

**Newington Parish Council**  
**Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held at George's Barn, Newington on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7 pm**

**Present:**

Councillors: Councillor John Neale (Chairman)  
 Councillor Kevin Golding (Vice-chair)  
 Councillor Sarah Wright  
 Councillor Jill Sage  
 KCC Councillor Susan Carey  
 DDC Councillor David Godfrey

Clerk: Jonathan Mount

01	<b>Apologies</b> Cllr Cleo Smith (unwell)	
02	<b>To declare any pecuniary interests (DPI) and other significant interests (OSI) relating to items on the agenda.</b> None declared	
03	<b>Agree and sign the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b> The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.	
04	<b>Matters arising from the previous minutes</b> The salt that had been requested has not been delivered. Next year, the Clerk will be more proactive in chasing the order before winter arrives. The Clerk's laptop has been checked; it is still a bit slow but there is a further problem that needs to be sorted out, this should happen within the next few days, but it is usable. It will end its life in a few years' time when the operating system will no longer be supported.	
05	<b>Public participation – adjournment of the meeting</b> There was one member of the public present. A member of the public spoke about the state of the roads and verges. Estimated cost of repair to the verges will be around £300. Councillor Golding will pay a visit to the site, as will Cllr Neale. Discussion about the placement of "obstacles" on the verges to discourage vehicles from travelling over the verges. Cllr Carey suggested that she might be able to help, ref. KCC Highways. Mention was made of the HIP and whether something could be incorporated in the next HIP. Further discussion ref. potholes and whether or not they were being repaired. Cllr Carey will send details of the HIP to the Clerk.	
06	<b>Reports</b> Cllr Susan Carey Since March 2022, 3207 Ukrainians have found a temporary home in Kent under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 892 more are still on their way. There's been a warm welcome to the Ukrainian refugees in Kent and we host more than any other county. The initial scheme was for people to host for up to six months but with the war still under way the scheme has continued. Not everyone has been able to offer accommodation for longer than six months and new hosts are needed for those Ukrainians already here and those on the way. There's information about how to take part in <i>Homes for Ukraine</i> and the payments for doing so on <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a> <u><a href="#">Whether it's a room, an annexe, or a second home it may be that you could help and KCC has committed to top up the Government payments until at least March 2024.</a></u> Another area where KCC has sought to be as supportive as possible has been in our payments to care providers. The council tax rise for KCC has been set at 5% but we are raising payments for home care, residential care and nursing care by between 6% and 10%. Doing this means we have to make large savings in other areas of expenditure. The consultation on community services has now finished but you can expect to see numerous consultations throughout the year. To make sure you don't miss any of these you can register at <a href="http://www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk">www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk</a> There's also a regular newsletter issued by KCC which you can sign up to at <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a> and this includes alerts when policies and proposals are open for comment. Every autumn sees	

