

**Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm**

Minutes of Meeting

Present: John Neale MBE – Chair
Sarah Wright – Vice Chair
David Godfrey
James Butcher – FHDC
Melanie Wrigley – PCC member The Friends of St. Nicholas Church

Clerk: Jean Gilham

1. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair – John Neale MBE
2. Apologies for absence – none given
3. Approval of minutes from 2025 meeting (circulated prior to meeting) signed as a true record of the meeting.
4. Annual report from the Chair – see Appendix A
5. Annual reports were invited from –
 - KCC Chris Hesse – see Appendix B
 - FHDC David Godfrey – see Appendix C
 - PC George Brance – no report received
 - Newington Village Hall – no report received
 - Elham Valley Trust Line – See Appendix D
 - Friends of St. Nicholas Church – See Appendix E
 - Newington Gardeners Association – See Appendix F
6. To receive any matters of interest or concern to the Parish of Newington from the electors of the Parish –
 - Use of the Village Hall Car Park by Visitors to the Church or Elham Valley Trust, there are occasions when additional parking is needed to accommodate visitor to either the Church or Elham Valley Trust it is hoped that parking at the Village Hall may be found if they have no events ongoing.
 - Gardeners Association – have raised the amount of £820 during 2025 for their chosen charities which were The Rainbow Centre and Hythe Pantry.
 - Elham Valley Line Trust – a comprehensive list of events carried out during 2025-26 can be found in appendix D. The Parish Council expressed their thanks for the continued use of Georges Barn for their meetings.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.55pm

Date of the next Annual Parish Meeting: 10th May 2027
Time 6.30pm
Venue: Georges Barn

**Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm**

**Appendix A
Newington and Peene Chairman's report, End of March 2026**

Yet another year has passed and we now have our core of Parish Councillors. We all seem to be working well together David Gilbert joined us this time last year and he's been a real asset to our small team, with plenty of local knowledge, I along with other counsellors are very grateful.

Last year I reported we no longer had a local community warden or police officer in our Parish. I'm happy to report we now have PC George Brace who we all know and has been kind enough to attend several meetings this year. He has been able to advise us on several issues that we had have concerns about in the village.

Last year we saw an election for KCC. After many years of being served by Susan Cary she decided not to stand and a new KCC Councillor for our area was elected. We welcomed Christopher Hespe to number of the meetings and I have worked with Chris on a number of issues already, I look forward to working with him in the future.

We have our two Folkestone and Hythe councillors to the area, attend most of our Parish Council meetings and I would like to thank both Stephen Scoffham and James Butcher for their support in the parish, particularly for help funding new goal posts and the painting of the phone box/library which I'm pleased to announce was completed last week.

Concerns over potholes still seem to be on the agenda but I am pleased to announce that the road between Beachborough and Hythe along Bargrove has being repaired in the last year with a section being completely resurfaced, unfortunately this has caused another problem with Cars speeding along on the newly surfaced road. Chris has passed our concerns onto a colleague Lezanne Cesar, Community engagement officer road safety and active travel group. She has told me that after looking at data the average speed along the road from Hythe to Beachborough is 38.81 mph so under the limit of 40 so there is little she can do. She is happy to meet with me/us to discuss further. I will be in touch with the rugby club regarding this issue.

I reported last year that the new EU entry exit system (EES) has been delayed. It is now being used throughout Europe, but on a recent visit to Spain Alicante Airport. The system would not recognise my passport so I was stamped in as per usual. I understand it is also not working at either Euro tunnel or the Port of Dover due to connection issues with France, (who'd have thought it.)

Operation Brock has been enforced a couple of times this year, and seems to have prevented any buildup of traffic around the area. I drove past the entire length on several occasions counting five Lorry's along the whole stretch on one journey and not many more on the other trips.

Our gardening contract which is one of our most expensive costs seems to be going well. The field looks in tiptop condition and the contract has just over a year to run. I do fear that the cost of the next contract will be considerably more particularly due to world events and the cost of fuel. As mentioned earlier the new Goal posts seems to be popular and it's great to see youngsters out kicking balls and off their phones!

**Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm**

I have received a email from Open reach to inform me that we will at last be getting fibre in our area. Hopefully this will be a much faster Internet service which has been promised to us for many years! (I have previously written to KCC and MPs) The road in Bargrove will be closed for a few days at the end of June for these works to be started.

The Parish Council bought a Poppy wreath which was laid during the remembrance ceremony at the war memorial which again was well attended. My family had a visit from Germany. My son's German girlfriend was pleased to attend a laid a wreath on behalf of the Bargrove residence, time is a great healer.

I would once again a like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their support and special thanks to Sarah, my vice chair and Jean, our Clerk who now has things under control.

