

Newtown Parish council

Hampshire

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 7:30pm

Present: Chair – Tony Webb
Councillors - Sean Curry, Tom Reseigh and Bob Ward
24 residents

In Attendance: Clerk, Rebecca Cloke
Corinne Davis-Cooke – HCC Countryside Access

1. Welcome

Cllr Webb welcomed those present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Izett and Cllr Exelby

3. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the last parish assembly on 23rd May 2022 were approved by the meeting, proposed by Cllr Curry, seconded by Cllr Reseigh and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the 2022 Parish Assembly

Cllr Webb proposed to comment on matters arising from the prior assembly as he gave his Chairman's report.

5. Chairman's report

Cllr Webb briefed the assembled public on the work that had been carried out at the village hall and thanked Cllr Reseigh and the trustees of the village hall for the work that had been put in to make the improvements. Cllr Webb urged the community to support village hall events such as the upcoming quiz night, to help to maintain the upkeep of the hall.

Cllr Webb briefed the public that the Parish Council would continue to press Hampshire County Council to carry out the works identified in the recent tree survey on the common.

Cllr Webb outlined the work that was being carried out by the Parish Council on the common bylaws. It had been identified that they had not been reviewed or updated in over 50 years. Cllr Webb outlined the history of the devolved management of the Parish Council for the common but that Hampshire and Basingstoke and Deane were still responsible for different aspects such as trees (HCC) and bylaws (B&D).

A member of the public requested that there be a note in the Parish magazine to outline the bylaws to new residents. Cllr Webb undertook to carry this out.

A member of the public queried whether the Parish Council had considered adopting a Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Webb briefed that it had been considered at length but that with B&D unable to identify an adequate land supply, the benefits were marginal and that the Parish Council did not have the manpower or resources to carry it out. Cllr Webb suggested that anyone who was willing to assist or take on this project to get in contact with the Parish Clerk.

Cllr Webb further briefed the public that at the meeting prior to the Assembly, it had been agreed that the Parish Council would invest in upgrading the PC website and that each Parish Councillor would have a bespoke council email address that would be used for all council correspondence. The new website would have the facility to be able to register for local updates so that items such as the annual newsletter could be communicated electronically.

6. Report from County Councillor, Cllr Thacker

Not present

7. Report from County PCSO, Kieron Venn

Not present

8. Report from Corinne Davis-Cooke, HCC Countryside Access

Corinne introduced herself and outline the work that HCC Countryside Access does to make the countryside more accessible and to build a large work force of volunteers to help with projects.

She outlined the project to remove obstacles, such as stiles, from wayfairs and stated that a ditch crossing would be HCC's responsibility but that a stile was the landowners responsibility. Funds to replace stiles with gates could be accessed from HCC.

Corinne outline the need for everyone to report rights of way issues using the reporting tool on HCC website. Pictures and "What 3 words" location references are useful.

She urged residents to sign up to be path wardens.

A member of the public queried if children could get involved and whether HCC Countryside Access would speak to schools. Corinne said as long as they were accompanied by an adult and the clerk committed to forward Corinne's email address to liaise directly regarding the query regarding schools.

9. Open Forum

A member of the public raised the threat to power lines caused by leaning trees. Cllr Curry stated that HCC had surveyed the trees and had committed to remove some trees. IF there were further trees that required action, we would need to report these separately to HCC, who will survey them. The member of the public was asked to email the Clerk stating tree location and concern for the Parish Council to be able to take action.

A member of the public queried why there were a lot of new electrical lines going up locally. They had contacted the electrical board who had stated that the council would need to be contacted. The member of public was asked to email the Clerk with the details.

A member of public asked about the track to the village hall being reopened and the risk to walkers and children when cars or other vehicles (such as an oil tanker) turn out onto the road on a blind bend. Cllr Reseigh stated that the track was never closed but that it had been recently cleared since the builder for Stanly John (Sage Cottage) had used it during the building works. Cllr Reseigh agreed he would report it to HCC.

A member of the public stated that traffic in general was becoming more of a problem with increased volume and driving much faster. It was stated that the Parish Council was looking into signage.

A member of the public queried what Sparsholt College students did on the common. Cllr Curry stated that they carry out work outlined in the winter work plan.

A member of the public stated that since more trees were being removed, there was more of an issue with water run off and noise and Cllr Curry undertook to look into this issue. Cllr Curry stated that in general the CMC try to stay 20m away from residents boundaries and the only trees that are felled are those that are not native, to to allow native varieties to flourish.

The member of the public stated that they were enormously grateful for the work that has been carried out to improve the common.

Cllr Curry stated that Simon Melville is a huge asset to the Parish Council as he is so knowledgeable and gives up so much of his free time to the management.

A member of the public stated their thanks for the continued campaigning of the Parish Council regarding the pot holes. Cllr Webb stated the PC would continue to try to hold HCC to account and to continue to forward reported ticket numbers to the Clerk for collation.

10. Close

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 20:35.

Signed

Dated