

Newton Flotman Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 30 April 2024, Newton Flotman Village Centre, 7.30pm

Present: Paul Weeks (chairman) Parish Council

Cate McNerney Parish Council
Drew Broad Parish Council
David Segans Parish Council
Maria Hutson (Clerk) Parish Council
Caroline Wolfe Partnership

Virginia Weeks
William Ball
Richard Beech
Andy Cox
John Cook
Kirsten Remer

Newton Flotman Charities
Village Centre/Church
Biodiversity group
Biodiversity group
South Norfolk Council
Church and NFaST

Members of the Parish: four

Paul Weeks welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Lesley Crump and Bruce Turnbull - Councillors, Vicky Ball – Crafting for a Cause, Adam Riley – Primary School, Keith Burnett – Long Stratton Medical Practice, Dawn Davidson – Church, PC Barnard and PC Smith – Norfolk Constabulary

- 2. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 25 April 2023

 These were agreed as a true record of proceedings with no amendments
- 3. Reports from Village Organisations and Groups
 - Newton Flotman Allotments
 There was no representative in attendance
 - b. Charity of John William Sewell, Virginia Weeks Virginia read the following report;

In my Annual Report last year, I noted that the committee had decided to broaden its remit as we sought to aid people in need in the village. At that time, we were looking to form a mini help hub for Newton Flotman which unfortunately did not happen. I

am, however, able to bring a report of the success we have had in the last twelve months.

Firstly, I should report that we changed our bank from Barclays to Unity Trust Bank. In doing so we had to change the name of the charity to the Charity of John William Sewell as this is the name used for the charity by the Charity Commission.

The main development in the year 2023/24 was starting the Cherry Tree Café which opened its doors for the first time on 16th June 2023. The aims of the café are:

- 1. Provide a space where residents including those who are lonely, have mental health and emotional wellbeing needs and want to engage in community activities can meet for three hours once a week.
- 2. Provide a place where all residents can meet once a week to chat together and, during cold weather, keep warm.

I am very pleased to report to this meeting that to-date we have had an average attendance of 17 people which has included some regular attendees who are living alone and in some cases are bereaved partners. The café started in the summer holidays and we had a lot of mothers with school age children. During term time the attendees have changed to an older group of residents who enjoy coming along to chat with each other over a drink and some food. We are serving the needs of residents and fulfilling our aims for the café.

Residents have been very generous in providing donations to the café with average weekly donations for the ten months we have been operating of £22/week. We received funding from South Norfolk District Council in the form of two grants – Go for it grant of £300 and warm spaces of £500. Finally, we must also mention Breadsource who have been providing us free of charge with a selection of breads, pastries and cakes each week which have been very well received by the attendees at the café.

I would like to thank the committee members and volunteers who have made the café work over the last ten months of its operation.

Finally I must inform the meeting that we still want to support those in need in the village and we have recently given a donation to a couple who were in need of support.

c. St Mary's Church, Kirsten Remer

Kirsten had a Benefice report and also gave a brief run through the following report;

"Worship

Our regular pattern of worship continued within the Tas Valley Benefice with joint 5th Sunday services with the Upper Tas Benefice as we worked together more closely.

ECO Church – Exploring Creation Outside met once a month in Newton Flotman Churchyard with several families from South Norfolk come along to learn more about nature and Jesus until the Summer as the leaders took up a new ministry within the enlarged benefice.

Special Services

Pet service on 8th October was well attended by pets and their humans! Held outside much in the format of Eco church style service. It was first for our church and was well received

Benefice Service held at Newton Flotman on 29th October led by the 'embryo' Climate Care group with John Hooper LLM at Tacolneston leading the intercessions. There was a call for other parishes to join forces in our aims.

Harvest Festival was well attended and the gifts provided were given to Waveney Foodbank. Newton Flotman Primary School also held their Harvest Festival in church and contributed lots of packets and tinned goods to the Foodbank. The Benefice service Remembering Loved Ones was held at St Mary's.

