

Newnham Parish Council & Burial Authority

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Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 6.45 pm in the The Club, High Street, Newnham.

Present: Chair. Cllr F. Bihlmeier, Cllrs D. Harvey, C. Kenny, J. Larkham, M. Penny, M. Smith & N. Swiers. Plus, County Cllr R Hoyland, & the Clerk

There were 28 members of the public present.

1. To allow public consultation.

A number of those present addressed council objecting to the change of venue. All comments made were generally supported by the other members of the public present, who did not speak directly to council. Concerns were raised regarding the following issues; many having been expressed to council at previous meetings. Members of the PC supporting the move are not considering the views of many parishioners. GAPTC's confirmation that the move is acceptable is not considered an accurate reflection of the legal requirements for licencing and disabled access, and their advice has been objected to them directly. It was also felt other venues that were better positioned to provide facilities for disabled access were not considered, including the Armoury Hall, the George Café, the Church & the Primary school. Parishioners question the rationale for leaving the Armoury Hall which in their view has never been adequately explained. Toilet facilities for the disabled at the Club are also considered impractical and concerns were raised regarding evacuation in case of a fire. Further comments were made including opposition from "Inclusion Gloucestershire" who feel the needs of disabled people are not being met based on the information provided to them. A request was made that the move be included on the agenda for the February meeting and was supported by two members of the council. It was felt that the good work being conducted by the PC is being undermined by opposition to the proposed move and that a valued member of the council had tendered his resignation at the November meeting as he felt his position was untenable due to his opposition to the move.

One speaker advised that a formal complaint has been made to the Monitoring Officer at FoDDC and that a response is awaited, advising others to make similar complaints. Cllr Bihlmeier advised that the move was resolved for a trial of 6 months when the decision will be reviewed. He added standing orders prevent inclusion on the next agenda unless 6 members of the council wrote to the Clerk requesting it to be so included. At the conclusion of public consultation County Cllr Hoyland expressed the view that councils should consider concerns and objections raised by parishioners.

2. To Receive Apologies for Absence

District Cllrs R. Burton & A Moore

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest

None

4. To approve the minutes of the Parish council meeting of the 26th November 26

Minutes of the meeting were duly approved

5. To receive a report on activity for items not on the current agenda – Lead: Clerk

None

6. To receive an update from Cllr Hoyland regarding Glos CC proposed legal action against the owner of the Victoria Hotel, outstanding for a number of years.

Investigations ongoing

7. To question District & County Councillors on the content of their reports to council, pre issued to all Councillors.

In the absence of both District Cllrs, no discussion took place.

8. To receive the Clerk's report

All matters by agenda item.

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Financial

9. **Financial Statement** - Lead: The Clerk

The monthly financial statement for December 25 was noted

The monthly financial statement for January 26 was received and duly approved

Monthly payments for December 25 were noted

Monthly payments for January 26 were received and duly approved

Note: The payment schedule and financial statement for December were circulated to all councillors prior to payment and approved by authorised signatories.

10. **To receive a report from the finance committee.** Lead: Cllr Smith

Cllr Smith confirmed the December finance meeting took place and financial checks and the accuracy of the Income/ Expenditure report was completed with no issues being identified.

The quarterly spot check of the Asset register focussed on the buildings and maintenance activity under PC ownership. Discussions were held on activities to ensure all remained in good condition.

11. **To receive the Income / Expense report YTD**

The Clerk advised that the report had been used by the finance and employment committee as part of the financial checks and found to be in good order. The report was noted by council.

12. **To consider financial performance versus 2025/26 budget 9 + 3** Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that the outlook for yearend was a reserve reduction of approximately £3K. Over spend is related to an increase in national insurance payments, a new notice board at the Cliff and a new bench that was paid for by a parishioner. Work in the playground (including reseeding of the football pitch) and additional expense on a full tree survey for the village also contributed to the over spend.

13. **To consider quotations for clearance of the Ferry Point and pathway** Lead: Cllr Blakeman

Two quotations have been received for the proposed work, however, a proper understanding of ownership of the area need resolving before the project can continue. After discussion it was agreed Cllrs Kenny & Penny (supported by the Clerk) would meet with residents of Severn Terrace for discussions prior to the February meeting.

14. **To consider the Barton Hyett tree report including the condition of the Lime trees in the Chains and Lower High Street and any budget implications.** Lead: The Clerk.

