

HENSHAW PARISH COUNCIL

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HENSHAW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting 27 April 2026 held in the All Hallows Church, Henshaw

Present: Cllrs J. Oliver (Chair), Cllr V. Gibson, D. Finlayson, S. Armstrong, K. Baron, A. Saunders, County Cllr A. Sharp, M. A. Smith (Clerk).

1. Introduction and Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence Cllr L. Welsh.

3. Declarations of Interest None received.

4. Public Questions None received.

5. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 23 March 2026 were read and approved.

6. General Amenities

6.1 Footpaths. The footpath next to Benton House is going to be tarmacked by the County Council.

6.2 Seating. Clerk and Cllr Finlayson to arrange for repainting of the seats.

6.3 Street Lighting. Nothing to report.

6.4 Verge Maintenance. Cuts have now started on the miscellaneous verges and grassed areas, but complaints have been received about the standard of the work. Clerk to arrange a site meeting with the County Council to review. Complaints have also been received regarding the grass cutting in Henshaw Church and this will be discussed at the same meeting.

6.5 Litter bins. The Clerk has sent plans and photographs to the County Council to request a new bin to be located near to Springfield and Hawthorn Terrace.

6.6 Dog Bag Dispensers. The dispensers will be refilled as soon as possible.

7. Village Greens

7.1 Henshaw Village Green. Awaiting estimates for the resurfacing of the central access road.

7.2 Village Green update. Clerk to arrange for a refresh of the tree surveys of the village greens.

7.3 Bardon Mill Village Green. A local tradesman is to make the library cabinet with arrangements to follow regarding siting on the village green.

8. Planning Applications and Issues

8.1 No planning matters were raised.

8.2 No applications have been received in April.

9. Transport and Highway Matters

9.1 A69. National Highways have removed the litter bins in the laybys and people are simply leaving rubbish by the road. Cllr Sharp is taking this up with National Highways.

9.2 Bardon Mill Station Road Access. Network and Northern Rail have still not responded to a request for funding. The Clerk and Cllr Sharp are continuing press for a decision as the funding package already identified is at risk of being withdrawn. Clerk to also raise this with the local MP.

9.3 Road Maintenance and Potholes. There are potholes on the road next to Springfield Terrace and section of road needing patching in Henshaw. Clerk to report on Fix My Street.

9.4 Wellbank, Henshaw. The road needs resurfacing as surface water flows away from the drains and down onto the A69 junction. Clerk to raise this with the County Council again.

10. Redburn Park

10.1 General Maintenance. Work has been carried out to repair the 'Tommy' memorial at the entrance to the park, and clearance of the entrance road and grassed areas.

10.2 Monthly Inspections. Reports received each month with any recommended work undertaken.

10.3 Woodland Improvements. The Clerk updated Members on the proposals to carry out woodland thinning and clearance. There have been numerous site meetings, and plans are developing to remove approximately 200 trees which will allow vegetation to grow and add variety to the woodland. A new section of the Pittman's Trail has also been marked. Cllr Graham Gill (Bardon Mill PC) and Denis Fleming (who undertook thinning previously) are assisting and advising. External funding will be sought if/where possible as part of these proposals.

11. Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

11.1 Lease to Village Hall Project Group. Clerk is liaising with the Solicitors to progress the change to the lease arrangements.

11.2 Update on Activities and Events. The new floor is practically completed with only minor repairs to be done. This has enabled the hall to gradually start classes and events.

12. Northumberland National Park

12.1 An update was given on general matters by Cllrs Gibson and Saunders.

13. Henshaw School

13.1 Cllr Sharp has raised the issues by Members that the community and Council don't seem to be involved in events and activities at the school as they used to.

14. Report by Clerk on Financial Matters

14.1 A report was presented by the Clerk with funds held being £33,733.68.

14.2 Expenditure and Income to approve/note:

- Society of Local Council Clerks (Membership 2025/26 Replacement Cheque) £110.00
- Northumberland Association of Local Councils (Membership 2026/27) £109.31
- Storey & Dodd Limited (Accountancy Services) £60.00
- HMRC (National Insurance Contribution) £10.51
- Beltingham with Henshaw Parish PCC (Room Hire) £50.00
- Society of Local Council Clerks (Training Course) £102.00 *Already approved but not cleared.*
- Village Hall (Donation) £2000.00 *Already approved but not cleared.*
- Great North Air Ambulance (Monthly Donation) £10.00. *Pre-approved and accounted for.*
- HSBC (Bank Charges) £10.00. *Already accounted for.*
- Northern Powergrid (Wayleave Payment) £21.91 (Income)
- Bowes Leek Club (Donation to Play Park) £150 (Income).
- Northumberland County Council (Precept 1st Instalment) £9,500.00 *For information – already credited.*
- HMRC (Tax Exemption Refund) £2379.28 *For information – already credited.*

Estimated balance following above transactions is **£31,462.77** of which £14,962.77 is operating funds and £16,500 is ringfenced for the Capital Programme.

14.3 Draft of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were circulated by the Clerk. Members were advised that the Council now has expenditure exceeding £25,000 which means there must be an External Audit in addition to the Internal Audit. Clerk to continue with completion of the return and the Internal Review. The return will then be agreed and approved at the Annual Parish Council meeting before referral to the External Auditor.

14.4 Capital Programme. The main projects in the programme are the resurfacing of the access road at Henshaw (across the green) and the woodland clearance and extension to the Pitman's Trail.

15. Northumberland County Council Update

15.1 Cllr Sharp had provided updates throughout the meeting but praised Tim Reed for his work in raising the additional funds for the Village Hall floor. Members agreed and asked the Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Tim.

16. General Matters and Correspondence since last meeting

16.1 Update by Clerk. The Clerks pay and hours have not been reviewed for some time and the Parish now has additional assets and management responsibilities as well as significantly higher funds. Agreed that the Chair and Cllr Finlayson meet with the Clerk to conduct a review.

16.2 Website and Email Account. Arrangements are progressing for the new website and the .gov email is now in place.

16.3 Annual Parish Meeting. Clerk to make arrangement for this and issue invites.

17. Items to be included on the next Agenda. Nothing raised.

18. Date and time of next meeting. This will be on Tuesday 26 May 2026 and will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 6.30pm followed by the Monthly Meeting at 7pm. Venue TBC.

Approved and signed at the meeting held on 26 May 2026.....