

**Newington and Peene  
AGM and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Held at**

**Barn starting at 7pm**

**Attended by:** Councillor John Neale MBE (Chair)  
Councillor Sarah Wright (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor David Gilbert  
Councillor David Godfrey  
FHDC James Butcher

**Clerk:** Jean Gilham

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies Received</b> – None	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration</b> of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and Other Significant Interests (OSI) relating to items on the agenda – None	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> – held on 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 circulated prior to meeting. Signed by Cllr. John Neale as a true record.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Election of Chair</b> Cllr. Sarah Wright proposed – Cllr. John Neale MBE Seconded – Cllr. David Godfrey Vote – Carried	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Election of Vice-Chair</b> Cllr. John Neale MBE proposed – Cllr. Sarah Wright Seconded – Cllr. David Gilbert Vote – Carried	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters arising from meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b> <b>6.1 Broken Gates</b> – awaiting allocation. <b>6.2 ROSPA repairs</b> – completed and account paid <b>6.3 Local Government Reorganisation</b> – still out for consultation <b>6.4 Telephone Box/Library</b> – redecoration of exterior completed. Cllr. John Neale has been asked by a local resident if he can make a handmade sign for the Telephone Box/Library. Agreed by all in attendance. Cllr John Neale has offered to paint the crown (top of the telephone box) in gold coloured paint. <b>6.5 Bollards in Peene</b> – a member of the Parish Council will check to see if the bollard which was removed has been reinstated. Cllr. James Butcher will email the Clerk when more details are available.	
	<b>6.6 Rugby Club</b> – Speeding outside the Rugby club/Bargrove Cottages. The average speed monitored along this stretch of road was 39 mph which is just inside the speed limit of 40mph. A highways improvement plan should be carried out to assist any recommendation for lowering the speed limit or for any traffic calming arrangements to be put in place around this area to ensure the safety of residents and children. <b>6.7 Parish Online Mapping Service</b> – the Clerk sent details on accessing this service on 10 <sup>th</sup> April. All Councillors to review and discuss at the July meeting.	<b>All</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Open Session/Public Participation</b> – none	

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<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Reports</b>  <b>FHDC James Butcher</b> – see appendix A  All other reports were given at the Annual Parish Meeting</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Planning</b> – 25/1491/FH Retrospective Listed Building Consent – refused.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Financial Items</b> – all bank statements and bank reconciliation statements were circulated prior to meeting. All items relating to the 2025-26 Audit were also circulated to the Parish Councillors prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>10.1 March 2026</b> – bank reconciliation form signed by Cllr. John Neale MBE (Chair) and Jean Gilham (Clerk).</p> <p><b>10.2 April 2026</b> – bank reconciliation form signed by Cllr. John Neale MBE (Chair) and Jean Gilham (Clerk).</p> <p><b>10.3a To approve the Certificate of Exemption</b> - Approved by the Parish Council. Signed by Cllr. John Neale MBE (Chair) and Clerk Jean Gilham</p> <p><b>10.3b To approve the Annual Governance Statement</b> – Approved by the Parish Council. Signed by Cllr. John Neale MBE (Chair) and Clerk Jean Gilham</p> <p><b>10.3c To approve the Accounting Statement 2025-26</b> – the statement was approved by the Parish Council. Signed by Cllr. John Neale MBE (Chair) and Clerk Jean Gilham.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Report was reviewed with no comments being noted.</p> <p>The Clerk informed the Parish Council of the dates relating to the exercise of Public Rights (commencing June 10<sup>th</sup> ending on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026).</p> <p>The next Audit is booked for 14<sup>th</sup> April 2027</p> <p>All relevant documents to be emailed to Mazars by the Clerk</p> <p>All relevant documents to be uploaded to the Website by the Clerk</p> <p><b>10.4 2025-26 VAT reclaim</b> – has been sent to HMRC by the Clerk, awaiting payment/information.</p> <p><b>10.5 Bank signatories</b> – all information has been accepted by the bank and amendments made to account as requested, checks will be made by the Clerk when May bank statements are sent out.</p>	<p><b>JG</b></p> <p><b>JG</b></p> <p><b>JG</b></p> <p><b>JG</b></p>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Policies and Procedures</b></p> <p><b>11.1 Homeworking Policy</b> – following discussion it was agreed that this document should be added to the Clerks Job Description rather than stand as a policy. This has been reviewed by Cllr. Sarah Wright and the Clerk and a copy emailed to the Chair for approval.</p>	<b>JG/JN</b>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>A.O.B.</b></p> <p><b>Grass Verges around Peene</b> – have once again been damaged during the extended wet weather having been repaired by KCC in 2025. The Parish Council discussed the possibility of KCC Highways carrying out repairs or if this matter could be added to the broken gates issue. The Clerk to contact KCC re the verges.</p> <p><b>Correspondence via email from resident</b> – the clerk received an email this afternoon regarding the hedge/bushes which are overhanging the road at the entrance to Newington, Mr Curner is concerned that it may prove a hazard to local residents. The Parish</p>	<b>JG</b>

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<p>Council discussed this matter and concluded that these trees/bushes are on private land therefore are not subject to the Parish Councils remit to ground maintenance. The Clerk was asked to inform Mr Curner that he should contact KCC Highways and seek their help with this matter, or arrange for maintenance to be undertaken privately.</p> <p><b>Bus Stop on Folkestone side of A20</b> – FHDC James Butcher informed the Parish Council that a new waste bin will be installed at the bus stop and that it will be emptied by the waste collection team.</p>	<b>JG</b>
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There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.55pm

**Date of next meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

**Venue – Georges Barn**

**Start time – 7pm**

**A copy of these and all other minutes can be found on the Parish Council website at**

**[www.newingtonandpeene-pc.gov.uk](http://www.newingtonandpeene-pc.gov.uk)**

**Appendix A –**

**Newington & Peene Parish Council**

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**District Council Report – Cllr James Butcher**

**The local economy**

Growing the local economy is one of the central themes of the District Council’s new corporate plan, and F&HDC has commissioned an appraisal of the economic opportunities and challenges across the different areas of the district – including the North Downs. As part of the process, we held a meeting at the Hawkinge Community Centre to capture ideas about the particular issues in our part of the district (e.g. public transport). The report is due to be published shortly.

