



The Newtongrange Flyer is here!

The Newtongrange Flyer is produced by the Newtongrange Community Council. This issue highlights community efforts to improve village life in lock-down.

Back in a more normal world the **Newtongrange Community Council (NCC)** members collectively scratched heads and wondered how we should evolve and improve our engagement with the village. The goal was to help people understand what the role of a community council is beyond lobbying the council to repaint road markings, checking planning applications or running litter picks, and how the NCC could be useful or even vital for protecting and enhancing village life and heritage. We also recognised we needed to build bridges with community groups, so amongst other things funding was sourced to produce this Newsletter.

However, before we could publish, our hand was forced in the worst possible way when the novel coronavirus appeared and the NCC needed to act. The community councillors deployed Scottish Government emergency funding through collaboration with businesses, local

groups and villagers to form a resilience response. The **Newtongrange Resilience Volunteers**, or NRV as they came to be known, are just one story of resilience in the village, but it is a great one and we've included their report in this Newsletter. Integral to the NRV development, established local heroes **Newtongrange Community 1st**, along with many other groups and individual heroes, were busy reinventing their delivery with a monumental effort to meet community need and their story is here also. Then there are the stories of groups who have been



displaced by this crisis. **Village Voices** has always had a social media platform but their capacity to actually meet, like many groups, was lost with the closure of the library and this is the lesser-known story of lock down: how so abruptly, and in some cases completely, people have been isolated in our village and why the community council has a responsibility to represent and support where it can even the smallest group.

On that note, the NCC have updated the constitution to be able to take on more members and have taken on projects like this newsletter targeting inclusion of all households over 3 years. This, we hope, will mean the NCC continues to be connected and utilised by the village, more important now than ever as Midlothian Council moves to involve community councils ever more in decisions around prioritisation of services following what they call “renewal” and learning from the impact of CoViD-19. We welcome this move.

The views of everyone in our village matter, particularly for the purpose of development, preserving heritage

and influencing local government, and the NCC hope to represent them fairly and inclusively. **Your voice** can be heard by getting involved or simply sharing your views. This newsletter tells you how!

NCC Chair, Jeremy Adderley

Where did it go...?

One thing we know is that heritage is as important to the village as well cut grass in Welfare Park and retired community councillor Ron Campbell made short work of replacing the iconic Edinburgh Sign. NCC funds or seeks funding for projects like this.



Newtongrange Village Voices

Newtongrange Village Voices is a local history and reminiscence group who meet to share our memories of growing up and living in the village.

Our village has a rich historical and cultural environment and has always enjoyed a very strong community spirit. Last century, Newtongrange was the jewel in Scotland's coal mining crown, and the largest mining village in the country. At its peak of production in the 1950's, the Lady Victoria employed over 1700 people.

Old photos, artefacts and memorabilia are frequently the sparks which bring alive long forgotten memories of people, places and events from the past, and our group believes living memories should be shared before they are lost.

We set up our Village Voices Facebook page in 2019 to inspire people in the village, and beyond, to share their photos and memories and so enable them to be captured for future generations.

We welcome photos and memories posted to our page, and would encourage visitors to the page to share the photos with those who are not on Facebook. Living history is important to our group and we believe everyone should have a voice.

NCC June Robertson

Get involved with Village Voices:

Social media savvy can send a message to facebook @newtongrangevillagevoices attaching any photos or use NCC email on the back page. They are also currently do walks from Gardiner's Place Community Centre on alternate Mondays 9.30-11am. Meet them at "The Pool," November 14th from 11am, (see back page).



Thinking About Welfare Park



June lays the NCC wreath

The creation of the Welfare Park was funded by contributions from the District Miner's Welfare Committee for Mid and East Lothian. One penny was levied on every ton of coal produced in Great Britain, the money to be spent on recreation, health and education in mining areas. Opened in 1926 by Lord Chelmsford our park is a well-loved oasis more so during pandemic lock-down.

Walking through the iron gates on the Main Street your eye is drawn to our War Memorial surrounded by a beautifully planted flower bed. The paths on either side in springtime come alive with a canopy of cherry blossom which cannot fail to bring a smile and energy to our well-being. Generations have a treasure chest of memories playing in the swing park and a new generation will have fun making theirs. This vast green space and the

views especially from Park Road are a sight to behold. We all enjoy walking and exploring the well-trodden paths. Our park is a very valued asset to our community our families who look forward to enjoying it for many years to come.

