Newnham Parish Council & Burial Authority

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 5th August 2026 at 6.45 pm in the Armoury Hall, Dean Road, Newnham.

Present: Chair. Cllr F. Bihlmeier, Cllrs N. Assirati, H. Blakeman, D. Harvey, J. Larkham, M. Penny, M. Smith & N. Swiers Plus the Clerk

There were 12 members of the public present.

Representatives of Black Box Design attended the meeting representing Freeman Homes in relation to the planning application for Phase 3 of the Unlawater development

1. **To allow public consultation.**

   Prior to the start of the meeting council **resolved** to suspend standing orders to allow discussion with the representatives of Freeman Homes and to extend standing orders to allow normal public consultation to follow.

   Freeman Homes (FH) Phase 3 – A request from the county Archaeologist to move the properties adjacent to the Roman Villa site by a distance of 5 metres has been investigated by FH but rejected as not feasible due to issues such as the ecological corridor at the rear of the property. There is an existing gap of 4.5 metres within the current plan. Access to the Villa site was also expressed as a concern as the road way is proposed to be in private ownership, although access across it is permitted. Following discussion, FH representatives committed to investigating the possibility of this stretch of road being adopted by Highways. Transfer of ownership of the site of the Villa to the parish council are ongoing (see item 23). Retention of ownership within the estate would result in maintenance being conducted by the management company. It was also felt that insufficient infrastructure planning was being considered by development of land in section one preventing any opportunity of a railway station or halt being considered in future. Potential rear access to the school would also be lost (see item 17 for planning discussions)

   General Public consultation.

   Standing orders were reintroduced following the FH discussions.

   Victoria Hotel – A mobile lifting platform has been at the site for 6 weeks with no work being conducted. A request for the Clerk to contact planning (and the owner) seeking further information on planned work was suggested and accepted.

   Junior Football Pich / Tree move – Views were expressed for and against the relocation off trees and the need for public consultation on the proposals. The need for a dedicated Junior pitch was also challenged as there is a training opportunity organised at St Peters School. See item 18 for more details. **Banning of dogs** from the Playing Field were also suggested.

2. **To Receive Apologies for Absence**

   C Kenny,

3. **To Receive Declarations of Interest**

   None

4. **To approve minutes of the Parish council meeting of the 24th June 26**

   Minutes of the meeting were duly approved

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

   Street Cleaning contract FoDDC – Payment received. renegotiation required for 2027/28 contract price

   Tree removal Junction with Dean Road – The trees in question belong to highways who have been advised of the concerns and plan to investigate.

   Adult Exercise equipment installation – awaiting date

   Defibrillator training by Severnside Defibs Ltd- awaiting numbers interested from RBL, Club and Newsletter promotion

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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.**
In the absence of Cllr Hoyland, no update was available. However, the Clerk advised that he had been informed the independent investigation into the ownership of the land has been completed and committed to chasing Cllr Hoyland and Highways for the report.

7. **To question District & County Councillors on the content of their reports to council, pre issued to all Councillors.**
No reports received for discussion.

8. **To receive the Clerk's report**
All matters by agenda item.

Financial

9. **Financial Statement** - Lead: The Clerk
The monthly financial statement for July 26 was received and approved
Monthly payments for July 26 were received and approved

10. **To authorise release of August payments by signatory councillors with the monthly statement circulated to councillors in advance and presented at the September meeting.**
It was **resolved** that in the absence of an August meeting two of the approved signatories would release the payments following circulation of the monthly statement to all councillors by the Clerk.

Procedural

11. **To receive and consider the report of external audit, notification of public rights on the website and notice board and conclusion of audit publication.** Lead: The Clerk
PKF Litttlejohn approved the external audit with one observation. "The responses given in Section 1, Box 9 and Section 2, Box 11 are not consistent. The smaller authority has confirmed that it is not a sole managing trustee hence the response to Section 2, Box 11 is incorrect and should be 'Yes'. "
Basically, the wrong Yes/No box was ticked !
Public rights started 3rd June and concluded on 14th July with no requests for viewing.
Following external audit approval, the conclusion of audit notice has been posted on the website and notice board.

Community

12. **To consider a formal notice from the Parochial Church Council to transfer maintenance responsibility of ST Peters Churchyard to the parish council in line with the 1972 act.**
Lead; Cllrs Assirati, Blakeman Smith and the Clerk
Following considerable discussion, it was accepted that the notice issued with respect to the 1972 act gave no option for council to refuse to undertake maintenance in the diocese owned sections of the Churchyard. The potential to transfer responsibility to the District Council was considered. However, the Clerk advised that if this was done, although the responsibility would move to the District Council, any work conducted would be recharged to the parish. It was therefore **resolved** to retain responsibility at parish level. Cllr Bihlmeier pointed out that this new financial liability would likely lead to a precept increase in the coming year. The current state of the Lime trees adjacent to the cutting wall require pollarding at a cost of £4,000 to £5,000. The Clerk was requested to advise Rev Knight of the decision and to arrange the meeting as previously planned to discuss maintenance with the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

13. **To receive an update from the clerk regarding further recent damage to the culverts and consider any further quotations for infill.** Lead: The Clerk
Further quotes have been requested to either pipe and fill or just fill the remain culverts.