Advent and Christmastide -The village were invited again invited to host our Posada figures for a night during Advent. The Traditional Crib and Carol Service on Christmas Eve was very well attended led by Lesley Cox. Village Café hosted themed events including the packed out festive wreath making during Advent (thank you to Caroline for leading this) and Christmas Space on 23rd December. We hosted Carols on the Green on 22ndDecember, when the community were invited to sing carols and festive songs with some festive refreshments provided in the warm glow of the lights strung up on Kings Green.

Church Community

Evelyn Binns our much loved and loyal church pianist moved to Long Stratton in August, this means live worship is now led solely by Andy Cox but we are able to download and play tracks and have access to CD's and a CD player if necessary.

Visting We have a WhatsApp groups to co-ordinate visiting church family members Sheila and Amy who are not able to get to church regularly. This has been set up and is co-ordinated by Lesley Cox.

There continues to be an online weekly prayer group on Friday mornings hosted by Lesley Cox.

Charities – The Benefice Service in October was held at Newton Flotman led by members of the climate care group and £108.00 was collected for A Rocha. We held a bric a brac sale and hosted Village Café for Christian Aid and including donation envelopes distributed around the village for Christian Aid week, we raised £266.00.

Norfolk Churches Trust bike ride – volunteers manned the church to welcome cyclists, drivers and walkers. Many thanks to Sally Mitchell for cycling again on behalf of St Mary's Church.

Foodbank – we continue to collect for the local foodbank and donations are collected whenever the church is open. A Scheme for Waveney foodbank using the church as a drop off point and team of village volunteer deliverers was trialled but stopped due to few demands on deliveries and client's preference to pick up in Long Stratton where other services could be accessed.

Community Outreach

Village Café 10-12 every Saturday in the church continues and provided opportunities to focus on events or charities during the year as well as providing an important village focal point for people to meet. **Monthly local walks** arranged by Richard and Hilary Beach welcome people from across the Benefice. The walks take place on Saturday mornings and afterwards those who want to drop in at the Village Café to enjoy some homemade refreshments. Village Café went "on tour" for the Easter Fair, Fete and Christmas Craft Fair at the Village Centre. Some of the hosting team took part in Mindfulness training in July organised by the Newton Flotman charities team

Summer Space held on the first four Tuesday mornings in August —held at the church for all ages. It was well attended event where helpers offered and led their own activities. Time was spent both inside and out with various crafts, and up with trips up the tower, there was an interactive music session and using Godly Play a story from the Bible the event involved mainly members of the Newton congregation but members from churches across the expanded benefice joined us as helpers and on members from around the Benefice. Pasta dinner packs were available to take away and refreshments and sandwich take away lunches were provided. These were funded partly by giving and part donated by the foodbank. This template was taken forward for a similar event at Christmas.

Climate Care group – Richard and Hilary Beach have led the setting up of a group of initially church members now branching out into the village to raise awareness and encourage action and activism about the climate crisis. The PCC has made a climate declaration.

Tree planting – this year the focus by the core team Richard Beach, Andy Cox and David Wharton has been on creating an avenue along the edge of the Alan King playing field

William organised another **Litter Pick** in conjunction with SNC and we were lucky to win the £200 prize for doing so. This goes into our Community Fund to be spent on things to benefit the whole community.

Outreach Post Office – the service was provided by Framingham Earl Post Office on Wednesday mornings is well established and the stewarding of the Post Office by church volunteers has ceased

The **Community Allotment** continues to provide an opportunity to engage with the community and provide a source of fresh vegetables and fruit.

Partnership – the monthly village magazine which is managed by the PCC received a grant from of Newton Flotman Parish Councils due to the rising costs of paper. We have started to contribute to a newsletter for the whole extended benefice collated by Upper Tas available via email to be printed for churches.

Crafting for a Cause – After one of our long-standing members passed away early in the year we decided to take Priscilla Bacon Hospice as our 2023 cause in her memory, as they had looked after her. We made a wide variety of crafted items to sell at the two Fairs held in the village hall at Easter and Christmas plus Saxlingham Scouts Fair in Saxlingham. We raised a total of £548.00 towards the new hospice appeal.

Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage group continued to meet as commitments and health allowed, hosting several Village Cafes and restarting to collect oral histories for the archive. We shared tent space with the Parish Council and Newton Flotman charities at the village fete and produced another village calendar for church funds

School Connections – Coryn has worked hard to develop links with the school and parents and carers, there has been good attendance at school services. Lesley Cox has taken on the role of Schools Ministry across the whole extended benefice and connections in Newton Flotman paid dividends when organising the Posada and the Crib and carol service since Coryn has moved on to the Coastal Group after serving her curacy with us.

Olive House - Andy and Vicky continue to offer a monthly Communion service at Olive House Care Home in the village. The residents and occasionally staff, appreciate having a small service with hymns and prayers. Carol singers from the church sang for the residents at Christmas. There have also been a couple of church services when it has been possible for some residents to attend most notably the Crib and Carol Service. This is dependent on staff availability and volunteers to push wheelchairs up the steep hill!

Events

<u>Coronation</u> We marked the event of King Charles III's coronation by being part of a programme of village events by ringing the bells on Coronation day, we held a themed service on the Sunday and joined others for a coronation picnic at the village centre and hosted a 'Big Help Out' session to encourage volunteering on the Monday.

<u>Fabric</u> We decided not to pursue untethering the pews. We changed to another roof alarm provider after an attempted lead theft attempt went undetected by Ace Defence. Our insurers are claiming from the previous alarm providers for the cost of the repairs. After a survey of the trees in the churchyard, tree work was undertaken for safety and to avoid power lines. A number of the church community took part in a repointing workshop over a few days in August which has equipped us to do minor low level repointing works (subject to Diocesan approval)

<u>Deanery</u> In the new year the reorganisation of the parishes in the Deanery was announced and we were to join with the Upper Tas Valley but lose Tharston. In May we had a talk from Revd Julia Chamberlain from the Diocesan Children, Youth and Families Team. At the October meeting officers were elected for the next three years."

d. Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage Group (NFaST) Kirsten Remer

Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage Group (NFaST) are a community interest group, under the banner of St Mary's Church Newton Flotman. We are interested in the history of the village and have created a village archive housed in the church room. We also host a website www.nfasthg.com which the Parish Council have underwritten in terms of paying for the domain name and web host fees until 2026. The website has a facility to contact NFaST members for those seeking information, we have had 5 enquiries over the year. We also have a digital archive, some work still needs to be carried out on labelling the items so that they can be easily accessed via our cataloguing system developed with support from the Norfolk Archive Centre.

Our monthly meetings have stalled this year due to illness and other commitments but we have hosted Village Café and had a stand at the Village Fete. At Village Café events we have conducted oral history interviews with Jean Cooke and John Hewitt and selected photos for the NFaST Calendar as well as commemorated the Coronation and Remembrance weekend. We welcome interest from those who want to join us to help with the cataloguing and website development. We are looking forward to working with other community groups for the D Day commemorations in June.

e. Partnership Magazine, Caroline Wolfe

Partnership Report

The Partnership magazine has managed to continue with being published in hard copy despite the rising costs of production of recent months. Following the consultation of its readers at the start of the financial year, it was considered a vital community resource, particularly for those without the capability of being able to read an online version.

We currently produce 900 copies which are delivered to every household in Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe by a team of dedicated volunteers. The magazine is also available for collection from the chuches, here at the Village Centre, at the Doctor's surgery and at the village shop.

William Ball has continued to manage the invoicing for our advertisers for which I am very grateful. Advertising revenue 2023 was £1,750 (although there were late payments that fall in to 2024). Parish Council contribution was £500 (Newton Flotman, that is, NOT Swainsthorpe)

So, £2250 income, cost of production was £2300. On that basis, it cost the church £50. For 2024, the Village Centre has contributed £250 as a one-off "advertising" donation.

Hopefully, we will do better and at least break even in 2024.

f. Newton Flotman Primary School, Adam Riley

Mr Riley sent his apologies. He sent the following report which was read by the Clerk:

"We are now at capacity for the number of children in school with 105 children in attendance.

Unfortunately, at the end of last year, Reverend Cory Stanforth left the village for new ventures. This has hampered some of the good work that Reverend Coryn did with us but Lesley Cox has stepped up to now ensure that links with St Mary's Church and Newton Flotman Primary remain. Recently, Mrs Cox was able to support us in preparing resources and learning at Easter, which we then shared with the parents at school.

