



NRS&NMHPC

Newton Regis, Seckington and No Man's Heath Parish Council

Three villages, one community

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – No. 277b.

Tuesday, 28th May 2024
Newton Regis Village Hall

Present:

Cllr G. Hunt (GH)(Chairman)
Cllr. R. Thirlby (RT)
Cllr M Ruston (MR)
Cllr S. Wilson (SW)
Cllr D Cox (DC) arrived after meeting had started
Cllr H White (HW)
Mrs. B Cox (Clerk)

County Cllr M Humphreys (MH) , Borough Cllr D Humphreys (DH)
6 parishioners

The meeting commenced at 7pm prior to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 17 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

The past year has provided some significant challenges which we have dealt with appropriately and for the most part successfully. We continue to interact with North Warwickshire Borough Council on issues relating to Planning etc and have strengthened our relationship. This has yielded some significant benefits for us and our Parish continues to move forward.

The loss of our Chairman David Waithman was the single most significant and devastating event for us this year. David was a guiding light for me and to call upon his knowledge and experience was a huge bonus as I "learned the ropes" as a councillor. It can't be overstated how much his presence will be missed after his many years of loyal service. It is an honour to be elected Chairman of this wonderful Parish and I promise to do my best to serve our community as well as David although I very much doubt I could ever surpass his immense contribution.

We have co-opted Councillor Harry White into our team to fill the vacancy left by my taking on the role of Chairman and Councillor Dilys Cox has been elected to the position of Vice Chairman. Our Clerk Barbara Cox has proved to be an excellent replacement for our former Clerk Nicola Alton so we are very well set up to face the challenges that come our way.

Our Parish Council meetings appear to be gaining interest and we have a rising number of residents attending along with local Police and Borough Council representatives. This is a very encouraging indication of an engaged community which can only be good for our villages and our Parish.

With the completion of the Cameron Homes development we have seen an increase in the number of residents in Newton Regis and we welcome them all into our community. I am sure they will come to love living here as much as we do.

Unfortunately we continue to be targeted by housing developers but will resist any that we feel would impact negatively on our residents and the character of our Parish. The most recent application for 39 properties to be built in the field alongside Newton Regis Village Hall is currently on hold but we will take all necessary steps to support the wishes of our residents within the parameters of the planning regulations.

However there are some very positive aspects of properly managed and sensitive developments such as the one Cameron Homes have built in Newton Regis. Apart from the obvious benefits to local businesses and community organisations the neglected 18th century farmhouse on the main road has been fully restored and is once again one of the "jewels" within our Parish. Several of the old barns and outbuildings on the same

site have been refurbished to make lovely characterful homes. During the construction phase of their Newton Manor site Cameron Homes have been very supportive of our community initiatives. They have made financial contributions to the News and Views magazine and donated a significant sum for us to finally undertake the de-silting and improvement of our duck pond which we can now plan and hopefully complete this year.

The playing field is being maintained by the cricket team and one of our residents which saves us a significant sum. Part of this saving is re-invested in preparing the cricket square so that it can be used for cricket matches during the summer. The equipment in the children's play area requires some minor cosmetic work to keep it in top condition and looking bright and clean which we will tackle over the summer / autumn months.

We are pleased to have a model aircraft flying club using the top of the playing field away from the village hall, tennis courts, cricket square and houses. This also helps to offset some of the costs of looking after the playing field.

With the increasing costs of maintaining the green and dwindling membership numbers the Newton Regis Bowls Club decided it could no longer operate outdoors and has moved its activities into the village hall. This allows them to play all year round in a warm and welcoming environment. As part of the conditions within the lease from Thorpe Estates the area and facilities they vacated should have been returned to their original state but this would have cost the bowls club £1000's which was just not feasible. The Parish Council decided that rather than demolish the green and the pavilion it would look at using them for alternative community activities and have been able to plan re-purposing the green as a wildflower meadow. We have already secured a small grant (£350) for wildflower seeds and we plan to sow these on the old bowling green in the Autumn ready for next year. Unfortunately initial estimates for the cost of bringing the pavilion up to the required safety standards for general community use are very significant and cannot be justified so the facility has to remain closed for now.

Our village halls continue to be at the core of many community activities and No Mans Heath has been doing a great job after securing some significant funding and upgrading its facilities. Similarly Newton Regis village hall has continued to excel for our residents offering all sorts of activities including educational events e.g. Information Technology tuition sessions. They host regular leisure, health and well-being initiatives such as light lunches for our residents and line dancing lessons. The trustees are all volunteers and put so much into keeping the hall viable as it has to be self-financing as a condition of its charitable status. We are very lucky to have such an amazing facility and such generous volunteers to run it. It is definitely another "jewel" within our Parish.

The Newton Regis Open Gardens event was a huge success in 2023 after an absence of several years due to COVID restrictions and we are already looking forward to 2024. Similar events in Seckington are very popular too and the funds raised are extremely valuable to both local community initiatives and the various charities that benefit from the donations made. It is always lovely to see hundreds of people milling around our villages enjoying what we as residents are fortunate enough to have available to us every day!

The Goose Walk held traditionally on New Years Day was very well attended this year and we were very fortunate to have good weather. Mike at the Queens Head was a great host allowing us to use the pub car park as our meeting point and opening up the pub to serve everyone with a cup of soup at the end (or something stronger after midday). He even supplied the soup!

The Christmas Lights switch on at St Mary's Church in Newton Regis was fabulous this year and we have to thank Rev Joanne Dyer for welcoming us all in and for allowing us to put the lights back up on the big tree in the churchyard where they looked amazing! We were also honoured to have Carol Waithman switch them on for us as David had done every year that I can recall.

None of these events would be possible without the volunteers who give their time (and often their own cash) to make them happen. A number of residents in Newton Regis have formed a group called the Friend Of Newton Regis (FONR) and are galvanising volunteers and undertaking work to improve our surroundings and raising funds to finance these tasks. We are so lucky to have so many public spirited people around us! With the increasing traffic generated by the new distribution hub at J11 along the Ashby Road we are experiencing more dangerous conditions when exiting our side roads onto the main route. This is particularly the case at the junction's with Hangman's Lane and Kings Lane along with all of the junctions along No Mans Heath. We have asked the Borough Council to review the situation and put in place any traffic control/calming measures they deem appropriate.

This year has been particularly wet and as a result we have experienced unprecedented flooding both in terms of its regularity and the levels it has reached. Kings Lane has been of particular concern and the condition of the drains has been brought to the attention of the relevant water authority. Further investigations are to be undertaken to make sure we can cope with the potential of more frequent wet weather as a result of global warming.

Finally I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to my fellow Councillors namely Dilys Cox, Stuart Wilson, Mike Ruston, Richard Thirlby and Harry White for the support they have given me during this year of

transition. I must also mention our Clerk Barbara Cox who has been so instrumental in our efforts to move our Parish forward for our residents.

The report had been circulated to members of the Council and will be published on the Council's website and notice boards,

4. Audited Accounts 2022 /2023

The Clerk reported that the required the Exemption Certificate for 2022/2023 had been sent to the External Auditors, Moore, as required. An acknowledgement had been received from the External Auditor, no report was issued and there had been no objections from the electorate. The accounts were available for viewing at the meeting.

5. Any other Parish affairs

None

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Chairman
Cllr G Hunt

Date