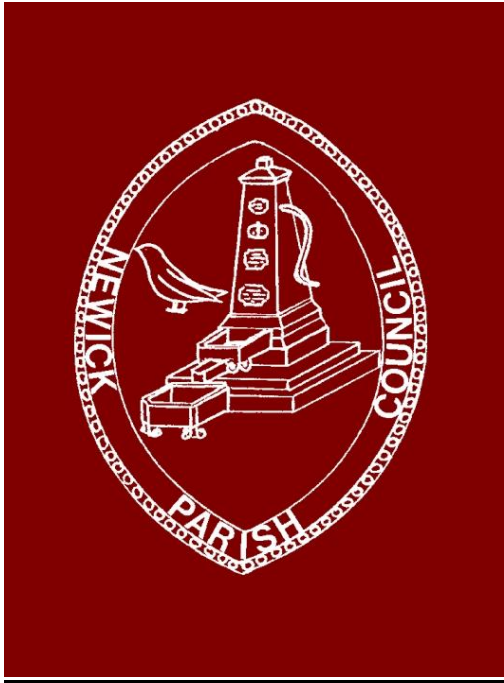


# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: YEAR TO APRIL 2019



## The Parish Council

### Your Parish Councillors

Throughout the year the following Parish Councillors have continued to serve on the Council:-

Chris Armitage  
Guy Clothier  
Mario Halsey  
Ben Horsfall (Vice Chairman)  
Iain Nesbitt  
Jean Sheppard  
Jenny Smerdon (Chairman)  
Melanie Thew  
Joe White  
Cathy Wickens  
Ken Wrench

### Parish Council Precept

The work of the Parish Council is funded largely by a contribution from the Council Tax paid by parishioners to Lewes District Council. This is known as the precept. In 2018/19 the precept received amounted to £55,000.

At the end of November, the Council approved the budget for the 2019/20 financial year. Unfortunately there is a significant shortfall in income to cover expenditure. This is due to both an increase in costs (including those associated with hiring a new clerk e.g. a transition period, training, new equipment etc.), as well as a reduction in income from LDC and ESCC grants. Whilst some of the additional expenses were expected to come out of the Council's reserves, the remaining shortfall would have required a precept increase of an alarming 46%. Although it was anticipated to reduce again in the following year, it was agreed that the Council would use further reserves in order to soften the impact on tax payers. In the final budget, we have managed to keep the increase down to 17%, which in monetary terms results in a band D increase from £48.66 last year, to £56.98. This results in the Council using around £30k of its reserves.

We would like to reassure you that we work hard to ensure the residents of Newick get the best value for money, and as with other Council documents you can inspect the budget yourself on the website - [www.newick.net](http://www.newick.net).

### Neighbourhood Planning

The future of restricting housing development around Newick to **planned** development, as opposed to **developer-led** development, now looks more uncertain. The revised National Planning Policy Framework allows local plans and neighbourhood plans to be given far less weight if **either** the local planning authority is deemed by government to have insufficient land lined up for the development needed over the next five years, **or** if the new housing completions over the last three years are deemed to have been insufficient. Sadly, the

government's recently published Housing Delivery Test (HDT) figures put Lewes District into this category. Not only do the figures indicate failure of the HDT, but they also mean that a larger buffer must be allowed when calculating the housing land supply. LDC may not, therefore, meet either requirement.

Lewes District Council (LDC) considers the government's figures to be wrong and is contesting them, both on the grounds of mathematical error and because the figures unfairly penalise the area outside the South Downs National Park for poor progress on development within the Park.

There are currently several planning applications for sites around Newick not included in either the Newick Neighbourhood Plan or LDC's Local Plan. Regrettably, it is not possible at present to predict what the outcome of these applications might be.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee meets monthly, continuing to monitor national and local issues, legislation and emerging legislation together with relevant court proceedings and local developments as they affect Newick.

### **Anti-social behaviour at the Recreation Grounds**

Sadly, the Parish Council has, during the year, received a number of reports of anti-social behaviour at the recreation grounds (King George V Playing Field and Manwaring Robertson Rugby field). There have also been complaints of drugs being used, loud music being played and verbal abuse directed at those who have tried to reason with the perpetrators.

The Council has checked the CCTV footage following receipt of these reports and is in touch with Sussex Police about these incidents.

As part of Sussex Police's continued efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour, 'Operation Blitz' patrols operate from 4:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. You can contact an officer direct through the Blitz phone number at these times to report anti - social behaviour.

The phone number for Lewes District: 07989188960

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators are continuing to pass on information to residents when it is received from the police.

There have been a few burglaries in the village. Thieves seem to be looking mainly for jewellery or money and entry is often gained by breaking glass doors or windows or forcing locks at the rear of properties. Police advise that residents should be careful what they put on social media and never advertise the fact that they are away. Be aware of 'cold callers' and do not let them into your house.

