

**Minutes of Newton Annual Parish Assembly
held on Wednesday 23rd April 2014 at the Village Hall**

Those Present

Paul Presland	-	Parish Council Chairman
James Finch	-	Suffolk County Councillor
James Cartlidge	-	Babergh District Councillor
PCSO Hemmett	-	Suffolk Police
Dave Crimmin	-	Parish Clerk

21 residents, registered as local government electors in Newton.

The Chairman welcomed both guests and residents to Newton's 121st Annual Parish Assembly.

Apologies

Dawn Bridge, Rita Schwenk, Wendy & John Turner and Fiona Garnam.

2014/01 Minutes of Meeting held on 24th April 2013

The meeting agreed the minutes of last year's meeting and the Chairman signed them as a true copy.

2014/02 Police Report

PCSO Hemmett gave the Police Report. "This report covers the period from 01/04/2013 to 01/4/2014. During this time there are 12 crimes recorded relevant to the parish of Newton, this compares to 9 crimes for the same period last year.

BREAKDOWN OF CRIME

Burglary Dwelling	-	2012-2013	0	(Increase on last year)
		2013-2014	1	
Burglary Other Building	-	2012-2013	1	(Same as last year)
		2013-2014	1	
Vehicle crime	-	2012-2013	0	(Increase on last year)
		2013-2014	8	
Assaults and public order	-	2012-2013	0	(Same as last year)
		2013-2014	0	
Theft	-	2012-2013	6	(Decrease on last year)
		2013-2014	1	
Criminal Damage	-	2012-2013	0	(Increase on last year)
		2013-2014	1	
Other Miscellaneous	-	2012-2013	2	(Decrease on last year)
		2013-2014	0	

1 Crime was detected with people being dealt with by cautions, fines or court.

There has been an increase in Burglary's in and around the Babergh West area this year and we are working hard to reassure the residents with our increased patrols and crime reduction advice surgeries. We still urge all residents to be aware of any suspicious activity and to please call the Police with any information you may have. If you see any suspicious vehicles driving slowly around your area and they seem to be out of place then please try to take down their registration numbers and pass these onto the Police by dialling 101 the non-emergency number, if it is an emergency you are to dial 999."

Signed..... Dated.....

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2014/03 Suffolk County Councillor's Report

James Finch delivered his report which contained the following:

- SCC delivers on council tax freeze pledge
- Raising the Bar in Education
- GCSE results move Suffolk up five places in league table
- Greater Ipswich City Deal signed
- SCC Cabinet agrees investment in new apprenticeships across Suffolk
- Government confirm funding for A14 and drop plans for a toll
- Topping-out ceremony in Bury St Edmunds marks 1st year of care-home partnership
- Extra broadband funding confirmed as broadband roll-out reaches 13,000 properties.

2014/04 Babergh District Councillor's Report

James Cartlidge gave his first annual report as Newton's Babergh District Councillor which contained the following:

- Planning
- Precept and the freezing of council tax
- His Audit and Housing roles at Babergh
- Merged back office functions with Mid Suffolk
- Income generation
- Head Office location review
- The solar farm planning application in Newton.

2014/05 Chairman's Report

Paul Presland delivered the Annual Report of behalf of the Parish Council. "The last twelve months have been a busy time for the Parish Council with councillors involved in a variety of activities, some of which were expected and some of which were somewhat unexpected. They all brought their challenges and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Councillors and our Clerk for their hard work and their commitment. As always, they undertake their duties diligently and with honesty and integrity. I would also like to thank both James Cartlidge and James Finch for their support and advice during the past twelve months. We really appreciate the work they do for us at a local and regional level and we look forward to maintaining this positive partnership in the coming months. Thankfully, Newton remains relatively crime free although we must never become complacent and must remain vigilant and supportive of one another. To help us in this task we really value the feedback and support we receive from our local PCSOs. Finally, on behalf of all the Councillors, I would like to thank all our villagers for the work they do to make our village such a lovely place to live and work.

