

Newton Flotman Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26 April 2022,
Newton Flotman Village Centre, 7.30pm

These minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting.

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| Present: | David Gibbs (chairman) | Parish Council |
| | Jeff Billings | Parish Council |
| | Lesley Crump | Parish Council |
| | Bruce Turnbull | Parish Council |
| | Paul Weeks | Parish Council |
| | Julie King (Clerk) | Parish Council |
| | Kirsten Remer | NFAST |
| | Richard Beach | Tree Warden |
| | Florence Ellis | District Council |

Members of the Parish: three

David Gibbs welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Andy Pownall – allotments, Rev'd Coryn Stanforth – St Mary's Church, Caroline Wolfe – Partnership magazine, Adam Riley – Primary School, William Ball – Village Centre, Keith Burnett – Long Stratton Medical Practice and Stu Barnard – Police.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 April 2021

These were agreed as a true record of proceedings with no amendments.

3. Reports from Village Organisations and Groups

a. Newton Flotman Allotments – Andy Pownall

The Clerk read out Andy's report:

"There are 23 allotments off Exchange Road made up of 21 allotments of approximately 30m x 7m and 2 allotments of half this size. All of the allotments have been let this year and most are kept in reasonable condition. I have four names on a waiting list.

One allotment is rented by Andy Cox who has set up a community allotment as he and a group of others identified a need in the village, particularly during the Covid restrictions, for people to get out for a chat and maybe a cup of tea and perhaps grow a few vegetables for people with a need in the parish. There is a large shed on this allotment for people to use should the weather be wet; the shed was originally used to hold meetings of the allotment society before the Church meeting room was built. The project is progressing successfully.

The grass on the access track through the allotments is kept cut by a lady volunteer.

There have been no reported incidents of crime committed on the allotments this past year.

All allotment holders are members of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society, affiliated to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. The membership fee is set at £3.00 of which all £3.00 is passed to the National Society kindly paid by the Parish Clerk. The fee is collected at the same time as the rent. Minor expenses of the Society are paid for out of the discount received from the seed scheme. There are 19 members.

Government regulations concerning Covid restrictions are adhered to on the allotment site and people are happy to tend their plots keeping the required distance from each other. The AGM of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society did not take place last year due to Covid but hopefully will take place in the Church meeting room later this year.”

b. Newton Flotman Charities – David Gibbs

David read his report:

“Charity of John William Sewell (1931) reg. no. 208645, includes Charities of John Pye (1647) and Thomas Claburn (1815).

The original bequests were small by today’s standards, the initial intention being to provide a bag of coal for the needy of Newton Flotman at Christmas. For ease of administration, the limited amounts of money involved in each charity were combined and invested in COIF (non-disposable) income shares for which we received a small investment income each year which is available for donations. The pandemic and lengthy restrictions have placed a burden on households, especially with regard to the needs of growing children such as school uniforms, new shoes etc. Although we are a charity with limited resources, we may be able to contribute to the expense involved.

If you live in Newton Flotman and would like us to help, please complete the Grant Application Form which can be found on the Parish Council website. All requests will be treated in the strictest of confidence.”

c. St Mary’s Church – Rev’d Coryn Stanforth

The Clerk read out Coryn’s report:

“Worship returned to Zoom for the early part of 2021 due to further restrictions. However, during the spring, we returned to weekly in-person services. Our outdoor Eco church meets once a month and during August a group of ordinands (trainee vicars) came to experience Newton Flotman’s Eco church. Personally, a highlight of the year was being ordained priest in a wonderful service held in Norwich Cathedral on 26th June.

We have held a number of special services including one to celebrate Harvest Festival; food was collected for the food bank and the service was followed by lunch. We commemorated Remembrance Sunday and held a variety of services to celebrate Christmas including a Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve.

Also, in the run up to Christmas a group from the church sang carols at Olive House and a large number gathered on a chilly evening for carols on the green.

The community allotment and Crafting for a Cause have both continued and have been supplemented by a walking group meeting monthly and a weekly Village Café taking place in the church room. We have held two litter picks around the village and have organised a tree planting group. Fifty trees have been planted on an area at the Alan King playing field and another fifteen on the village green.

Coryn has developed links with the school and led collective worship on a regular basis at Newton Flotman Primary Academy. The school community visited the church for their Harvest Festival celebration and for a Christingle service at Christmas. We also welcomed Newton Flotman Pre School to church for their Christmas concert.

