

Re-imagining Newhaven Board

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 20th May 2026

2pm to 3pm via MS Teams

Attendees:

Chair

- Chris Ketley (CK)

Community, Education and Business Representatives

- Andrew Tucknott (AT)
- Annie Lorys (AL)
- Dave Collins-Williams (DCW)
- Duncan Kerr (DK)
- 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 Enterprise Zone

- Michelle Connors (MC)

Guests

- Kane Tudor (KT)
- Guy McQueen (GMQ)

Secretariat (provided by Lewes District Council)

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

Apologies:

- Alison Turner (ATu)
- Andrew Hill (AH)
- Graham Amy (GA)
- James MacCleary (JM)
- Ken Dry (KD)
- Mike Shorer (MS)
- 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.

CK started the meeting by welcoming good news stories.

LR spoke about a recent tour of the Fish Processing Plant in New Road organised for Councillor O'Brien, representatives from Sussex Bay, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and Lewes District Food Partnership.

The building is being run by a director of a fishing business in Grimsby and it's becoming really successful. They are picking up scallops from local fishers as well as from Hastings and Rye, and they will be focussing soon on bass. They have a wholesale company from Devon picking up the catch from the unit three times a week and the chiller is always full. They are also supporting local fishers to buy new boats and offer fixed interest free monthly repayments which have allowed a local fisher to expand their business.

BM summarised the recent positivity expressed on social media:

The Sidings / Abyss opening night:

- "A little town brimming over with big ideas and brilliant people".
- "Beautiful! What a stunning little town we have".

Newhaven Tap / Pat's Pizza opening:

- "This is a great addition for Newhaven!"
- "Exactly what the high street needed and someone has finally done it! So happy".
- Congratulations. What a lovely bar!"
- "Looks great. Awesome to see investment in the local area".

50 Years of print exhibition opening soon at the Marine Workshops:

- "Looks incredible guys".
- Looks amazing" Well done.
- You are just awesome. This looks incredible...thank you!"

Newhaven Street Market

- "What a brilliant day at the market yesterday"
- "Huge thank you to everyone who came down, supported the stalls and helped make the event such a success. It was amazing to see so many people enjoying the sunshine and supporting local businesses!"

Channel 5 News Hero of the week:

- Nick Gentry, Newhaven RNLI's longest-serving volunteer was Channel 5 News' 'Hero of the Week. Nick was praised for having rescued hundreds of people over the last 40 years he has volunteered with Newhaven RNLI.

MC mentioned that the Newhaven Enterprise Zone (NEZ) provided funding to support both the new businesses on the High Street including for their shop frontages.

PS mentioned the upcoming exhibition at the Marine Workshops called Newhaven Heritage Stories, opening on 26th May. The project has been coordinated by SCDA, working with local people on what the heritage of Newhaven is, valuing the industries, employment and the place.

AL spoke about the recent Chamber of Commerce Seahaven Business Awards. 22 finalists were selected from more than 450 nominations. The Deputy Lieutenant, Alan McCarthy,

MBE, said “it was a fantastic evening celebrating the strength, resilience and diversity of businesses across the Seahaven area and the awards highlighted the innovation and community spirit at the heart of businesses across this coastal area”. AL asked local businesses to get in touch if they would like to be involved with sponsoring future award events.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 23.03.26

The minutes were agreed.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

4 Business Grants outputs and case studies (KT)

Round 1 of the Newhaven Business Grants programme launched in May 2023 and closed in March 2024. Round 2 launched in November 2024 and completed in March 2026.

The programme provided 50% matched grants to support SME businesses in Newhaven to grow, increase productivity and make business improvements.

Round 2:

- The team spoke to 105 Newhaven businesses about the programme.
- 18 businesses were awarded a grant through Round 2 of the programme, all of these are now complete.
- £198,457.50 of grants were awarded, with an average value of £11,025 per project.
- Businesses provided £301,270.88 of private match funding to projects.
- £475,914.38 of investment into Newhaven businesses.
- 25 jobs created to date, with an additional 5.5 awaiting confirmation.
- When visiting businesses, the team were able to talk about other business support offers, which they were subsequently able to take advantage of.

