

Minutes of Open Meeting Monday 22 September 2025

7.30 pm St Mary's Hall, Highdown Road.

1. Introduction from Chair, *Carole Kirby*

Carole welcomed everyone to the meeting. It is still the 25th year of NRA, she has been to almost all meetings and she is the Association's 6th chair. Carole would particularly like to thank Suzy Nelson and Kia Makepeace for getting NRA back on its feet after Covid. Carole is a long term Nevill resident, and her parents were residents. Carole has been putting together the newsletter for 14 years. The next one will be out next month.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 18 May 2025

a. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

- The seat outside the shops has already been mended twice by the Men's Shed, and they have now reinforced the arm. They are very generous with their skill, and we only pay for parts. This is not a sturdy seat so we may need to replace with, Carole suggests, a bench, so people can sit looking either way.
- Traffic report is published on the website. Suzy continues to take responsibility for the project. Transport plans for this year are already decided but officers will take recommendations into consideration next year. There is a meeting on site tomorrow with resident reps and officers.

3. Report from Treasurer, *John Somerville*

NRA started the year 1st April 2025 with a good balance. We have had one credit from Nevill Garden Trail and a big outgoing for the traffic report (the grant from the Town Council). Otherwise only small outgoings for meeting expenses. NRA holds £170.00 for any arising defibrillator expenses. To come from the account is £142.50 for Public Liability insurance. The full record is at the end of these minutes.

4. Garden Trail held on 13 July 2025, *Vicki Trenhaile*

This biennial event was on July 13th this year. The trail aims to open 10 to 15 gardens, with some serving tea and cakes. This year it was an excessively hot day, so fewer people than usual were able to participate! Even so, it raised £750. Lynn Donoghue holds the 'kit' ready for 2027, and hopefully someone will be prepared to organise it. NRA paid £400 of the takings to Homelink charity, run by Lewes Churches Together to support homeless people. The balance will benefit residents.

5. Preparation for snow – 'Snow Angels', snow shovels, grit bins, *Mike Fisk & Robert Massey*

Robert - 'Snow angels' is a small WhatsApp group to help vulnerable people in case of snow by sweeping snow off their steps etc. NRA has about 10 snow shovels around the estate to help clear roads. It is best to clear immediately before it becomes icy, when snow shovels won't be able to cope. Holders of the snow shovels are listed on the NRA website (nevillresidentsassociation.org). Please let Robert know if we need replacement shovels, or if you can help vulnerable neighbours.

Mike - grit bins. Most across the estate are filled by ESCC (one by LDC) but two are the NRA's responsibility to fill. Mike is looking to buy rock salt directly - pallet load of 40 bags - to fill bins ourselves. He'll see whether we can leave excess bags at the Nevill bonfire land.

6. Overgrown hedges on pavements, *Robert Massey*

Certain roads are blocked or severely narrowed by overgrown hedges. It is very problematic for pushchairs, wheelchairs, pedestrians generally. The offer is there to help cut hedges back if you can't do it yourself. If pavements or roads are made too narrow, and are reported to ESCC, the Council can insist on hedges being cut back or recharge the expense of doing so to the householder.

Adrienne - Paths between The Gallops and Hawkenbury Way are very overgrown with brambles. She asked whether she can do them herself. She also asked whether anyone can help her to cut back this Friday. Answer: it is perfectly fine to cut back obstructions to paths yourself. Suggested Adrienne posts onto the Community WhatsApp group to ask for help.

7. Drain cleaning, *Mike Fisk*

Mike had a meeting with Wendy about how to make it possible to clear all drains across the estate. It is suggested this is tagged onto Nevill Bonfire, when more roads are clear of cars, starting after procession. There is no word yet on whether they are prepared to do it then. Wendy will pass the route to Highways once it's confirmed, to see whether they can access the roads that are often blocked by parked cars.

8. New NRA bus timetable, *Sarah O'Kane*

Sarah, Mark Maidment and Fiona Griffin are putting together a refreshed bus times leaflet following the one distributed to every household on the Nevill last year. There aren't too many changes from the existing timetable. There is a change to Compass' app details. Compass has noted that circulating the timetable has improved use of the estate buses. Therefore, Compass' Chair has agreed to pay £100 towards a refreshed leaflet with NRA paying the remainder. It should be ready to distribute with the NRA newsletter. The full timetable will also be on the website.

John pointed out that you can't always see the location of buses on the app. Apparently this is because some drivers don't have the location turned on. It would also be good to get the app to recognise the CTLA buses. Buses 'disappearing' from the app is a real problem. Also, there is nothing to tell you whether the buses are going from a different stop, eg, School Hill rather than Friars Walk. For some reason these are not included in 'issues' on the app.

9. *Ann Holmes* shared her research on the history of Nevill Estate

Ann is a founder member of the Lewes History group. The 'Street Stories' group is very successful and has produced 7 books and put lots of research on to the Lewes History site. Ann brought a lot of her research as a display so participants could take a closer look. What follows is a very brief summary of Ann's talk.

Plans for Nevill estate started after the First World War 'homes fit for heroes' push, plus increased housing need as result of Industrial Revolution, slum replacement etc.

The Government was giving subsidies for new housing. 80 years earlier, Poor Law commissioners were looking at where the new workhouse should be built to comply with new Poor Law legislation. One site considered was The Gallops but its elevated situation together with 'keen winds' stopped that. By 1920,

minds had changed. The Abergavenny Family Trust sought to sell the land, which was farmland, to pay inheritance tax. The land was sold to the Council and the Council got subsidy towards half the estate. The Council decided to buy all the land to get the better deal. Land round Nevill cost £46 - £80 per acre, whereas Wallands was £600 per acre and St Swithuns was £1,400 / acre.

