

Re-imagining Newhaven Board

Minutes of Meeting

Monday 23rd March 2026

10am to 11am via MS Teams

Attendees:

Chair

- Chris Ketley (CK)

Community, Education and Business Representatives

- Andrew Tucknott (AT)
- Dave Collins-Williams (DCW)
- Mike Shorer (MS)
- Penny Shimmin (PS)

East Sussex County Council

- James Harris (JH)

Lewes District Council

- Christine Robinson (CR)
- Ian Fitzpatrick (IF)
- Lisa Rawlinson (LR)

Members of Houses of Parliament and Lords

- Janet Whitaker (JW)

Newhaven Town Council

- Ken Dry (KD)

Guests

- Charlotte Stock (CS)
- Helen Blanche (HB)

Secretariat (provided by Lewes District Council)

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

Apologies:

- Alison Turner (ATu)
- Andrew Hill (AH)
- Annie Lorys (AL)
- Duncan Kerr (DK)
- Graham Amy (GA)
- James MacCleary (JM)
- Michelle Connors (MC)
- Nick Backstrom (NB)
- Rob Cottrill (RC)
- Sophie Sneddon (SS)
- Zoe Nicholson (ZN)

1 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

CK welcomed Board members and guests to the meeting.

BM mentioned the recent positivity expressed on social media which praised the developments being delivered at the Fort Road Recreation Ground, the Marina and the new Health Hub. There's also been lots of positive feedback about the [Community of Kindness](#) banners, stating they are "beautiful signs expressing the open hearts and minds of young people" and how the banners have "changed the vibe of the area to one of inclusivity and a place to feel welcome". There has also been recent positive social media activity surrounding the imminent opening of Newhaven Tap and Pat's Pizza on the High Street. CS confirmed the businesses have received funding from the Newhaven Enterprise Zone (NEZ).

MS stated that the Chamber of Commerce received more than 450 nominations for over 150 businesses for the 2026 Seahaven Business Awards and the judges were blown away by the nominations.

AT spoke about his recent visit from the new Managing Director of DFDS France and how he spoke positively about the route and was an encouraging meeting for Newhaven.

CS announced that the Newhaven Enterprise Zone relaunched the NEZ Community Awards and have received 19 applications, and considering the demand, the NEZ will boost the funding pot for next year's round.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 20.01.26

The minutes were agreed.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

4 The Sidings and Marine Workshops update (IF)

The Marine Workshops were empty prior to the purchase by LDC from the Department for Education. Since LDC took occupation, there has been considerable progress. The businesses on the ground floor are all Newhaven grown and have added to the cultural hub feel and the food provider is flourishing. The events and exhibitions in the BN9 gallery on the top floor and the atrium space are providing great footfall. The first floor is occupied by East Sussex College Group who are gaining traction with student numbers and the course offering. LDC occupies a space on the second floor with a Cabinet room including webcasting technology and office space for staff, and the Tourist Information Centre on the ground floor is supporting the importance of the economic impact of tourism.

Currently waiting on MHCLG to announce the geographies for the unitary councils under the Local Government Reorganisation. LDC have been working hard to ensure the Marine Workshops operate sustainably going forward, with a commercial offer as well as providing a regeneration impact and cultural offer. LDC are exploring longer leases for the top floor, atrium and the Sidings by working with tenants to provide the long leases which would enable businesses to invest.

The NEZ has a link into the new mayoral authority and will make the Mayor's office aware of all the transformational projects taking place in Newhaven e.g. the Health Hub, new Landing Stage, the Sidings and Marine Workshops.

AT suggested the College could offer apprenticeships focusing on marine heritage and the needs of Newhaven businesses. IF offered to introduce AT to NB.

5 Fort Road Recreation Ground project update (HB)

This project is redeveloping the Fort Road Recreation Ground area to include the retrofitting of existing buildings, landscaping, new trees, native hedging, pathways and the development of a new play area, community garden and outdoor fitness trail.

HB shared photos of Shakespeare Hall, the Cricket Pavilion and the public toilets before the redevelopment commenced and then shared a series of photos recently taken of the construction progress. Sunninghill, the contractors, have made good progress despite it having been one of the wettest winters on record. The contractor has contributed to social value by purchasing new notice boards for the entrances and community garden, as well as curved benches for the Scout's new cook-out area.

HB confirmed public feedback has been very positive to the visible changes taking place on the site.

6 Newhaven to Dieppe ferry route (CS)

The NEZ commissioned a research project to pull together evidence on the economic and social benefits of the ferry service to Newhaven and to the wider Sussex region in order to evaluate what the implications would be for the town and the region if the service ceased.

The study included an on-board passenger survey, stakeholder input and analysing local and national statistics.

The report concluded the ferry route has a significant impact. Since 2013, the route has experienced a 47% increase in passengers. The majority of passengers come from the UK. The report recommends a focus to develop tourism and to build up the visitor economy e.g. promoting the town to offer short breaks and improve facilities for campervans and motorhomes.

There is scope to expand facilities for hauliers, secure investment to support ferry decarbonisation and promote trade and investment.

JH mentioned a recent meeting that took place with the EU Trade Commissioner's Office to present the report. IF stated that onshore charging in Newhaven is important to Newhaven Port and Properties Ltd.

