

Newtown Parish council
Hampshire
www.newtown-pc.org.uk

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7:30pm

Present: Chair – Tony Webb
Councillors - Sean Curry, Tom Reseigh and Jo Exelby
17 residents

In Attendance: Clerk, Rebecca Cloke
Cllr Tom Thacker (HCC)

1. Welcome

Cllr Webb welcomed those present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Izett and PC Simon Denton

3. Approval of minutes

The minutes of the last parish assembly on 22nd May 2023 were approved by the meeting, proposed by Cllr Curry, seconded by Cllr Reseigh and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the 2023 Parish Assembly

None

5. Chairman's report

Cllr Webb briefed the assembled public on the planned intention to raise the issue of the Horris Hill junction at the B4640 with Hampshire Highways. This followed concerns being raised to the Parish Council, about the layout of the junction and the increased usage. Cllr Webb explained to the public that the land was common land and was not the original intended access route to the school. He stated that he had requested that Horris Hill lead this review but that they declined the request.

Cllr Webb stated that the Parish Council was actively looking to recruit councillors and referred to the flyer that had been distributed with the annual newsletter. Cllr Webb outlined the role and asked that anyone considering the position to get in contact with the Clerk.

Cllr Webb stated he intended to resign after 11 years of being a councillor. He outlined the projects that he had been involved in over the years such as high speed broadband, establishing Hampshire's tree responsibility on the common and highway issues.

Cllr Webb described his disappointment at the development that had been approved within the village in recent years and how disproportionate it was for a small village such as Newtown.

6. Report from County Councillor, Cllr Thacker

Cllr Thacker introduced himself and explained that he had been Newtown's county councillor since 2009 and stated he intended to re-stand at the 2025 election. He stated he had 10 parishes within his area.

Cllr Thacker outlined the financial position of Hampshire County Council and stated he supported the council's intention to focus spend on schools, elderly and vulnerable. He stated that the council were receiving less funding from central government but were expected to fulfil more adult and social care responsibilities that had been divested from the NHS.

Cllr Thacker stated that HCC had had to use reserves to maintain essential services this year and were two years from having to declare bankruptcy. HCC were actively looking at what cuts can be made to try to reduce outgoings. Cllr Thacker stated he would not support cuts to Highways funding, social care, homeless and adult social care.

Cllr Thacker outlined the different methods the council used for road repairs such as pot hole filling. He stated that he was committed to ensuring that the council better communicated regarding its highway repairs and hoped to see a better reporting tool rolled out in the near future. He stated that he understood residents' frustration regarding seemingly temporary repairs and when one pothole was fixed but another very close was left. He pledged to support residents by looking onto issues if not resolved following raising a ticket with Hampshire Highways.

Cllr Reseigh outlined the issue that had occurred on the C45 when the road was closed for works to the spring water leak, Hampshire Highways had arrived on site but did not commence work and then left. A member of the public stated that school transport had been cancelled too because of the road closure. Cllr Thacker acknowledged that communication needed to improve.

Cllr Webb stated that the service he had personally received from Hampshire's adult social care in recent times was outstanding and thanked Cllr Thacker.

Cllr Thacker outlined that he had been pleased to be able to allocate some of his Councillor grant towards the repairs of Jonathan Hill car park recently.
(See appendix 1 for Cllr Thacker's full report)

7. Report from Borough Councillor, Cllr Izzett

Not present – report sent

Cllr Webb outlined Cllr Izzett's report regarding matters such as the recent Borough election, highways issues within the borough and planning issues.

(See appendix 2 for Cllr Izzett's full report)

8. Report from CSPO, Drew Mechen

Not present

9. Open Forum

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.

A member of the public asked why the Parish Council had allowed the level of development in the village. Cllr Webb stated that the Parish Council had objected to every planning application that had arisen for new houses but that Basingstoke and Deane’s lack of land supply had resulted in every application being granted either at application stage or at appeal to the Planning Inspectorate stage. Cllr Webb reminded the public that Basingstoke and Deane are the planning authority and hoped that the new legislation regarding the reduced land supply requirement would help with future applications.

A member of the public stated they were surprised there had been no consideration of historical sites when planning applications were considered.

A member of public queried why a swing that her son had installed on a tree on the common had been removed. The Parish Council stated that they had not removed the swing, nor knew who had.

10. Close

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

Cllr Reseigh expressed sincere thanks, on behalf of the residents of Newtown, to Tony Webb and his years of dedication to the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 20:25.

Signed.....

Dated.....