14. **To receive on the potential downloading of data from the current speed sign from Cllr Swiers.**

Having obtained the hardware required, Cllr Swiers will attempt to download any data on the sign. If successful a repositioning of the post nearer to the speed limit will be considered.

15. **To receive an update on the Beeches parking project.** Lead: Cllr Penny /The Clerk

- **Update on the planning application for additional parking in the Village**
- **Update on discussions with Glos CC on permission to release the covenant restriction.**
- **Update on feedback from interested parties in the agreed funding proposal.**

The Clerk confirmed that 4 of the interested parties expressed an interest in upfront payment, pending further information on the contract and ability to raise funds. Two advised no interest in upfront funding. Cllr Penny to discuss the project with the interested parties and report back at the September meeting.

16. **To receive an update related to Highways issues.** – Lead: Highways committee.

- **Pathway condition A48 to Silver Fox**
- **General discussion following June Highways meeting**

The A48 pathway has been cleared from the fencing side although weeds still exist in the curb edges and gutters. Cllr Assirati expressed concern that this is the case throughout the village. It was agreed this is a good discussion for the September Highways meeting.

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

- **P0687/26FUL Land of Severnbank Avenue.** Residential development for 88 dwellings and associated access and infrastructure.

Cllrs Assirati & Penny presented a detailed analysis of the phase 3 plan, highlighting concerns and objections relating to: The Density of Housing on the South West corner adjoining the Allotments, School and Railway Line. Resulting in a loss of rear access to the school and any potential for a Railway Station / Halt to be built at a future date. Concerns relating to the lack of a cohesive plan for infrastructure, given the expectation that 13,000 houses will be built in the district in the coming years was agreed. Lack of integration of the Roman Villa into the Village remains an issue.

Following discussion, it was **resolved** unanimously that the analysis should be submitted to the Planning Officer as formal concerns and objections. Following further discussion, it was **resolved** by a majority of councillors that the council had "No objection" to the further development of the site providing the changes detailed in the analysis document were implemented. Cllrs Assirati & Penny were thanked for their comprehensive review of the application and professional document for input to the Planning department.

18. **To consider ways of increasing the use of Village sports facilities by parishioners and the use of the Football Pitch by a youth side and discussions with the Harmony Project on some tree removals to support the reinstatement of a junior pitch.** Lead: Cllr Assirati

Following discussion of the comments made in public consultation and the result of public consultation at the July Street Fair (60% objecting to the proposal) it was agreed that relocating the Trees planted by the Harmony project would not take place.

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19. **To receive a report from Cllrs Assirati & Blakeman on the urgency of conducting remedial work on rot found in the crown of some Lime trees in the Chains and Lower High Street and to receive quotations from Abbey Trees and BFG if work is required and discussions with Mr Kerr on the issue and shared costs.** Lead: The Clerk
Cllr Blakeman advised that it was not possible to consider the need for the tree works given the density of foliage on the trees. It was agreed to delay further consideration until the November when Mr Kerr could also be invited to a site meeting. Quotes obtained will be held on file for further consideration.

20. **To receive an update on widening the footpath from the Play Park to the entrance of the school to allow two-way traffic and to install a connecting path from the Skate Park to the school path and discussions with Freeman Homes re the increase in footfall from the Unlawater development to the school via the public pathway.** Lead: Cllr Assirati/The Clerk
Further update to be presented at the September meeting

21. **To consider improving drainage within the Play Park in the area of the pathway.**
Lead: Cllr Assirati
Further update to be presented at the September meeting

22. **To consider quotations from Abbey Trees and TrunkArb. For removal and disposal of sycamore trees on the Green suffering from "Sooty Bark fungus" requiring felling**
Lead: The Clerk
Following consideration, it was resolved to award the contract to TrunkArb based on value for money.

23. **To further consider the PC taking the freehold of the Roman villa remains in the Unlawater development into community ownership and the response from the developer. –** Lead: Cllr Assirati
Further discussions will take place with Freeman Homes once a proposal has been received from them**.**

24. **To receive an update from the Clerk regarding the registration of the "The Green" at land registry to the parish council.**
The Clerk advised a meeting has taken place with the legal advisor who has requested a business account be set up with Land Registry to seek information and submit applications. The latter will remove the need to pay for formal conveyancing. The account is free to set up and administer and any enquiries would be subject to a small fee paid by direct debit. This account will not only help with the conveyancing of the Green but other future projects.
It was **resolved** that the account be set up.

25. **To consider a request to treat with preservative the sculpture in the Play Park.** Lead: The Clerk
It was **resolved** to purchase the materials required (£80 -£90) and for the Clerk to liaise with the parishioner who made the enquiry. Cllr Assirati volunteered to help if needed.

26. **To receive an update reading replacement of the vandalised commemorative tree at the riverbank.** Lead: Cllr Swiers.
Cllr Swiers advised a secure tree guard would cost approximately £150. Cllr Penny advised that a free tree should be obtainable from the County Council. It was agreed to plan the tree in the autumn.

Other Matters

27. Matters for the Next Agenda.

Allotment vacancies and tenancy agreement updates – next agenda

Future tree planting in the village – next agenda

28. To Confirm date & time of next meeting

- Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 30th September 2026

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Signed……. **Date……..**

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