

**Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting**

Blanchland Village Hall

On Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 7:00pm

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Mr M Kennedy, Mr D Kelly, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.
2. **Apologies:** Mr M Forster,
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Michael Kennedy, Tim Bowers - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee. Dave Kelly - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee & Blanchland Village Hall. Carolyn Asquith Blanchland Artisan Markets & Blanchland Village Hall Treasurer & Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 18th February 2025:** Minutes of the previous meeting were corrected and will be signed at the next meeting in September
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Shildon Road and Clapshaw:** Ongoing issues are being reported and the Clerk has sent repeated emails regarding both to NCC. Most recently there has been a fall reported on Shildon Road, adjacent to the Tea Rooms, where the road has buckled, an elderly gentleman fell, the fall was witnessed by local residents, the Clerk will flag this again to NCC and will seek confirmation from the couple that witnessed the incident.
 - 5.2 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** Ongoing, The Clerk has not had communication from NCC this year but will continue to monitor the situation and relay information to NCC and Savills as appropriate.
 - 5.3 **Local Transport Plan:** No further information, although the end of June 2025 was mentioned by Michael Evans from Savills at the AGM earlier this evening, this seems to be the date when reports and budgets will be available.
 - 5.4 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** As Above
 - 5.5 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** Work in progress
 - 5.6 **Fix my Street:** Clerk will use this to report Shildon Road again.
 - 5.7 **Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Donation:** £300 donation towards signage for the show was agreed in the last meeting, The Show Committee will agree the design etc at their next meeting on Thursday 22nd May and will organise payment with the Clerk.
 - 5.6 **Artisan Market:** Another successful market which saw the Square being used very successfully for market traders, the organisers C Asquith & D Asquith signed a licence for the use with Savills and took out appropriate insurance, the next event is Sunday 3rd August and then Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd November, the organisers plan to utilise the Square for all events and have received approval from local residents.
 - 5.7 **Bridge and Debris in the River:** A Local resident has asked for this issue to be looked at/addressed as they are concerned that in heavy rain this might cause issues for the houses nearby if the waterway isn't cleared. The Parish Council confirmed it is not a risk at present but it needs monitoring.
 - 5.8 **Village Hall Car Park:** Now the kerbside at the front of the hall has been addressed the Parish Clerk/Village Hall Treasurer asked if the PC could assist. The puddles need to dry out and it would be an estimated cost of £500 to provide the lime and the equipment required. The Clerk asked if the PC could help towards costs and was reminded that the VH have funds they can use, the Clerk commented that the Hall has made improvements over the past year which have used some of these funds and any help would be appreciated.
 - 5.9 **Elections:** Parish Councillors all stood again, as it was an uncontested election they have all been re-elected. The Clerk reminded Councillors to complete their expenses forms and return to NCC asap. The PC can now co-opt a new councillor to make up the allocated 5, they discussed potential applicants and Michael Kennedy and Tim Bowers will approach potential candidates and report back.

6. Finances

6.1 Current statement/Balance: £3267.78

6.2 Petty Cash: Petty cash £5.00 available

6.3 Clerk Wages: £160.54 (chq no. 85 signed by TB and MF)

7. New Business:

7.1 Donations: No Donation request for this quarter

7.2 Funding from Colin Horncastle: The Parish Council have received £2000 towards new fencing around the Play Area and the Showfield. The Village Hall will undertake the work and will invoice the Parish Council once the works are complete.

7.3 Letter of Support for Treasures of Blanchland Funding: The Parish Council and other local businesses were asked to write a letter to support the next round of funding for the Abbey project. The Parish Council were in favour of supporting the bid, but were conscious of the effect and impact it might have on local residents, the Parish Clerk has collected views from locals about visitors and most are in favour of events that bring people into the village, which supports local businesses and helps the village thrive. The letter was sent prior to the meeting as the deadline was the 20th May 2025.

7.4 Village Hall Warm Welcome: The Village Hall is open every Tuesday from 12pm to 2pm, providing a light lunch, free of charge to local residents and visitors. The project is funded by the National Lottery and is proving very popular.

Meeting closed 20:45 pm

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 2nd September 2025