NCC Linda Anderson

Linda has done amazing work improving the response from our Midlothian Council Land & Countryside Manager and ensuring he knows upkeep priorities like planting out the war memorial. Hedges next!

The Welfare Park Centenary is 2026. How should we mark this occasion? Give us your thoughts, see "Get Involved" section for contact details.

Newtongrange Community 1st

Newtongrange Community 1st (NC1) have been organising and supporting village events since 2013 when they were initially established to facilitate the development of the Skate-park in the Newtongrange Welfare Park. Since then they have gone on to develop activities and events to bring together the community of Newtongrange such as The Christmas Light Switch On, Neighbourhood Watch, quiz nights, community gardening events and car treasure hunts as well as financially supporting other small groups in the village.

At the beginning of March this year, just before lock-down, NC1 had been working alongside Pethelpers Scotland who had been helping vulnerable residents in and around Newtongrange affected by the Corona Virus which was starting to affect us not just here in Midlothian

but what was about to become clear the rest of the world, Responding quickly to the needs of some residents, NC1 swung into action and by the time the official lock-down was enforced NC1 already had set up a system



NC1 Fiona & Dot, dish out the surplus at the Pool

of preparing meals and delivering to those most in need, Most of those needing help were older or shielding residents along with some villagers who had to self isolate and didn't have any other supports to help them access food etc. NC1 were very lucky to secure the use of The Sidings Bistro thanks to Apex Scotland and used this as their base for the following 5 months. In the 26 weeks, just over 5,500 meals were given out as well reading books, activity packs including gardening projects, wool and puzzle books. In addition to this practical support another important element was the emotional and social contact aspect – sometimes the volunteers were the only people those receiving food would see.

As well as meal deliveries NC1 set up the Lock-down Gallery at the Pool Site, planting up the flower planters which became so nice that a family of gnomes moved in keeping people on their toes with their antics. The idea for the Pool container came after Fiona Horne from NC1 had visited the Westray Development Trust, on Westray, one of the most northerly islands in Orkney. Here they had the Bargain Box – a couple of containers which sold very



Wheel gets paint, NCC Ross gets weeds: huge thanks to Broadsword Military Vehicle Group for wheel renovation and Newtongrange "Gorilla Gardners" Greta Higginson and Sheila Moffat and families for tireless bulb planting

inexpensive 2nd hand goods. People could donate and buy with all funds going towards the local groups – what a great idea she thought and that could work very well back in Newtongrange. Taking the idea to the community council, Fiona explained how this might work now especially during the pandemic. The Resilience Group took the idea on and sourced the container which now sits nicely alongside the Lock-down Gallery. NC1 supported The Pool each week giving away free donated food from Costco helping to reduce their waste.

Of course none of this would have been possible without their dedicated volunteers, giving up their time to help others - thank you so much. Financial support from Awards for All, Supporting Communities Fund, CO-OP and Radio Forth Cash for Kids was much appreciated and needed to support the work being done. The generosity from local businesses and individuals was amazing so thanks to everyone who contributed

to the effort especially Costco, CO-OP, Morrisons, Tesco, MacSweens, Apex Scotland and all the individuals who helped in one way or another.

#peoplemakecommunities

Newtongrange Resilience Volunteers

Newtongrange Resilience Volunteers (NRV) was established in March 2020 under the auspices of Newtongrange Community Council (NCC) in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The village was split into 4 zones, each allocated a co-ordinator and a team of volunteers. 26 locals offered their help. Initially the NRV supported the village with shopping, picking up prescriptions, dog walking, signposting to other support as well as a friendly voice on the phone and welfare referrals. The NRV worked closely with Newtongrange Co-op and Swift Taxi's who helped to deliver services. Around 90 calls, referrals from Midlothian Council and web enquiries were received and supports provided.

Leaflets were designed and distributed, by volunteers, throughout the neighbourhood giving details of how to





Overwhelming: donations of toys & books at the Pool

access support and social media was used widely to make contact.

An Easter Egg project was designed based on rainbows that were in house windows and local knowledge. 200 eggs were delivered throughout the village by the NRV Easter Bunnies and 50 art packs were produced and distributed to support a drawing club.

The 'My Story' project involved journals being designed and distributed throughout the village for people to record their thoughts and feelings as they coped with being in lock-down. Around 300 journals were distributed.

