

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON



Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
18<sup>th</sup> September Thursday 2025  
Parish Rooms, Rothbury

**Present:** Hilary Dunn (HD -Chair); Peter Henry (PH); Alan Tait (AT) Fran Tait (FT).  
**In attendance:** Clerk.

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

1. **Apologies for absence.** None.
2. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 17th July 2025** were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (Proposed (PH), Seconded (FT), All in Favour).
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not included in the agenda.** None.
4. **Police Report.** Police unable to attend but submitted a written report:  
*'Please do pass on concerns surrounding door to door sellers doing the rounds in the local areas (not just Longframlington). More to be vigilant and an awareness that individuals are going about trying to sell door to door without the correct pedlar's certification. These are usually ex-prisoners who are charging excessive prices for dusters etc...These individuals do prey on vulnerable or elderly residents and are sometimes aggressive in their manner or behaviour which can pressure persons into purchasing items from them. If in doubt or any concern is raised, please encourage residents to report them to Police'*
5. **Highways and Footways AT**
  - a. Highways The hardcore stone added to the passing places along Carterside Road works better than the fine grit, although it still gets pushed out of the potholes and needs to be racked back in regularly.
  - b. Footpaths No issues with footpaths have been reported
  - c. Verges No issues on the verges of junctions.
  - d. Seats & Road Signs
    - i. Sinkhole reported near Ryehill Farm has been quickly repaired by the county council and looks to be a good quality job.
    - ii. There is one pothole on Tossion bank to be reported soon.
  - e. Drains The drains and grips have been checked and are working normally.

6. **Finance**

- a. Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

08/09/2025	Barclays 70103195	Interest	6.88
08/09/2025	NCC	Precept 2nd half	3375.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3381.88</b>

- b. Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

21/07/2025	Rothbury DCC	Room Hire: Parish Rooms	12.00
21/07/2025	Northumberland Citizens Advice	Donation	30.00
15/09/2025	Rothbury Parish Council	Joint Burial Committee Payment 2nd half	1502.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1544.00</b>

- c. Requests for donations. Coquetdale Squirrel Group. Donation of £20 approved (proposed FT, Seconded HD, all in favour)

**Action: Clerk**

- d. Bank Reconciliation to 15th September 2025. Approved.

Balance per E-bank statements at 15th September 2025			£
	Community account		5288.95
	Business Saver		2079.80
			7368.75
Less unrepresented payments	15/09/2025	Rothbury Parish Council	1502.00
Uncredited Deposits			0.00
Balance			5866.75
Balance per cash book			5866.75



THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON

- e. 2025/2026 Pay Award and Salary Review.
  - i. The Local Government Association had reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Employers were encouraged to implement the award as soon as possible. The new rate for the Clerk at the current spinal point SCP 14 was £15.31 p.h.; an increase of £0.47 p.h. Members agreed to the new rate as from 1st April 2025.
  - ii. Annual incremental pay review for the Clerk was not considered in February 2025 (at the anniversary of appointment). Currently the Clerk was on SCP 14= £14.84 p.h. (2024/25 rates). Members agreed a one incremental rise to SCP 15 (25/26 rates) = £15.56 p.h. from February 25 (February/March paid at the old SCP 25 rate of £15.08). **Action: Clerk**
  - iii. Review of Clerk’s Contract. Earlier this year the PC had discussed the rate of pay for the Clerk and how this could be reviewed given increased workload and responsibilities. Having looked into this, the Clerk had found some confusion in the wording of the clerk’s current contract, as to whether or not he could be placed automatically onto LC2 scale. When the role of parish clerk was evaluated nationally many years ago the rule of thumb was that LC1 was typically for smaller councils or less complex roles and LC2 was for slightly larger councils or more demanding clerk roles. However, there was no clear analysis of what this meant. Indeed, the current contract overall was out of date and revised models had been adopted across the country. It was agreed that the clerk’s role be formally re-evaluated at an appropriate time in the future when further information was available. Meantime Clerk to monitor numbers of hours worked **Action: Clerk**
  - iv. Home working. Currently the Clerk claimed £5.00 per month for homeworking and had done so for a number of years. This in no way reflected the outlay for working at home. It was agreed to support claims at the HMRC flat rate (where no receipts were required) of £6 per week for home working . This arrangement applied where the employer required the worker to work from home. It was not dependent upon whether the post was full or part-time nor the number of hours worked. **Action: Clerk**
  - f. Contribution to Longframlington Parish Council for purchase of printer. The office printer, paid for by LPC had been replaced. It was agreed to pay LPC, £50 towards printing costs. **Action: Clerk**

7. **Planning: To consider any planning applications.** There were currently no requests for consultation that had not already been commented on.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
4/04127/VARYCO	Rams Wood Whitton:	Permitted	See previous minutes.

- 8. **Community Flood Plan Report:** AW had reported:
  - a. Flood Warning Signs AW & AT had met with Colin Hall (EA) and Alan Milne & John Scott, Rothbury Flood Warden's group, to discuss flood management and maintenance of the sign. AT to be responsible for maintaining the signs. Flood Warden high viz jackets were provided to the flood wardens.
  - b. Maintenance at the Ryehill flood prevention That the willow had been cut back to improve the sight line around the bend and a set of steps dug up the bank ,above the site, for access to the basic trash screen site. The trash screen required two to three fence posts and nine metres of pig net to set up. AW had the fence posts to hand and Hilary had asked Martin if he had some net. AT recommended to get the screen made before any floods this winter.
- 9. **Rothbury JBC Report** HD reported:
  - a. Base for shed was now in place.
  - b. Drainage TV surveillance was underway.
  - c. Reed Pond was to be installed to offset effects of impact of drainage works at Rams Wood.
  - d. Restoration of stream to its original course National England were now involved.
  - e. Realignment of pathways was being considered to allow for turning circle of the hearse.
  - f. Application form for memorial Inscription changes had been adopted.
  - g. Next Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025

