



Newton Flotman Annual Parish Meeting

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 April 2023,
Newton Flotman Village Centre, 7.30pm**

Present:	Paul Weeks (chairman)	Parish Council
	Jeff Billings	Parish Council
	Cate McNerney	Parish Council
	Bruce Turnbull	Parish Council
	Drew Broad	Parish Council
	Maria Hutson (Clerk)	Parish Council
	Caroline Wolfe	Partnership
	Andy Pownell	Allotments
	Virginia Weeks	Newton Flotman Charities
	William Ball	Village Centre/Church
	Helen Busfield	Police

Members of the Parish: one

Paul Weeks welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from David Segens - Councillor, Vicky Ball – Crafting for a Cause, Adam Riley – Primary School, Kirsten Remer - NFaST, Rev'd Coryn Stanforth – St Mary's Church, Florence Ellis – District Council

2. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26 April 2022

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

Andy read a 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 five names on a waiting list.

One allotment is rented by William Ball who manages this as a Community allotment for people in the parish with a need to get out for a chat, maybe a cup of tea and perhaps grow a few vegetables. There is a large shed on this allotment for people to use should the weather be inclement; 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. The lock on the gate to the allotments has recently been replaced – provided by an allotment holder; the old lock failed to open due to grit and rust.

There have been no reported incidents of crime committed on the allotments this past year. However, the chestnut paling fence along the top of the ditch at the far end of the allotment site has collapsed and the allotment holders are concerned that people may get in to steal fruit and vegetables considering the high value of food at present. The fence was provided by the Parish Council after the ditch was dredged. Will the Parrish Council be able attend to this please?

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. Minor expenses of the Society are paid for out of the discount received from the seed scheme. There are 19 members.

The AGM of The Newton Flotman Allotment Society takes place in the Church meeting room during September each year.”

b. Newton Flotman Charities, Virginia Weeks

Virginia read a report;

“The Newton Flotman Charities was formed from legacies left by John Pye Charity (1647), Thomas Claburn Charity (1815) and John William Sewell (1931) with the specific aim of helping the poor of the village, which was done initially by providing coal and bread to villagers and more recently by making financial donations. An examination of the accounts has identified that the charities provided grants to residents in 2007 and 2018 only. We have not made any grants since then and are limited in what we can provide as we only have £2,454 (two thousand four hundred and fifty-four pounds) available to use to support the residents.

This year David Gibbs and Bob McKelvey have stepped back from the charities and have been replaced by Paul Weeks as chair and administrator, Cate McNerney and me who form a committee along with Caroline Wolfe one of the existing trustees to run the charity.

The committee has decided to broaden the remit of the charities and we are seeking ways to aid people in need. We would like to form a mini help hub for Newton Flotman, to be a sign-post to residents to help them to find the support available from either the government (local or national) or the charity sector and/or provide practical help where we can to vulnerable people in the village.”

c. St Mary’s Church, William Ball

William Ball summarised a report below on behalf of the Church;

Worship - Our regular pattern of worship continued within the Tas Valley Benefice.

ECO Church – Exploring Creation Outside meets once a month in Newton Flotman Churchyard and several families from South Norfolk come along to

learn more about nature and Jesus. At one of these services we did a Bat Walk and used equipment that identified which bats were flying around. Prior to the walk we were introduced to the world of bats by Fay, the granddaughter of one of our congregation, who impressed us all with her knowledge.

Oasis Holiday Club – this held at the Village Centre for 5 – 11 year olds one morning in August and led by Revd. Coryn. It was well attended and the weather was fantastic as we spent time both inside and out with various crafts, outdoor games, singing (with actions) and a story from the Bible acted out by congregation members from around the Benefice.

Harvest Festival and Lunch was very well attended. The gifts provided were given to Norwich Foodbank. The lunch was specifically to thank all those who volunteer at church. Our **primary school** also held their **Harvest Festival** in church and contributed lots of packets and tinned goods to Foodbank. The Benefice service Remembering Loved Ones was held at St Mary's.

