

Re-imagining Newhaven Board

Minutes of Meeting

Monday 14th July 2025

11am to 12pm via MS Teams

Attendees:

Chair

- Chris Ketley (CK)

Community, Education and Business Representatives

- Alison Turner (AT)
- Andrew Tucknott (ATu)
- Charlotte Carr (CC) (in attendance for SS for part of the meeting)
- Dave Collins-Williams (DCW)
- Dick Shone (DS)
- Nick Backstrom (NB)
- Mike Shorer (MS)
- Penny Shimmin (PS)
- Sophie Sneddon (SS)

East Sussex County Council

- James Harris (JH)

Government's Local Growth Team

- Harry Colquhoun-Flannery (HCF)

Lewes District Council

- Christine Robinson (CR)
- Lisa Rawlinson (LR)
- Rob Cottrill (RC)

Newhaven Enterprise Zone

- Michelle Connors (MC)

Guest Speaker

- Guy McQueen (GMc)

Secretariat (provided by Lewes District Council)

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

Apologies:

- Annie Lorys (AL)
- Andy Hill (AH)
- Ben Anderson (BA)
- Duncan Kerr (DK)
- Graham Amy (GA)
- Ian Fitzpatrick (IF)
- Janet Whitaker (JW)
- James MacCleary (JM)
- Ken Dry (KD)
- Zoe Nicholson (ZN)

1 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

CK welcomed the Board members and guest speaker to the meeting.

CK welcomed two new Board members, Michelle Connors, the Newhaven Enterprise Zone representative and Sophie Sneddon, the NHS Sussex representative.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 20.05.25

The minutes were agreed.

3 Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest for agenda item 6 were received from: RC, LR, CR, MC, JH.

4 Newhaven Enterprise Zone (NEZ) Funding Opportunities

MC informed the Board that the Newhaven Unleashed funding opportunities and the NEZ's three-year investment programme commenced in March 2023 with 3 funding streams:

- Low Carbon Fund
- Refurbishment of Employment Space
- Transforming Newhaven.

The Town Centre Revitalisation Fund is the newest out of all the NEZ funding opportunities. A Design Guide has been produced and includes the key principles of a good shop front design, formal permissions, consents and useful contacts/resources.

There are 68 business premises within the town centre, of which 10 are vacant. Following meetings with the businesses, 16-20 outline proposals have been identified for this funding opportunity. 3 businesses have submitted proposals which have been approved by the Investment Panel and have proceeded to the delivery stage. The first shop will be completed in quarter 3.

5 Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvement scheme

GMc presented an update on the Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvement scheme.

Town Centre Streetscape project:

Photographs were shared highlighting the current conditions:

- Dominated by concrete (no greenery)
- Cars parked on the pavements
- Cluttered by street furniture
- Multiple bollards and columns
- Black top pavement infills.

The RIBA Stage 3 designs are based on 4 priorities which emerged from the design process. These were the designs which were used in the recent public consultation.

Project prioritisation:

- Renew lighting across the town centre, decluttering and improving perceptions of safety after dark.
- Transform entrances and improving points of arrival

- Western approach (top of the High Street) improvements
- Greening and sustainable drainage throughout wherever pavement widths and services allow.

The design team have referred to the following wealth of documentation and previous consultations:

- Newhaven's Neighbourhood Plan
- Town Investment Plan
- Wayfinding and Signage Spatial Masterplan
- Newhaven Shop Front Design Guide
- The Newhaven Story (Newhaven Enterprise Zone).

Consultation was carried out with shop keepers, community members and local councillors in October 2024 to review RIBA Stage 1 plans and concept designs. The detailed designs were then presented at the Marine Workshops and Newhaven Library in June 2025 and were positively received.

Next steps:

- LDC officers and ERA (design team/consultants) will prepare and apply for a Lawful Development Certificate for the works.
- RIBA stage 4 will commence alongside this application process to prepare tender documentation.
- Newhaven Town Council working with Sussex Police on CCTV upgrades.
- Newhaven Town Council to establish maintenance agreement with East Sussex County Council for planting and street furniture.
- Following successful tender, contract award scheduled for Q1.

Transport Interchange project:

- Stage 3 cost plan was over-budget by a considerable sum and despite some identified cost savings/value engineering, it has been necessary to undertake a reduction in scope and alter aspects of the detailed design.
- Revised cost plan currently being reviewed by lead consultants before issuing to project team.
- Legal agreements between Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council have been progressed in the meantime.
- Progress will be reported to the Board in due course.

CK asked if mature trees would be planted in the town centre? GMc explained they would be as mature as possible. DS asked if there will be an irrigation system for the trees and planting? GMc stated there would be irrigation in place where needed. PS asked if the pedestrian crossings on the ring road have been considered? GMc stated they were outside the scope of this project. JH informed the Board that East Sussex County Council are currently waiting on the outcome of their Major Route Network bid for the A259 and crossings were part of this.

6 Open Call Additional Funding Awards

AS referred to the Open Call Additional Funding Award paper which had been circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting. The paper contains a summary of the Open Call applications received and outlines a series of recommendations for the Board to discuss and approve.

The paper recommended the following for Board approval:

- The Business Grants Programme is allocated the full ask of £12,527
- Two projects received the same assessment score, therefore 65% of the ask was applied to:
 - Eastside Recreation Ground £57,933.85
 - Fort Road Recreation Ground £94,358.6
- The Restaurant and Community Destination project scored the highest in the assessment process due to its significant transformational nature and the economic impact of the new destination for visitors and residents, therefore a recommended award of £700,000 was allocated.

CK asked if 65% of the ask was enough to enable the Eastside Recreation Ground play area element of the project to proceed. AS explained that Newhaven Town Council are also providing match funding for the project.