Thank you

Counsellor John Neale MBE

Appendix B

Kent County Councillor Annual Report for Parish and Town Councils. 14 April 2026

With many Parish Councils in Elham Valley (there are 16!) holding their annual meetings around this time, it may be opportune to reflect on my first year as a County Councillor.

My role is to ensure good quality services are provided at County and local level, whilst representing the 20,000 residents of Elham Valley. I have been welcomed in so many places, and I would like to thank you for that. The County Council is the largest in England, is hugely complex and has a net spend of approximately £1.6 billion. I will write a future newsletter outlining the breadth and reach of KCC, but for the time being you may be interested to hear what the first year of the new administration at County Hall has achieved:

Money

We inherited a dreadful financial position from the previous administration, but in the year we have reduced debt by £114 million and debt interest paid by £3,362 per day. We managed to set a Council Tax increase lower than 86% of County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils in England. Across the year, we made £115 million savings and re-prioritised future spend of £39.5 million.

A budget for 2026/27 has been set with no extra borrowings, a net increase in reserves, and increased spending for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment, Highways and Transport.

Putting Kent First

For Local Government Reorganisation, we devised an option for local government to save Kent taxpayers £450 million over 10 years.

We produced 'Reforming Kent'; a plan setting out Kent's priorities.

The Council scrapped the 'Climate Emergency Declaration' and subsequent need to spend and achieve Net Zero by 2030. We declared an 'Illegal Migration Emergency' in Kent to

Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm

highlight cost and safety; and we campaigned for new nuclear provision at Dungeness; International rail services to reopen at Ashford and Ebbsfleet; and began exploration of establishing an Environment Tax for foreign lorries.

Saving Services

We overturned proposals to close 34 Libraries, close Country Parks, lose 35 Community Wardens, discontinue with School Crossing Staff and close four Household Waste Centres, which had all been threatened by the previous administration.

Education Services

We struggled with the increasing cost of special educational needs, and reducing costs of home to school transport proved to be an ongoing problem. But overall, 98% of Early Years settings were deemed 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and 96% of pupils obtained a place at one of their preferred schools.

Businesses

We were keen to support Kent businesses, so we produced Kent's first Commercial Strategy, provided enhanced support for 500 Kent supplier companies, and awarded £55 million more value of contracts to Kent companies. More than 1,100 businesses were assisted via the Kent and Medway Growth Hub.

Roads

Like all areas in the UK, our roads suffered during the 'freeze/thaw' of Winter. The surfaces were patched on a temporary basis, but we can usually only provide a good repair in dryer weather. We spent a record amount on pothole repairs (£67 million) and filled in the region of 50,000 potholes, which is a significant increase on previous years. We re-tendered for a new contractor, and Ringway will commence in May 2026. The heavy rainfall posed drainage problems, particularly in Elham and Ottinge33, although we did manage to clear more than 85,000 gullies across the County. Significant road improvements were made during the year, including Spitfire Way in Hawkinge, the High Street in Etchinghill and the B2086 (Stone Street) near Petham and Stanford.

Other Services

We carried out nearly 7,000 weddings and civil ceremonies, welcomed 2.7 million visitors to libraries and 1.2 million to country parks. Some 99.6% of municipal waste was diverted from landfill and the Council dealt with well over 650,000 tonnes of waste.

Member Community Grants

Grants were issued to a number of organisations in Elham Valley, including MCA Dance for Special Needs; Hawkinge Community Events for Summer, Halloween and Christmas events; Elham Valley Cricket Club; Sellindge and District Bowls Club and Shepway Wanderers FC Disability.

**Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm**

The Next Year

I am committed to protecting valued services and ensuring your money is spent wisely. We will have tighter contracts and greater value for money, and I will seek to ensure that Elham Valley residents' needs are addressed by KCC.

Chris Hespe

**Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley, and Cabinet Member for Local Government
Efficiency and Reorganisation**

Appendix C

Report from District Councillor David Godfrey (Conservative)

As a back bencher of a minority group, I have less influence over Council Policy than my fellow Ward Councillors who are both Cabinet Members (Green Party). Generally, we work well together and reach a consensus although there are occasions where I have voted against proposals put at full Council albeit, always outvoted but that is Democracy. I also sit on one of the Councils Scrutiny committees which gives us the opportunity to challenge Council decisions.

As residents will know we are currently undergoing Local Government Re-organisation which will disband existing District and borough Councils and establish larger Unitary groups. We are awaiting the Governments decision on FHDC preference to join with Dover, Thanet, Ashford and Canterbury. Reform led KCC have a very different view on how LGR should be determined so the Governments decision is eagerly awaited.

My main concern with the current administration is the endless delays to the Otterpool Park Garden Town development for which consent and support was won by the previous Conservative Administration when I was a Cabinet Member. Although originally voting against Otterpool the current Green and Labour groups now recognise that Otterpool should bring significant benefits to our District but at this time I fear those benefits may be diminished by constant delays.

