

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Newick Parish held  
at 7.30 p.m. Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
at Newick Village Hall, Western Road, Newick.**

**1. Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman of Newick Parish Council, Cllr. Brian Hodge welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Approximately 30 parishioners attended the meeting including Newick Parish Councillors: Chris Armitage, Brian Hodge (Chair), Peter Impey, David Marchant, Cathy Wickens, Mary Hughes. District Councillor Keenan was also in attendance in her capacity as both District and Parish Councillor.

The Parish Council Clerk, Emma Reece, was in attendance to take the minutes.

**2. Approval of the minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held 19th March 2025**

It was agreed that the draft minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th March 2025 should be approved as a true record of that meeting. These were published on the Newick Parish website.

**3. Chairman's report on the activities of Newick Parish Council over the past year –**

Cllr. Hodge welcomed residents and thanked them for attending. He went on to say it had been a busy and interesting year and he would be giving an outline on the activities of the Parish Council over the past 12 months and an idea of the future (and his concerns) regarding NPC.

Cllr. Hodge stated the Pavilion (being discussed later in the meeting) had taken up a significant amount of time and money in the past year. He stated there had been correspondence and meetings with East Sussex Highways to discuss parking concerns, potholes and sinkholes in the village, temporary traffic lights and the failure of some contractors to follow the rules about removing them if work not occurring overnight or at weekends.

Cllr. Hodge stated there have been meetings with Sussex Police - covering speeding and dangerous parking concerns of NPC and residents on residential roads. He went on to outline concerns following the falling of a major limb from a Manwaring Robertson oak tree which created a potential safety headache and took a long time to resolve. Cllr. Hodge talked about the wild-flower areas, stating the grass cutting contract became due for renewal during the year which gave the opportunity to consider the success or otherwise of the multi-year plan. Views were invited from residents and the grass cutting contract was renewed with areas removed or amended as a result.

Cllr. Hodge stated that the planning application to build 250 homes on Goldbridge Farm swamped the LDC website with letters of objection vastly outnumbering those in support. NPC strongly objected to the application. He stated that the NPC Planning Committee had a busy year and that Cllr Cathy Wickens would discuss this later in the meeting.

Cllr. Hodge shared serious reservations about the future of the Parish Council. Following the sad Loss of Councillor Mel Thew and resignation of Councillor Tom Whitlock, the Council currently have 9 members instead of 11. In 2027, in just over a year, the current NPC term of office expires. It is probable that at least 4, if not 5 of the current Council will not stand again leaving just 4 or 5 members of Council. He went on to say there must be a quorum of at least 4 to agree on any resolutions, if at any meeting numbers fall below 4 no decisions can be made. If too small to function, Parish Council can be suspended and functions and assets taken over by a higher authority. Currently this would be LDC but after devolution it would presumably be the Unitary authority under the Mayor. He outlined the current assets owned by NPC and highlighted potential impacts on those assets. He went on to outline the impact of having no Parish Council might have on grass cutting, allotments, planning applications, bench maintenance and staffing.

Cllr. Hodge asked residents to step up to protect the assets and services of the village, stating that being a new resident or already being very busy were not necessarily reasons not to participate.

**4. A presentation from Councillor Cathy Wickens on Planning –**

Cllr. Wickens gave an outline of recent planning legislation history and how the Newick Neighbourhood plan was created. She stated that the first National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came out in and since then there have been multiple versions of the NPPF, with a new version now currently under consultation. Cllr. Wickens showed a detailed map of planning sites in Newick and highlighted those that were included in the Newick Neighbourhood Plan. She can an overview of the sites which were not included in the plan stating that the further along Allington Road they went the less popular they were ranked by residents when the original plan was drafted. Cllr. Wickens imposed the Goldbridge Site on the map, demonstrating the outline of this planning application.

Looking to the future Cllr. Wickens stated that Newick needs to have people on the Parish Council who are passionate about planning and keeping a village a village. She stated that the rules are all changing and outlined the more positive aspects including; being plan led, spatial development strategies (infrastructure led), an encouragement of development within settlement boundaries, and a focus on gentle densification within existing settlement.

Cllr. Wickens stated that local plans are supposed to be based on standard methodologies, but where the South Downs National Park sits in the Lewes district this creates a difficulty. She stated that Brighton and Hove bid to include coastal towns in their unitary authority to help ease their own housing problems. Cllr. Wickens stated she agrees with Zoe Nicholson (leader of the District Council) when she stated that the District Council had looked everywhere at potential sites for the new Local Plan and the number they have assessed is all they can get. Cllr. Wickens stated that the Eton Town could therefore be considered again in the future.

