



March 2024

Issue 16

NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Welcome to this Spring edition of the Newsletter, which aims to provide useful & interesting news about the Council & the wider community.

If you have an article or information of interest to Newent residents, please email it to the Town Clerk: townclerk@newenttowncouncil.gov.uk

Market House Museum – Opening Soon



The recently refurbished Market House will soon be open to visitors on Saturday afternoons, between 1300-1600, from 30th March to 28th September.

Newent Market House which is in itself an iconic historic building, is also home to lots of interesting local artefacts and stories.

The Market House Museum is run by a team of dedicated volunteers, who manage the displays and give up their time to staff the open afternoons.

Entry to the museum is free, but there is small donation box inside the museum for anyone who wishes to contribute to the running of the museum.

Please note that the museum is only accessible via an outside staircase, therefore is not suitable for wheelchair users/those with mobility issues.

Newent Spring Clean – 16th March



On Saturday 16th March, over a dozen volunteers spread out from the Market House to litter-pick in the town. The clean-up coincided with Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

Armed with litter grabbers, hi-vis tabards and refuse bags, the keen volunteers headed off in search of litter. Eight bags were filled in just over an hour, when the volunteers met back in the Market Square and took the bags to the collection point.

Around the town centre and not far beyond, it was easy to find discarded cigarette ends, paper, cans, crisp packets & plastic wrappings. Other rubbish included vapes, metal & rubber. Thanks to the volunteers, the town soon became less littered, making a real difference to the local environment.

The event was organised by the Town Council and individual residents, families, Councillors & staff took part. It was supported by Forest of Dean District Council (via litter picking equipment & rubbish collection) and the main Newent Co-op Store (via soft drinks & biscuits for post clean-up). Thank you to them and of course a huge thank you to everyone - adults and children - who took part.

Business Feature: G.D. Parker & Co

This feature is the first of a series, based on interviews with well-known local businesses in the town. We are delighted that Richard & Jane kindly agreed to us visiting their premises to chat about their business, from its beginnings to now and into the future. What follows is a series of questions, which we will use & adapt for each business we visit, which we hope will be of interest and give an interesting insight into the business and highlight any news.



The store's current opening hours are:

Monday to Friday: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Saturday: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

What is the nature of the business and your roles?

G.D. Parkers is an established family-owned hardware store, providing a wide variety of DIY, garden & household supplies & equipment. Richard & Jane are partners in the business and both undertake all aspects of running the business; from buying, pricing, stocking shelves, window dressing, counter sales, key cutting, paint mixing, deliveries, paperwork and accounts. They both enjoy running all parts of the business, Richard even admitting that he quite likes doing the paperwork and accounts!

What is the history/background of the business and how did you become involved?

The business opened in 1973, as a traditional hardware store, called Parker & Price; set up by Gerald David Parker (Richard's father) and Gerald's brother, both builders by trade. Richard started working in the store, which was half the size, when he was nearly 16 years old and has continued to this day, having latterly taken over the business with Jane, who herself began working in the store on a Saturday as a teenager.

In November 2023, G.D. Parkers celebrated the milestone of being in business in Newent for 50 years. The shop was opened on a Sunday morning and many customers and friends joined in the family celebrations and shared happy memories, as well as special cup-cakes and bubbly!

What are the key products/services offered and some customer favourites/best-sellers? What is your customer base and USP?

G.D. Parkers provides a large range of goods - hardware, gardening, DIY and household supplies and services - paint mixing, key cutting and watch batteries. Bird seed is a popular item and key cutting & watch batteries are also very popular. The items on sale appeal to many different customers and will sell; for instance, a 24" adjustable spanner and a set of tow ropes were recently bought. Some products have changed significantly over the years though, from loose paraffin at first, wallpaper & china plates 20 years ago, to present day air fryers and refillable cleaning products.

Customers come from Newent, Huntley, Highnam, Ross and there is a good flow of regular, loyal, customers. Richard and Jane are always happy to see familiar faces and delighted to see new ones. Richard was pleased to report that the Daffodil line bus service has brought in new customers from the towns and villages on the route.

G.D. Parkers provide a friendly, knowledgeable, face-to-face, personal service of a wide choice of handy goods & services; there is a good range of stock & services and Richard & Jane are always happy to listen, advise and look into getting specific supplies where possible.

How is your business involved in the local community?

Having been in the town for over 50 years, we are an established business that continues to offer reliable & unique goods & services for the locality.