Advent and Christmastide -The village were invited to host our Posada figures for a night during Advent. The invitation was taken up with enthusiasm and started with our youngest member of the congregation taking them home after her Baptism and finishing with the last hosts bringing them back to church for the Crib service on Christmas Eve. At the beginning of Advent we had painted pebbles with stars (Follow the Star) plus a message and scattered them around the village, asking the finders to bring them back to the Crib Service. The Traditional Carol and Crib Service was very well attended and Revd. Coryn, who led the service, couldn't stop smiling as more and more poured into church! Village Café hosted themed events including festive wreath making and table decoration workshops during Advent (thank you to Caroline and Sharon for leading these) and both Christmas and New Year's Eve. We hosted Carols on the Green on 21st December, when the community were invited to sing their hearts out with some festive refreshments provided in the candlelight on Kings Green.

Church Community

An **Alpha course** was organised by three of our church members to be held in Tharston. It was advertised in our village magazine "Partnership" and we were really pleased when someone rang up to say they would like to do the course and had seen our advert. The course was very special and ended at Quiet Waters in Bungay for a day of praying, praising and enjoying each others' company whilst we discovered more about the Holy Spirit. There continues to be an **online weekly prayer group** on Wednesday/Friday mornings hosted by Lesley Cox.

Charities – The Benefice Service in May was held at Newton Flotman and our guest speaker was Peter Nicholls. £85.40 was collected for A Rocha. Village Café collected £40.75 for Christian Aid over and above the envelopes distributed around the village for Christian Aid week, which raised £221.00. £189.90 was collected through a plant sale, raffle and bric a brac stalls at the Village Café and the money was sent to DEC Ukraine appeal.

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

Norwich Foodbank – we continue to collect for the local foodbank and donations are collected whenever the church is open and delivered to Norwich once a month.

Community Outreach

Village Café 10am-12noon 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 Christmas Craft Fair Village Centre at the end of October. Homemade bakes were served throughout the day, with homemade bread and soup for lunch.

Tree planting – since this initiative started (Richard Beach, Andy Cox and David Wharton) lots of trees have been planted. In 2022 more trees were planted on the Kings Green and near Clabburn Close and we thank all those who donated to the project including Duffields Mill. Special Platinum Jubilee trees were planted on Kings Green and in the churchyard with commemorative plaques donated by Cllr Florence Ellis.

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. We purchased tables this year for community use with the last award.

Outreach Post Office – the service was provided by Mulbarton Post Office ceased due to it's closure early in the year. Framingham Earl Post Office took up the reins on Wednesday mornings and have provided a very good service since. Thank you to David Wharton for securing this for us.

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 sought grants from the Parish Councils of Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe due to the rising costs of paper.

Crafting for a Cause – Minidonks was our "cause" for 2022. Minidonks take their gentle and friendly miniature donkeys to community groups, voluntary organisations, dementia groups or special needs groups. Crafting for a Cause meet once a month and have produced lots of different knitted, crocheted and felted items that Minidonks sell to raise money for their wellbeing work.

Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage group met monthly throughout the year in the church room. The main activities involved the digitisation of our archive, hosting the Platinum Jubilee Village Café and the production of the village calendar.

School Connections – Coryn has worked hard to develop links with the school and parents and carers, there has been good attendance at school services and in the Crib service and in engagement with church activities. The school produced bunting for the Platinum Jubilee.

Events

Lesley and Andy hosted a prayer space on Fridays after the onset of the **conflict in Ukraine**.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Started by planting trees on Kings Green (near A140), that are part of the Queen's Green Canopy. We had a beacon on the church tower which was lit at 9.45pm on Friday evening of the Jubilee weekend and a choir from ARTS sang on Lime Bank while the community stood on the Green to witness both events. Everyone was invited back to the church room for refreshments afterwards which turned out to be akin to the 5 loaves and 2 fishes but we managed!

Saturday's Village Café was a celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, hosted by NFaST, with lots of wonderful displays of past royal events, some contributed by the pupils at our Primary School. On Bank Holiday Monday we congregated again at the playing field and Village Centre with our picnics and enjoyed some time together to celebrate. Councillor Florence Ellis provided a plaque for our Platinum Jubilee tree (planted on Kings Green) and Revd. Coryn blessed it on the night the beacon was lit. In September St Mary's held the Book of Condolence during the period of national mourning following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Fabric

Work started early in 2022 to carry out major repairs to three of our church windows. Much of the work was done off-site, boarded up windows caused lots of comments for those driving through the village and attending the Post Office. The work was funded by the Mercers grant and private donations and we give grateful thanks to all who gave generously for this work.