Case studies:

Square One Design Workshop Ltd

- Bespoke cabinet and furniture manufacturer serving clients across the South Coast (and London).
- Received grant of £10,398 towards the purchase of a wide belt sander and a morticer.
- These machines allowed them to replace painstaking manual processes (hours of orbital sanding etc.)
- Speeding up production, reducing waste, and taking on larger and more complex projects.

Newhaven Scuba Centre

- Long running scuba training company. They teach anyone from beginners to instructor level. They also provide a range of other diving services.
- Received a grant of £15,000 towards a larger second boat.
- This means they can do more ocean floor cleaning, and train more divers, meaning they can reach more customers and grow the business.
- The new boat and increased business has allowed them to employ another full-time member of staff.

Vinyl Fencing Ltd

- Family-run business specialising in plastic and vinyl fencing and gates.

- They received a grant of £13,997 to purchase an electric van.
- Deliveries had previously been handled by external couriers, which was expensive and goods were often damaged or delivered incorrectly.
- The new electric van has enabled significant cost savings on deliveries, supported the creation of a new full-time job, and reduced their emissions.

Felcon Ltd

- Engineering and manufacturing business working across healthcare, life sciences, pharmaceuticals and advanced technology sectors.
- Received grant of £9,922.50 to purchase a turret milling machine for onsite machine shop.
- Previously, the business had no in-house milling capability and had to subcontract all milling work. This increased costs and reduced their competitiveness and profit margins.
- The new machine has helped the business develop a new standard product range, allowing them to design, prototype and manufacture products more effectively.
- This also allowed them to upskill existing staff and move from one-off bespoke projects towards a more scalable manufacturing model.

Impact of both rounds of the programme:

- 35 business received a grant, with an average grant value of £11,514.12.
- £402,994.03 of grant funding delivered.
- £556,173.88 of private sector match provided by businesses.
- £935,353.91 of investment into Newhaven businesses.
- 54.5 jobs confirmed to date (double decker bus with some left over!).

JH emphasised the collaboration of all the partners involved, and the positivity associated with the business support provided by local government to help businesses diversify and modernise to improve productivity and profitability.

MC said the new NEZ Business Growth Fund has received 6 applications since April: [NEZ Business Growth Fund - Newhaven Enterprise Zone](#)

IF asked if there were any business grants applications which could not be fulfilled? KT explained that the programme had been designed to support a variety of activity. However, the businesses were required to pay for the items up front and then claim back the 50%. Some small businesses did not have the cash flow to make the initial outlay. Appropriate levels of project controls were needed otherwise the funding would have been given in the hope that the businesses would make the purchase(s).

5 Wayfinding: Town Centre Improvements project (GMQ)

The Board were presented with a timeline articulating all the engagement that has been carried out. In October 2024, traders and community representatives were invited to feedback on RIBA Stage 2 designs. In June 2025, the designs were presented on large boards at the Marine Workshops for the public to view and provide feedback. Positive feedback included:

“A good use of smallish budget. Planting, murals, rocks, colour palette...really positive impact on the overall feel.”

“More shrub areas to prevent pavement parking...use the car park. Seating areas are an improvement.”

“It shows Newhaven the love it deserves!”

Upgraded street lighting is the largest element of the project: high quality statutory lighting throughout the town centre and additional lighting within planting beds and features. The lighting design has enabled Newhaven Town Council to install CCTV across the town centre which will integrate neatly into the columns.

The scheme will also be providing lots of additional planting beds and trees, and consideration has been given to all year-round interest and biodiversity. New seating will be implemented; some will be integrated with the planting areas and others will be stand-alone seating. A range of heights will be provided. Many benches have a singular arm to allow for easy transfer for those who need it. Natural stone planting beds will provide structure and interest. A 'treasure trail' of carvings will also be produced, making use of the feature stones.

The main contractor is due to start on site in summer 2026 and finish in January 2027, allowing for downtime during the Christmas period. It will be an incremental programme which will involve road closures. Traders will be fully informed to limit disruption and to enable deliveries to take place.

Licences will be in place for the maintenance of the assets e.g. ESCC will maintain the statutory lighting and trees. Newhaven Town Council will take on the maintenance of the non-statutory items.