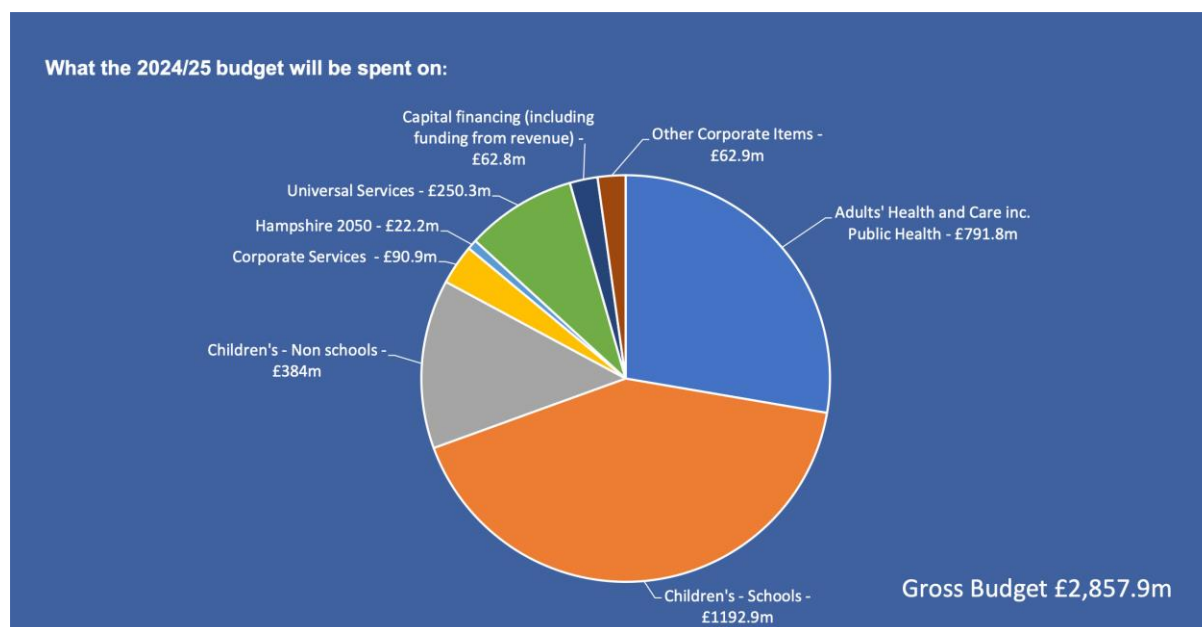
Appendix 1

Hampshire County Councillor: Annual Report 2023-2024

HCC budget 2024-25/2025-26

Revenue budget

The County Council's budget for the next financial year has been approved by the council. This budget covers £2.6 billion of public spending on the ongoing delivery of important local services to Hampshire's 1.4 million residents.



Our projections show that while we will be able to balance our budget for the next two years, by 2026 there will be an anticipated shortfall of £132 million. We therefore are looking to find ways to bridge that gap should support from Government not be forthcoming.

HCC has consulted over proposals covering how we would deliver:

1. **Adult social care charges**
2. **Adult social care grant schemes**
3. **Competitive (one-off) grant schemes**
4. **Hampshire Cultural Trust grant**
5. **Highways maintenance**
6. **Highways winter service**
7. **Homelessness Support Services:**
8. **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)**
9. **Library stock**
10. **Passenger transport**
11. **Rural countryside parking**
12. **School Crossing Patrols**
13. **Street lighting**

Timeline:

January – March 2024 Consultation

June 2024 Select Committee Scrutiny

July 2024 Consultation

From April 2025 Implementation

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/future-services-consultation>

Capital programme

The County Council also approved the spending of £880.6 million over the next three years on capital programs, to help boost jobs and the local economy, the quality of the environment and contribute towards the County Council's commitment to tackling climate change. This brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire to £1.4 billion.

Transforming in-house care for older people The County Council operates in-house care homes for older people and will invest **£173m** on new specialist nursing and complex dementia care, as well as short term pre-and post-hospital support, to better meet the needs of the county's ageing population. It will increase the overall number of beds available to local people from 900 to 1,000, within a network of 13 homes. Approving these plans secures the long-term future of our in-house homes ensuring they remain in the council's ownership.

Local matters 2023/2024

Highways

Lots of potholes had to be filled.

Surface repairs and patching (as at 12 April 2024)

- **A343, north of Highclere – completed**
- **Whitchurch Town approaches to the railway station - completed**
- **Tufton Lane - patched**
- **Kingclere – planned/in progress**
- **Foxs Lane, Highclere - planned/ in progress**
- **Harroway – planned/ in progress**

Major road degradation issue on the roads in and around St Mary Bourne because of the tankers – raised with HCC, whose management have responded that legislation allows a Highway Authority to recharge any costs incurred to repair damage caused as a result of works undertaken by a utility company. Southern Water are aware of this legislation and do work ed with the County Council on covering the costs of highway repairs that can be attributed to their actions. Highway officers will be inspecting the roads in the vicinity and the process outlined used as and when appropriate.