Roofing options for the church roof was explored but this was put on hold due to the rising costs of materials.

We were given notice that the much extended faculty for the reorganisation of the church granted in 2017 would be ended in 2023 so minds are focussed on pew untethering.

Deanery – we hosted the October meeting of Depwade Deanery and heard about the Parish Giving scheme. We also participated in the consultation on the proposed reorganisation of the Deanery.

- d. Newton Flotman Football Club
There was no one present to report on the activities of this group although William Ball reported that there is an under 18s and a veteran's team that play in the league. There is discussions around the possible expansion at a youth level working with a neighbouring village
- e. Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage Group (NFaST)
Kirsten Remer was unable to attend but provided a report that the Clerk read out;

We hosted several Village Café's over the last year and have gained a new member Richard Green who was fascinated to hear about the 1968 floods having moved into Weavers Cottage on Old Street. We held a special Platinum Jubilee Village Café which was very well attended. We finished our training with the Community Archives project. The archive (mainly materials left by Jean Wilson), has been catalogued, filed and digitised and hard copies stored in the NFAST archive filing cabinet in the church room lobby. The Community Archive project resourced us with special archiving materials including storage wallets. More work needs to be done on cross referencing the digitised material. We manage to produce a calendar again this year – Mike Wilkinson colourised 'places and people' photographs which went down well. Planning for calendar 2024 is starting in August with hopefully a longer lead time than last as circumstances allow. We are grateful to the Parish Council for financially supporting the renewal of our subscription to Wix for our domain name and website hosting for another three years for our website. The website address is www.nfasthg.com. Progress on developing the site is time dependent. We have had two direct contacts via the 'contact us' function and several direct enquiries about family/house history that we have been able to assist with this year.

Plans for 2023

Developing our skills in gathering oral histories.
Encouraging contributions to the website to record recent events.
To produce a 2024 calendar
To pursue the idea of a detectorists day
Planning in conjunction with other village groups for the Kings Coronation – porch display and capturing the village experience.

- f. Partnership Magazine
Caroline Wolfe gave a brief overview;
Partnership is black and white magazine with a colour cover with 10 editions per year. Over 900 copies are produced across Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe by a voluntary team. Copies are also in the GP surgery, church and shop. Copies are also available on the Parish Council website and Village Facebook page.

The magazine is currently just about paying for itself. This has been done in part by using a smaller font and condensing the articles produced.

It would be good to receive contributions from the football club and additional articles from the school.

- g. Newton Flotman Primary School
Adam Riley had hoped to attend the meeting but had to send apologies
- h. Tree Warden
Andy Cox gave a report on the village tree planting;

A new “avenue” of trees has been planted at the village centre. Trees planted on the village green and elsewhere in the village have been growing well. In addition there are now areas of wildflowers.

- i. Newton Flotman Village Centre
William Ball summarised the report below;

“It is fair to say that 2022 was an eventful year for Newton Flotman Village Centre. It had its share of good, sad and frustrating things to deal with and I will deal with some of the headlines in that order shortly.

Following the enforced inactivity brought upon us by two years of Covid-related restrictions, it was clear that we needed to treat 2022 as an opportunity to increase the profile of the Village Centre in our Community and work towards making it somewhere that could be used by residents to its full potential.

Good: At last year’s AGM, and following suggestions received from residents, we trialled the idea of forming a **Social Club**. Thankfully, a group of people came forward to volunteer their services in order to test the demand and a number of Friday evening events were planned and the necessary licences applied for on an ad-hoc basis. These went well and by the end of the year we had successfully applied for, and received, a Premises Licence, which meant we could open as a bar on a far more flexible basis on Friday evenings and at other times. My personal thanks go out to those volunteers who have given generously of their time to make this happen by manning the bar, buying stock, organising food vans, doing bar staff training as well as joining the Village Centre Committee. The Social Club contributed to the success of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June and supported screenings of England’s World Cup matches as well as the regular Friday nights events. Greater things are planned for 2023, including live music events.

Also among the “good” things to report are that **Newton Flotman Football Club** ran a full season of fixtures, the monthly **Film Nights** resumed and have been well supported and both regular and occasional bookings for the hall have picked up nicely. The Parish Council has, with support from the YMCA, now operated a regular **Youth Club** every Wednesday evening and the Village **Tree Planting** group have also managed to enhance the look and environmental credentials of the Playing Field by continuing their programme of planting new trees.

