

Acklington Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in Acklington Village Hall, on Tuesday, 2nd September 2025

Present	Cllr Sharin Ingleby (Chair)	Cllr Steve Thorpe (Vice Chair)	Cllr Alison Bell
	Cllr Sean Malone	Cllr Ann McDougal	Cllr Tony Mezza
	Barry Flux (Clerk)		
In Attendance	County Councillor Pauline Davidson		

Public questions / speaking

No members of the public were present

Agenda Item

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Stephen Shanks

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes from the meeting of 1st July 2025 were approved as a true record.

Matters arising:

Nothing which was not due to be discussed within the meeting.

4. CO-OPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR(s)

It was agreed to defer the consideration of co-option until after the proposed coffee morning at Acklington Village Hall where it was hoped that residents within the parish may show an interest.

5. CLERK'S REPORT

Pay award (all clerks)

It was agreed to implement the national pay agreement in respect of the clerks pay.

Clerks Training

The clerk confirmed he has passed his ILCA qualification. The next logical training is the CILCA qualification. SLCC had paused applications for this until January 2026 owing to them updating the course. It was agreed to

Remembrance commemorations

Signed

Date:

It was agreed that the purchase of two wreaths was certainly required. It was further agreed to monitor if a third wreath was required for the new memorial at Acklington Prison. It was agreed to purchase one if required.

Payments – Full Financial Report

Financial reports with references AC004S, AC005S, AC004/5I, were presented to the meeting. It was also noted that the Community Account held £13,607.75 in funds and the Instant Access Account held £12,399.11

6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

GP Appointment Issues:

Health & Wellbeing Committee meeting discussed issues with GP appointments at the Hadston and Amble practices. Residents struggling to get appointments despite having registered. Surge in local population expected with 1,300 new houses, potentially affecting appointment availability. GPs are already overburdened, but extending current surgeries is seen as the only solution. Health authorities are investigating the issue.

High Park Farm Planning Application:

The previous planning application was refused; however, a new proposal has been submitted. Concerns over the impact of heavy vehicles, but the new proposal addresses some issues. Highways raised objections due to heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) taking the shortest route, impacting local roads.

Local Road Issues:

Roadworks in Acklington have been completed; improvements noted, although some minor issues remain.

Pavement issues raised on the church side, particularly with wheelchair access. Dropped curbs approved and will be installed outside the church.

Speed cushions ongoing; issues remain with traffic speed and safety, particularly around the railway bridge.

Request for lighting or additional signs to make speed cushions more visible. The lighting proposal is costly but alternative options are being explored.

Morwick Road Safety:

Concerns about cars speeding while cattle are crossing, especially near the ice cream farm. Proposal for a sign to warn drivers but this is still under consideration.

Bus Stop Coal House Farm:

Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from the North East Combined Authority for a new bus stop pole at Coal House Farm is pending approval. Expected confirmation in the coming weeks.

Hedge at The Paddocks:

Continued delays in addressing despite a letter from the Dukes Estate suggesting this was a County Council responsibility and they would now deal with.

7. PLANNING

Signed

Date:

- 25/02225/LBC – No comment.
- 25/02196/LBC – No comment.
- 24/02540/FUL – It was noted that Northumberland County Council had refused this application in advance of it arriving at any planning committee.
- 25/03337/MISC – No comment
- 25/03338/MISC – No comment

Further planning matters were discussed on items submitted to planning after the publication of the agenda

- 25/03015/MAST

Notification of Prior Approval for the installation of 1No. 15m 'Phase 5' monopole, 3No. antennas, 2No. 0.3m dishes, 1No. GPS Node and 3No. ground-based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto.

B6345 Acklington, Northumberland NE65 9BN

'The proposed location is in an open space at the edge of Acklington within an area that contributes significantly to the character, setting, and amenity of the village. The proposed site lies within the outskirts of the village which:

Provides an essential buffer between the built environment and the surrounding countryside;

Is widely used by walkers, dog owners, and residents for leisure and exercise;

Contributes to the rural and undeveloped character of the village's edge, offering scenic views and natural habitat.

The introduction of a tall telecommunications mast, with its industrial design and associated cabinets and paving, would constitute an intrusive and visually dominant structure. This would result in a significant loss of amenity and the urbanisation of a rural, tranquil location that is highly valued by local residents.

The application fails to provide sufficient evidence that alternative, less sensitive sites were fully explored and ruled out. In particular, a far more appropriate location exists at Acklington Railway Station, which:

Is already a developed transport hub with existing infrastructure;

Would minimise visual and landscape impacts;

Is less sensitive in terms of community and recreational use.