NRV worked closely with the Church and NC1 referring the most vulnerable in the community for meal and food provision along with a food pick up and drop off service to the village.



Village in action, Library weeds

During the pandemic there were times when food and other items were donated to the village but it became clear we didn't have a central pick up point. An idea to use a container for this purpose came from NC1 and through the Community Council a container was sourced and based in the centre of the village.

The container arrived on 5th June and after community consultation through the 'What's on In Newtongrange' Facebook page, 'The Pool' was chosen as its name. This was a play on words due to its location on the old swimming pool site, as well as the collection of resources and volunteers based there.



The Pool has provided 'exchange space' every Saturday, run by 16 NRV's, on a rota basis. Donations from the community including books, toys, videos, games, jigsaws and CDs are 'quarantined' in the container for a week before being set out on stalls for the village to access for free every Saturday until September. NC1 ran a weekly free stall with food donated by Costco and the Church set up their New2U clothes stall. There was also entertainment provided by local people. On average 35-50 people turned up every week over a 2-hour period. Social distancing was observed at all times and hand sanitiser was provided at all of the tables displaying goods. Induction was carried out with all volunteers to ensure everyone was aware of what needed to be done to keep this a safe and social space for the village to access. Many people came along just for the social interaction and have a chat.



Anger management at The Pool

The Broadsword Military Vehicle Group renovated the ornamental Pit Wheel at the Pool while the Thursday Evening gardening group were also hard at work during the summer. The Pool was also used to store Todd the CoViD snake on his way from his starting point in the park to his new home at Newtongrange Primary School.

Funding for the NRV activities was managed by NCC who applied and received awards from Midlothian Council and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to support communities to cope with the pandemic. Local businesses, Tesco, Newtongrange Star Football Club and Newtongrange Masonic Hall all made donations to the NRV effort. Around £400 was also received in donations from the community on Saturdays at The Pool.

There has been a huge effort by the community during this most difficult situation. Everyone has worked together to try and make things a little better



to cope with. NRV are keen to retain this community activity to get the village through what will no doubt be a very difficult winter and build on the momentum so far by creating an organisation that could respond to issues and look to the future of Newtongrange. The creation of a permanent community base in the village and the continuation the partnership working that has been successful in 2020 would be a great legacy to come out of what has been a life changing period for everyone in the community. The NRV hosted a meeting of the community partners

and Development Trust Association Scotland in September to explore the potential for this.

NRV Janet & Pat

Point your camera here!

Your support is needed for Newtongrange to benefit from its own Development Trust. Take the survey now or talk to the NRV at The Pool, Saturday Oct 31st or Nov 14th from 11am to show your support!



A Box Full of Taylor Family Memories

In 2017 my work colleague showed me a box full of photographs, postcards, annotated books & documents relating to a Newtongrange family. David had purchased the box in a local auction & knew I would be interested in the local heritage. During lock-down I was thinking about the amazing contents & since last week I am now the custodian of this box. My aim is to make sure it is appreciated, preserved in a museum archive or perhaps reunite the items with the family. The items were possessions of

Mr. Robert Taylor b.1895 of 49 Abbeyland & 38 5th Street a miner who in WWI served with 11th Battalion Royal Scots 52792. His wife Mrs Mary Cunningham (Taylor), 9th First Street and son John Taylor a local school janitor. I am contacting Newtongrange Village Voices for some of the images to be shared on social media for the community to appreciate. John Taylor wrote the poem opposite which appeared in the Midlothian Advertiser in 2003.

Ross Anderson



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S

Face coverings 

Avoid crowded places 

Clean your hands regularly 

Two metre distance 

Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms 

Keep it up Nitten... now more than ever!

A NITTEN MAN RECALLS

*Auld Nitten, oh I see you still
As a boy of long ago, Tho, when
I walk your Main Street
Now my step is rather slow*

*At Bryan's corner standing
Where houses stretch on far
There once was a field and meadow
Before bus and motor car*

*Then Rab King owned the farm
And pigs ran down the strip
With wagon loads of three pit redd
To White gates there to tip*

*Now monstrous bing it covers
Where once were fields so green
A gas works and a brick work
In my day there was seen*

*Two iron gates a signal box
With Lyes of coal brom foo,
Buts its Nick Thomson's Builders yard
That covers them the noo*