The summer term is full of exciting opportunities for the children with various school trips, including our Year 5 and 6s going to Hautbois for their residential visit. We have Sports Day and Transition Days too, which will keep us all busy."

g. Biodiversity group, Andy Cox and Richard Beech – Climate Care group

The following report was read out;

"In October St Mary's Church declared a climate emergency. We believe that much more needs to be done to prevent terrible consequences climate change.

We subsequently set up a group named Newton Flotman climate care with the following objectives:

- to encourage each other to adopt environmentally friendly lifestyles
- and to press our leaders to take proper action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

To enable this we have a Facebook page and a WhatsApp group where we share ideas on climate friendly lifestyle changes. So far we have considered eating less meat, using less plastic and measuring our carbon footprint.

When it comes to pressing our leaders to take proper action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions this involves national and local government.

Nationally we have written to Kia Starmer urging him not to abandon his green objectives and we have contributed to a government consultation on rooftop solar panels for new houses. Local government includes our Parish Council. Happily we don't have to do much lobbying persuading as the parish council are already aware of and active concerning environmental matters. They consent to local tree planting they are seeking to manage the green for wildlife. The village plan will include biodiversity provision. They have invited Andy and I to report regularly on biodiversity matters.

If you would like to join the climate care group do chat to Andy or Hilary or me- we would be pleased to tell you more.

One other matter. We note that the mowing organised by Saffron Housing is poor - neither short and neat nor longer and flower filled. I wonder if the council would care to contact Saffron about this."

h. Newton Flotman Village Centre

William Ball gave the following report;

"My report last year was of necessity cautious, as it was at a time of financial uncertainty about the future of the Village Centre, but it did highlight a number of opportunities open to us.

Of particular note are two big success stories; the Social Club and the Fete. The Social Club is now an established fixture, being on every Friday evening during the Summer and twice monthly during the winter, with occasional "specials" on other days. Food vans, live music, bingo, race nights and quizzes have been well supported and have shown that having a theme is important, on dark evenings especially. The fete, with the dog show, was a great success, both in terms of the numbers that turned out and financially. Neither of these things happen on their own and I must offer a special thank you to the teams behind both these things. It has been especially pleasing to me that people have come forward as volunteers to help with planning and organisation. We always need more help, so please do let me know if you can offer your services in any way, however small.

I am delighted to say that several of the opportunities I referred to earlier have been realised and there are several more in the pipeline.

One big opportunity was the availability of the Hall to daytime users and several new hirers are now using the hall on a regular basis. Among these are Action for Children's Stay and Play sessions on Tuesdays and the Cherry Tree Café on Wednesdays.

At last year's meeting, we gathered a number of ideas for improvements that could be made to the Village Centre and the Committee has been taking these into account in its deliberations. As far as the Hall itself is concerned, we are aware that the ambiance can be improved but for now we have concentrated on the fabric of the building and Social Club bar facilities. The roof needs repairs and the loft space needs to be cleared and reinsulated. These are in hand. The parquet floor in this room has been sanded and sealed and the new bar area is close to being finished with the installation of a sink, after which the décor can be attended to, although the bar itself has been in use since last year. We have bought six picnic tables for use outside and have ordered some more, ready for summer social evenings. Last year, we bought a pool table and this has now been repaired and made moveable so it can now be used. Maybe we can think about a pool team and maybe darts as well.

Financially, the Village Centre ended last year with a surplus of £5,464 (compared with £2,192 in 2022) and this was largely due to the success of Social Club Activities and the Fete.

As far as the playing field is concerned, there is not much to report. The football club have been running three teams this season, there have been more trees planted by the Newton Flotman Tree Planting Group and plans are in hand to improve the drainage situation, which is an ongoing problem and one that will be expensive to solve. We have been given a number of recommendations by South Norfolk Council as to how this could be dealt with and are in the process of getting quotes.