Are there any interesting stories to tell?

There are lots of stories and interesting customers; too many to mention, but in the past, they have been asked if they sold slippers, wardrobes and red diesel! Following their online business, a few years ago, a customer in South Africa bought a pink whistling kettle but was bemused to find that it didn't have a plug!

What major business challenges have you faced and how did you overcome these? What has been particularly rewarding/successful?

There were of course challenges and repercussions of the Covid pandemic, although the store was an outlet for lots of essential supplies during the period, so stayed open to allow the sale of these.

The main challenge overall has been the changes in shopping habits, and the impact of online shopping. Richard & Jane did sell products online, particularly niche products, via their website, selling to over 20 countries.

However, they decided to stick with in person selling, which they prefer & is very successful. Richard & Jane continue to evolve their business to adapt to customer needs, carrying on running a strong, viable, local business.

What are your favourite aspects about running a business in Newent?

Being an integral part of the community, providing a local service. Seeing people and getting to know customers & helping people wherever possible. Also living & working in the same place and being able to walk to/from work.

Are there any plans for the business?

Richard & Jane are looking forward to carrying on running the business together and continuing to provide customers with a wide variety of interesting & essential goods & services.



Richard & Jane continue to serve the community with their family-owned hardware store business, G.D. Parker

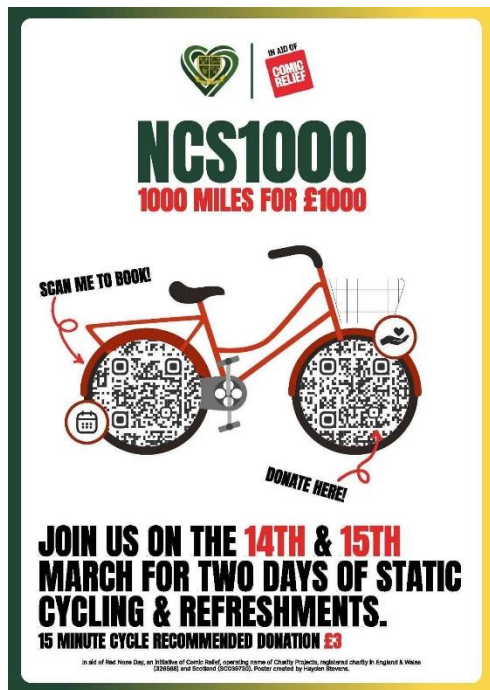
More information about the business and contact details can be found on G.D. Parkers website: <https://gdparker.co.uk/>

Comic Relief Cycle Challenge

On 14th & 15th March, Newent Community School hosted a community cycle change in aid of Comic Relief. Two energetic members of the Town Council donned their trainers and did the challenge, raising funds for the nationwide charity.



Councillors Sara Hulbert and Josh Robertson, who took part in the Comic Relief Cycle Challenge



Newent Town Council Meetings

2nd & 4th Monday of the month – From 7pm

Room G4, Newent Community School, Watery Lane, Newent (subject to change)

Planning & Environment Committee	Full Council
March 25 th	March 25 th
April 8 th	April 8 th

Council Positions & Roles

Mayor

Cllr Sara Hulbert

Deputy Mayor

Cllr Eddie Wood

Finance & Staffing Committee

Cllr Julia Gooch (Chair)

Cllr Eddie Wood (Vice-Chair)

Planning & Environment Committee

Cllr Gill Moseley (Chair)

Cllr Kay Selwyn (Vice-Chair)

Other Councillors were elected on to these Committees. In addition, Councillors were appointed for specific roles and Council representatives on outside bodies. The full list for all the positions can be found on the Council's website:

www.newenttowncouncil.org.uk/

If you would like to find out more, please contact the Town Clerk

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Deadline for articles to be included in the next issue Thursday 12th April 2024

Email to Town Clerk marked 'Newsletter'.
townclerk@newenttowncouncil.gov.uk

The Editor's decision is final.

Regular notices & news can also be found via the Council's:

Facebook page 

<https://www.facebook.com/Newent-Town-Council-147707619127917/>

Website



www.newenttowncouncil.org.uk

Details about the Council, its function, notices, news and documents, Agendas, Minutes, Policies and Financial information are available on the website.

Twitter 

[@newenttc](https://twitter.com/newenttc)

Noticeboards

Under the Market House, at the entrance to the Lake Car Park and by the children's play area at the Lake.