The Drove, Crux Easton – repairs have been delayed due to adverse weather. Update requested.

Carriageway water issues on Harts Lane – jetting planned for end of May.

Carriageway water issue on Well St - further structural work planned for autumn 2024.

County Councillor Grants

My annual devolved Councillor Grant pot is for projects or events across the Whitchurch and the Cleres Division. Please contact me if you have a project or event that will benefit residents. In the meantime, please see the list of projects that benefitted from my grant funding last year:

My £8000 Councillor Devolved Grant Budget for the financial year 23/2024 was shared amongst the following 12 projects.

Applicant	Project
Burghclere Parish Council	Coronation party
Whitchurch parish fete	Whitchurch Parish Fete
Whitchurch In Bloom	Whitchurch In Bloom Infrastructure Upgrade
Whitchurch Conservation Group	Whitchurch Children's Festival 2023 - places for free school meal children
Busy Bees Preschool (Kingsclere)	Busy Bees Recovery and Sustainability Project
North Hampshire Cruse Bereavement Support	Providing specialist 1:1 Bereavement Support to reduce waiting list
Kingsclere Village Club	Updated Electrical Infrastructure Project
Whitchurch In Bloom	Whitchurch in Bloom - Workhorse Truck
Whitchurch Conservation Group	Whitchurch Arts and Crafts Festival website
St Mary Bourne Bowling Club	Training for new Green Maintenance Team
Newtown Parish Council	Jonathan Hill car park repairs
The Westridge Trust	To replace a broken Memorial Bench & install a new Westridge Studio sign

Tom Thacker
Hampshire County Councillor
Whitchurch and the Cleres Division

Appendix 2 – Cllr Izzett's Borough Councillor report

Dear Councillors and parish residents, I am sorry not to be present tonight but I have been obliged to attend an important meeting in Basingstoke that I had thought I could attend by Zoom but it turns out that to be eligible to vote I have to be present.

The first matter I would highlight is the recent borough elections held on 2nd May. In the case of Evingar Ward in which this parish sits, Conservative candidate Johanna Perry was elected to represent you. She joins Cllr Sam Carr and myself as your united team of borough cllrs. She won with over 50 per cent of the vote and now succeeds Cllr Graham Falconer who retired and stood down at this election. She lives in Egbury, near St Mary Bourne and will focus on that area of Evingar in particular. Although all 3 cllrs are of course elected to represent Evingar as a whole, I will continue to lead on Newtown.

The overall position on Basingstoke Council is as follows-

Conservatives 16

Labour 11

Liberal Democrats 11

Basingstoke Independents 10

Independents 3

Greens 2

Women's Equality Party 1

The effect of this is that the current coalition of Lib Dems and all of the Independents will continue to form the administration, supported when required on key votes, by the Labour group.

Onto issues that have affected this parish directly over the past year; unresolved is the dangerous state of the C45 which is clearly a significant problem. Parish councillors have worked tirelessly to get action from the highways department. Kit Malthouse our MP has raised it and the speed survey request with the Cabinet member at HCC and we have had support from our neighbours in Burghclere. Pressure needs to be maintained on this and the traffic speed survey on the B4060 that both parishes have offered to fund. While I have no direct influence, I see it as one of my priorities ahead for the parish to achieve results on these issues before there is a serious accident on these roads.

Applications and approvals for unwanted new homes in Newtown continue to bedevil the parish. With no Neighbourhood Plan we remain vulnerable to judicial interpretations of case law and the borough not having an up-to-date Local Plan.

It is important that a new up-to-date borough Local Plan is brought forward as soon as possible. As Conservatives we have concerns about the approach being taken by the administration, particularly on high annual housing numbers of around 850 new homes per year, because we believe there are good planning grounds to contend for lower numbers. However the key priority is to obtain the protection as soon as possible of a completed Local Plan for our rural areas, with no housing allocation for Newtown, and therefore we will of course adopt a constructive approach as an opposition party.

Looking back over the past year, I am pleased that cllr grant funding from Cllrs Falconer and Carr contributed to the provision of additional parking for Newtown. Obtaining some clarity on legal responsibility for byelaws on the Common became a long running saga but again I acknowledge the perseverance of parish cllrs.

I apologise I'm not around to answer any questions or points from residents but if there are any I would be grateful if the Clerk would take a note and allow me to respond.

Cllr John Izzett