

Re-imagining Newhaven Board

Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday 20th May 2025

10am to 11.30am via MS Teams

Attendees:

Chair

- Chris Ketley (CK)

Community, Education and Business Representatives

- Alison Turner (AT)
- Annie Lorys (AL)
- Dave Collins-Williams (DCW)
- Duncan Kerr (DK)
- Nick Backstrom (NB)
- Penny Shimmin (PS)

East Sussex County Council

- James Harris (JH)

Greater Brighton Economic Board Representative

- Andy Hill (AH)

Government's Local Growth Team

- Harry Colquhoun-Flannery (HCF)

Lewes District Council

- Ian Fitzpatrick (IF)
- Lisa Rawlinson (LR)

Members of Houses of Parliament and Lords

- Janet Whitaker (JW)

Guest Speakers

- Beverley Lucas (BL)
- Marc Stephens (MS)
- Martin Garry (MG)
- Sophie Missen (SM)

Secretariat (provided by Lewes District Council)

- Anna Salmon (AS)
- Bryn Mabey (BM)
- Dan Fairbrother (DF)

Apologies:

- Andrew Tucknott (ATu)
- Ben Anderson (BA)
- Christine Robinson (CR)
- Corinne Day (CD)
- Dick Shone (DS)
- Ken Dry (KD)
- James MacCleary (JM)
- Mike Shorer (MS)
- Rob Cottrill (RC)
- Zoe Nicholson (ZN)

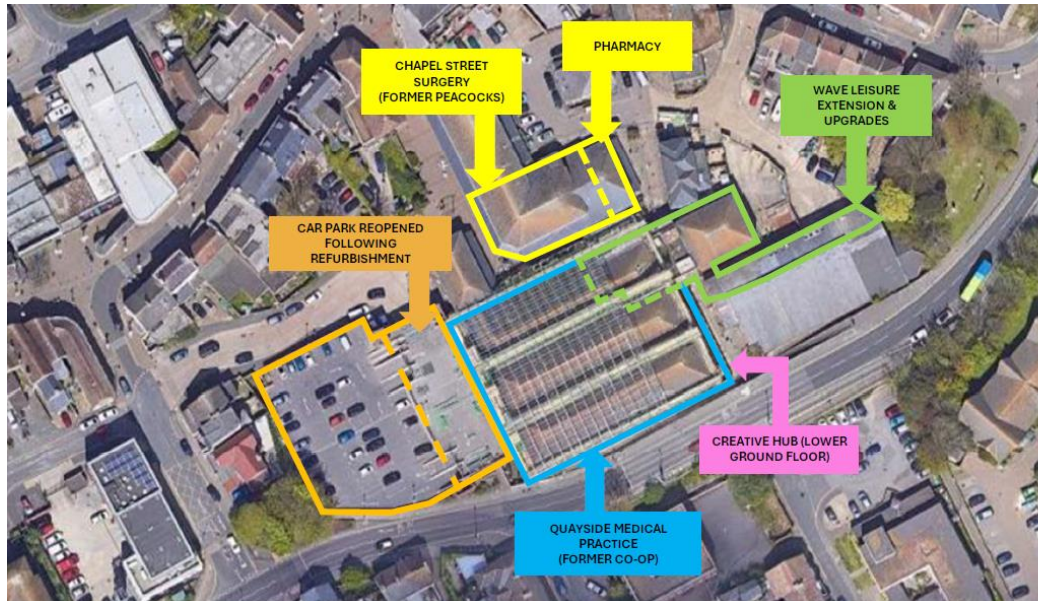
1	<p>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</p> <p>CK welcomed the Board members and guest speakers to the meeting.</p> <p>CK announced the departure of two board members, Emma Smith and Corinne Day. CK thanked Emma for all her support to the Re-imagining Newhaven Programme over the past two years. CK thanked Corinne for all her contributions to the Board over the past few years and for everything she's done for Newhaven.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting held on 28.03.25</p> <p>The minutes were agreed.</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p>	
4	<p>Newhaven Football Club Outputs and Successes</p> <p>MG, Chairman of Newhaven Football Club, provided the Board with an update following the completion of the grant funded project in summer 2022.</p> <p>The new 3G football pitch promised to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • To bring life back to Newhaven through greater involvement with the wider community • Bring more people into the town and investment into the area as the football club will be able to provide for locals and visitors whatever their needs • An education/training centre • Somewhere for everyone to get involved in activities at any age • A place for the vulnerable to feel safe and to be able to talk without fear • Increase awareness of ladies and girls' football. <p>Achieved so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 new permanent jobs, 7 voluntary roles including 2 roles through social services • The club now provides football from 2yrs old to 83 years (membership 500+) – this would not have been possible with the old pitch • Investment has increased through additional sponsors which has allowed further work to be done at the ground which has opened new opportunities • Achieve Play Learn (APL) Academy are working with age groups from 7 to 16 years once a week and also during school holidays • It's become a social hub for Newhaven Heights residents and the nursery is currently located on site • "Back to work on Wednesdays day for retired people" with any skills or social backgrounds has been launched with great success • The club now has 30 football teams. 5 years a-go it only had 3 teams and 116 members. • Newhaven ladies' teams include the flexi league, recreational league and walkers. • Newhaven girls' teams (U12's, U14's and U18's). 	

