

NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Plan Working Party - Terms of Reference

The Newton Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP) is a working group of Newton Parish Council (NPC). All NPC policies and procedures are applicable to NPWP, and all the work undertaken by the NPWP will be submitted to NPC for adoption.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the NPWP is to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Newton, progressing it through an Independent Examination, a successful community referendum, and ultimately its adoption by Babergh District Council as planning policy.

The NPWP will engage the local community to ensure the NP reflects the ambitions of Newton, maximising support through high levels of engagement throughout the process.

Principles

The NPWP will operate democratically, transparently, and fairly, encouraging participation and giving equal weight to all community views. All decisions will be evidence-based and supported by community consultation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The NPWP will be accountable for developing and providing strategic management of the NP. It will develop and maintain a project timetable to guide progress. The NPWP will also produce a programme of consultation and engagement events with residents, aligning with NPC's Statement of Community Engagement, to ensure public involvement throughout the process.

To support plan production, the NPWP will undertake analysis and evidence gathering. It will actively support and promote the NP during the project and liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to enhance effectiveness.

The NPWP will gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that conclusions are robust and reflect the aspirations and concerns of all residents. It will consult widely to ensure that both the draft and final versions of the NP accurately represent the community's views. Monthly progress reports will be made to NPC.

Membership, Chairman, and Quorum

Membership of the NPWP will include a minimum of 5 members, with at least 2 being members of NPC. Additional members may be co-opted as needed to ensure broad community representation. The Chair of the NPWP will be an NPC member and a Deputy Chair will be selected by the NPWP. For a meeting to be quorate, at least 3 members must be present, including an NPC member.

Decision Making

The plan-making process is the responsibility of NPC as the qualifying body. All NPWP actions will be carried out on behalf of and require approval from NPC. NPC will approve all the documents making up the Draft of the NP before it is published for consultation and independent examination processes.

Meetings

Meetings of the NPWP will be held monthly at Newton Village Hall. Notices and accompanying papers will be distributed at least three days before each meeting. All documents of the NPWP will be updated on the Newton website by the Parish Clerk.

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Decisions will typically be made by consensus; however, where voting is necessary, each member will have one vote (excluding co-opted members), with a simple majority determining the outcome. The Chair will hold a casting vote in the event of a tie.

Finance

All grants and funds for the NP will be managed and accounted for by NPC. All orders and purchases will be placed via the Parish Clerk and will conform to NPC's Financial Regulations. NPWP members may reclaim agreed expenses related to the project.

Conduct

NPWP members are expected to adhere to NPC's Code of Conduct, including the declaration of interests where applicable. Members should conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy, and respect towards others, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religious belief. They must promote equality of access and opportunity throughout the process.

Amendments

Any amendments to these Terms of Reference must be approved by NPC.

Adopted at the NPC meeting on 9th July 2025