

Newsham Parish Council Annual Meeting 27/05/26

Chairman`s Report 2025/2026

Finances

The Council`s finances remain at a robust level allowing us to cover our annual budgeted costs, hold the statutory required amount to cover any electoral costs which may arise, and maintain a prudent reserve to allow for the costs of any ordinary remedial works which may be required. We consequently decided once again not to increase the resident precept payment for 2026/2027, maintaining it at the level of £3000.

Planning

Consideration of planning applications remains a core responsibility of the Parish Council. Within the parish in the last twelve months there were eleven validated applications. As a Council we endeavour to always fully scrutinise each application to ensure that the voice of Newsham residents is heard, valid concerns are fully considered by the local planning authority, and that any appropriate amendments or conditions are added to applications as required. Our relationship with the local planning authority is strong and we believe that this positively affects the outcomes achieved.

Clearly the Hope Moor development will be a key focus moving forward, requiring significant effort by the Parish Council to facilitate resident feedback, ensure timely response to consultation, comment on the initial developer scoping report and all other development proposals as required.

Biodiversity

All Parish Council`s have an obligation to maintain and enhance biodiversity. To date we have worked closely with two trustees of the Holmedale Nature Network, and residents of Newsham, Edmund and Anne Baker to help us maximise results in this area. They work alongside other Newsham residents and have delivered several initiatives this year including:

- 1.Planting up of the old tree stump on the village green to attracts insects and birds
- 2.Utilisation of the old phone box as a nature information hub
- 3.Educational talks in the village hall
- 4.Ponds have been created in some gardens to encourage biodiversity
- 5.The removal of invasive Himalayan balsam from watercourses.
6. A very enjoyable and well attended Hedgehog House building event.

My understanding is that HNN itself is no longer now in operation, but Edmund and Anne have kindly agreed to lead Newsham- specific biodiversity projects and a full list of initiatives will be publicised in due course. My thanks to them and all others who has have actively supported biodiversity within the Parish to date. It is very important work.

The Village Green

The Village Green falls within a Conservation area and The Parish Council was advised several months ago that the NYCC conservation team had concerns regarding vehicle movements which had caused further damage and erosion to the Green, and the adjacent track.

We continue to wait for greater clarity from the local authority as to the extent of remedial works they believe are required, whether parts of the Green should be re-instated, what width of track is acceptable and the type of materials that can be used. We hope to have the necessary advice needed soon enabling us to inform residents of any necessary works, formulate a plan and understand the budget required.

In the interim ahead of the Carnival, we have again completed some minor works to fill a few potholes on the existing track, my thanks to Cllr Hall for undertaking this work.

The planning of daffodils on areas of the Green and around the War Memorial came to fruition this year and many positive comments were received from residents. The intention now is to undertake some more

planting in the Autumn to also bring colour to other sections, including the Northern end of the Green, next Spring.

The Village Hall

The Village Hall is the single biggest asset in Newsham as it is a focal point for the Community. bringing significant benefit to the village. The Parish Council is the Trustee of the Village Hall, but it is managed on our behalf by the Village Hall Committee.

There are many legal obligations which must be met, including charity law compliance, health and safety requirements, fire regulations, licensing requirements, food hygiene and safeguarding. Additionally, the fabric of the aging building must be maintained, inspected, repaired and improved.

Due to the myriad of fundraising activities undertaken over time the village hall now has significant financial reserves, and the Committee are presently exploring ideas and initiatives to improve the Hall with the support of the Parish Council as required.

My thanks go to all Committee members for their continued efforts in ensuring all aspects of managing the hall are delivered, the organisation of events and exploring new ideas to try and ensure greater usage of the Hall, both for local resident events and private hire. The showpiece village hall event each year is of course the Carnival and Newsham is very lucky to have such a group of committed volunteers willing to make events of this nature happen for the benefit of everyone.

Lastly I would like to place on record my thanks to our Parish Clerk Cllr Bob De`Ath for his continued diligence managing our financial affairs and our frequent communications with NYCC , my fellow Councillors for their hard work on behalf of Newsham during and between meetings, Mrs. Val De`Ath for taking the minutes of our parish meetings and Mrs Karen Brown for her efforts maintaining the Parish Council website.

Cllr Chris Brown