JH expressed how football clubs are often a focal point of a community, but this example provides so much more than that. It's an amazing asset to Newhaven which delivers the original outputs and more.

BM offered to help the club with marketing and PR activity.

5 Newhaven Square project update

SM presented an update on the Newhaven Square project and provided an overview of all the different elements being delivered as part of the project.



PROPOSAL

The development includes the proposal for two green walls on: Dacre Road car park and the new Quayside medical practice on the Chapel Street elevation.

Key dates:

- The main contractor has been on site since October 2024 and the project is progressing well
- The roof scaffolding is currently being removed from the new Quayside medical practice and will be completed by August 2025
- Chapel Street GP surgery will complete in May 2026
- By August 2026, the rest of the project will be completed.

LDC will be working with the contractor and GPs to establish the actual occupation dates and premise opening dates.

SM informed the Board that the new site hoarding that includes project information, has been positively received.

JH asked whether there are any outstanding permissions required to deliver the project? SM confirmed that planning permission has been received.

	<p>IF reminded the Board how the project has evolved and responded to meet the local health needs and strongly aligns with Government's intentions to integrate health, exercise and leisure. This project will deliver a state-of-the-art facility in the heart of Newhaven town centre.</p> <p>6 Restaurant and Community Destination project update</p> <p>SM provided an update on the Restaurant and Community Destination project being delivered by LDC.</p> <p>The project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant • Splash pad • Children's play area • Outdoor gym • WCs/Changing Places facility • Landscaping and ecological improvements. <p>Current status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission was granted on 24th July 2024 • Detailed design has been carried out by the design team • Going out to tender for a main contractor imminently • Work to start on site in summer 2025 • Reptile translocation has taken place on site ready for groundworks to begin • Project completion spring 2026. <p>DK raised concerns about the risks associated with the location of the splash pad regarding the on-going maintenance. SM confirmed this is being considered as part of the design process and they've discussed the challenges with Portsmouth Council about their splash pad.</p> <p>AL asked what considerations have been given to the security of the new outdoor facilities. SM confirmed this continues to inform their on-going discussions about the design.</p> <p>7 Social Enterprise Incubator project update Open Call for additional funding</p> <p>AS confirmed the closure of the Social Enterprise Incubator project and expressed how hard PS and colleagues at SCDA had worked to try and make the project viable. Sadly, it has just not been possible to move this project into the delivery phase.</p> <p>MHCLG have confirmed that the funding allocation can be retained within Newhaven. With approval from the Board, the funding can be re-profiled to support pressures elsewhere in the Re-imagining Newhaven programme.</p> <p>AS referred to the Open Call briefing paper, proposing the commencement of an Open Call, which would enable the remaining projects within the Re-imagining Newhaven Programme to apply for an additional funding allocation. Applicants will need to evidence the budget pressures facing their project and provide confirmation that an additional allocation would be spent by 31 March</p>	
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2026. The applicants will also be asked to identify any additional outputs that would be realised.

Once the Open Call has closed, the Board will be provided with a summary of the applications received. The Board will determine which projects will receive the additional funding allocations.

The Board unanimously approved the commencement of the Open Call.

8 Re-imagining Newhaven programme updates

AS provided high level updates from across the programme.

Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvements:

- Both major public realm projects (Transport Interchange Hub and Town Centre Streetscape Improvements) are nearing the completion of RIBA Stage 3 with the designs currently being finalised.
- The preparation for planning and tendering for the main contractor will be the primary focus of activity under RIBA Stage 4.
- Engagement will take place in June.

Business Grants programme round 2:

- Enquiries from 95 businesses with 17 businesses being accepted onto Round 2
- Round 2 is currently fully allocated subject to all applications completing the process
- £30,000 has been claimed so far / items have been purchased – the next couple of months will focus on supporting the businesses in the defrayal of their grants.
- 19.5 projected new jobs will be created from the Round 2 investment in Newhaven businesses.

Eastside Recreation Ground:

- Newhaven Town Council (NTC) have carried out a consultation survey on the Eastside play park
- Designs for the play park have been drafted
- Contractors/suppliers presenting quotations and plans to NTC Full Council meeting in May 2025
- NTC are looking to fund the play park which will be reported as Re-imagining Newhaven programme match funding.