Some significant work has been carried out on the church building including treating the wooden roof and wood in the church tower for beetles. Major work on the church windows was commissioned and tenders were put out for lead work on the roof.

We continue to host the outreach post office in the church room on a weekly basis and Partnership magazine is still published regularly and delivered around the village.”

d. Newton Flotman Football Club

There was no one present to report on the activities of this group although Paul Weeks did report that there was currently a junior and a veteran’s team.

e. NFaST – Kirsten Remer

Kirsten read her report:

“NFaST met up in April 2021 to reflect on the past year and to discuss future plans. We have a core group of five, there is space round the table if you wish to join us! We meet monthly usually on a Saturday morning but some members have also been meeting on Tuesday morning to carryout cataloguing and digitising resources.

From July to September, we participated in the Community Archives Project (part online, part face-to-face) run by the Norfolk Archive Centre, gaining skills in archiving including cataloguing and digitalisation. We have since taken ownership of a filing cabinet from the Village Centre which will hold our archive materials and have spent time cataloguing Jill Helmont and Jean Wilson’s archive

collections. Nigel Morgan has also donated photographs of the village from the late 60s's / early 70's. Many of these resources have been digitised and again these are in the process of being added to our computer database. We have taken delivery of special archive storage envelopes courtesy of the Community Archive Project so are now able to start filing our archive. Thank you to Paul Weeks and Moyra Parker for their work on this.

Through the website, we have an enquiry for information once every couple of months on average. Enquiries this year were about the Blundevilles, from as far away as South Africa and the Goulty family. In August 2023 the renewal of the website and domain name needs to be made (approx. £120). We anticipate we will be making an application to the Parish Council for this.

A new church history booklet was published with a limited print run but it can be emailed. Thanks to Mike Wilkinson and Paul Weeks we produced a calendar entitled Village Memories, using an online company based in Diss. We produced 50 selling for £6 or 3 for £15. Profits went to the church who house the archive and where our meetings are held.

We have held just one memories event post lockdown but plan more in the future. These are are get together to chat about memories of living in the village and a chance to look at the materials we have on the 'archive'.

The 'covid' postponed visit to the site of Blundeville Manor on the Shotesham Estate took place on 13 March. It was led by Dr Stephen Heywood with kind permission of Edward Bailey. The highlights were seeing the double queen posts supporting the roof of the restored straw thatched barn and the site and situation of Blundeville Manor. Mr and Mrs Styles joining us for it having booked into Sugarbeat for the weekend from Sheringham, Alan Styles is from the Blundeville family.

f. Partnership Magazine – Caroline Wolfe

Caroline was unable to attend.

Kirsten reported that production costs were rising rapidly and that discussions needed to take place regarding the long-term viability of Partnership. Feedback from readers was always welcome.

g. Newton Flotman Pre-School

There was no one present to report on the activities of this group.

h. Newton Flotman Primary School – Headteacher Adam Riley

Adam had been unable to attend.

i. Tree Warden – Richard Beach

Richard read out his report:

“My work as tree warden has involved the planting and maintenance of new trees in the village. The group of trees planted on the playing field in January 2021 appear to be establishing well. One or two that did not flourish have been replaced. During this winter trees have been planted on the village green, in the church yard, on a grassy area owned by Saffron Housing at the end of Claburn Close and a few on the playing field. On each occasion we have selected British native trees and tried to select the "right tree for the right place" as the Tree Council recommend. This work has been supported and planned by a Tree Promotion Group from St Mary's Church and we should recognise the work of Andy Cox and David Wharton. The local community have been very supportive and have been involved in tree planting and maintenance projects. One of the trees on the Village Green will be for the Queen's platinum jubilee. Tree planting has been sponsored by Duffields and the South Norfolk Tree wardens' network were very helpful in supplying trees for this year's planting. We need to think ahead and consider planting for this coming winter. It may be possible to support planting on private land so if you have any ideas do let me know.”

j. Newton Flotman Village Centre – William Ball

The clerk read out William Ball's report:

“The last couple of years have seen strange times and it is a real pity that the Village Centre has, for obvious reasons, stood idle for much of the last two years. Lockdown saw all events and private bookings cancelled. Our main hirer, Newton Flotman Pre School, returned in September 2020 and had sole use of the premises for several months. 2020 saw the return of some private bookings and meetings. We had had one film night but by that time the financial impact had already been felt.

