

WHITTINGHAM, CALLALY & ALNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Sarah Trushell

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MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of WCA Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th May 2025, 7:00pm at the Whittingham Memorial Institute Hall.

Present:

Councillors Brian Wood (Chairman), Karen Armstrong, David Bateson, Neil Blackshaw, Jamie Bolton, Paul Bradley, Jonathan Clark, Elidh Gardiner, Toni Marsden, James Renner, Andrew Whincup

Clerk Sarah Trushell

Members of the Public: 6

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Stuart Gray, (Declaration of Acceptance of Office not yet signed)

2. Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

Declarations of Acceptance of Office were received from all elected members prior to the commencement of the meeting, with the exception of Stuart Gray.

3. Election of Chair

- a) Following a vote, Cllr Andrew Whincup was elected as Chair (7 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions).
- b) Following a vote, Cllr Karen Armstrong was elected as Vice-Chair (5 votes to 4, with 2 abstentions).

4. Appointments to Working Groups and Committees

- a) Neighbourhood Plan
Cllrs Bateson, Blackshaw, and Bradley
- b) Personnel
Cllrs Blackshaw and Bradley
- c) School Governors Representative
Cllr Marsden
- d) Village Hall Representative
Cllr Gardiner

MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of WCA Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th May 2025, 7:00pm at the Whittingham Memorial Institute Hall.

Present:

Councillors Andrew Whincup (Chairman), Karen Armstrong, David Bateson, Neil Blackshaw, Jamie Bolton, Paul Bradley, Jonathan Clark, Elidh Gardiner, Toni Marsden, James Renner, Brian Wood

Clerk Sarah Trushell

Members of the Public: 6

Signed as a true record of the meeting _____ *on Date* _____

51/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Stuart Gray

52/25 Declaration of interests.

Cllr Armstrong declared an interest in item 60/25(a).

Cllr Whincup declared interests in items 56/25(a) and 57/25(a).

53/25 Public Participation

A member of the public spoke about the possibility of including Parish Council information in The Vale News.

54/25 Minutes of the Meeting of 15th April 2025

It was proposed by Cllr Bradley, seconded by Cllr Wood, and unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th April 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

55/25 Neighbourhood Plan

As the new group has only just been established, there was no business for the Parish Council to consider at this meeting.

56/25 Communication Received

a) Footpath near The Grange

Prior to the start of this item, Cllr Whincup (Chair) left the meeting due to a declared interest. Cllr Armstrong (Vice-Chair) took the Chair for items 56/25(a) and 57/25(a).

It was noted that this matter is currently being dealt with by the Rights of Way team at Northumberland County Council, who are in contact with the landowners. The Parish Council agreed to take no further action at this stage and to leave the matter in the hands of the County Council.

57/25 Updates on Community Matters.

a) Path along Riverside

Cllr Armstrong will obtain the invoice for the work already completed. Further discussion is required regarding whether to progress the project further, so this item was deferred. The Clerk will contact County Councillor Bridgett regarding materials that had been previously promised.

Following conclusion of item 57/25(a), Cllr Whincup returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

b) Cast Iron Road Signs

Cllr Gardiner has completed an audit of all the historic cast iron signs and is awaiting responses from various contacts regarding advice on restoration. Volunteers will be sought once work is ready to commence.

c) Bus Shelter

Cllr Gardiner is seeking a grant to support maintenance and potential improvements to the bus shelter. It was noted that a survey is likely to be required.

58/25 Parish Council Administration Matters

a) gov.uk emails

The Clerk reported on an update received from NALC, which stated:

Signed as a true record of the meeting _____ *on Date* _____

"NALC are working with an IT company to provide a new website platform for each Council we presently support. The website will have a .gov address and we are also investigating providing a .gov email address for the Clerk as a minimum to comply with the changes coming into effect on 1st April 2026.

NALC will provide in the coming weeks a projected timeline for the changes and projected costs to allow your Council to budget accordingly."

Once the projected costs are received, this item will be brought back to the Council for further discussion.

b) Parish Wide Communication

The Clerk presented a proposal for establishing a resident mailing list, using Google Groups. It was agreed that the mailing list would initially be set up with Councillors' email addresses in order to test and refine the system before it is rolled out to residents across the parish.

59/25 Governance Documents

a) Standing Orders

It was AGREED to defer this item to allow new Councillors time to review and bring forward any questions or comments. It was further AGREED that any comments should be submitted by email to all other Councillors and the Clerk, no later than 10th June 2025 to allow a one-week review period prior to the next Parish Council meeting, enabling an effective and efficient debate.

b) Financial Regulations

It was AGREED to defer this item to allow new Councillors time to review and bring forward any questions or comments.

c) Code of Conduct

It was RESOLVED to adopt the Code of Conduct.

d) Complaints Policy

It was AGREED to defer this item to allow the addition of a section regarding whistleblowing, before the policy is brought forward for adoption.

e) Data Protection Policies

It was RESOLVED to adopt the Data Protection Policies.

f) Publication Scheme

It was RESOLVED to adopt the Publication Scheme.

g) Reserves Policy

It was AGREED to defer this item; Cllr Armstrong will assist the Clerk in preparing the draft.

h) Risk Register

It was AGREED to defer this item.

i) Biodiversity Plan

It was AGREED to defer this item.

Summary:

The Clerk will update and recirculate the deferred documents for future consideration and adoption by the Council.

60/25 Planning Matters

Signed as a true record of the meeting _____ *on Date* _____

a) 25/01304/LBC - West End Cottage, Whittingham

Cllr Armstrong left the room for the duration of this item due to a declared interest and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to support the application.

9 Councillors voted in favour, with 2 abstentions.

b) 25/00828/BT - BT Telephone Box Consultation

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would raise no objection to the removal of the telephone box as proposed in the consultation.

c) 24/03756/FUL - Land North and East of Braeside Cottage

Proposal for five new dwellings. It was NOTED that permission for this application has been refused.

61/25 Financial Matters:

a) Transaction Report

The Transaction Report had been published on the Council's website in accordance with transparency requirements and was circulated at the meeting.

b) Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Armstrong confirmed that the bank reconciliation had been checked and agreed.

c) Payments for Authorisation

The following payment was APPROVED:

Clerk's travel expenses: £11.88

The Clerk's wages and Working from Home Allowance (£26) were noted as contractually approved and paid in accordance with the Clerk's contract of employment.

62/25 Items for Information or Future Agenda

The following items were put forward for inclusion on a future agenda:

Litter picking group

Bins in Whittingham village

Potential meeting locations in other wards

63/25 Date of next and future meetings (all start at 7pm unless stated otherwise)

17 June 2025

15 July 2025

No meeting in August 2025

16 September 2025

21 October 2025

18 November 2025

No meeting in December 2025