7 Re-imagining Newhaven Programme outputs (DF)

MHCLG's Local Regeneration Fund superseded and consolidated the following into a single funding pot: Towns Fund, Levelling up Fund and the Pathfinder Pilot (including the former Future High Streets Fund).

As one of the ten Pathfinder Pilots, very little has changed for the Re-imagining Newhaven programme because it had already been benefitting from the flexibilities and simplified processes since the end of 2024. The introduction of the Local Regeneration Fund has provided an opportunity to review the outputs reported against across the Re-imagining Newhaven programme.

MHCLG have provided a new list of Outputs and Outcomes. A mapping exercise has recently been carried out to match the original outputs against the new list provided under the Local Regeneration Fund. This exercise has been an opportunity to update the output

targets and to provide a more accurate representation of the benefits all the projects will deliver for Newhaven.

The programme has already delivered:

- Total permanent jobs created through the programme – 77.5
- Total safeguarded jobs through the programme – 66
- Amount of green and blue space created – 2,929 m²
- Number of learners/students enrolled in new/improved education programmes – 50
- Amount of new/improved office space – 432 m²

The following outputs are expected to be delivered once all the projects are complete:

- Amount of healthcare space - 1,973 m²
- Amount of new or improved cultural/community space - 485.2 m²
- Amount of green and blue space created - 66,821.2 m²
- Amount of new or improved sporting facilities - 741.59 m²

The target outputs are subject to change because the final numbers are still being collected.

8 Re-imagining Newhaven Programme update (AS)

Fish Processing Plant (LR):

Exciting things have been happening at the Fish Processing Plant in recent months. A new company was formed in January 2026 called 'Fish and Shellfish Ltd'. The company is now operating from the New Road unit and one of the Directors works on site. The company employs a local driver and someone to assist with the fish preparation on site.

Future plans include cooking crabs and sourcing large quantities of seafood locally. The team is also considering requests from larger buyers seeking locally sourced fish.

The project has funded training at the unit to ensure the people operating from the building are fully compliant with health and safety matters e.g. forklift truck training, food safety in manufacturing, achieving food hygiene rating of Level 5, basic fire safety awareness and manual handling.

Business Grants Programme:

- The last business submitted their claim to LDC last week and is currently being processed.
- The outputs are in the process of being captured.
- In April, the Newhaven Enterprise Zone (NEZ) will be launching their new Business Growth Grant. This new grant replaces the Low Carbon Investment Fund and the Refurbishment of Employment Space with one single fund. The fund will also build upon the success of this Business Grants Programme.

Newhaven Fort:

The final tweaks and repair works have taken a while to complete following the reopening of the Fort in February 2025 and will be finished by the end of this month.

Newhaven Square:

- Construction works on site are progressing well and in line with contract completion dates.
- The new Chapel Street Surgery is being renamed to Newhaven Medical Practice and will complete construction in May and open in the same month.
- The rest of the development (Quayside Medical Practice, Wave Active and the Pharmacy) will complete construction in August, with individual opening dates expected from August to the beginning of September.
- An EOI has taken place for a tenant for the Creative Hub.

- External landscaping is being carried out to the existing soft landscaping beds on the site. The installation of a green wall to the Quayside elevation, outside the existing Seahaven entrance, will take place in the next month.
- The majority of the site hoarding is expected to come down at the end of April, ahead of Newhaven Medical Practice opening. This will see the pedestrian ramp linking Newhaven Square to Chapel Street reopen.

Restaurant and Community Destination:

- The tender exercise for a main contractor has completed and a contractor has been selected.
- The Section 278 application for a proposed scheme of improvements to the pedestrian route along Fort Road is in progress.
- A preferred operator for the restaurant has been identified following a call for Expressions of Interest. The Council is in the process of agreeing terms.
- LDC has allocated additional funding to the project which will allow it to be delivered in full, rather than phased.
- A Non-Material Amendment application will be submitted for some minor changes to the approved scheme, including the location and size of the bin store.
- The project team is in the process of confirming the foul waste strategy from the options available, prior to commencing the main scheme.
- It is anticipated that enabling works will commence in Q1 26/27 to demolish the existing vacant structures on site.

Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvements:

Town Centre project:

- The tender for Newhaven Town Centre project has been awarded to Blakedown Landscapes. A finalised programme will be agreed by the end of this quarter.
- LDC and ESCC are progressing a Section 278 agreement for works on the highway.
- Communication will take place with all traders within the Town Centre:
 - Initial letter drop to establish communication, dedicated email, phone number and named contact
 - Regular project updates
 - Access and delivery coordination.

Transport Interchange project:

- The Transport Interchange project is at RIBA Stage 4.
- Stakeholder sign-off will be required, and a Road Safety Audit (Detailed Design stage) will be carried out in liaison with the ESCC Road Safety Team prior to tendering in Q1.

Landing Stage:

NPP have reached a settlement with the contractor over the compensation event claims. The steelwork will be completed by Easter and then the timber decking will be completed by the end of April. Following this, the ramp access and gangway will be installed and the revetment works will be completed. NPP will carry out the M&E works, install the davit cranes, dredging and install the pontoons once the contractor has finished on site. The project is scheduled to be finished at the end of June 2026.

CR asked for ESCC introduce road markings on the roundabout under the flyover because they are currently non-existent and would especially benefit tourists coming off the ferry. JH will pass this request onto the Highways team.

9 Any Other Business

- Next Board meeting: 20th May at 2pm