I have used my 2025/26 Ward budget supporting projects throughout the Ward including King George V field, Hawkinge Men's Shed and Summerfest and the Early years project, I am pleased to advise that our members Ward budget allowance for 2026/27 has been increased to £5000 Applications can be made from 18th May on the FHDC website.

I have now represented the district continuously since 2007 and at this time will not be seeking re-election at the end of the current term which ends in May 2027 and wish to thank all residents who have supported me through the years.

Appendix D

The Elham Valley Line Trust - Chairman's Report for 2025

What a year this has been - it seems to me at least, to have flown by.

A bit of a late start with Easter being late, which was quite useful as we had emails flying back and forth about the wording for the new signboard at our main gate!

Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm

Fortunately, having replaced the wood on which it was to be placed and with help from Sign Graphics the new sign was up in time for opening - even if the screws were not all in place!

So that was our start for the new year with a new name: The Elham Valley Line Heritage Centre.

Then into our Easter Bunny Hunt of four days - on the trot for some of the team, followed very shortly by the Miniature Steam Weekend. The first time with a resident miniature traction engine.

Just a couple of weeks later came the Military Weekend. This year for the first time not only did we have the Desert Rats on the Duck Lawn but also a German patrol on the Tunnel Lawn! Also, this year were more display stands, one of which was based on the Home Front. These additions proved to be very popular.

All the while since the middle of January, in the background on Tuesdays, general maintenance and repairs were being done. Work such as a new Buffer Stop outside the Station Building, final touches to the new gazebos; a new handrail in the gent's toilet to replace the old somewhat rusty looking one; the fencing at the north end of the car park was completely rebuilt and stained among hundreds of other small and not-so-small jobs. Not of course forgetting one of our major projects this year - the architect designed Porch to the Gazebos!

I must also mention that when the school holidays and half terms occur, the younger members are not stinting in the time they give to the Trust in taking on many jobs around the site from shifting road plannings, to clearing the Dipping Pond, to servicing the steam loco.

With the Grounds Maintenance - unfortunately the person who had stepped in when Matthew was unable to continue, also had to bow out. Not even the Tuesday Team could do everything, although we did manage to keep the grass under control until we were able to have a local firm, Fox & Oak to take over. They think that we have a very special place here - and of course they are right - and are very keen to be part of it as well as being a contractor.

In July the idea of a Table Top Sale was suggested. So willing to give it a go, we held that on Saturday 26th. I don't think any fortunes were made but it brought some extra funds into the Centre.

July also saw our Volunteers' Barbecue when we invited all our regular volunteers to come for the evening - food provided, but if you were really hungry you could buy extra sausages and burgers!! Sarah, who we had welcomed to join the Crafters in the Barn this year had persuaded her partner to operate the barbecue - thank you, Dan.

Sadly, in July, after a long period of declining health we lost our very own Old Woodcarver, John Wise. He leaves a big hole in the atmosphere of the Barn, but also many memories, some of which have been shared on the Memory Board. This was set up by the other craftspeople in the Barn for the special wake we held to remember

Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm

both John and Joan who had died earlier and we had not been able to remember properly due to the pandemic restrictions.

Almost at the same time we lost our long-term Trustee, Tony Hicks, who via his business had enabled this barn to be rebuilt here after it was dismantled and taken from its original site now under the Eurotunnel Terminal. Over the years, although he had not been able to attend many meetings in recent years, he has helped the Trust, most recently paying for the repairs to the barn roof where the tiles had been damaged by storms.

In August came the Country Fair when we borrowed a large collection of sideshows from Newington Village Hall - thank you - which was another great fun weekend.

Then another new idea! The 'Queen' Tribute Evening on 5th September. Fortunately, it was a dry evening and the event was very well received! Again, we had a barbecue operated by Dan.

Then came the Annual Apple Pressing with apples provided free by Garden House Orchards in Saltwood. Once again, the Tuesday Team provided the man-power for the picking. The weekend once again proved popular although we did not get through as many apples as last year. Maybe it was because the crusher had been made more efficient with new 'teeth' earlier in the year!

As the evenings began to draw in, we held the Spooky Weekend with ghouls wandering about, skeletons a-plenty and all the staff in various costumes. It all gave an air of fun-spookiness.

Finally, to close our season, two weekends of Festive Fayres. The weather was a little on the odd side with some people getting hot in the early morning sun in the big marquee, to folk being cold in draughts in the Barn itself. The miniature railway even managed to squeeze just over 200 rides into the last Sunday afternoon, despite the earlier rain that day!

That just leaves me to say a big Thank You to all of you who have made this year such a success.