Signed

Date:

A mast located at the railway station would serve the intended coverage area while avoiding unnecessary harm to a protected and much-loved landscape.

There appears to have been minimal engagement with local residents prior to the submission of the application. Given the significant visual and environmental impact of the development, proper community consultation should be a prerequisite. This lack of engagement is disappointing and undermines the community's trust in the process.

While improved telecommunications infrastructure is important, it must be sensitively located. The current proposal is inappropriate, harmful, and poorly justified. A more suitable and less intrusive alternative exists at the railway station, which should be fully explored before any decision is made.

We urge the planning authority to refuse this application in its current form.'

- 25/02834/FUL (Change of use of paddock to residential garden/ecological and sustainable garden) It was agreed to comment on this application:

'The Parish Council does not object to the proposal, but requests that specific conditions be attached to any planning consent granted in light of recent development on the site and concerns about future intensification of its use.

The site has recently been subject to a substantial extension and the erection of a large outbuilding. While this current application may appear minor in isolation, the cumulative impact of ongoing development at the property raises legitimate concerns about the potential for overdevelopment and its effect on local character and neighbouring amenity. If planning permission is granted, the Parish Council strongly recommends the following conditions be included:

That the land the subject of this application be used solely for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling, and be maintained as garden/amenity space only, with no separate or commercial use permitted. This will help ensure the land remains appropriate to its residential context.

That permitted development rights be removed, so that any future development-such as the construction of outbuildings, greenhouses, summer houses, or significant hard landscaping-would require full planning consent. This is necessary to prevent further unregulated development and to ensure proper oversight by the Local Planning Authority.

While the Parish Council does not raise an objection to the current proposal, it considers the above conditions necessary and reasonable to safeguard against overdevelopment and to protect the character and amenity of the surrounding area.'

8. KEY PROJECTS

Bins

- New bin was proposed outside the Cheviot Meadows permissive pathway (post mounted)
- It was suggested the existing bin at the millennium footpath be removed and that a new ground mounted bin be placed on the outside of it.

Signed

Date:

- A new ground mounted bin at paddocks west of Inglenook

Road Safety and Bus Stop

- These were discussed during the County Councillor report so items were not revisited.

9. GENERAL ITEMS

Donations process

It was agreed that the regular donations to the village hall and church be processed. It was agreed organisations would need to inform the Parish Council of their requirement / request for an annual donation in the run up to the budget formation process.

Coffee Morning

It was noted the coffee morning would be held on 1st November 10:30 -12:30 in the Village Hall. Acklington Community Team (ACT) would assist with tea, coffee and refreshments. It was agreed to look into the provision of lanyards for parish councillors for this event and parish Council duties in general.

Refurbishment of bus shelters

Bus shelter at Togston end of the parish needs repair. The bus stop at the village hall end of the parish was also in some disrepair. It was agreed to pay for a power wash to see what work is needed following this.

It was also discussed whether a noticeboard or murals / artwork could be considered in the future at bus stops.

Tree survey

There used to be a tree survey annually. This had dropped off. Cllr Bell agreed to talk to a tree surgeon contact on this matter.

Benches on footpaths

Suggestions were put forward for benches at:

- Millenium Pathway
- Bottom of Cheviot Meadows Permissive Pathway
- Baby trees area

There were some logistical concerns and ownership concerns discussed on these matters which needed further discussion with contractors, owners etc.

Planters

It was agreed to talk to the volunteer who waters the planters to check they are content with carrying on tasks are if they have any issues with mobile water bowsers etc. It was agreed to seek permission from the church to use their outside tap.

LTP Process

It was agreed that councillors Malone and Thorpe would attend the LTP workshop on 29th September. Following this the Parish Council would fully confirm their LTP submissions, however the following were discussed at the meeting:

- Resurfacing and Safety Improvements to the Pavement Outside the Church

Signed

Date:

- Structural Repair to the North Side of Acklington Drive
- General Road Safety and Visibility Enhancements

10. FOOTPATH WORKING PARTY UPDATE

Cllr Malone presented the Footpath Working Group update (appendix 1)

11. PLAYGROUND UPDATE

It was agreed that the zip wire needed to be decommissioned. Further to this it was commented that the parish council would submit a funding bid for further playground equipment.

12. ITEMS FOR THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The following items were requested for the next meeting's agenda

- Review of policies (Particularly safeguarding as this is required as part of the funding bid for further playground equipment)
- Budget preparations

13. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4th November 2025

Meeting closed at 21:45

Signed

Date: