

Re-imagining Newhaven Board

Minutes of Meeting

Friday 19th September 2025

10.30am to 12pm via MS Teams

Attendees:

Chair

- Chris Ketley (CK)

Community, Education and Business Representatives

- Andrew Tucknott (ATu)
- Dave Collins-Williams (DCW)
- Duncan Kerr (DK)

Lewes District Council

- Ian Fitzpatrick (IF)
- Lisa Rawlinson (LR)
- Zoe Nicholson (ZN)

Newhaven Enterprise Zone

- Michelle Connors (MC)

Members of Houses of Parliament and Lords

- Janet Whitaker (JW)

Guest Speaker

- Danielle Holter (DH)
- Helen Blanche (HB)

Secretariat (provided by Lewes District Council)

- Anna Salmon (AS)
- Dan Fairbrother (DF)

Apologies:

- Andy Hill (AH)
- Annie Lorys (AL)
- Alison Turner (AT)
- Ben Anderson (BA)
- Christine Robinson (CR)
- Dick Shone (DS)
- Graham Amy (GA)
- Harry Colquhoun-Flannery (HCF)
- James Harris (JH)
- James MacCleary (JM)
- Ken Dry (KD)
- Mike Shorer (MS)
- Nick Backstrom (NB)
- Penny Shimmin (PS)
- Rob Cottrill (RC)
- Sophie Sneddon (SS)

1 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

CK welcomed Board members and guest speakers to the meeting.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 14.07.25

The minutes were agreed.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were declared.

4 Fort Road Recreation Ground update

HB presented an update on the Fort Road Recreation Ground project. Mobilising works commenced on site on 05.09.25. The play area has been taken out. The retained equipment has gone into storage. Topsoil has been added to the area, the first step towards the creation of a Community Garden. Brighton Permaculture Trust have supported LDC in the successful application of £65,000 from the Veolia Trust. The community will be involved in the design and gardening courses will be run as part of building the garden from scratch. The project will benefit from an artist in residence and resource to coordinate and oversee everything. The project has received over 100 expressions of interest from individuals and organisations.

HB shared the artist impression for Shakespeare Hall and explained that the style of cladding has been changed due to cost reductions and will be presented to Planning Committee on 01.10.25 as a minor amendment.

The Cricket Club have submitted a bid for £130,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy to internally fit out the cricket pavilion, including disabled toilet facilities, female changing rooms and improvements to the internal layout. The project also plans to install heating to enable the building to be used all year round by the community.

HB shared the artist impression of the toilets which will be renovated on the inside and out, to make single cubicles and will be installing robust fittings to prevent vandalism.

ATu asked if CCTV had been included in the budget for the area near the toilets? HB explained that Shakespeare Hall is a very difficult building including the costs associated with asbestos removal. HB said that additional funding for CCTV can be explored.

IF mentioned the Seaford Group that help to install sustainable drainage mechanisms to reduce water usage which is low cost and innovative and might be able to support the Community Garden project. DK stated that the group are interested in The Fort. HB said she has been working with a Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) and the civil engineers have been looking at drainage across the site. HB has worked extensively with Southern Water to rectify the flooding issues in the park.

CK asked if the toilets were already closed? HB confirmed that the disabled toilet had remained open until 18.09.25. It is now a full building site. Site signage will signpost to the nearest alternative toilets. IF stated that LDC are looking into alternative options e.g. community toilets for the short term.

5 Business Grants update

DH presented a visual update on Round 2 of the Newhaven Business Grants programme:

- £191,757 of grants have been approved.
- £161,397 of defrayal complete.
- 16 businesses have received support so far.
- 19.5 FTW jobs projected (forecast) as of May 2025.
- 21 FTE roles have been created (realised) to date.

The grants have enabled the purchase of:

- 2 new boats
- Creation of a storage service
- 200 luxury glamping tents
- 9 new vehicles
- Engraving and setting machine
- Industrial turret mill and more.

The presentation included video interviews/testimonials with some of the grant recipients and is now available to view on the Council's website: [Newhaven Business Grants Programme | East Sussex County Council](#)

Glamping Adventures: Enabled the creation and manufacture of a new tent. The grant fast tracked the company's vision and enabled them to secure 6 year contracts with Glastonbury and Silverstone.

Newhaven Scuba: The additional boat has enabled them to grow the business, employ a new member of staff, deliver training and carry out more ocean floor cleaning.

Tomsetts Distribution: Created an additional stream of revenue with setting up a storage service and employing a new member of staff.

Vinyl Fencing: The new electric vehicle has resulted in additional members of staff and has boosted productivity.

Complete Properties: The funding has enabled the business to grow quickly and diversify.

Reebo Scaffolding: The grant has enabled the creation of two new roles.

CK explained how the Business Grants programme is a direct injection straight into the heart of businesses in the town and the benefits are realised very quickly. ATu mentioned the wider impact of the grants programme with the generation of more work for other local businesses to benefit from.

6 Landing Stage update

DCW presented an update on the Landing Stage project. The jack up barge, the Octopus, arrived at East Quay on 21.07.25. The other work vessels include a flat top barge and a tugboat, the Stour.

Due to careful pre-planning and the skill of the pilots, traffic has continued to move up and down North Quay.

Works commenced with demolishing the original dilapidated structure. The demolition debris was transported back over to the East Quay to sort through it and as much as possible has been or will be recycled.

Sheet piles and tubular piles will form the new structure. The piles arrived at East Quay by ship from Cardiff, the steel is British steel. 28 pairs of sheet piles will support the revetment at the top; this will also provide a better flood defence for the area. The further sheet piles and tubular piles will provide the structure for the new fishing stage.

IF referred to the noise that the project is generating which is being monitored by the Environmental Health team. DCW confirmed that the piling work is expected to be completed in early November. The fit out of the structure will then commence to create the walkways, gangways, pontoons and electrics. Project completion is planned for early February.

CK asked if the pontoon will move up and down with the tide? DCW said there will be a stepped gangway going down onto the pontoons which will go up and down with the tide, enabling easy access to the pontoons instead of the original vertical ladders.

7 Economic impact of Newhaven ferry service

IF shared the following Newhaven ferry service data from a couple of years ago:

- 360,000 passengers per year
- 120,000+ tourist vehicles
- 11,000 bikes
- 40,000 freight vehicles
- Supporting 500 direct and indirect jobs for Newhaven.

MC informed the Board about the economic and social impact study which the Newhaven Enterprise Zone have commissioned. The study, called the 'Value of the Bridge', will build on existing research and studies to provide a unified theory of economic and social gain, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What would be lost if the service was ceased?
2. What is the net positive economic and social impact of the bridge between Newhaven and Dieppe on an annual basis for the UK, including current net positive tourism and freight flows across the bridge and the direct and indirect benefits of it being in place?
3. What are the top five investments or actions that need to be made on the UK side to secure the bridge for the next 20 years?
4. What would it take for the 1.7 million residents of Sussex and 60,000 registered businesses in Sussex to use the bridge more often? How can we get businesses to understand how this local transport link might support them?

IF also mentioned an exhibition on the top floor of the Marine Workshops to celebrate the 200-year anniversary which is open 26.09.25 to 25.10.25.

CK suggested a revised timetable to enable day trips to Dieppe could help to support an answer to question 4. It was agreed that ATu would be contributing to the study via the Newhaven Enterprise Zone Board.

8 Re-imagining Newhaven programme updates

AS explained that the Programme Dashboard will be circulated to Board members in October following the end of the Quarter 2 reporting period.

AS provided updates on the following projects:

Eastside Recreation Ground

- Contractors started one month earlier than originally expected to take advantage of the dry weather. The play area often suffers from water logging which is why they wanted to start early.
- Residents were consulted and were happy for the closure to take place early despite it falling inside the school holidays because they are excited to have the new and improved play area completed as soon as possible.
- Nearby houses were leafleted to explain what was happening and the disruption that may be caused in terms of noise and traffic – this has prevented any complaints.
- New play equipment has now been installed. The new surfaces will be installed soon and then the graphics will be applied.
- Grand opening on Saturday 4th October 10am – all welcome.

Newhaven Square

- The scaffolding and hoarding wrap on the new Quayside surgery building (previously the Co-op) has been removed, and the roofing work is watertight.
- New window install is complete (Quayside).
- Work on the interior of the buildings is progressing well with internal walls being installed to Quayside, and internal finishes have started in Chapel Street.
- An Expression of Interest for a Creative Hub operator is live on the Council's website (deadline 26.09.25).

Restaurant and Community Destination

- The tender for a main contractor was issued in August.
- The contractor appointment is expected towards the end of 2025.
- An Expression of Interest for a restaurant operator has launched.

Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvements:

- The Town Centre project has reached RIBA Stage 4, and the design team are currently preparing a tender for issue in November. An application for a Certificate of Lawful Development will also be submitted during this quarter. January/February 2026 is the current target for the appointed contractors to be on site.
- The Transport Interchange project has also reached Stage 4, after needing to reduce the scope to meet costs. A planning application is now being prepared. The design team will then progress towards the tender stage with a target of March 2026 for construction to commence.
- Newhaven Enterprise Zone's Transforming Newhaven Investment Fund has been secured and will provide wayfinding and signage within Railway Quay, alongside the wider Transport Interchange public realm works.
- A series of directional, welcoming and place signs across a wider town area have also been developed. Guy recently shared the Additional Wayfinding Stage 2 Report with all Board members and requested feedback by 19.09.25.

9 Government strategic update

AS informed the Board that MHCLG are consolidating Levelling up Fund, Town Deals and Simplification Pathfinders Pilots into one funding pot called the *Local Regeneration Fund*. LDC has actively engaged with MHCLG over the past 2 years and provided positive feedback on the experience of being one of the 10 pilot authorities. All local authorities in receipt of the funding will now benefit from the simplified processes and greater flexibilities which we have already been able to take full advantage of e.g. moving money between the Re-imagining Newhaven projects without needing to go through the lengthy Project Adjustment Request process.

As part of giving Local Authorities greater flexibility, a decision has been made within MHCLG to step back from sitting on local Boards. This means that HCW will no longer be attending the Board meetings but will carry on providing relevant updates.

- MHCLG Ministerial portfolios have now been confirmed post-reshuffle. Alison McGovern is the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness.
- Despite the ministerial changes, timelines for the Local Government Reorganisation and devolution are expected to stay the same.
- The deadline for Local Government Reorganisation proposals from East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton is 26th September.
- The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill passed its Second Reading on 2 September. The next Bill stage is Commons Committee. The oral evidence session took place on Tuesday 16 September. The line-by-line scrutiny sessions are now taking place until Wednesday 12 November.
- The autumn budget has been announced for 26th November.

10 Any other business

IF passed on ZN's thanks to everyone that gave supporting letters regarding the Local Government Reorganisation, particularly around the Brighton options that were proposed.

Brighton have publicised their proposals for Local Government Reorganisation to expand into Saltdean, Telscombe, Peacehaven and Falmer, but no longer including Newhaven. Brighton's proposal makes references to the rest of Sussex and the creation of 5 unitaries. East Sussex has a proposal which incorporates all 5 District and Boroughs within East Sussex and the County Council, into one new unitary authority.

MHCLG will review the proposals and carry out consultation before making decisions by March 2026.

A shadow unitary will be established in May 2027, with a go live in April 2028. After this date, Lewes District Council and the other local District & Borough Councils will no longer exist.

There will be a Mayor for Sussex with elections taking place in May 2026.

Dates for your diaries:

- Celebrating The Sidings party – Thursday 25th September 5.30-8.30pm.
- Official opening of the new Eastside Recreation Ground play area – Saturday 4th October at 10am.
- Next Board meeting is Friday 28th November 10.30am to 12pm.

CK thanked everyone for their contributions to what is an exemplar Board and JW took the opportunity to thank CK for successfully chairing all the meetings.