Well, not quite the end, as personally I must add my thanks to everyone who has been so kind, understanding and encouraging to me while I have been going through radiotherapy and ongoing treatment for Prostate Cancer - thank you all for being there and I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas!

Appendix E

The Parish Church of St. Nicholas' church, Newington
Friends of St. Nicholas' church

The church, both the Church Council and The Friends Group are run by volunteers. Sadly, since December 2025 five people who have supported and helped at the church for many years in various ways have died. Mrs Greta Rajadhyaska who has run the Friends Group for many years since it started in 2007 sadly passed away on 17th February, Age 90. Greta will be deeply missed by all who knew her. Greta applied for

Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm

grant funding, and managed many projects to maintain, restore and improve the church for the local community and for future generations. Over the 18 years, Greta raised about £300,000 to repair the Belfry and replace the oak shingles; renovation of the vestry into half kitchen, half vestry; build an accessible toilet; completely renovated and redecorated the interior paint work; replaced pews in the North Aisle with tables and chairs for a more usable communal area; and enabled the repair of the historic, churchyard boundary wall. We will continue to do our best to continue Greta's legacy with the Friends of St. Nicholas church group.

We need your support, please

To be able to apply for grant funding it is important we run events to raise money. In this way, we are more likely to obtain grant funding towards caring for the historic church building so that the church can be in use for the present community and for future generations for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Please become a Member of the Friends of St. Nicholas' church. Membership forms are on the table in the church. The more members the better when applying for grants,

Please come along to some of our events during the year and help promote them

Last year we had eight fund raising events. And, five church tidies where volunteers maintain the grounds and clean, dust and polish inside the church.

In 2026, we have the following events organised in the church:

Saturday 16th May - Folklore Festival, 10am to 4.30pm

Saturday 20th June - Willow Basket Weaving workshop, 10.30am to 3pm. £20 per person. Materials supplied. Limited places Please Book a place via wrigleymel150@gmail.com Refreshments for sale (towards PCC running costs)

Saturday 27th June - Sound Bath Meditation 1, 6.30pm by Sound Emergence. Let the sounds gently wash over you. Bring a yoga mat and a blanket to keep extra warm.

Friday 3rd July, 7.15pm - 'Grow your garden more naturally' Illustrated Talk by Mel Wrigley. £5 per person. Refreshments, Raffle.

Sunday 26th July, 'A Lazy Sunday Crafternoon' – 3pm to 5pm. bring a craft or hobby along to do and share. Refreshments for sale. Raffle.

Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September. A Weekend Exhibition of Amazing Architectural Drawings of the church building and internal features by the Late John Martin. Charge for entry: £4 per person. Refreshments for sale and a Plant Sale (towards PCC running costs)

Friday 16th October (evening) – Sound Bath Meditation 2, 6.30pm

Saturday 28th November – Natural Christmas Door Wreath Making Workshop (towards PCC running costs).

It costs about £12,000 a year to keep the Church open and running for services, Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.

**Newington and Peene Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 11th May 2026 in Georges Barn starting at 6.30pm**

We are a small congregation (volunteers) and would appreciate help to be able to keep the church open for the community and for future generations.

With my PCC 'hat on'....

You could also help by joining the PCCs 100 Club a monthly raffle with a small cash prize. Please contact Helen Vincent, Church Warden.

Or, make a donation to the church funds either to the PCC or to The Friends of St. Nicholas' church, Newington, Folkestone towards project funding.

Thank you
Melanie Wrigley

Appendix F

NEWINGTON AND DISTRICT GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

We have had a good year as a club but the 3 shows we have in March/July and September are always weather dependant for the plants/vegetables we show. It is either too dry or too wet and as gardeners we have to just put in the show what looks best on the day. We always manage to attract a few members of the public who are always amazed by the quality of our entries.

We have had a few new members join recently and have recently put an advert in the Folkestone Town Council community magazine, May edition, which covers 3 months, to see if we can attract more members.

We raised £820 for The Rainbow Centre/Hythe Pantry as our chosen charity last year and this year we are raising funds for Guide Dogs for the Blind. We will present a cheque at our business meeting in November. We are holding a Beetle Drive in the village hall on 2 dates this year to raise extra funds.

Our garden visit last year was to RHS Wisley and this year we are hoping to go to Great Comp on 9 August but it depends if we get enough members/guests who want to go as we have to pay for the coach and entrance and it has to be financially viable.

We think the kitchen in the village hall has been modernised to a high standard and it is great to have an urn actually plumbed in to the mains, rather than filling the old one up all the time. Thank you to everyone who contributed because we certainly appreciate the new facilities.

We now have a website: Newingtongardeners.co.uk so anyone can have a look at the forthcoming guest speakers or the classes to enter in our spring, summer an autumn shows'.

Anyone with queries can ring me on 07841 669161,

Denise Buckland Chairman