We continue to live in times of financial austerity and, like all villagers, the Parish Council has to think very carefully about how to use its limited resources. Last year we set our Precept at 9k in an attempt to mirror 2012/13 and avoid any increase. Unfortunately, because of changes in the law regarding Tax Base, this still represented a very small increase. Dave Crimmin manages our accounts very professionally and along with all Parish Council minutes they are published in both the Parish magazine and the Parish Council website. Our finances continue to be audited by Heelis and Lodge and they are very satisfied with the procedures we adopt.

The number of planning applications has remained very similar to previous years and Councillors are always very mindful of the needs of the village and the rules and regulations concerning the planning process. As you are aware, villagers are invited to any Council meeting to discuss proposed planning applications or any other item on the agenda and Councillors welcome that input. Unfortunately, it is somewhat of a rarity to see villagers at these meetings and, therefore, the opportunity to listen to different perspectives is missed. They are not as dull as some of you might think and they are an important opportunity to influence the Councillors decision making process on matters affecting our village.

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As previously mentioned, we are privileged to live in Newton with its many green open spaces. I am pleased to report that Gary Flowers has done an excellent job in maintaining the Playground and the surrounding areas near the Village Hall. We plan to undertake some remedial work in the children's playground during the spring and we hope this can be done without too much disruption to people who use this amenity. Last year, we took over the responsibility from BDC to maintain footpaths in Newton and I am sure you will agree that David Gotts regular cutting of the footpaths has resulted in them being far more accessible to villagers. We now have two Owl boxes situated on the edge of the golf course and these will be monitored by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. I understand that we might even get some new residents this summer; let's keep our fingers crossed. Thank you to villagers who continue to pick up litter throughout the year and to those who turn out on our special Saturdays; Bacon rolls seem to be a good incentive.

The Affordable Housing questionnaire which was circulated to all villagers identified the need for three small dwellings in the village. In response to this finding, the Parish Council liaised with Babergh's Planning Department to review preferred sites. Two possible providers, Orwell Housing and the Hastoe Group we invited to present their ideas. It has been decided to invite the Hastoe Group to approach certain land owners to explore the feasibility of this type of development. Of course there are complex criteria that need to be adhered to and villagers will be kept informed of all developments.

The busy A134 remains a problem for our village. Unfortunately we are not eligible for a Pelican crossing and traffic calming installations do not seem practicable for a number of reasons. In the recent past, a Safe Haven was muted at the junction of Church Road and the A134 but the feelings of some villagers appear to have changed. The issue around the busy A134 needs addressing again and to help facilitate that discussion, the Parish Council intends to circulate a short questionnaire to villagers during this summer.

NGT has confirmed that the Parish Council will manage the Green by the enforcement of the Village Green Byelaws. A proposal to amend the Byelaws has been submitted and the Department of Communities and Local Government has completed its investigation to ensure they are robust, fit for purpose, enforceable and proportionate. NPC will advertise in the local press informing people of its intention and the DCLG will inform our Council of any observations made. Providing our proposal is favourably received in the locality, we will apply to the Secretary of State to have the byelaws confirmed. Fireworks returned to Newton Green for the first time in 20years; what a great event it turned out to be! I would like to thank all Councillors and villagers whose hard work made that possible. It is our intention to repeat the display this year and for it to become an annual event. Hot on the heels came the Christmas lighting for the first time. The idea was to encourage villagers along the main road to decorate their gardens with white lights. The Parish Council erected two trees on the edge of the Golf course and adorned them with subtle Christmas lighting! Thank you to everybody involved and I am sure it can become a tradition. The improvement to our sewer system has now been finished and the fields either side of Church Road have been reinstated.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that serving as a member of the Parish Council is a privilege and it is important that we get a cross section of the village represented. As part of our inclusion strategy we are nurturing the Council of the future. Succession planning is very important, and I am extremely pleased to inform you that we now have a Newton Youth Council. It had its inaugural meeting tonight and the full Council looks forward to working with them over the coming months."