Fort Road Recreation Ground:

- Procurement has been the dominant focus during the last quarter
- The tenders for the main contractor and landscaping subcontractor came in higher than the budget
- Value engineering and some redesign has been carried out by the project team and QS to bring the project back on budget
- Construction will start on site towards the end of June 2025
- Community arts project (painting the shipping container) will be appointing an artist to paint the mural.

Newhaven Fort:

- The Fort re-opened to visitors on 15th February as per the project timeline.

- Visitor numbers have exceeded expectations.

There are some works which were not possible to complete prior to re-opening. These include:

- a canopy over the café seating area
- a storage area on the parade ground
- an exhibition regarding HMS Forward
- and a temporary exhibition showcasing Vera Lynn.

These works will all be procured and delivered in this quarter (by the end of June). There are also various rectifications required by both the base build and fit out contractors, which are being addressed in this quarter.

Landing Stage:

- Tendering of the works is nearing completion
- The tender process took longer than anticipated due to several contractors withdrawing and additional contractors being added to the list
- The tenders all came in higher than the allocated budget
- Value engineering has been carried out and the contract will be awarded very soon
- Due to the procurement delays, construction will now start on site in June 2025 but is still on track to be completed within this financial year.

Fish Processing Plant:

- The fish processing plant is now operational, and fish is landed daily to the unit
- The freezer unit is rented out to local fisherman
- The fishers have been looking at ideas for processing local products and ways of adding value to their catch. The fishers are dependent on MMO funding being released, to develop new projects
- Grant Funding Agreement for the Ice Maker has been finalised and is with the fisher's society to be signed on agreement of their committee
- S33 Covenant on the LDC side is completed and with Land Registry.
- The last quarter has seen an increase in the numbers of storage units let out
- The fishing industry newspaper, Fishing News, has asked to attend and complete a write up on the project and its benefits to the local industry.

JW mentioned that artists were commissioned during the second world war to paint boats to dazzle so that they wouldn't be recognised as ships which would make very interesting narrative for the Fort Road Recreation Ground community arts project.

AL asked whether the refurbishment of the Fort Road Recreation Ground toilets was still within scope and whether these works would also commence in June. AS confirmed the toilets were in scope and works will commence in line with the programme. Following the meeting, AS has been informed by the project manager that several layouts/configurations are currently being considered by the project team for the toilets.

BM announced that a PR informational piece is being drafted to include information and headlines for all the large projects within the programme. BM also informed the Board that the latest District News magazine includes articles on several of the Re-imagining Newhaven programme projects.

NB informed the Board that the College is in discussions with Newhaven Fort to provide work experience for 300-400 construction students.

MS confirmed that the Newhaven Square main contractor regularly circulates newsletters to local businesses and the new hoardings contain a QR code which links to quarterly updates on the Council's website. Information will also be provided inside the GP practices once internal images are ready to share.

9 High Street Rental Auctions

AS referred to the High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) briefing paper circulated to Board members.

The HSRA powers came into force on 2 December 2024. The goal of HSRA is to reduce high street vacancies, boost local economies, and empower communities to revitalise their areas.

HSRA allows local leaders to tackle persistently vacant properties in city, town and village centres by putting the leases up for auction. HSRA aims to boost the high street through 'right to rent' commercial lots for businesses and community groups.

HSRA aims to stop disengaged landlords from sitting on empty properties. There is a fundamental limitation of the HSRA, the process does not allow a Council to take direct control of vacant properties, the role of the Local Authority is purely an enabling one.

Significant interventions have already been initiated in Newhaven town centre to drive greater footfall, increase dwell time and positively impact on the town's economic activity.

At present, the Council views HSRA as a 'last resort' mechanism, which is still in the early stages of delivery. The Council plans to continue active engagement with MHCLG and is well placed to monitor at a distance and benefit from the lessons learned from the Early Adopters who are pioneering the implementation of these new statutory procedures.

The Council plans to revisit and review the HSRA opportunity upon completion of the Early Adopters programme.

JW asked about the success rate of the HSRA programme. AS confirmed that evaluation and feedback would be sought on completion of the Early Adopters Programme which is currently piloting this new scheme.

JW asked whether there was any proactive work being done with landlords on the High Street to improve the shop fronts. LR informed the Board about the Newhaven Enterprise Zone shop fronts grant funding pilot and the good practice toolkit which has been developed.

JW asked whether Active House could form part of a future HSRA programme. LR confirmed that LDC have been in discussion with the administrators about the property.

10	Government strategic update HCF informed the Board about the recent changes to the Cities and Local Growth Units. HCF is part of Sam Lucas' team within MHCLG that will provide area-based support to Sussex and will look to visit Newhaven soon.	
11	Any other business AL announced the Newhaven Chamber of Commerce has successfully hosted their 20 th year of the Seahaven Business Awards which was attended by 155 people from local businesses. CK thanked all Board members for their excellent contributions and especially to those presenting. Meeting closed at 11.10am Next meeting: Monday 14th July 11am to 12.30pm	