Cllr. Wickens went on to outline how the new legislation would affect Newick. Stated that local policies and Neighbourhood plans must be can only make site allocations and deal with issues which are genuinely unique. National decision-making policies which will otherwise apply to us all. Cllr. Wickens stated protection of the environment and landscape is tokenistic. She went on to say that Councillors making planning decisions have to be fully trained which is a golden opportunity for a new fresh Council. She reverted back to the site map and appealed for new Councillors to take planning on in the future.

## **5. A presentation from Councillor Brian Hodge and Clerk Emma Reece on the renovation of the Sports Pavilion –**

The Clerk gave a brief outline of the history of the existence of a Pavilion building in Newick. A picture of the Pavilion after the 'Great Storm' in October 1987 when a tree fell on the roof was displayed. She shared a document which had been stored in the Pavilion from this process and writing which was discovered on a wooden beam stating who did the work, who was US president/UK prime minister and that bonfire had been a success the previous weekend. A picture of the extended building completed in 1988 was displayed and the Clerk gave an overview of what happened next, including maintenance issues, the building ageing, insufficient heating and air circulation and showed some pictures of the building in poor repair. She showed plans which were drawn up in 2018 for a larger building on a different site and the process of the Sports Pavilion Committee registering as a Charity (NSPCT) and securing a 30-year lease for the building. She outlined how plans for a new building stalled and how the idea of renovating the existing building was then suggested and explored.

She stated that the existing building was extensively assessed structurally, that users, residents and neighbours were surveyed, that other Pavilions were visited and this culminated in the appointment of an architect/project manager. Plans were produced and a planning application submitted and approved. The Clerk applied for £200,000 from Lewes District Council from their infrastructure monies and this application was successful.

Cllr. Hodge gave an outline of the appointment of a building company who started with the storage buildings and a series of photos of the building works progressing were displayed and were talked through. The new facilities including the kitchen, showers, light corridors, function space and kitchen were shown and highlighted. Cllr. Hodge stated that in 2026 the construction was completed with the first home match (Football) being a win for the Newick team.

He stated that the following have been achieved; sporting teams have long term access to changing facilities, improved safeguarding, roof is now watertight with new tiles at back/renovated and retiled at front, heating, insulation and air circulation, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, desirable hire space for residents needing something smaller than the Village Hall and a large terrace area for watching fixtures can also be used for marques for one off large events.

The Clerk gave an overview of spending stating that the building aspect cost approximately £600,000 excluding VAT with £575,000 to Two Build and £25,000 in other professional fees and costs. This was funded

by £364,000 from Parish Council funds, £200,000 from Lewes District Council and £36,000 from Newick Stoolball Club. Separate to the main build there was a further £18,000 in funding (£10,000 from the National Lottery and £8,000 from Go Fund Me and fundraising) this was spent on fixtures and fittings, the changing room benches, kitchen/bar equipment and furniture.

**6. A presentation from District Councillor Keenan –** Cllr. Keenan introduced herself stating she was elected as District Councillor in 2023 and has two more years of her term. Normally it would be a 4-year term but the introduction of a Unitary authority has extended this to 5 years. Cllr. Keenan gave an outline of her remit including planning, waste, dog poo, social housing and pest control (including flies). She stated she isn't in charge of potholes, but she does try to help even if not District Council remit. She stated she was happy to take any questions but there were none from the audience.

## **7. Question and Answer Session**

A member of the public (MOP) outlined concerns about parking in the village and suggested solutions including signage. Cllr. Hodge stated that the Parish Council is doing everything they can and that traffic wardens rarely come to the area but double yellow lines have been requested in two additional roads. Cllr. Hodge stated people need to be more considerate by using garages or driveways.

A MOP asked about what would happen to the annual bonfire celebrations if there was no Parish Council to give permission to use the Green? Cllr. Hodge replied it would have to go to the unitary authority who may or may not give permission.

A MOP asked if the points raised in the Chair's review of the year might be published somewhere? Cllr. Hodge replied that the next edition of the Parish Council newsletter would include the main points.

Cllr. Armitage stated he was Chair for a few years and has asked for an item on the next agenda, to discuss whether councillors should be paid an allowance in case that is attractive to applicants.

A MOP stated that with the introduction of a unitary authority the role of the Parish Councillor may change with more responsibilities and be more intense. We may have to wait and see if it changes anything.

A MOP stated that in his involvement in Newick Horticultural Society and Rootz there is a dire shortage of people putting themselves forward. He would like to see people who are starting to retire, volunteer.

A MOP gave thanks to the Parish Councillors for their hours of work and thanks to the Clerk.

There were no further questions, Councillor Hodge thanked everyone for attending.

***The meeting closed at 9.04pm***