	<p>a consultation on KCC's budget, and the results of this help shape the budget. There's always been strong support for care of the elderly and child protection to be the top priorities, but the consultation provides the opportunity for everyone to have their say.</p> <p>The Government has announced an extra £200m funding to local government for potholes which should mean around £6m for roads in Kent. Kent has over 5,000 miles of road and we could easily use the whole £200m. We do of course keep asking for more, but we are also trialling new types of road surface that use graphene and other technical innovations to reduce costs and extend the life of the road surface. The challenge of keeping our roads in good condition is made greater by the dramatic increase in the number of times utility companies dig up our roads to lay new broadband fibre or replace their cables and pipes. As well as the inconvenience of the road closures, the road itself is inevitably compromised whenever it is disturbed this way. KCC councillors have asked our Highways officers to find ways to reduce the frequency and duration of these closures. As ever, you can help by reporting potholes, fallen trees or other damage on our roads to <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk">www.kent.gov.uk</a> (look for the highways section and use the interactive map to pinpoint the location) or ring 03000 41 81 81. In either case you'll be given a reference number which will help should the issue need chasing.</p> <p>Please remember there is help available for individuals and families struggling to pay bills (including council tax) and a useful place to look is on the KCC website under the 'Kent Together' banner or ring 03000 41 92 92. There's also help for those who need someone to talk to. 'Release the Pressure' has trained counsellors on 0800 107 0160 or text the word KENT to 85258. This service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.</p> <p>Despite the financial challenges there's still much good work going on and one example of this is a project I've been much involved in. KCC has now run two rounds of SolarTogether which uses collective buying power to secure a better price for solar panels and battery storage than an individual could obtain for themselves. Over 1,500 Kent households have taken part in round two (up sixfold on round one) and round three launched on 20 March. Those registering an interest can expect to receive a quote in June and they then have four weeks to accept it or not. You may receive a mailing about this and there will be information on the KCC website. I took part in round one myself and found the process very straightforward. Rooftop solar is an increasingly attractive option and SolarTogether can help make it more affordable.</p> <p>Cllr David Godfrey</p> <p>We have all had or are about to receive our 2023/4 Council Tax bills. Notwithstanding considerable inflationary pressures FHDC, which accounts for approx. 16% of the bill including local Parish precepts, has managed to limit its increase to 2.97% which equates to less than 20p per week for a Band D property. Whilst the Council expects to maintain its core services some non-mandatory services and regeneration projects will need to be scaled back.</p> <p>We have recently revamped our website and hopefully this will make it easier for residents to navigate. I am also pleased to report that some 35000 residents have signed up to the My Account service enabling them to access their Council services/</p> <p>This comes on the back of the new Housing online service allowing council tenants to access view and update information about their tenancies and properties.</p> <p>As you will know we have elections coming up so good luck all who like myself are standing again.</p> <p>Community Warden Gary Harrison No report received</p> <p>PCSO Nicholas Hazell No report received</p>	
07	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>To note applications decided and pending since the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November</p> <p><b>Decided</b></p> <p>Ref: 23/0031/FH Old Kent Cottage  <b>Proposal:</b> Repairs to the north elevation timber frame etc.  <b>Status:</b> Approved with conditions</p> <p><b>Pending</b></p> <p>Ref: 23/0016/FH 2, Arpinge Cottages, CT18 8AQ  Erection of a log cabin to replace an existing large shed.  The Parish Councillors had no comment and raised no objections.</p>	
08	<p><b>Financial report</b></p> <p>The bank reconciliation up to the end of February has been circulated under Appendix A</p>	

	<p>To approve payments made since the last meeting as detailed on the financial statement (circulated Appendix B)</p> <p>To review the budgeting monitoring document (circulated Appendix C)</p> <p>Payments to the Clerk and one other, were ratified by the Councillors</p>	
09	<p><b>Policy and procedure review</b></p> <p>Code of conduct policy...accepted...dates to be changed as appropriate, to be back at next meeting with adjustments</p> <p>Risk Assessment Policy...accepted...dates to be changed as appropriate, to be back at next meeting with adjustments</p> <p>Statement of Internal Control...to be reviewed next meeting...dates to be checked and changed as necessary,</p>	Clerk
10	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>The matter of a complaint ref. noise at the village Hall was discussed and it was resolved that it was a matter for the Village Hall to address and not the Parish Council. Complainants could complain about noise via the Environmental Health Officer. Clerk to reply to letter of complaint and copy reply to the Chairman.</p>	Clerk
11	<p><b>Any other business.</b></p> <p>Kissing gates to be collected from Brabourne. They are to be collected from Brabourne on a specific day and at a specific time; this will involve extra costing. Cost would be approx. £40. Owing to the fact that the style of one of the gates has changed, there could be a reduction in the installation cost. It was agreed that the job should be carried out at the earliest date possible. Invoice will be presented after the installation.</p> <p>The phone box library has been well used and is now filled with books.</p> <p>Question about the tree that was due to be planted in the children's park. This was no longer going to take place.</p> <p>Parish meeting will consist of AGM first, then the Annual parish meeting. Reports will be printed and be available for parishioners to read on the night.</p>	Clerk
12	<p><b>Date of next meeting.</b></p> <p>The next parish council meeting will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in George's Barn</p>	