Building started in 1920 along Nevill Crescent/ Nevill Road. Homes had generous plots with internal bathrooms etc. Housing fit for the working classes but very soon it became a very mixed community. Lots of police, prison officers, teachers etc. Most of 'Nevill' estate was built by 1930. The 'Downs' estate (i.e. the 'Crescents') was built in the 1930s.

Ann told the meeting of some interesting controversies and in-fights in the process of the development.

In the late 1930s, the Council planned building on Hawkenbury Way to supply housing for prison officers. Those would, however, block South Way residents' views of the sea so all those householders were fobbed off with a large extra bit of garden. Building was then delayed till after the war. In fact, German Prisoners of War helped build the houses.

Ann has been gathering the stories of people who were children on the Nevill, have lived on the estate all their lives, etc. It is important to gather and record stories to retain all the history in people's memories. Ann has been transcribing and sending stories in to the group and they are online on the History Group's website. Ann really wants others to tell their stories or those of their friends and neighbours. It would also be good if someone wanted to extend the history of the estate beyond the Second World War. If you are interested, Ann has a lot of material, including who was living on many of the streets up till the Second World War. For more information look at: <https://leweshistory.org.uk/Search-for-Research-Projects/Street-Stories/Nevill>. You can contact Ann via the website.

10. Any Other Business

- a. Landport Bottom management plan: Cllr Edwina Livesey has asked residents to look at the current Landport Bottom Management plan on the Town Council's website (<https://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/116/2024/11/Landport-Bottom-Mang-Plan.pdf>) and give comments, including on the use of ponies this year, to Edwina Livesey, cllr.Livesey@lewes-tc.gov.uk. The plan is being reviewed for 2026.
- b. Imogen Makepeace - in February, members asked for contributions to the Town Council for the Local Plan review. There will now be a stakeholder consultation meeting on 22nd October, 10.00 to 17.00, on a draft master plan for Lewes, to influence the Reg 19 version of the South Downs National Park local plan. NRA can send 2 people. Committee members can attend but would welcome someone else to be a Nevill rep. Imogen said that Kia Makepeace would be prepared to go to the meeting if her work schedule allows. Delegates have been requested for all local resident groups.
- c. Wendy reminded the meeting that the Town Council with others is putting on a big event on 31st October and 1st November to commemorate and learn from the 2000 Lewes flood. There will be an exhibition on 1st November. The Lewesian and Lewes News have information.

- d. Rob Elvery - the footpath that runs behind gardens from the allotments to the field is now impassable. It used to be mown regularly, but was last mown in January. Imogen agreed to pick this up with Brian Courage, the ranger.
- e. Adrienne - There is an annual issue of high grass on the corner of Highdown Road with Nevill Road. This needs to be cut more frequently. Wendy said there are two scheduled cuts by Highways, but visibility cuts on the corners can be requested at any time. Report on ESCC Highways' 'Report-it' page.
- f. Imogen - on 29th October, the community food hub at Fitzjohns is doing a harvest festival and would appreciate two more pairs of hands to help out on the day. Please contact Ruby on 07598 713444 or via the Nevill Community WhatsApp group.

Dates of 2026 open meetings, all Mondays at the Church Hall, Highdown Road:

9th February 2026

20th April 2026 - AGM

21st September 2026

Present:

NRA committee members: Carole Kirby (Chair) John Somerville (Treasurer) Lesley Healey
(minutes) Vicki Trenhaile Robert Massey Sarah O'Kane Mike Fisk

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|-----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Ann Holmes | Maria Birch | Graham Sutton | Catherine Smith | |
| Mark Maidment | Jenny Maidment | Simmy Vinnikka | Suzy Nelson | Jim Attwood |
| Peta Jarman | Bob Jarman | Rob Elvery | Wendy Maples | Ivan Bonsell |
| Vanessa Raeburn | Imogen Makepeace | Brian Kirby | | |
| Carolyn Blayney | Derek Blayney | Jane Jackson | Adrienne Soudain | |
| Andrew Buxton | Sally Buxton | | | |

Apologies:

Fiona Griffin (NRA committee), David Smith, Frances Lord, Dan Allen-Baines, Alex Cumersdale
Cllrs Paul Keene, Edwina Livesey, Kevin West, Graham Clews

Nevill Residents Association income & expenditure

01/04/25-21/09/25

| Date | Description | Money out | Money in | Balance |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1st April 2025 | Start balance | | | 3138.65 |
| 30 May | Online banking bill payment to Dr. Susan Nelson. Ref: AGM refreshments | 56.50 | | |
| 6 June | Phil Jones Associates Ref: 08568 | 2160.00 | | 922.15 |
| 9 June | St Anne S Parochial Ref: Hire of hall | 28.00 | | 894.15 |
| 24 July | Credit from Victoria Trenhaile Ref: Nevill Garden Trail | | 749.50 | 1643.65 |
| 21 August | Cheque 100188 to Homelink Ref: Nevill Garden Trail | 400.00 | | 1243.65 |
| 1 September | Online banking bill payment to Mens Shed Ref: bench inv 101 | 20.00 | | 1223.65 |
| 21 September | Balance carried forward | | | 1223.65 |
| Total payments/ Receipts | | 2664.50 | 749.50 | |
| Payments due | Public Liability Insurance | | | (142.15) |
| Held in reserve | Defibrillator costs | | | (170.00) |
| Available funds as of 21/09 | | | | 911.50 |