

# NOTES FROM OPEN PUBLIC MEETING –

TOWN HALL 29.4.25

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUP



### Attendees

CLlr Steve Davey (Chair NMTC) [CLlr. Steve Davey | New Mills Town Council](#) Ollersett

CLlr Esther Morrison [CLlr. Esther Morrison | New Mills Town Council](#) Ollersett

CLlr Ann Hallam [CLlr. Ann Hallam | New Mills Town Council](#) Thornsett

CLlr Margaret Ritchie [CLlr. Margaret Ritchie | New Mills Town Council](#) Whitle

CLlr John Reed [CLlr. John Reed | New Mills Town Council](#) Whitle

CLlr Charles Jevon [CLlr. Charles Jevon | New Mills Town Council](#) Whitle

CLlr Mark Paxton [CLlr. Mark Paxton | New Mills Town Council](#) Whitle

### Apologies

CLlr Lyn Bannister [CLlr. Lyn Bannister | New Mills Town Council](#) Thornsett

25 residents attended, as both interested individuals and from 10 local community groups.

## AGENDA – Tuesday 29 April 2025

### New Mills Town Hall

1. Introduction to the Parks and Open Spaces Working Group (POSWG)
2. Why we have invited you all.
3. What is the Big Conversation?
4. Requests for volunteers
  - a. Who would like to volunteer to help prepare for Big Conversation (**Sunday 1 June**)
  - b. Who would like to manage an 'information point' at Big Conversation?
  - c. Who would like to be added to POSWG?
5. Agreeing the Terms of Reference
6. What happens next and when.

### 1. Introduction

CLlr Steve Davey, Chair of NMTC – opening welcome and 'housekeeping'.

### 2. Why have we invited you?

Esther Morrison was co-opted to NMTC on 10 March 2025. With a background in public consultation, she asked to lead on a new approach to developing a community-led strategy for the town's Parks and Open Spaces, to create a 5-year plan. This first meeting was to share a very broad outline of how the next year would see a number of activities to give as many people in New Mills as possible, the opportunity to have a voice in what a strategy designed by the town and for the town might look like.

### 3. What is the Big Conversation?

HPBC SERVICE COMMISSIONING (LEISURE & PARKS). Sally Curley shared with us the current Parks Strategy from HPBC [2021 - 2031 Parks Strategy - High Peak Borough Council](#) which runs until 2031. She also gave an overview of Move More High Peak [Move More High Peak](#). Both of these impact on how residents and visitors might use our parks and open spaces in the future and came from public consultations.

Esther explained that the first of the open events was planned at High Lea Hall on Sunday 1 June. It was to be an outdoor event and run from 11 till 4 and would have stalls on 'topic' areas for people to share ideas.

It was pointed out that this location could exclude a large proportion of New Mills East, who for a multiple of reasons would not attend. Demographic information was shared to explain why this might be.

This opened up discussions on how the High Lea Hall date was just the first event and to agree that multiple events were needed in multiple locations, to gather the widest input. The issue may be the selection of a social space for Ollersett and Rowarth that could be weatherproofed.

Big Conversation was felt to sound as if it would be the only conversation, not the first. We also tried to produce something shorter e.g. chat. It will take a bit more brainstorming to put a choice for a vote.

### 4. Requests for volunteers to be involved in the POSWG & events

Two people were willing to say that they would volunteer to help on 1 June, but the majority in the room wanted more information and for a broader selection of the town to be involved before they could commit.

### 5. Agreeing the Terms of Reference

The FINAL DRAFT Terms of Reference were shared, but nobody wanted to join the Working Group at that stage.

### 6. What happens next and when.

We went around the room to hear what people were most interested in and how they might get involved in the future. Individuals from the town were e.g. members of an allotment, parks users, had an interest in biodiversity, corporate sustainability, accessibility, mental health and sustainable tourism.

A recurring concern was benches/seating provision in New Mills, both for mobility-impaired users and also to create places just to be able to sit safely, and in comfort. The other concern was bins and bin positioning; both for dog bags and litter.