*The folk they all disgord
From off the old Globe trains
Afore you had a station
'Twas at Dalhousie Mains*

*Of Romans the hall stair
The stank block 1 could tell
And Lovers Lane and Abbey Land
With women at the well*

*Auld Taylor's hut your cricket pitch
The pavilion with its clock
Are things of my young childhood
Like Auld Nittens dwindling flock*

*Handyside an oil works
At Murderdean he had
The Loan and Auld Coo Mary's
When I was just a lad*

*Three fitba' teams you could then boast
The Star, The Thistle, The Vics
Then Readshaw came to Nitten
And he brought the silent flicks*

*Just some of Nitten's men I'll name
To honour my intention*

*For Nitten men like you old place
Deserve a special mention*

*Wull Blyth and Joe Barton
The family Walkingshaw
Dukesy Dickson, Dobie Moffat
With Gun Jock Shillinglaw*

*Mind I too of the Gordons
Dave Rose to boxing fame
The charger Connelly and Moss Smith
All from Old Nitten came*

*Pasteboard, Treacle, Dandy Pete
Dave Pryde and Peter Kent
When in there need of a haircut
To Old Tayior's hut they went*

*Sharp, Wood, Holget or Herriott
With Peacock will not rhyme
Ovens Lockhart Williamson
Then add on Nichol Syme*

*I write this for my father
No malice do intend
For he like you when in his youth
Stunt hunkard at the pend*

*He speaks of Nitten lovingly
Recalls the youthful plays
When Newtongrange was Nitten
And you and he were boys*

© John Taylor 2003

Help is at hand...

Lock-down and isolation are tough, even though hard work and self reliance are Newtongrange virtues, another virtue is looking out for our own. The NRV are here for confidential support and if you or someone you know could use a hand, reach us by email or call local legends SWIFT taxis to put us in touch:

SWIFT 0131 660 5000

Email: nrv@newtongrange.org

- For Social Work emergencies call 0800 731 6969
- Age Scotland: advice & friendship 0800 12 44 222
- Something troubling you? SAMARITANS 116 123

In brief:

- **Remembrance Sunday Nov 8th** - Put Poppies in your window & Newtongrange Scouts Group invite you to stand outside doors for 2 minute silence at 11am. The NCC will be laying a wreath at a service lead by The British Legion and the Parish of Newbattle Church from 10:45 Wednesday 11th at the Welfare Park War Memorial.
- **Merry Christmas!** While CoViD-19 will likely prevent parades Midlothian Council has purchased Christmas trees and is committed to providing lights.
- **The NRV** who have done amazing work to support the community are continuing "The Pool" (see dates opposite subject to gov guidance) so you can still pick up books, toys, surplus food and do some "social social-distancing" with a chat, crafty activities and sometimes even entertainment...
- Don't forget the Newbattle Parish Church is available for support too, telephone: 0131 663 3345
- Both the NCC and the NRV are calling for your support to create **Newtongrange's own Development Trust**. For more details email nrv@newtongrange.org or see the NRV article inside!
- We're looking for someone with time & skills to set **Todd the Corona Snake** in concrete at the school - the NCC will fund materials for this...
- The NCC is seeking more members: could you spare a few hours a month to help represent the village and support local projects?

Did you fill in a "Life in Lock-down" journal and want to share a copy? We'd love to hear from you, write to nrv@newtongrange.com or use any other contact method...



Some dates for your diary:

- NRV- The Pool Halloween, 31st Oct 11am
- **Remembrance Sunday Nov 8th**, outdoor service Welfare Park War Memorial Wednesday 11th 10:45
- NRV- The Pool with Village Voices, 14th Nov 11am
- NCC Regular Meeting - Nov 24th (no AGM this year)
- NRV- The Pool, 4th Dec 11am
- NCC Regular Meeting, Jan 26th 7pm
- **Library is OPEN** - Mon-Fri 11am-4pm (closed Wed)



How to get involved with the NCC:

- visit: <https://newtongrange.org>
- email: secretary@newtongrange.org
- drop us a note: NCC Dropbox at the Library (leave your address & we will include you in correspondence)
- follow Facebook: @newtongrangecc
- See the noticeboards at Welfare Park Main St entry or The Pool Square for meeting agendas and minutes

The NCC meets 7pm last Tues of the Month: currently online, all welcome - email for your link.



Newtongrange Community Council

C/O NEWBATTLE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE
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