



Newtongrange Community Council

Your guide to becoming a voice for Nitten



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What is Newtongrange Community Council?

The Community Council is a voluntary organisation set up by statute by the Midlothian Council and run by people like you and acts to represent the people of Newtongrange. As the most local tier of elected representation, Newtongrange Community Council plays an important role in local democracy.

The Community Council is comprised of people who care about Newtongrange and want to make the village a better place to live.

As well as representing the community's views to Midlothian Council, the Community Council facilitates a wide range of activities which promote the well-being of Newtongrange. It brings local people together to help make things happen. It seeks to protect and promote the identity of the village. It advises, petitions, influences and advocates numerous causes and cases of concern on behalf of the Newtongrange community. Here are some examples of the work it has undertaken over the last few years:



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- Carried out projects to enhance the community. This includes the provision of 2 community based defibrillators, reinstating the Miners Statue and updating details on the War Memorial.

- Engaged with Newtongrange residents on 2 Neighbourhood Plans – working in partnership with a range of community groups, Midlothian Council and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. As a result £25,000 was distributed to community groups in the village in 2018.

- We have also represented the views of Newtongrange residents on the Newtongrange Town Centre Masterplan and the Stobhill Masterplan.

- We have researched and created a 'Newtongrange Community Directory' which provides information about local groups, contacts information

- Campaigned on local issues – working to keep buildings such as the Library, Newbattle Community Learning Centre and the swimming pool open.

- Organised community events – Queens Diamond Jubilee.

- Reviewed Planning Applications.

Newtongrange Community Council provides one of the best opportunities to get involved with what is happening in the village. It will give you a good understanding of what is going on locally and nationally and the workings of Midlothian Council.

Being a Community Councillor

Being a community councillor means you have shared responsibility for the success of the Community Council. All members can contribute to discussions and decisions concerning the work of the Community Council and the opportunity to take an active part outside of meetings.

What are the roles in Newtongrange Community Council?

There are various ways in which you can play your part in the Community Council. You can become a Chairperson, a Treasurer or Secretary (an office bearer). The office bearers, as elected

members representing their local communities are responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the community council.

All members of the community council are equally responsible for the community council's decisions and actions and may take on additional activities in support of the community council. The office bearers' roles are described below.

Chairperson

The Chairperson can make a massive difference to the success of the community council. Meetings are key to making decisions on what the priorities are and what work it has to do. The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that discussions are productive and run on-time, and that clear action points are set. Duties include:

- Ensure there is a quorum (enough people to hold a meeting) & that everyone has signed in
- Welcome everyone to the meeting and introductions (particularly so people know who
- the community councillors are)

- If new people, ask if they were along for a particular issue so that it can be added to the agenda
- Introduce speakers or guests
- Review the minutes from the previous meeting, (minute taker notes any amendments) then get them proposed and seconded from a CC that was at the meeting
- Move on to matters arising from the minutes
- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak and be listened to

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for handling the community council's finances. It is his or her responsibility to ensure that the finances are kept healthy and the community council does not get into debt. Duties include:

- Keeping up to date financial records (including transactions, payments and receipts) Reporting on financial position at each meeting.
- Provide report on the Accounts at the Annual General Meeting

Minute Secretary

- Ensure that the community councillors are identifiable on the minutes,
- Any officials, for example the police, elected members, me – should be noted as in attendance (not included in present)
- A clear minute with actions to help keep everyone on track
- Draft minutes must be presented to Midlothian Council (send to
- MidlothianCCminutes@midlothian.gov.uk) within 14 days from the date of the meeting and circulated to CC members, relevant elected members and other interested parties

Secretary

The Secretary ensures the smooth running of the community council by organising meetings, setting the agenda and keeping minutes and records. Secretaries also ensure effective communication between committee members. Duties include:

- Accessing the Community Council mailbox and filtering out the communication (a duty

- that could be share with another member of the Community Council)
- Provide the chair with a summary of any relevant communication
- Create an agenda for the meeting
- Contact all CCs if there are things that require urgent attention and input prior to the next meeting
- Identifying relevant planning applications from the automatically generated list and ensuring they are on the agenda
- Bringing along copies of the agenda and minutes to the meeting
- Make sure the venue is booked
- Advertise the meetings, Posters, Social Media, Emails

Other roles

The Community Council welcomes people who have expertise or knowledge to bring and you might want to consider if you want to undertake a specific role in response to an area/project that needs a lot of attention. For

example, the committee may wish to create the post of Engagement Officer where there is a need to reach out to a specific group that is under-represented in the community council (e.g. young people, ethnic minorities or disabled people). Other roles that might be created to support the work of the community council are:

- Creating publicity to promote the Community Council
- Fundraising to get money for Community Council Projects
- Events Officer

Your involvement

You don't have to take on a specific role though to be involved in the community council. All members can play an important part by thinking creatively about what you can do by working together to improve the lives of the residents of Newtongrange. If you do take on a role, then you don't need to feel restricted to only doing this – the main role of the committee is to support each other and work together to make things happen.

The Midlothian Scheme for Community Councils Framework

Community Councils must represent all people in the area without prejudice.

Therefore they should:

- be non-party political and non-sectarian
- represent a full cross-section of the community and encourage the involvement of people regardless of gender, race, age, disability, nationality or sexual orientation.
- gather the views of local citizens.

The Community Council acts as a voice for Newtongrange. In addition you can represent the village at a wider level through the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.

Community Councils ascertain and express the views of the community to Midlothian Council and other public bodies such as Police Scotland and NHS Lothian, and to take action which appears to be in the interests of its community. They complement the role of the local authority but



To effectively represent their community a community council must be proactive in consulting and engaging with local residents.

are not part of local government. Newtongrange Community Council has a positive working partnership with Midlothian Council – through the Communities Team it is both informed about the council's policies, and in addition is able to keep the council updated on their activities.

Community Councils' role in planning

Community councils have a statutory right to be consulted on applications for planning permission and the community council has a special role, representing a broader yet still local view which can be set alongside the comments of those with a more individual interest.

Planning authorities also receive comments and objections on planning applications from statutory consultees like Scottish Natural Heritage or Historic Environment Scotland and from neighbours who are given special notification.

Authorities are obliged by law to decide planning applications in accordance with the development plan for the area (that is, where applicable, the approved

strategic development plan and the adopted local development plan or local plan, taken together) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Coming to a reasoned judgement on these matters lies at the heart of the planning authority's' discretionary power to approve, refuse or modify applications under the law and within a framework of national policy guidance. The Community Council's key task is helping to provide an informed local context within which appropriate decisions can be made in the public interest.

Community Engagement

Newtongrange Community Council attempts to engage with a wide range of people to create a large diversity of perspectives and insights which can help the Community Council to achieve more. Engaging community members in making decisions supports them to be more pro-active about their community's needs.

Community Councils are, by law, non-discriminatory. The Community Council is welcoming, open and non-judgmental toward all

people, including young people and individuals from hard to reach or minority groups.

Making contact with Newtongrange Community Council

Newtongrange Community Council meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 7.00 pm in Newbattle Community Learning Centre in Gardiner Place.

You can get further information about Newtongrange Community Council by sending an email to this address: newtongrange.community.council@gmail.com

You can also contact the Midlothian Council Communities Team by sending an email to paul.johnson@midlothian.gov.uk or calling 0131 270 6744.