- 10. **Coquetdale Cluster Report AT/FT**
  - a. Rothbury Estate: In attendance: Duncan Hutt and colleague, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, representative of Northumberland National Park. They explained that when sale had gone through farm tenants would be allowed to carry on their farming practice as normal. Moorland management will become less intensive. Move towards reduction in the numbers of sheep and actions to be undertaken. This may increase fire risk but NWT working with Fire and Rescue on a management strategy. Move to planting indigenous trees with no large conifer plantations. Interested in opening a Wildlife Trust building in Rothbury but this would require significant additional funding. Plans under consideration to develop Coquetdale section of the old Morpeth- Rothbury railway as cycle way/footpath/bridle way.
  - b. Borderland Initiative. Ian Hedley, NCC spoke on this issue. No plans currently which would have a direct impact on Coquetdale.
  - c. Drainage in Whitton and Tosson. The PCs actions to maintain the road drains are kept running was commended and a possible model for other councils
  - d. The effectiveness of the Cluster. AT/FT expressed their concerns about the way the Cluster currently operated. It appeared to lack direction and objectivity with little or no impact on local government and local issues The lack of civility and respect



THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON

at times of some of the members was concerning. The Council discussed the merits of continuing to be a member of the Cluster. It agreed to investigate the matter further before taking any action. **Action: Clerk**

11. **Update on Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.** Clerk had written to Northumberland NALC for advice regarding the adoption of the NALC 2025 Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and whether Northumberland NALC were going to produce an abridged version for small councils, (like the ones adopted in 2015), as the 2025 were lengthy and onerous for small councils. They advised adoption, as the new regulations addressed recent legislation and gender neutral nomenclature. They said Northumberland NALC had no current plans to produce abridged models. Further advice was taken from David Francis (member of NALC’s national smaller councils committee) who said that the national committee had begun to prepare several model documents and guides specifically for smaller councils, with the intention of publishing these on the National ALC website. Work on the production had begun, using the current Northumberland model as a starting point. He suggested not to adopt the new National ALC models, as they were far too complicated for a small council such as BHPC. Members agreed to wait for the proposed national models for smaller councils rather than adopting the new 2025 versions.

12. **NCC Corporate Performance Report (CCP) & Meetings for Town & Parish Councils regarding the CCP.** NCC have produced their CCP for the next four years and the letter from Cllr Glen Sanderson (GS), Leader, invites PCs to respond. GS has written to invite members of town and parish councils to a special meeting in Cramlington on 2nd October. AT/FT agreed to attend and to report back to the next meeting when the Council will consider its response. **Action: AT/FT**

13. **NCC Local Transport Three-Year Plan.** NCC had revised its approach to the LTP which would now move to a 3-year planning cycle. There were significant changes with much broader parameters. NCC was providing a briefing on Monday 29th September. Clerk to attend and report back at the next meeting, prior to the priorities being set. NCC had agreed to extend the submission date for our priorities until after the next PC meeting in November. **Action: Clerk**

**Feedback from Current WTPC LTP:**

Priority	NCC Comment
extend the safety rails west of the caravan site on Carterside Road	There are no safety rails in place. There have been no recorded incidents or accidents.
install two passing places between Simonside Forestry Commission Car Park and Cattle grid	We have been unable to include this in the programme. It can be reconsidered for future programmes if still a priority. Note this may require land that is outside the highway.
upgrade two informal passing places on Carterside Road between Caravan Site and Whitton Bank	We have been unable to include this in the programme. It can be reconsidered for future programmes if still a priority.

14. **Any Other Business**

a. Community Governance Review - Parish Pre Consultation Questionnaire Northumberland County Council passed a resolution on 10 September to commence a county-wide Community Governance Review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This enables the County Council to review and make changes to the community governance of its parishes and their electoral arrangements. The preliminary stage will start the process and provide our Parish, Town, and Community Councils with the opportunity to complete and return a pre-consultation questionnaire. Agreed no changes were necessary to the current arrangements. **Action: Clerk**

b. Polling District and Polling Place Review 2025 Northumberland County Council has initiated a review of polling districts and polling places across the whole of the county. The objectives of this review are to seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable; to seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled; and have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons when considering the designation of polling place. A period of consultation with electors and key stakeholders (including elected representatives, political parties and disability groups) is taking place between the 11 September 2025 and 9 October 2025. Agreed current arrangements were satisfactory and no changes required. **Action: Clerk**

c. Citizens Advice Northumberland Annual General Meeting Monday, 1st December 2025, from 12 noon to 2.30pm.

d. Northumberland Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting Saturday 15th November 2025, 10:00 am at County Hall Morpeth AT/FT to attend. **Action AT/FT**

e. Resurfacing of Passing Places, Carterside Road. AT proposed that the PC should implement a scheme to resurface the passing places to standard so they would not require continual maintenance. It was unlikely that NCC would fund such a scheme. A number of funding options were discussed. It was agreed as a first step that the Council would support and pay for AT to attend the upcoming 'Beyond the Precept' online NALC training event. AT also to meet with Carl Eungblut, Senior Team Leader NCC Highways, to discuss the most appropriate solutions for the resurfacing work and to ascertain what NCC would be prepared to do. **Action: AT**

**THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON**



15. **Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: 7.00 p.m. Thursday 20th November 2025 in the Parish Rooms, Rothbury**

*Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.*

**Garth Rhodes, Parish Clerk, 5 Wardle Terrace, Longframlington, NE65 8AB**  
Tel: 01665 570347      Email: [whittonandtossionparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:whittonandtossionparishcouncil@gmail.com)