Last year the District Council launched a programme to support high street and rural businesses with the challenges of the 21st century retail environment, with about 50 businesses across the district participating. And once the Folkestone – a Brighter Future works are completed at the end of the summer, the focus will shift to bringing more life and activity to the town centre, with the recruitment of a town centre manager who will oversee a year-round programme of markets and live events.

**Southern Water**

After a sustained campaign by the Stakeholder Group, which F&HDC lead, Southern Water have now increased their planned investment in local infrastructure from £11m to £42m – a very welcome, if belated, recognition of the scale of the problem. The investment will include “increasing pump capacity at Range Road and West Hythe to reduce storm overflow releases” and “Sewer sealing to reduce the impact of high groundwater on the sewer network system, specifically to reduce the risk of pollution in villages such as Elham, Lyminge and Peene.”

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## **Tourism**

Tourism is one of the significant economic sectors for our district: millions of people visit each year, spending £269m locally, which supports about 5,000 jobs. We work with local tourism businesses through the District Tourism Board to make sure we focus our limited resources on what matters to them – recently we ran a “shoulder season” campaign to attract people to the district in the quieter months of the year.

A North Downs tourism map has just been published highlighting visitor attractions in this part of the district (including the Elham Valley Line Trust Museum) and the council continues to develop [folkestoneandhythe.co.uk](http://folkestoneandhythe.co.uk) – the district’s tourism website.

We’re waiting to hear the outcome of a bid for UNESCO Geopark status for the unique chalk landscape of the North Downs that extends under the Channel to the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d’Opale in France. Whether the bid is successful or not, there are all sorts of opportunities to encourage visitors who have an interest in landscape and ecology to visit our area, and the district council is starting a project to work with local businesses on more sustainable approaches to tourism.

## **Housing**

Building more council homes is another of the priorities in the F&HDC Corporate Plan: since 2023 Over 100 council homes have been delivered or are in the immediate pipeline, with many more to come over the next couple of years. Meanwhile the District Council is investing £5m into expanding its stock of temporary accommodation, which will see at least 20 properties bought to be used for homeless households in the district. Using council-owned properties as temporary accommodation reduces the reliance on private, nightly-let temporary accommodation and is much more cost-effective in the long term.

## **Public engagement**

The F&HDC Corporate Plan includes a commitment to develop new ways of engaging with people and ensuring that everyone has the chance to be heard, particularly young people. As a result, we’ve established a Youth Forum to consult with representatives from all the secondary schools in the district about their ideas for the future. The Youth Forum meets in the council chamber with F&HDC officers and district councillors. The March meeting focused on the Leas Coastal Park improvements, the Hythe swimming pool, litter & recycling, and the Town of Culture bid. One attendee commented: “I like the feeling of being heard.”

Locally we set up the North Downs Forum to bring together community groups, local councillors, small businesses, and interested individuals, sharing ideas and expertise, and getting a stronger voice for our rural and town communities at the District Council. Previous meetings have focused on the local economy, tourism (leading to the North Downs map highlighted above), local food production and biodiversity, social isolation & local health services, and community energy projects. Anyone is welcome to join, so if you think you might be interested, do get in touch.

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### **Bus stop bin**

After a campaign from a local resident, a litter bin will be installed at the “Newington Turning” bus stop on the A20.

### **Funding for community projects and services**

The Rural England Prosperity Fund provides government capital grant funding for both businesses and community projects in rural areas. There are still some funds remaining, although we’re processing a lot of expressions of interest – if you’re looking for funding for a project (which has to be completed by August), you can find details at [www.folkestone.works](http://www.folkestone.works)

The first year of the F&HDC Green Grant scheme supported almost 40 organisations with grants ranging from a few hundred pounds to £20,000 to support biodiversity and sustainability projects. The second round of the scheme was launched last week at the Sustainable Futures Forum. This is a network that brings together community groups and businesses to share information and support each other’s projects. For example, local firm AW Construction finds ways to avoid sending leftover building materials to landfill, something the Hawkinge Allotments were able to benefit from in resourcing one of their projects.

Each year district councillors have had a ward grant budget of £3k to help fund local community projects, and F&HDC are now increasing that budget to £5k. Last year I supported the refurbishment of the telephone box library - do get in touch if you have a project, you think we could help with. This year’s scheme will open on 18th May, with details on the F&HDC website.

In addition, the District Council continues to fund a wide range of community groups and services like the local community hubs that provide low-cost meals, food and fuel vouchers, digital support, and warm spaces for vulnerable people, and Citizens Advice which helps people with information on debt and benefits, housing, consumer rights, legal matters, immigration and employment queries.

Finally, F&HDC previously introduced a 100% council tax premium on second homes and on homes that have been left empty for over a year. The District Council have decided to use the extra funding to provide a 100% discount for working-age households on the very lowest incomes, to match the government-mandated scheme for those of pensionable age.