Sad: As many of you will already know, **Newton Flotman Preschool** closed their doors in October 2022. They have been operating at the Village Centre

for many years and news of their closure was received by many with sadness. My thanks go out to the loyal staff, committee members and others who have given so much for such a long time. I can also report that Newton Flotman **Table Tennis Club** have not reformed since lockdown.

Frustrating: It is very frustrating to have to report that there were several incidences of vandalism and theft during the year along with anti-social behaviour. In the playground, three childrens' swings were stolen (along with a length of chain from near the entrance gate) and graffiti was sprayed on to various places at the Hall and on the playground. Replacement of the swings will cost nearly £1,000, some of which will be covered by financial help from the Parish Council. I'm not sure what can be done to prevent these things happening without having to spend time and money monitoring behaviour and installing CCTV.

Finances: Last year we made a surplus of £4,938, compared to a loss of £141 in the previous year. That's a pretty good recovery from the difficulties we faced during and after the Covid pandemic.

Thankfully, our main sources of income all recovered, with cinema evenings, hall bookings, and Preschool income pretty much reaching their pre-pandemic levels. And thanks to the Social Club team, an additional profit of £3,714 was generated last year due to their hard work.

And that's going to become even more important this year, as due to the sad closure of Newton Flotman Preschool, the Village Centre will lose approximately £6,000 in income a year, so we will be relying more and more on the success of the Social Club to keep the Village Centre afloat.

On the expenses side, you'll see that we spent quite a lot of money on health and safety last year. Almost £1,800 of that was to bring our electrics up to standard. We have an inspection every three years and due to the age of our electrical system, changing regulations and higher standards insisted upon by our insurers, we invested in bringing everything up to scratch.

The other increased expense to note last year was in licences, where we paid for a premises licence and the associated costs of that, such as advertising our application and training.

A big thank you must go to Newton Flotman Parish Council, who agreed to provide us with almost £6,400 in grants. These include the costs to regularly mow and maintain the playing field, repairs to the children's play equipment, new litter bins and to finally be able to replace the flat roof above the foyer.

Thanks must also go to South Norfolk Council, who continue to rebate part of our non-domestic rates, which saves us around £370 a year.

j. **Crafting for a Cause**

Vicky Ball sent a report that the Clerk read out;

“Crafting for a Cause meets once a month in Newton Flotman church room. The group make items to send to charities and during 2022 decided to support one particular charity – Minidonks for Wellbeing. They are a small local group who have 6 miniature donkeys they take to groups, schools and care home to help the wellbeing of their residents, pupils etc. They have sales to help raise funds and we joined their team of makers to provide knitted donkeys and more for them to sell. Some of the group have carried on providing knitted items for Minidonks this year.

In 2023 we decided to raise money instead of making items and our first sale was at the Easter Craft Fair at Newton Flotman Village centre. We chose Priscilla Bacon Hospice for our charity in aid of Val, one of our members who passed away recently, and raised over £200 on the day.”

4. Reports from Other Bodies

a. Long Stratton Medical Practice

Paul Weeks said that the Patient Participation Group are now running regularly along with Health Champion sessions.

There will be building work during the summer at the Long Stratton building and the Newton Flotman building will be open four days a week to provide more space for practitioners.

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

b. District Council

Councillor Florence Ellis was unable to attend but sent a report that the Clerk read out;

“It has been a good four years serving as your District Councillor and I thank everyone in the village for your support and friendship during that time. We have had a change of Parish Clerk, Chairman of Parish Council and Many Parish Councillors in those years and everybody worked together for the good of the village which does not happen in all villages.

During my time I got to meet and know many groups and the people within who do such good deeds - for the environment and tree planting, litter picks, church group, young people and the village hall to mention some. I really appreciated being asked to join the tree planting as part of the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and each time I drive past I see them growing and will continue to do so.

The icing on the cake is the lovely cakes etc on Saturday morning at the church. Will call there.

I was able to give grants to some of the groups over the past four years and the first group was the Playgroup which you no longer have. I apologise for not being here tonight but my brother-in-law’s funeral is today in East Sussex.

I wish everyone in the village best wishes and all the good people doing such worthwhile voluntary work, the Parish Council and its Councillors and Maria, the Parish Clerk. You were all a pleasure to work with and for. I decided after 12 years of being a district councillor it was time for self and family.”