2014/06 Newton Green Trust

Roy Gardner gave the report on behalf of the NGT. "By far the most noticeable change to the Green this year has been the resurfacing of the "Saracen's Head" car park. For many years it has been rather an eye sore with potholes and uneven surfaces. With some slight changes it is now complete and we await the growth of the grass border. An improved licence was negotiated with the Saracens Head. A solution is now sought to prevent HGV's from parking on it.

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We have had two meetings with the golf club this year and at the first they were unprepared to make even a small concession in annual membership to Newton villagers. At the second meeting we discussed matters of concern to both parties. The golf club expressed concern about the very few dog walkers who do not clear up or who walk their dogs unleashed on the green and a reminder was printed in the newsletter. The recent heavy rain and consequent near flooding opened up the question of who is responsible for maintenance of the ditches which cross the green but reference to the 2006 agreement resolved the matter.

We have taken steps to increase the flow of water from the pond by Plough Cottage. Again thanks to George Davey for his help. We had a proposal by Tim to create a mini golf course on the field and, although we were sympathetic, it was rejected as being unmanageable. Permission was granted to the golf club to build a starters hut by the 1stTee and regular annual meetings with NGGC are planned, the first to be on May 7th. The ongoing dispute with Mr. King continues to be unresolved, but a regular reminder is sent to him reinforcing our continued concern regarding the boundary along the 12th fairway. Although it is Trust property we gave the parish council permission to manage the Green through the byelaws.

Letters have been sent to Mr. Leeks requesting that he desists from selling cars on the lay by. They have been unanswered but you will have heard already that the new by laws are in place and could bring a halt to this problem. Work on reviewing the licences issued by the Trust to households crossing the Green continues, and work is being done to rationalize them. Negotiations are in hand with Anglia Water who used the Little Green Track as access they caused some damage.

The Trust continued to give financial support to the following local organizations:

- Fireside Club
- PCC
- The Alston and Plampin Charity
- The Poppy Fund
- The Village Hall.

In thanks for his long service to the Trust a dinner and presentation was held at the "Head" for John Taylor."

2014/07 Parish Assembly's Newton Green Trust Representative

Paul Devlin was unanimously re-elected as the Parish Assembly's Newton Green Trust representative

2014/08 Village Hall

Alan Vince gave the Village Hall report which covered the:

- Finances
- Popularity of hall as a venue
- Legacy from Linda Cutts
- Non-viability of solar panels for the Village Hall.

2014/09 Newton Charities (Plampin and Alston)

Alan Vince reported that the funds under deposit as at the 31st December 2013 was valued at £5,993 and £308 at bank. The Charities are not adding any new names to their list but instead are contributing to the Christmas Parcels scheme in the village.

2014/10 Parochial Church Council

The Chairman read Fiona Garnam's report. "We continue to hold regular services throughout the year. The Family Service is presently replaced by an informal Morning Worship. Revd Judith Sweetman also holds an informal prayer meeting every Thursday morning. The sound system and hearing loop have now been installed. Roof tiles have been replaced after the storm damage.

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We are extremely grateful to all who have contributed either financially or in volunteering their time and skills to help in running the Church. Fundraising events have been held during the past year, including the popular wine and quiz evening and a performance from The Mill Wheel Madrigals. Our Annual Gift Day Coffee Morning in the Village Hall will be on Saturday, 3rd May and we look forward to welcoming all who can join us."

2014/11 The Fireside Club

The Chairman read Wendy Turner's report. "We have an increase in membership and an increase in our fortnightly subscriptions as we will be lacking a donation from the Fête this year. We have enjoyed seven outings in a minibus, two afternoon teas out, two hot lunches in the Village Hall, a cold buffet and two fish and chip lunches when we invite retired villagers to join us. A very good Christmas lunch in Newton Golf Club for members and invited guests, on Shrove Tuesday we had pancakes cooked for us in the village hall.

At our meetings we play bingo, occasionally, beetle drives, many quizzes and chair exercises. We have performed our own mini one liner pantomime, have decorated hats for Easter and modelled Easter chicks from sugar paste. We held our own mini fête in the village hall and have been out twice to play ten pin bowling. We thank the Trust for their donation as this helps to keep our finances above water and we are looking forward to our outings this year."

