



FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Additional Full Council Meeting of Newhaven Town Council
held at Meeching Hall, 2 Fort Road, Newhaven
on **Tuesday January 14th 2025 at 7.15pm**

PRESENT: Councillors: Pinky McLean-Knight (Chair & Town Mayor)
Lesley Boniface (Chair of Environment & Amenities)
Mark Wardle (Chair of Promotion Partnership & Finance)
Shaun Boniface (Chair of Strategy & Regeneration)
Steve Saunders
Kim Bishop
Graham Amy
Corinna Watts
Jessa Chapman
Jan Woodling
Julie Carr
James Harrison
Linda Thomas

ALSO ATTENDING: Ken Dry, Town Clerk
Stephen Honey, Executive Officer
Laurie Marsden, Communications & Events Officer
Ms. G. Cutler
Mr. D. Nash

C078/25 The Chairman opened the meeting and stated that the meeting was being recorded and that the recording would be made publicly available on the Newhaven Town Council website for 28 days followed by its removal and deletion.

C079/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs, Taylor and Macleod. (note For Town Clerk – Apologies received from Cllr. Cook via email rec'd 17:24Hrs).

Absent: Cllr Von Kurthy.

C080/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - DISCLOSURE BY COUNCILLORS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA, AND WHETHER THE COUNCILLOR REGARDS THEIR INTEREST AS PREJUDICIAL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT.**

None declared.

C081/25 **TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE MINUTES OF THE ADDITIONAL FULL COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 13TH 2024 ARE AN ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING.**

RESOLVED:

That these minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings.

C082/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

The Town Clerk alerted the Chair to the presence of Mr. D. Nash who asked the council to consider if the anecdotal narrative that Newhaven Town was an unpleasant place to live was/is correct?

Following discussion of this and associated points, the response to Mr. Nash was that whilst there are certain aspects of the Town that can, could and are being improved, the views he has referred to remain subjective to the individual making them.

C083/25 TO RECEIVE AN ORAL REPORT/UPDATE FROM OFFICERS OF SUSSEX POLICE.

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Sussex Police had been invited, and whilst WPC Nicholson indicated she was unavailable she anticipated that one of her colleagues would try and attend.

No Sussex Police Officers were in attendance and no written report had been received.

C084/25 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MS. GEORGINA CUTLER ON BEHALF OF 'PLASTIC FREE'.

Ms. Cutler delivered her presentation which was well received and discussed by councillors.

The Chair thanked Ms. Cutler on behalf of the council for her attendance and presentation.

C085/25 TO NOTE THE ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Planning & Development | 24th September 2024 22nd October 2024 26th November 2024 17th December 2024 |
| Environment & Amenities | 24th September 2024 17th December 2024 |
| Promotion, Partnership & Finance | 22nd October 2024 10th December 2024 |
| Regeneration & Strategic Development | 26th November 2024 |
| Personnel | 10th December 2024 |

All noted.

C086/25 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE RT. HON., JAMES MACCLEARY MP.

Cllr. L. Boniface read the following report to the meeting.

Christmas and New Year in Sussex

I hope everyone in our part of Sussex had a wonderful Christmas and New Year. It was a quieter period politically, but I had the chance to enjoy some fantastic local events,

including carol concerts in several parts of our constituency. Thank you to everyone who helped organise local celebrations, ensuring we ended the year on a high note.

Local Government Reorganisation

Significant changes are on the horizon with the government's push for local government reorganisation. This could mean the abolition of all district and borough councils, with a move to a single unitary authority for East Sussex. There has also been a bid from Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and East Sussex Councils to form a "strategic authority". Such a shift would have far-reaching implications, particularly for our town and parish councils, which play a crucial role in supporting our rural communities and understanding the issues affecting people's lives day to day. Local government reform must empower communities, not undermine them. I will continue to argue for a thoughtful, inclusive process that prioritizes the voices of residents.

