

Newtown Community Association AGM 26.2.11

CHAIR AND SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chair: First our huge thanks to everyone who helped us this year especially George Dumble who as well as his committee role, spends many hours bringing the hut up to standard; Peter Montgomery, our Treasurer and website editor; Michael Parrott our indefatigable Publicity Officer; Jackie Holdstock our patient Bookings Secretary, who has daily contact with all hirers, and not forgetting Billie Cornish who started the year off and handed over the role of Bookings Secretary to Jackie; all our cooks and bottle washers in the kitchen: Sally and Steve, Polly, Joan, Kat Thomas, George and Gaby and many more! Also thanks to Sue Gould our cleaner who against all odds keeps the hut spick and span.

Heartfelt thanks are also due to our tireless councillors, Devon County Council representative Cllr Richard Westlake, and our two Exeter City Council representatives Cllr Roger Spackman who replaced Cllr Shepherd when he stood down and Cllr Richard Branson. They have supported us by pushing forward projects such as The Vision Project and the proposed Football Wall for the park. Installation of some of the children's play equipment had to be postponed due to changes in the financial situation.

Thanks also to our Community PCSOs, Aurea, Paul and Nick who managed to attend meetings as often as they could and continue to provide a friendly line of communication between the Police and the community.

Secretary: We have increased attendance at meetings for which thanks to Ian who brings dog walking to a whole new level by chatting up everyone he meets! Special thanks to Ian for all his hard work both as Chair and part of the maintenance team of two with George. Where would we be without you? The Committee met almost every month, eleven open meetings in all and some sub-groups, so we have all been kept busy!

Our www edited by Peter has raised our profile too and we have also distributed leaflets around Newtown from time to time when we could afford it. Because of the www we now have fans as far away as you can get, Australia!

Exeter City Council kindly granted us £1,900 to cover the cost of rent Also thanks to Cllr Westlake for a recent grant of some £1,500 towards access improvements to the hut. In addition, we received a £300 grant, via the "Our Neighbourhood" scheme, towards redecorating the Hut last summer. Finally

thanks to the University, the City Council Parks Dept. and to Cllr Westlake for their contributions of bulbs.

We are still working on a simplified plan for Hut Hire Agreements and have now installed a digi lock which will go live on Monday to avoid the complications of handing over and collecting the keys.

We have worked on updating our Constitution this year and hope it will be ratified this Spring

We have run a number of themed events in the Hut, a format which has shown itself to be a manageable social focus. Cafes on Sunday mornings are clearly popular and will continue this year. In addition to the cafes, Respect will run a two day event in June, we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of Belmont Park in July, another decorating weekend is planned to see the remaining interior woodwork brought up to a better state, lastly bulb planting is expected to be repeated in Newtown this autumn.

The main topics for discussion at meetings during the year have been included: cafes and other events, maintenance and refurbishment of the hut, the Vision, the impact of University student developments on Newtown, University student wardens, projects such as the football wall, police liaison, cleaning, health & safety and more.

The hut bookings continue to take up a lot of Jackie's time as she is the person on the spot. The average number of bookings per month is 60 with 20 of these occasional. We have 14 regular groups who use the hut weekly monthly. Over six months we have had a total of 360 bookings which break down to 280 bookings by regulars and 80 occasional , so you can see how busy Jackie is!

The successful continuation of Newtown Community Association is dependant on increasing active committee members who can assist with the work of the committee and the fun things like events. The current small committee with the Chair and Secretary are hard-pressed and can only tread water unless there is more enthusiasm from other residents, otherwise the exercise is disheartening. Please let's start 2011 by speaking to all our neighbours and friends in the area to encourage them to come to meetings, make suggestions and even to join the committee.

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