2014/12 Art Club

Carol Langley reported that the club has 8 members that meet every Friday between 1.30pm and 4.30pm. Anybody wish to join should just turn up as the club is wishing to expand.

2014/13 The Village Fete

Paul Presland gave the Fete Report. Last year's Fete went reasonably well considering how cold the day was and the accounts below show how well we faired. Unfortunately, due to the number of committee members not being replaced this year it was decided not to hold the Fete in 2014. It is hoped that after a year's rest there will be renewed energy to run the Fete again in 2015.

FETE ACCOUNTS 2013

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	TOTAL
OPENING BALANCE	£309.77		309.77
INCOME FROM COFFEE MORNING	£105.63		£415.40
INCOME FROM PROGRAMME	£260.00		£675.40
STALL DONATIONS	£283.00		£958.40
INCOME FROM FETE	£2,466.41		£3,424.81
FETE EXPENSES		£840.00	£2,584.81
DONATION TO CHURCH		£1,000.00	£1,584.81
DONATION TO NEWSLETTER		£350.00	£1,234.81
DONATION TO VILLAGE HALL		£500.00	£734.81
DONATION TO FIRESIDE CLUB		£275.00	£459.81

2014/14 Village Newsletter

In the absence of Dawn Bridge the Chairman read the report. "Over the past year our Newsletter has succeeded in continuing to fulfil its purpose in providing a central communication point for the people of Newton, and with the on-going support of the village and its loyal advertisers, remains popular and stable. I would like to thank everyone very much indeed for their tremendous support. As always, it is very much appreciated."

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2014/15 Good Neighbours

In the absence of Dawn Bridge the Chairman read the report. "In the absence of any requests for help over the past year, I am compelled to conclude that the scheme, initiated by the Parish Council several years ago, is now defunct. That said, it is my feeling that far from failure, the lack of demand for a Good Neighbours service reflects very positively upon Newton's wonderful community spirit. If confirmation were needed that neighbours here in Newton really are 'good neighbours', this is it. In recent weeks I have conveyed my thoughts to the Chairman of the Parish Council, and have proposed that the scheme be abandoned, to be reinstated immediately should the need arise at a future date. My thanks to everyone who volunteered, as part of the scheme, to help neighbours in need."

2014/16 Neighbourhood Watch

Sue Presland gave the following report. "Once again, I feel my role is one in name only. I have registered again for this year which means we are officially a NHW village. There have been a few incidents this year, some of which I learnt about via Police Direct and a few being reported to me. Unfortunately, I have had no contact from the police directly. These incidents occurred in Airey Close, Church Road, on the A134 a few other locations. Incidents of car damage seem quite and there is still a risk of theft of oil. Two incidents that were reported to me were about a man knocking on doors and asking questions about a neighbouring house and padlocks being cut on barns along the main road. This all goes to show that we need to keep a wary eye on our own property and that of our neighbours. Unfortunately, I have had no contact from the police directly.

This brings me a suggestion that I have made before. Most NHW schemes cover a road or a small area. With the best will in the world, it is difficult to cover the whole village or to know where there are areas of concern. I would like to propose that the Parish Council assist me in recruiting volunteers from each road/area to act as a first port of call. This could be NHW concerns, but could also be extended to be a first point of contact in case of an emergency and to distribute information if necessary. It might be useful to have a reserve as well. I am quite happy to continue to be the named coordinator and collate information as necessary."

2014/17 Autumn Show

Sue Presland gave the following report. The Autumn Show will again be held on the 6th September and it is hoped to run it alongside other events around the Village Hall.

2014/18 Newton Community Award

Dawn Bridge was the 2014 Newton Community Award for all the work and support she undertakes on behalf of the village. Harry Buckledee was awarded a Lifetime Newton Community Award for all the work he has undertaken on behalf of the village.

2014/19 Questions to the Chair

Issues were raised on:

- Access to a field via Links View
- Christmas Parcels
- Need for more Speed Watch volunteers.

The meeting closed at 9.02pm when refreshments were served.

Signed..... Dated.....