The full Barton Hyett (BH)survey identified no major actions. However, concerns raised by the tree surgeon who conducted the Epicormic growth removal require further investigation. A sample of two trees were climbed and video information provided to BH. Their view was that some work on trees found to have rot on the crown need addressing. Their analysis identified that the longevity of the Limes is limited with a 10-20 year outlook before removal. Interplanting now is recommended with young trees to act as a replacements. It was agreed that Cllrs Kenny & Penny (supported by the Clerk) would investigate further and report back at a future meeting. Mr Kerr will be contacted when further information is available.

15. **To further consider and approve the budget for 2026/27 prepared by the Clerk** Lead: All

The Clerk advised that expenditure in 2026/27 would exceed income by £8K in the coming year. The plan does have included potential expenditure relating to the proposed Ferry Point work and spend on the Limes in the chains. It was **resolved** to adopt the budget as presented. Cllr Penny advised that the Armoury Hall are planning to submit an application for a grant to support some of the planned structural improvement at the Hall. The value of the request has yet to be decided and will be submitted in due course.

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16. **To resolve the precept for 2026/27** Lead: All

With reserves in a healthy state but considering the outlooked deficit it was **resolved** to increase the precept to £45,400 (3%) adding £1.74 p.a. to the council tax charges for the parish.

Community

17. **To receive an update on the casual vacancy to be filled by election** Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk advised that an election has been called. The election is conducted by FoDDC and not the parish council. Nominations close on 30th January and the election will take place on the 26th February 26

18. **To consider a quotation from Severnside Defibs Ltd to provide defibrillator training at a cost of £335 + vat. One session, unlimited attendees.** Lead: The Clerk

Following discussion it was **resolved** to arrange the training session.

19. **To receive an update re the interest and creation of additional parking in the Village and consider financial outlooks for implementation and funding sources.** Lead: Cllr Penny

The Clerk advised there are now Five parishioners expressing an interest in spaces. It was agreed that Cllr Penny will now generate a Planning Application for consideration.

20. **To receive an update related to Highways issues.** – Lead: Highways group.

Cllr Penny advised that the December Highways meeting took place with the following topics being discussed.

*A disabled parking space outside the Armoury Hall. * Parking on the Armoury Hall access road causing obstruction. *Blocked drains on the service road (Clerk to discuss with Highway's Manager) *Waste bins left on Dean Road were also raised as concerns. (Clerk was to discuss with residents).

The Hand rail on the Post building at the entrance to Severn Street has now been fitted.

Bollard installation outside the Post remains outstanding

21. **To Consider Planning applications received** – Lead: Cllr Bihlmeier

P0061/26/TCA Kingston House, High Street, - To conduct reduction work on Conifer, Prunus & Cherry Trees. **Resolved** "No objection" to this application.

22. **To consider ways of increasing the use of Village sports facilities by parishioners.** Lead: All

A youth Football team has approached the PC with a request to use the pitch on a Saturday morning. A number of the players live in the village. It was agreed Cllr Swiers and the Clerk would liaise with the Club Manager and report back at the February meeting.

23. **To receive an update on replacing wooden culvert covers with piped and filled culverts**

Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk advised he was still waiting for a quote from Oakdean Landscapes for the work.

24. **To Consider a request to instal adult exercise equipment on the Playing Field wholly funded externally to the Parish Council.** Lead: The Clerk

Following discussion, it was **resolved** to agree to the installation of the equipment (with ongoing maintenance supported by the council), on the Playing Field within the area currently planted by the Harmony project. The Clerk advised that insurance cover will be provided via the council policy once the equipment is added to the Asset Register.

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25. **To consider the condition and future preservation of the Historic Road sign on Dean Road.**

Lead: All

Cllr Larkham advised that Mr Stephen Yarworth has volunteered to renovate the sign. This was supported by council and he was thanked for his offer. Cllr Larkham to liaise with Mr Yarworth.

26. **To receive an update on a proposal from “Atlas” to improve mobile coverage in the village and consider providing a letter of support from the PC.**

Lead: Cllr Swiers

Response to the survey organised by Atlas has received a low response rate to date, despite promoting on social media and in the newsletter. Although the responses have been favourable unless at least 20% of the village take part in the survey it cannot proceed. It was agreed that more efforts would be made by further social media posts and inclusion on the PC Website.

Other Matters

27. **Matters for the Next Agenda.**

Safety in the Play area. Cllr Kenny & the Clerk to investigate -add to next agenda

Armoury Hall refurbish proposal & potential grant– next agenda

Safety on Zebra crossing/ traffic speed – next agenda

28. **To Confirm date & time of next meeting**

- Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 25th February 2026

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Signed.....

Date.....