Always make sure you lock vehicles, even if you're only leaving them for a while. Opportunist thieves have stolen wallets, phones and photographic equipment from vehicles, some parked in driveways.

### **Remembrance Day**

On November 11th, the village came together to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives. 100 years after the end of World War 1, we especially remembered all the young men from our village who died as a result of that conflict. The remembrance services in the Church and on the Green were very moving occasions and the torchlight procession and beacon organised by the Newick Bonfire Society was a fitting tribute.

## Allotments

The Cornwells Bank site has completed its second year and prizes were won at the Annual Horticultural Show. Congratulations everyone. There are still a few plots available on this site so if you would like to register an interest please visit their website, <https://e-voice.org.uk/nas/>

## Village Festival and Scarecrows

A wonderful weekend, the weather was lovely and lots of our local clubs and societies put on events. 'Praise in the Park' was very joyful. The scarecrows were amazing again and the whole weekend of fun enabled the community to come together.

## Newick Food Fair

The third Newick Food Fair proved to be a wonderful occasion, celebrating local produce from Sussex. Hundreds of people came along. Stall holders were thrilled to be asked to come back and it was great to see the Village Green being used in this way. Thanks to Alex Harrison, Emily Rae and Steve Jones who, with help from the Council, organised the event so brilliantly.

Plans for the next Food Fair to be held on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June** are well under way and we are pleased that Harris's Fair will be returning to Newick Green that weekend.

## School Crossing Patrol

Volunteers known as the 'lollipop gang' have almost completed 3 years. We thank them all for their dedication as they continue to make a real difference to the safety of pupils at Newick School.

## Christmas Tree on The Green

The Parish Council would like to thank Tom Stovold and his team at the **Royal Oak** for erecting and decorating the Christmas tree on the Green. Thanks also to the anonymous donor of the tree and to Baroness and Mr Cumberlege for providing the power source for the tree lights. The tree looked amazing and provided a lovely festive focus to the village green.

## Newick Directory Update

The Parish Clerk has updated the village clubs and society details and this leaflet was distributed with the Spring Newsletter.

## Village Appearance

Paul, our village handy person, has worked hard during the year to keep our village looking good. He is sadly leaving us and we are looking for someone to fill the post. We thank him very much for his enthusiasm and dedication in looking after our village so well.

The village survey carried out in the Autumn identified litter, overgrown hedges and the poor condition of some footpaths as areas that need attention. The Environment Committee is working to address these. Our grass verges are still coming under threat during the winter months and during spells of wet weather, but by parking sensibly we can help protect them.

We would like to offer a **very big thank you to those who helped at the Village Spring Clean Day.**

## Highways

We continue to work with East Sussex County Council through our Strengthening Local Relationships meetings when we discuss road safety and highways work, and we are currently consulting with other Parish Councils and ESCC Highways to find ways of reducing speed within the village.

## Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

We held a successful consultation morning at the Sports Pavilion in June 2018 when four projects were showcased for CIL funding:-

- 1) The maintenance and refurbishment of the main area of the Village Hall.
- 2) A new sports pavilion.
- 3) An accessible all weather route suitable for wheel chairs, push chairs and walkers on public footpaths to the south of the village.
- 4) The installation of some outdoor gym equipment on King George V Playing Field.

The Village Hall made a successful bid to Lewes District Council for CIL funding in October and they will be proceeding with their project in August. A great result! Well done.

## Newick Rootz

This wonderful group of volunteers works hard to keep the rights of way around our village in a super condition so that we can enjoy walking them.

An improved walking route linking footpath 14, at Rotherfield Wood and the Sheffield Park Estate was opened in the Autumn as part of the National Trust River Ouse Restoration Project at Sheffield Park.

## Parish Office

The office is working well at the Community Centre and it is open to visitors on Monday and Thursday mornings from 10:00 to 12:00. If you have any queries regarding village matters then do pop in during those times to speak to the Clerk.

We have appointed a new Clerk, Emma Reece, who will take up her duties after Easter and work alongside Sue for a period of time to ensure a smooth handover. Sue is retiring after 6 years as Clerk. She has worked tirelessly for the Parish Council, her knowledge and expertise, along with her ability to engage with the public have been outstanding. The Council on your behalf would like to say a BIG thank you and wish Sue a very happy retirement.

## Parish Website (Newick.net)

A reminder that the Newick village website is managed by the Council and contains village information, news and events, details of Parish Council meetings, Parish Council agendas and minutes, and booking information for Newick Village Hall and Newick Community Centre. You can sign up to receive email alerts about new items placed on the news and events page. Just visit [www.newick.net](http://www.newick.net), click on the 'News and Events' tab at the top of the page and follow the link on the top right hand side to sign up to receive these alerts. Enter your name and email address to register.

**Jenny Smerdon (Chairman)**  
**Newick Parish Council**  
**17th April 2019**