May Elections Debate

The Conservative leadership of East Sussex County Council has proposed postponing May's County Council elections, citing the ongoing reorganisation. However, I strongly oppose this undemocratic move, which would deny residents their right to hold the council accountable. After losing their majority, the Conservatives are clinging to power by avoiding the judgment of voters. I've spoken out on this issue, urging the minister to reject the proposal and allow elections to proceed as planned. The people of East Sussex deserve a say in who represents them, especially during this period of major change. Suspending elections risks undermining trust in local democracy. I have written to the government to make this case.

National Insurance Contribution Rise

The proposed national insurance rise has serious implications for individuals, businesses, and essential services. I recently spoke in the House of Commons to highlight the economic risks of this policy, particularly for sectors like healthcare and social care. For example, local GP practices in our area could face significant additional costs, with one practice estimating an increase of £60,000 a year. This threatens vital services and places further strain on our overstretched NHS.

I called for exemptions for groups such as GPs, dentists, and local councils, who cannot absorb these additional costs without cutting essential services. Social care providers, like St. Peter and St. James Hospice, are already under immense financial pressure, and this rise could push some to the brink. I will continue to press the government to reconsider this policy and protect the vital services our community depends on.

Lewes Local Plan

The next stage of the Lewes Local Plan is now underway, and this is a critical moment for our district. The Local Plan will determine where and how future development takes place, from new housing to business growth. It's essential that the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities while protecting our beautiful green spaces.

I urge residents to participate in the upcoming consultations and drop-in events, which provide an opportunity to share your views and shape the future of our area. This is your chance to have a say in decisions that will affect our district for decades to come. Let's work together to ensure sustainable, community-led development.

You can find the consultation events here: <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/Lewes-Local-Plan>

Opposition to Booking System for Waste Sites

A petition launched by Lewes Liberal Democrats against East Sussex County Council's proposal to introduce a booking system for waste recycling sites has now been signed by over 2,000 residents. Many locals are concerned that the new system will make

waste disposal more difficult, particularly for those without internet access or in urgent need of disposal.

Similar systems in other regions have been unpopular, and residents fear it could lead to increased fly-tipping. Additionally, the council's consultation process has been criticised for not reflecting community concerns.

The petition remains open, and support continues to grow for keeping the current walk-in system. You can view the petition and add your support here:
<https://www.leweslibdems.org.uk/tipbooking>

Newhaven Traffic Crisis

Traffic congestion in Newhaven has reached crisis levels. Long tailbacks and constant queuing throughout the day are causing frustration and delays for residents and businesses. Newhaven is an important transport hub, with the A259 and A26 intersecting in the town, in addition to a busy port with daily ferry crossings to France. However, this vital infrastructure is being hampered by worsening traffic conditions, which are stifling business growth, damaging air quality, and negatively impacting the quality of life for residents.

I've spoken out about this issue, calling for urgent intervention. While Newhaven's busy town centre is a positive indicator of its growing importance, the chronic congestion is damaging both businesses and the environment. We've made great strides in improving the town with projects like the new health hub, a refurbished Fort opening in February, and ongoing discussions about regaining public access to the West Beach. However, all these efforts risk being overshadowed by traffic chaos on the A259.

There isn't an easy solution, but recent news about the Department of Transport potentially not funding even modest improvements is deeply concerning. I am calling for urgent, substantial action to improve the traffic situation before it worsens any further. As a local resident, I see this every day, and we need a clear, effective plan to address overloaded roundabouts and the congestion around the swing bridge. I am writing to the Transport Minister and the County Council, urging them to take immediate action and find a solution to this growing crisis.

Looking Ahead

In the next month we have several key votes in Westminster, and in my diary I have several events on an environmental theme. Two Lib Dem sponsored bills will be voted on which I am supporting, the Climate and Nature bill and the "sunshine" bill which looks to include solar panels on new build houses. I have also secured a meeting with the Chief Executive of Southern Water where I'll be raising the sewage dumping scandal around our seas and rivers.