The following groups shared:

NEW MILLS JUNIORS FC [MATCH REPORTS | New Mills Juniors FC](#) New Mills Juniors have two sites – Ollersett Playing Fields and Newtown. Barney and Rick shared the new plans for planning permission at the Ollersett site, which were originally just a changing facility but will now include a social space – providing a missing asset to that area. Funding decisions have not yet been made.

NEW MILLS COMMUNITY ORCHARD [Facebook](#) The Orchard is next to High Lea Park. It is free and runs various events during the year. It is there for a place of calm as well as to support wildlife, biodiversity and give free fruit. Cormac delivers Climate Action activities in schools and would like to see more engagement with the orchard.

ROCK MILL CENTRE [Rock Mill Centre](#) The centre is in the old visitor centre and provides a range of events and activities. Its aim is to provide a safe, inviting and accessible community facility. Of particular interest is the role of the Millenium Walkway in bringing in visitors and the Story of The Rivers in Torr Valley.

YOUTH MATTERS NEW MILLS [Youth Matters CIC | New Mills](#) a CIC (Community Interest Company) that manages the Youth Centre at the top of Longlands Road, which was long abandoned. They provide facilities for all young people in the community, youth groups, Youth Club, basketball and also support those at risk. They want to make sure that their young people have a voice in this process.

NATURE NEW MILLS [Nature New Mills – A community group based in New Mills, Derbyshire](#) Nature new Mills focus is helping nature recover, by protecting habitats and endangered species, and increasing the variety and abundance of wildlife.

HPBC TENANT ENGAGEMENT – The council-owned and other public housing in Ollersett area have a tenants' association that delivers events and engagement. With HPBC, they recently delivered an event on Derby Road fields and are now looking at seating and planting for that space.

TRANSITION NEW MILLS [Transition New Mills – Reimagining the future and building a stronger community](#) Transition New Mills delivered a town event in 2019, which created a book that outlined hopes and ideas before Covid. They have a wide range of interests including the climate and social emergency, water pollution and inclusive solutions.

NEW MILLS NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY [\(2\) Facebook](#) Interested in observing and studying our local plant and animal wildlife.

MEAL STREET COMMUNITY SPACE This is a new project on Meal Street which has reclaimed unused private land on Meal St and is turning it into a community space. They have a particular interest in medicinal plants outdoor art, lighting for safety and empowering people to do something creative or useful with unloved land.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE NEW MILLS [Incredible Edible – New Mills – Located in High Peak, Derbyshire, we are a community organisation that aims to develop community connections through growing and sharing food.](#) Incredible Edible grow food for humans and pollinators and the spaces that they cultivate include Torr Top Car Park herb beds and the new space at St George's Field. 50% of the people that they work with are vulnerable.

TORRS HYDRO [Torrs Hydro, New Mills | Clean green electricity since 2008](#) Archie is New Mills reverse Archimedes screw turbine. It supplies energy directly to the nearby Co-op supermarket and any surplus is fed into the National Grid.

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- Share these notes on NMTC website, social media and mailing list.
- Encourage sign up to the mailing list, so that everyone receives information at the same time.
  - This doesn't mean that you are being part of a committee, but that you know what is going on.
- Ask the community for event dates e.g. One World Festival, that they are planning, so that POSWG can take this activity out to them in their safe places.
- Ask the attendees to encourage members/followers to follow the NMTC Facebook page.
  - NMTC will schedule a re-post of the mailing list link every Monday.
  - Individuals and community groups can ask to be tagged in that post, so that they can easily share to their networks.
- Poll the mailing list and ask if when they would be available to meet i.e. days of week and times.
- Ask HPBC for a large map of the town to use at the events.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

- Confirm costings for 1 June and publicise the event across the whole parish.
- Share the event at the Parish AGM on Tuesday May 13
- Hold informal meetings across the parish to gather more interested parties willing and able to help.
- Design engagement activities to take to planned community events.
- See how the primary schools and New Mills School can participate.
- Bring members of the public into the Parks and Open Spaces Working Group