CK asked if the road and pavement surface will be replaced? GMQ explained that the pavers were laid in 2004. Replacement was not financially viable and would have been extremely disruptive. Only a few distinct areas will be replaced. LDC is also committed to cleaning the entirety of the pavers and has already carried out some patch testing.

6 Re-imagining Newhaven Programme update (AS)

Projects completed in 2025-26

Eastside Recreation Ground:

The second phase of the project delivered a replacement play area and was completed in September 2025 and has been well received by residents.

Newhaven Business Grants Programme:

The programme supported 35 Newhaven businesses and created 54.5 new jobs.

Project progress and achievements in 2025-26

Fish Processing Plant:

In 2025-26 the building became fully operational, with fishers being able to process and store their catch within the building and rent out the storage containers in the rear yard of the processing plant. In quarter 4, a new processor employing local staff commenced operating from the premises.

Newhaven Square:

Throughout the last financial year, the project has progressed well in line with the contract completion dates and has entered the final stages of the build.

Landing Stage:

This major construction project commenced on site in quarter 2 with the demolition commencing in July 2025. The pilings works were completed in quarter 3. Quarter 4 works consisted of revetment construction, primary and secondary beams installation and the timber decking also commenced.

Newhaven Fort:

Following the re-opening of the Fort in February 2025, minor works and small projects were carried out in 2025-26 e.g. new Dame Vera Lynn exhibition and new canopy over the café seating area.

Fort Road Recreation Ground:

Construction works commenced on site in September 2025 and have progressed well, both internally & externally across the site:

- Shakespeare Hall
- Cricket Pavilion
- Toilet Block
- Community Garden.

A Play Area design workshop took place on 07/10/25 with Seahaven Academy. Students worked with four play area designers to inform the design for the new play area.

The Viewpoint benches have been fabricated and installed on site.

Newhaven Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvements:

- Town Centre Improvements: This project has progressed to RIBA Stage 4. Planning approval granted 7/1/26. Delays have been encountered with acquiring the Section 278 Agreement for works affecting the highway and also with obtaining the required agreements between ESCC, LDC and NTC. Positively, the Town Centre main contractor tender was awarded without requiring value engineering.
- Transport Interchange: The Stage 3 cost plan was over budget and required value engineering and scope reduction. The project has progressed to RIBA Stage 4 and expected to go out to tender at the end of Quarter 1 2026-27.

Restaurant and Community Destination:

Following the tender process, a preferred contractor has been selected. A permit application to the Environment Agency (EA) for on-site waste treatment has been made. Discussions with the selected restaurant operator have progressed well, with some minor amendments to the design to suit their operations being agreed. The project is ready to progress on site once a firm drainage strategy has been established and approved.

Big milestones in 2026-27

Newhaven Fort:

Final amendments were made to the play area last month, this marked the completion of this major transformation project, and the project is now closed.

Fish Processing Plant:

The final purchases are in the process of being made. The project is expected to complete this summer.

Fort Road Recreation Ground:

The construction is expected to finish this summer.

Landing Stage:

NPP will be carrying out the final stages of the works once the main contractor has finished on site. The project is expected to be completed in quarter 2.

Newhaven Square:

The opening of Newhaven Medical Practice (formerly Chapel Street Surgery) is expected imminently. The practice had originally hoped to be open already but has needed to go through a few additional processes with the CQC. Lewes District Council is working closely with the practice and Sussex Community Foundation Trust to help ensure that the opening

happens as swiftly as possible. 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.

Wayfinding and Public Realm Improvements:

The two major schemes, Town Centre Improvements and the Transport Interchange will be delivered throughout this financial year.

Restaurant and Community Destination:

This major project will be delivered by the end of this financial year.

7 Any Other Business

- **Next Board meeting: Wednesday 15th July 2pm to 3.30pm**
- **Site Visits: Monday 8th June.** Meet outside Portside Vets in Newhaven Square just before midday. If you are unable to arrive in time for the Health Hub visit, feel free to come along to the Landing Stage at 12.45pm or Fort Road Recreation Ground at about 1.15pm.