As ever, I am indebted to my fellow Committee members who do so much to keep this facility available for the residents of our Village and to those other volunteers who willingly get involved, as well as the Parish Council for their generous financial support."

i. Crafting for a Cause

Hilary Beech read out the following;

"After one of our long-standing members passed away early in the year we decided to take Priscilla Bacon Hospice as our 2023 cause in her memory, as they had looked after her. We made a wide variety of crafted items to sell at the two Fairs held in the village hall at Easter and Christmas plus Saxlingham Scouts Fair in Saxlingham. We raised a total of £548.00 towards the new hospice appeal. There are 12 people who meet the first Wednesday of the month, a range of ages and abilities."

j. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Martin Brooks

Martin Brooks, treasurer of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group read the following report;

"The Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed in October 2023 following the drop-in sessions that had been held in August that year to establish the needs and desires of residents in the village for the future.

The group has produced a draft Misson Statement which is as follows:

Newton Flotman will remain a cohesive rural community with good infrastructure for all. New development will reflect current and future needs of the parish, be well designed, environmentally sustainable and sympathetic to the character of Newton Flotman. Our wildlife, green spaces and local heritage will be valued and protected.

Since October we have employed a consultant – Rachel Leggett – and been undertaking a lot of evidence gathering to help provide supporting material for the policies that will be created in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The evidence gathering has consisted of the following:

Character appraisals – the parish has been divided into nine area based on characteristics including when the houses were built and type of housing. The areas have been described and photographed

Household survey – a household survey has been carried out to obtain from residents their views on a range of issues including housing need and location, design features, local views and green spaces, business needs, and community assets. 22% of the households responded to the survey.

Local green spaces – the local green spaces identified in the household survey have been recorded and photographed

Non-designated heritage assets – assets which have historical and/or architectural value have been identified, photographed, and recorded for the plan.

A company is undertaking research work for the Neighbourhood Plan using funding we have received from Locality a government funded body dealing with neighbourhood plans. They have produced a draft Housing Need Assessment of the housing needs for the period 2025 to 2045. The company is also producing for us a set of Design Codes which will form part of the neighbourhood plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will, for the next quarter, be developing policies for the plan with the aim of having a draft neighbourhood plan for consultation sometime by the end of the summer."

k. Football Club

There was no representative in attendance. William Ball stated that 3 teams are now playing at the club.

- 4. Reports from Other Bodies
 - a. Long Stratton Medical Practice

There was no one present to represent the Medical Practice

b. District Council

District Councillor John Cook introduced himself to the meeting. He has now been in post for a year and explained the area he covers and his role at South Norfolk Council.

He has been an activity member of the community and been involved in planning issues, assisted with a disability grant for a resident as well as Highways issue. John is liasing with County Councillor Daniel Elmer on issues relating to Flordon Road.

He feels it is a privilege being a District Councillor

c. County Council

There was no representation made

d. Police, PC Barnard and PC Smith

Due to an accident they were unable to attend the meeting. They have asked any issues to be sent to them directly and hope to attend the next meeting.

- 5. Parish Council Reports
 - a. Chairman's Report, Paul Weeks

The Parish Council has actively sought to serve the needs of the residents of Newton Flotman throughout the last twelve months as we have come out of the Covid pandemic.

Last year I reported on four areas – planning, environment, social and people – and I will base my remarks for this year using the same headings.

Planning

During the year the Parish Council established the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to develop a neighbourhood plan for the village. This has been reported on already in the meeting so I will not add to that report other than to say that we are pleased with the progress to-date and look forward to seeing the draft neighbourhood plan in the next few months.

The 19th round of the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan by South Norfolk District Council which includes the approval for 25 houses on a field off Alan Avenue, was due for completion this summer. It has been delayed and it is anticipated that it will be approved next year in the summer. We anticipate that we will have the neighbourhood plan in place at about the same time which will influence

housing development on that field. It should be noted that the 31-housing development which has received approval has not yet started and we are not, at this time, aware of when it is likely to start.

Flordon Road has been an area of concern to the Council for a number of years. I am pleased to report that we have been successful in our application for a Parish Partnership fund which will pay for safety features at the end of the village which consist of white hatching on the road surface and new gates at the entrance to the village.