As we begin 2025, I remain committed to working hard for all the communities in our part of Sussex. There are many challenges ahead, but by working together, we can continue to make progress and tackle the issues that matter most. If your parish has any concerns or projects that need my support, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to engaging with you and making a real difference in the year ahead.

C087/25 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

Cllr G Amy - Outline planning application for Harbour Heights had been approved.

C088/25 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES – TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM MEMBERS WHO HAVE ATTENDED MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL SINCE THE LAST REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024.

Cllr S Saunders informed the meeting that as part of the Southern Rail Partnership he has been made aware that 2025 is the 200th anniversary of passenger rail, and Stations can get £200 grant for an artist to participate in celebrations.

On the matter of CTLA, Cllr. Saunders informed the meeting that Cllr P McLean-Knight is now a trustee, and with a couple more added, the Board was now at full strength. He also informed the meeting that the current Transport Manager was standing down due to ill-health. Overall CTLA is doing well but will be affected by the latest changes in Employers National Insurance. They hope to be applying for a grant from NTC to help

Cllr J Woodling informed the meeting that the Hillcrest Centre have recently held their AGM and appointed some new trustees, and a new Chair. At their most recent meeting they discussed their rental rates and how to mitigate rises in utilities costs with a 3.5% rise in fees for hirers.

As well as the ongoing Issues with walls, roof general infrastructure etc., they were now bringing their AGM forward to September of each year. Cllr Woodling had advised them regarding the current NTC Grant Window. NTC grant window opening.

Cllr L Boniface informed the meeting that there was nothing further to report regarding the Egrets Way Charity nothing to report, and that she had been asked to join the Safer C7 Project Steering Group who have their first meeting on February 11th 2025.

C089/25 TO CONSIDER THE COUNCILS ONGOING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY – DISCUSSION ITEM (COVERING REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK).

The Town Clerk summarised his report, and following discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED,

That the Town Council should remain the key point of contact for the Town, specifically the Communications & Events Officer, and that they should work closely with the Newhaven Chamber of Commerce and Lewes District Council to co-ordinate their future visits.

C090/25 TO CONFIRM A TOWN COUNCILLORS VACATION OF OFFICE BY FAILURE TO ATTEND MEETINGS.

The Town Clerk summarised his report, and following Discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That the council confirms that Cllr. Browne has vacated his office by a failure to attend meetings and that the Town Clerk informs the Monitoring Officer accordingly.

C091/25 RECRUITMENT OF A TOWN CRIER – ORAL UPDATE BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

The Executive Officer informed the meeting, that despite a widespread advertisement using various communication channels that there had been no applicants for this voluntary role.

Following discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That the current recruitment drive be continued.

C092/25 NOTICE OF MOTION BY CLLR. L. BONIFACE; THAT NEWHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

a) supports plastic free coastlines by committing to plastic free alternatives and supporting plastic free initiatives within the town of newhaven, and

b) appoints a councillor representative on the plastic free newhaven steering group.

Referring back to the presentation by Ms. Cutler, Cllr. L. Boniface presented this Notice of Motion for the council's consideration, and following further discussion it was,

PROPOSED by Cllr. Saunders that this Notice of Motion be supported and that Cllr. L. Boniface be the Councils representative on the Plastic Free Newhaven Steering Group.

SECONDED by Cllr. Thomas, who, as a local business owner, also offered to join the Plastic Free Newhaven Steering Group.

Following a unanimous vote, it was,

RESOLVED,

That Newhaven Town Council,

a) Supports Plastic Free Coastlines by committing to plastic free alternatives and supporting plastic free initiatives within the Town of Newhaven, and

b) Appoints a Cllr. L. Boniface as the Councils representative on the Plastic Free Newhaven Steering Group.

C093/25 DRAFT EVENTS STRATEGY – EVENTS & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER.