JH asked what additional outputs would be delivered with the additional funding awards. AS explained that the focus is on delivering the original outputs that the projects set out to achieve.

The Board unanimously approved the funding awards outlined in the paper.

7 Re-imagining Newhaven programme updates

AS provided an update for each project highlighting progress, challenges, risks and key dates based on the data in the quarter 1 programme dashboard which had previously been circulated to Board members.

Business Grants programme:

- Round 2 is now fully allocated and is on track to exceed its targets.
- The programme has received strong positive feedback from local Newhaven businesses, many of whom are eager to contribute output case studies for future use.
- So far, 12 out of the 17 business have submitted claims.
- ESCC are working to ensure the recipients claim their grants in the timeframe and do not withdraw.
- Enquiries continue to come in and ESCC are managing the expectation of those on the waiting list. We will only be able to invite applications from the waiting list if some of the businesses withdraw from the process before claiming the grant funding that has been awarded to them.
- ESCC have started to work with businesses to capture the realised outputs and provide case studies and testimonials.

Eastside Recreation Ground:

- The allotments part of the project is complete bar the 12-month snagging period.
- Newhaven Town Council have agreed upon the contractor for the play area renovation.
- Play area construction planned start date of 25 September with completion by the end of October 2025.

Fort Road Recreation Ground:

- Project has been delayed starting due to tenders submitted being substantially over budget.

- Value engineering and some redesign has been carried out to bring the project back on track: timelines and budget. This process is nearing completion but has taken longer than expected due to having to make hard decisions as to what elements of the project will not go ahead.
- Retrofit and Demolition asbestos survey has been completed, and asbestos has been identified in the ceiling of the top floor of Shakespeare Hall and the soffits.
- The Viewpoint benches are currently being constructed ready for installation.
- Community orchard is being developed with Brighton Permaculture trust and other interested parties in the community.
- Appointment of the main contractor (build) and sub-contractor (landscape) expected this quarter (Q2).
- Commencement of the build in July/August 2025.

Newhaven Fort:

The delivery phase of the project is largely completed, just some rectifications are ongoing by both the base build and exhibition fit out contractors.

The following has been delivered in Q4:

- A new pop-up exhibition regarding Dame Vera Lynn was opened in June utilising the new temporary exhibition space. Various artefacts were donated to the fort by her daughter who kindly attended and opened the new exhibition.
- New canopy over café seating area and storage on parade ground.

Visitor numbers have continued to be above expectation, and great feedback continues to be received regarding the new fort offer.

Newhaven Square:

- The construction of the project is progressing well and in line with the programme.
- Updates have been provided to local residents and businesses in the form of monthly newsletters.
- Discussions have continued to take place with the GPs, NHS teams and Wave Active to confirm the final internal finishes, fire strategy and other details.
- The scaffolding and hoarding wrap on the new Quayside building has been removed.

Landing Stage:

- Contract signed on 22.05.25 and the contractor is starting on site week commencing 14/7/25.
- Awaiting MMO approval of Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (PAD) required prior to commencement of licensed activities.
- The contractor and the Port will provide project information signs on the compound site on West Quay.
- The contractor will be delivering letters to local residents in line with the dates of the key activities taking place.
- LDC will be using the Council's communication channels to share the same messaging.

Fish Processing Plant:

- The project is slowly progressing and the fishers using the unit to store fish have increased slightly with 2 new members joining this quarter.

- MMO funding is now available and the fishers are looking at options for funding to support their needs in the unit.
- There are some ongoing challenges surrounding the responsibility of ownership of the fish products and a lack of response from the MMO.
- Careful management of funds is keeping the CIC financially stable.

Restaurant and Community Destination:

- The tender pack has been drafted and contractor list confirmed.
- The proposed scheme of improvements to the pedestrian route along Fort Road has been finalised and the S278 application is ready for submission.
- This quarter will see the Council entering into contract with the selected contractor.
- The contractor will start on site towards the end of the summer.

8 Government strategic update

HCF provided an update on Devolution and the Local Government Reorganisation.

Devolution:

- Sussex is on the devolution priority programme.
- Assessments on proposals have been ongoing regarding whether to proceed with devolution in the priority areas.
- If it gets given the go ahead, and if East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove consent, then election for the new Mayoral Combined County Authority will take place in May 2026.
- The Sussex Mayor will have strategic powers on transport and local infrastructure, skills and employment, housing and strategic planning, economic development and regeneration, environment and net zero, health and public safety.
- For more information: [English Devolution Bill and Associated guidance](#).

Local Government Reorganisation:

- In a separate but related process, East Sussex, alongside West Sussex and Brighton and Hove, is undergoing Local Government Reorganisation.
- The aim for the programme is for areas where there are two tiers of local government, to abolish the lower tiers and have single unitary councils serving around 500,000 people.
- East Sussex have agreed to develop a detailed proposal for a single unitary council on the current boundaries of East Sussex.
- The final proposals are due in September 2025.
- If accepted by Government, election to the new councils will take place in 2027 and the councils will go live in April 2028.

RC explained that Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council are working very closely with the other district and boroughs across East Sussex to follow the Government's criteria and to provide the new authority for 2028.

Brighton and Hove have recently proposed to alter and extend their boundary eastwards to include Newhaven. They will be going out to consultation from 25.08.25 to consult on a few options.

Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council will be carrying out their own consultation with residents, local legislatives and partners to ensure they are consulted. A petition is also planned.

9 Any other business

DS stated that Newhaven West Beach is listed as one of the top 50 beaches in the UK in the Sunday Times travel section.

Next meeting: Friday 19th September 10.30am