Looking forward, the Long Stratton by-pass is starting now and will be completed by the end of 2025. We believe that this will have an impact on residents' ability to get out of the village onto the A140 and I am pleased to report that Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation with the parish councils who are adjacent to the A140 and north of Long Stratton. Drew Broad and I provided the case to improve the access to the A140 from the Flordon Road which was accepted, and we were pleased to see that the final report identified the Flordon Road/A140 junction is on the Norfolk County Council priority list for junction improvements. We will continue pressing for improvements to be made to the junction.

Environment

The Kings Green rewilding project came in for a lot of criticism during the year. This was due to the contractor not following our instructions about where and when the grass should be cut. This issue has been resolved and we will see a smaller rewilded area on the green this year.

The Parish Council has agreed to adopt a Biodiversity Policy and support the village biodiversity group which is run by Richard and Hilary Beech and Andy Cox.

Social

The YMCA ran the Youth Club in the village hall for the Parish Council during term time from September 2023 as suggested by the YMCA. The numbers are constant, and they are putting on a programme of activities which are educational and which is proving attractive to the children who are attending the club regularly. We will be renewing the contract for another year.

Last year I reported on the Platinum Jubilee celebration for the late Queen. In May it is the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings and we will be celebrating this event with the lighting of a beacon at 9.15pm on the playing field. Prior to the beacon lighting residents are invited to order and have a fish supper at the village hall as, we have been informed, fish and chips were the only food that was not rationed during the first and second world wars and was seen as being good for morale. Refreshments will also be served in the village hall and the bar will be open as well.

Students from ARTS will entertain us during the evening with a couple of war time songs.

People

We have been very pleased to welcome back Lesley Crump as a co-opted member of the Parish Council which has increased the number of councillors to six. We are still short of our total allowance of councillors and would welcome expressions of interest for the one outstanding seat on the council.

Maria our Parish Clerk has provided us with an excellent service again this year. To ensure that she can cope with the demands we are placing on her, we have increased her work hours from seven to ten hours per week with effect from this month April 2024.

I look forward to the Parish Council continuing to support the needs of the village and residents in the forthcoming twelve months.

b. Parish Council Financial Report, Maria Hutson

The Parish Council are pleased that Parish Partnership funding has been confirmed towards the installation of "Village Gates" on Flordon Road. Norfolk County Council have pledged to pay 50% of the cost, with the remainder coming from the Parish Council Precept.

There has been a significant increase in the cost of the grass cutting contract for 2024/25 and the fees for water at the allotment. Quotes were requested from 3 companies for the grass cutting and most competitive was agreed to. Grant funding towards the grass cutting of the Village Green has also been secured from the South Norfolk Council Clean up and Bloom Scheme. Due to the increase in the water used at the allotment the rates for the allotments have been increased to reflect this. The Parish Council awards grants to local organisations and has allocated funds to the Church for the upkeep of the Churchyard, Partnership magazine and the Village Centre. The money awarded to the Church and Partnership has increased by 25% and 50% respectively and allowed these projects to continue. Grants have been secured towards the specialised grass cutting on the Village

green. Funds were secured for the Youth Club from the Community Foundation and Adnams and further funding is sort for this year.

As a result of these and rises in other costs there will be a 22.79% increase in the Parish Council Precept for 24/25. This amounts to an average contribution of £64.13 per household annually, an increase of £11.85 per year or 23p a week. The Parish Council believes that they offer good value for money and that increases were considered at length and not taken lightly.

There remain adequate reserves in the Parish Council account as set out in the Parish Council's reserve policy.

6. General Parish Issues raised by members of the public

There was a question from a member of the public asking about the costs of the Neighbourhood Plan. Paul Weeks explained that the total costs so far, £6,835.00, has been funded through grants. Further grants will be applied for this financial year to continue this work. It was mentioned that if a Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan the Community Infrastructure Levy they receive from the district council is paid at a higher rate, 25%, rather than 15% without the plan.

There was a question about the reduction of affordable housing in the Alan Avenue development. Paul Weeks explained this in regards to increased costs due to Nutrient Neutrality.

Meeting closed 20:42