remains an idyllic village location & I hope it continues to remain so going forward.

Crime statistics reported for the past year: 01/04/2021- 31/03/2022 (crimes shown reflect those that fall within public interest only)

1x Criminal Damage

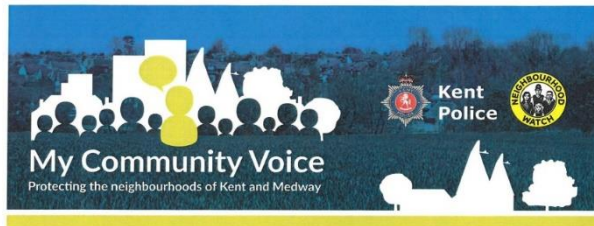
1x Public Order offence

Here is a link to the latest figures:

[North Downs East | Your area | Kent Police](#)

- Rural crime, heating oil thefts, with the rising costs of energy, and oil, this makes heating oil thefts all the more profitable to the perpetrators. Be mindful that there is an increased likelihood of this type of offending and consider preventative measures such as CCTV, security lighting, alarms, or even simply physical barriers to obscure sightlines to fuel storage.
- 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 see the below image, this is a new initiative which is designed to get useful information out to the public relevant to on-going crime trends and prevention. It is also used for appeals, when we need information in relation to serious offences, RTCs or a variety of other things.



Be the first to find out what's happening in your area

My Community Voice is a two-way engagement tool brought to you by Kent Police.

Whether you live, work or socialise in Kent or Medway, My Community Voice provides real-time messages directly from our police officers, staff and volunteers, about matters that may affect you or your community.

Your voice is important to us and we want to hear what concerns or views you may have in the area that is important to you. You can also share messages with others or reply to our alerts if you have information to share.

From crime prevention advice, to the latest updates on scams, appeals or events – you control what information you receive and how you receive it, by email, text or voice message.



Sign up today or to find out more visit www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk

Report a crime

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact

In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service 18000. Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.

www.kent.police.uk   

Please find advice on these issues and crime prevention on our website at:

[Home | Kent Police](#)
www.kent.police.co.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.

Kind Regards

PCSO Nicholas Hazell 59007 and PCSO Daniel Mills 58997

North Downs East, North Downs West

Newington Village Hall Committee

Cllr Kevin Golding reported that the village hall committee was back up and running after the impact of covid 19. However, the committee was much reduced following the departure the treasurer and secretary leaving only four members.

Nevertheless, the committee continues to operate successfully with the hall being used frequently by local groups. He extended their gratitude for funds made available during the pandemic when the hall could not be used. Any new volunteers would be very welcome.

Elham Valley Line Trust

Unusually for me, this is a relatively short report.

Last year I reported that we were planning to reopen in June, however as we all know the grand reopening of the world was not without its difficulties and we actually didn't reopen until August.

Our concerns were twofold; whether visitors would feel comfortable returning and whether our volunteers would feel comfortable.

So it started with a very tentative approach; with a marquee to extend our tea room, screens at counters, 13 hand sanitiser units across the site and one way systems through our exhibits, which weren't entirely without difficulties, given access to some of our buildings.

To some extent we were fortunate that the weather wasn't perfect Summer weather, so visitor number were initially slightly down and allowed us to get used to the very different environment, but they soon picked up, just as we became more comfortable with our own restrictions.

However, we did decide not to hold our Pirate themed weekend, our Apple Pressing weekend and much to everyone's dismay our Spooky Evenings, which meant that we missed out on some much needed income, so we were grateful for additional grants from FHDC which allowed us to survive without these events.

However, by the time of the Christmas Fayres in November, crafters and visitors were very keen and we were more confident, so decided to carry on almost as usual, with a slightly reduced number of visiting crafters.

We ended up with the Christmas Fayres being only slightly down on our record Fayres of 2019 and bringing in around 28% of our income.

Over the winter we regrouped and decided to remove the one way systems, but left in place most of the other COVID measures including the marquee which had become popular with visitors and volunteers alike as it provided more space in the tea room.

This year has started with a bang, as we opened just before Easter, had a busy Easter weekend, moved straight into our Miniature Steam weekend, then had a Bank Holiday weekend and then straight into our Military weekend.

After the disappointing weather for our 2019 events, we had much better weather for all of these weekends, resulting in record numbers of visitors and income.

However, they have placed a huge strain on our volunteers, so rather than ending the report with a plea for volunteers, I will drop it in now. We are still desperately in need of new volunteers, to try and spread the load. If anyone is interested in helping however much or little, please come along and see us, send the Trust an email or contact us via Facebook for more information. Links for these are on our website.