On a brighter note, now that most Covid-related restrictions have been lifted it does mean that some sense of normality is beginning to return. Our two football teams have been fulfilling their fixtures and the popular monthly film nights are now back. The Committee is now meeting regularly and is looking carefully at what can be done to ensure this facility is used to the full for the benefit of this community.

I'm pleased to say that, starting in May, there will be a weekly Youth Club meeting on Wednesday evenings for 8- to 16-year-olds. This is something that the Parish Council is running in conjunction with the YMCA and it came out of the Village Survey that they carried out in 2020. Our Parish Council representative, Paul Weeks, has been very much involved in this initiative and is also investigating other possibilities, such as the provision of a skate park or BMX track – other topics that came out of the survey. However, it is a fact that the playing field and children's play area here can get very muddy during the winter and when there is heavy rain. Last winter's weather also meant there was water running across the site and in to Alan Avenue. In order to combat this issue, a grant application was made to source funds to improve drainage on this site and to try and make the playing field less boggy. Unfortunately, we were not successful and will therefore be pursuing other options.

One other suggestion that has come forward is to form some kind of Social Club based here and one trial event has taken place with others to follow in the coming months. We want to demonstrate what can be hosted here and to hear views and suggestions as to what format this might take. If the demand is there, we will do all we can to make it happen.

I would like to have on record my appreciation of the work the Village Centre Committee do. We are a small band and, of course, we always welcome more people to join us.”

4. Reports from Other Bodies

a. Long Stratton Medical Practice – Keith Burnett

Keith had been unable to attend.

Paul Weeks said that the Patient Participation Group would be once again meeting in person from May.

Jeff Billings reported that the defibrillator on the surgery was once again working, was linked to ambulance control and that he was carrying out the monthly checks.

b. District Council – Florence Ellis

Florence spoke about the ways that South Norfolk Council has supported business during the pandemic and since lockdown and how leisure centre staff had been redeployed during lockdown, most officers had now returned to the office three days a week.

She said that seven families had come to South Norfolk from the Ukraine and were based in Diss or Wymondham.

She spoke about the project that planned to install solar panels on buildings owned by South Norfolk Council including leisure centres and parking areas with roofs. In addition, they were looking to install electric charging points at leisure centres and would be offering to work with village halls so that they could also have the opportunity to have them installed.

She said that South Norfolk Council and Broadland were looking to relocate their offices to the Broadland Business Park a small office may be opened in Diss and a mobile van was also being looked into. Before a final decision was reached agreement would have to be sought from Cabinet and Florence was pushing to ensure that residents had their say.

She said that she had been pleased to be involved in planting of a tree on The Green and would looking into funding the plaques to dedicate one of the trees to the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee both on The Green and in the churchyard. She had been pleased to be able to assist with the printing of the research report.

She was keeping a close eye on Alan Avenue development and the implications of the new guidance on nutrient neutrality was discussed.

She ended by saying how impressed she was by the community of Newton Flotman and promised to assist in any way she could.

Florence was thanked for her assistance.

c. County Council – Daniel Elmer

Daniel Elmer was not present.

5. Parish Council Reports

a. Chairman’s Report – David Gibbs

David spoke of the actions of the parish council during the preceding year.

Paul Weeks spoke of the findings of the research report including the actions being taken by the parish council in response and the activities planned for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

b. Parish Council Financial Report – Julie King

The Clerk spoke of the parish council finances for year ending 31 March 2022 including the increase in costs, projects undertaken and grants awarded to other organisations in the village. She said that the parish council had taken the decision in January to substantially increase the precept for the current financial year to cover the increased costs and the projects that the council wanted to undertake. The precept would rise from £12,298 to £23,418 resulting in an increase in the council tax demand of 89%. However, when broken down into real terms, for a band D property the increase would equate to £2.03 per month or 47p per week.

6. General Parish Issues

David Gibbs said that he was concerned at the lack of people willing to volunteer for in the village and that there was a need to stimulate additional interest. There were currently vacancies on the parish council and other organisations were also struggling to recruit the necessary volunteers.

David also advised the meeting that the clerk had resigned, he thanked her for her work and said that the council was in the process of recruiting a successor

Finally, David thanked those who had presented and attended.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.