The Comms., & Events Officer delivered a presentation of the Draft Strategy to date which was followed by discussion and a general consensus on the following type of events wherever feasible;

- Vietnamese Street Food Market
- Open Air Large Screen Cinema
- Dry Ice Rink at the Sidings at Christmas
- Lammas Festival
- Bonfire Society – Bonfire and Fireworks
- HMS Brazen Memorial
- Possibility of NTC opening the RNLI Lifeboat Fete
- Raft Race
- Invitation to the Vietnamese Embassy Ambassador/President to NTC civic events

C094/25 AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURE OVER £7500 – MAINTENANCE OF HIGHWAYS VERGES AND REED MANAGEMENT AT VALLEY PONDS, AND RECOMMENDED TREE MAINTENANCE – REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK.

The Town Clerk summarised his report. Following discussion, it was,

PROPOSED by Cllr. Saunders,

That the Council notes the recommendations of the Environment & Amenities Committee and authorises the following expenditure;

- a) Provision of Reed clearance by Bonny's Wood contractor at Valley Road Ponds for the year 2025/26 totalling **£7560+VAT**.
- b) Provision of Tree Maintenance works by Bonny's Wood contractor totalling **£4100+VAT**.
(Combined total of **£11,661+VAT** to Bonny's Wood contractor).
- c) 12-month extension of Highways Verges contract by Countryman's contractor, totalling **£15,781+VAT**.

SECONDED by Cllr. Wardle, after which it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That the Council notes the recommendations of the Environment & Amenities Committee and authorises the following expenditure;

- a) Provision of Reed clearance by Bonny's Wood contractor at Valley Road Ponds for the year 2025/26 totalling **£7560+VAT**.
- b) Provision of Tree Maintenance works by Bonny's Wood contractor totalling **£4100+VAT**.
(Combined total of £11,661+VAT to Bonny's Wood contractor).
- c) 12-month extension of Highways Verges contract by Countryman's contractor, totalling **£15,781+VAT**.

C095/25 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2025-26 – REPORT BY THE TOWN CLERK.

The Town Clerk summarised his report and also drew the meetings attention to the request from the Newhaven Tree Wardens to carry forward any unspent expenditure into the FY 25/26.

Following discussion, it was,

PROPOSED by Cllr. L. Boniface,

That the council adopts this budget of **£723,962** for the Financial Year 2025/26 and informs Lewes District Council accordingly, and that any unspent FY24/25 budget for Newhaven Tree Wardens be carried forward into the next FY 25/26.

SECONDED by Cllr. Saunders, after which it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That the council adopts this budget of **£723,962** for the Financial Year 2025/26 and informs Lewes District Council accordingly, and that any unspent FY24/25 budget for Newhaven Tree Wardens be carried forward into the next FY 25/26.

C096/25 TO RATIFY AND ADOPT A RANGE OF NEW AND REVIEWED COUNCIL POLICIES – REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

The Executive Officer summarised his report and indicated that the 'Sickness & Absence' Policy had been withdrawn from the list of those for ratification for additional review by officers.

Following discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That all those listed Policies, Procedures, Strategy Handbook and Rules & Regulations (with the exception of the Sickness & Absence Policy) appended to the report, be adopted by the Council.

C097/25 TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS FROM ES HIGHWAYS REGARDING BUS SHELTERS – REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

The Executive Officer summarised his report, and following discussion it was,

PROPOSED by Cllr. Saunders that in respect of 'The Fairway' (Brighton Road) Bus Shelters, the council reject those proposals made by ES Highways Officers.

SECONDED, by Cllr. Watts, following which it was unanimously,

RESOLVED,

That in respect of 'The Fairway' (Brighton Road) Bus Shelters, the council rejects those proposals made by ES Highways Officers.

C098/25 FINANCIAL REPORTS:

- a. **Bank Reconciliations for 1st September to 31st December 2024**
- b. **Lists of Payments made for 1st September to 31st December 2024**
- c. **List of NTC Credit Card transactions for 1st September to 31st December 2024**
- d. **Income and expenditure by committee headings up to 31st December 2024**

All noted and adopted.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 21:25Hrs.

Date:

Town Mayor