Going forward this year, we have opted not to hold a specific celebration for the Queens Jubilee, as there are likely to be many such activities and a 4 day weekend is already hard work for our limited volunteers, but in July we will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the closure of the Elham Valley line, with some new displays and, I am assured, some playlets by members of the Lyminge Players.

We will also be having our Apple Pressing week in September and of course the Christmas Fayres in November. We are also just starting work on the plans for this year's Spooky Evenings, which I am sure will be gratefully received by the myriad of people who have been trying to buy tickets since we reopened.

I would like to finish by mentioning that we were fortunate not to lose any of our volunteers to COVID. However, Joan Wise, the wife of John, our resident wood carver in the Barn, had been unwell for some time and sadly passed away whilst we were closed. Joan was a talented artist and lace maker and she had started painting a totem pole carved by John, so in memory of her, it has been finished and erected in the grounds of the Barn, making another very attractive feature.

Thank you for listening.

Friends of St Nicholas Church

(Read at the meeting by the parish clerk)

As some of you know, the Friends of St Nicholas was formed in 2007. The Friends are a non-religious organisation set up to maintain the fabric of our beautiful Norman Grade II* Church.

Since our formation, we have managed to raise funds to repair the shingles to the tower, build a toilet and kitchen facility, remove pews to make the church more user friendly for events, repair the roof and windows and repair the churchyard walls etc. through the generosity of various charities, the members of our membership scheme and some very generous donations. Despite Covid we managed to raise the funds to replace the church noticeboard recently.

We hope shortly to be in a position to redecorate the interior walls of the church which are in a deplorable state.

We would very much like the community to use our church facilities more. Please let me know if you wish to make use of the church – the PCC would expect a small fee and in the winter the cost of the heating.

I have some membership forms with me and would love to enrol some more members in the Friends Membership scheme.

We are now able to run events again and have a full programme this year. Please see the details in this leaflet.

We are aware that not everyone wants to come to services in the church but would be glad to see you at any time. Normally the church is kept open in the day time but due to the influx of asylum seekers it has been locked. The key is available to anyone from Mick at 3 Church Cottages.

Newington and District Gardeners Association

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

Newington & District Gardeners Association Annual Report 2021 / 2022

What a shock to read my last report to you dated May 2021. I don't even remember typing it. What a few strange years we have had. The report took us into 2021 with 37 members carried over from 2020. But all major events cancelled

Later in the year with slight easing of restrictions we managed to hold a potato bucket challenge in July and later in September a heaviest pumpkin challenge. I can't say they were the greatest events to happen but at least we tried.

With huge encouragement from our chairman Malcolm Brisley we made a return in September 2021 with a monthly meeting, carrying on in October and November. We, the committee, were very concerned come November because there was a distinct lack of members attending. Between November and February, we made an attempt to promote ourselves with a few facebook posts and an entry into the Newington Magazine, Sentinel where the editor David Cowell kindly added the entry into the other 2 publications he controls.

We received good news in February that 4 new members had been found but then received shock news that our closest friends Hawkinge Gardeners had decided to fold / close due to lack interest.

At the February 2022 AGM, we had to accept the resignation of Malcolm Brisley who having held the chairman role for more than 20 years had had to make the big decision it was the correct time to hand over the role. Unfortunately for me, my name was put forward so today I am here not in my old role of Show Secretary but as Chairman.

I am very pleased to report that the majority of the missing members have returned and along with new members, both in the February and March meetings, we can say we are in a good position. A full set of monthly meetings booked, a garden visit booked in June, a coach trip to London booked in July and even a new plant sale in the planning stages with Elham Valley Line Trust hopefully in June.

We held our own Spring show and we are looking forward to the return of our Annual Summer Show in July and Annual Autumn Show in September.

Thanks to Newington Village Hall we have a place to call home and hope the year continues in the high spirit it is now.

Thank you

Vic Coleman
NDGA Chair
May 2022

7 Public Forum

A parishioner raised concerns regarding the state of the road surfaces in the parish. Councillor Golding reported that the works were due to be carried out in 2021/22 so was hopeful that work would commence sometime this year.

Councillor Golding gave an update on the part of the playing field that is still to be made good following work carried out by a Balfour Beatty. He is still awaiting a meeting with the contractors before paperwork can be signed and the area levelled and resurfaced. He also reported that grounds maintenance required on the playing field would be completed over the next twelve months.

8 Next meeting

It was agreed that the 2022 Annual Parish meeting will take place on the 8 May 2023.

The meeting closed at 8pm

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**