- c. County Council
Daniel Elmer was not present.
- d. Police

Helen Busfield introduced herself as the new Beat Officer on a temporary basis initially. She is able to deal with any community issues in the village. There was a discussion on the anti-social behaviour/vandalism happening at the village centre and surrounding areas. Anti-social behaviour was also noted in the Bus Shelter

There was also discussion around speeding, especially along Flordon Road. Helen would investigate additional monitoring the police can undertake.

5. Parish Council Reports

a. Chairman's Report

Paul Weeks summarised a report which is in full below;

“I am delighted to bring you my first annual report as chairman of the Parish Council.

I recall in my training when I first joined the council being told that the most important task of the council was to set the precept.

In 2022-23 we set a precept which included the partial funding of a Youth Club to be run by the YMCA and allowed us to support grant applications from the Village Centre Committee and Church. The Village Centre grant allocation covered the grass cutting, maintenance of the hedges and trees around the playing field, the resolution of issues with the play equipment in response to a RoSPA inspection and the clearance of a ditch in the north eastern corner of the playing field. The grant to the Church was for the maintenance of the churchyard.

Thinking about what has happened over the last year I would highlight the activities that have taken place in four areas – Planning, environment, social and people.

Planning

The planning application for the 31 house development at the top of Alan Avenue was approved at the end of 2022 and is now subject to resolution of the Nutrient Neutrality issue before the developer can start to build on the site. It is disappointing to note that the objections of the Parish Council and villagers were not taken on board in the planning process.

The 19th round of the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan by South Norfolk District Council was also completed in January 2023 with

approval, subject to the normal planning process, for 25 houses on the field beside the 31 house development on Alan Avenue. At the present time the District Council is going through the process of confirming that they used the correct procedures for the planning process, and it will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate for examination by a government appointed Planning Inspector in the summer. It is anticipated to receive approval in the Summer of 2024.

We have been working with the Highways department to try and improve the safety for residents walking along Flordon Road. This has proved to be frustrating as, having agreed a suitable solution, we were not given sufficient information to put in a bid for funding at the end of 2022. We hope to be able to make a bid this year and see improvements made to the safety on this road at the end of the village closest to Flordon.

We have been considering how we can improve our influence with the District Council for planning issues and discussed the possibility of developing a neighbourhood plan for Newton Flotman. We will be seeking the residents' views on this matter and what they want Newton Flotman to look like in ten year's time, later in the year.

Environment

The Kings Green was rewilded by allowing the grass to grow and create a natural meadow. I have had complements from residents who have been very pleased with this development.

Social

The Youth Club run by the YMCA started in May 2022. The numbers dropped in the winter but have since recovered and the club has now got a good number of children attending each week with good reports coming to us from the children and parents. We are renewing the contract with the YMCA but will be reducing the club to term time only as suggested by the YMCA.

We were pleased to support the Platinum Jubilee celebrations last summer and purchased a beacon which Bruce Turnbull and Kirsten Remer lit at the top of the Church Tower. The lighting event was very well attended and it was very good to have a group of singers from the ARTS perform the Platinum Jubilee song.

People:

At the start of the year under review we lost two long standing members of the council. David Gibbs resigned after being the chairman for 32 years and Julie King resigned as the Parish Clerk. Replacing Julie we have been delighted to welcome Maria Hutson who has come in and done an excellent job for us. During the year we had four people join us as co-opted members of the council and, at one meeting, we had a full compliment of councillors! Sadly, two members have had to resign due to ill health. We are pleased that we have been partly able to fill the gap with a replacement councillor.

We are about to have an election for the District Council and the Parish Council. Five people stood for the Parish Council, and we have all been elected uncontested. With these two elections we are having to say goodbye to two people who have been very important members of the District and Parish Council – Florence Ellis and Jeff Billings. I would like to thank them for the work they have done for the Parish over the last four years. We will miss them.”

b. Parish Council Financial Report

Maria Hutson, the Clerk, gave a brief overview of the finances of the Council. There remain adequate reserves in the Parish Council account and the Parish Council have been able to keep precept increase to just over 3.5 %

6. General Parish Issues raised by members of the public

It was raised that it is looking hopeful that there will a Waveney Food bank distribution point opening in the village soon.

Paul Weeks thanks everyone for coming along
The meeting closed at 20:47