

Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on: 13th May 2025
Meeting at: Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time: 7.30 p.m. (Following the Annual Parish Council Meeting)
Present: Cllrs: James Allen (JA), Steven Bray (SB), Richard Elphick (RE), Mark Fenwick (MF), Lesley Hall (LH); David Owen - Chair (DO), Jackie Scarpa (JS), Jamie Whicker (JW)
In attendance: Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

Meeting opened at 7.54 p.m.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** None
2. **Parish Council Elections 2025**
 - a. The Chair congratulated members on their election and welcomed Richard Elphick as a new member to the Council.
 - b. Acceptance of Office. Members signed the declaration in the presence of the Clerk of the Council.
 - c. Election Expenses and Declaration of Pecuniary and Other Interests. Completed Forms were handed to the Clerk for submission. Those not completed to be submitted to the Clerk by Friday 23rd May. Otherwise, members to submit these directly to NCC. **Action: Clerk**
3. **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 19 below.** None.
4. **Declaration of Interests.** None.
5. **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
6. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** - The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11th March 2025 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (proposed: JW, Seconded: LH, All in Favour).
7. **Matters arising out of Minutes.** To receive updates on matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda including:
 - a. Sale of the Rothbury Estate. The recent Northumberland Wildlife Trust open meeting in Rothbury had been very positive. It had been announced that the completion of the purchase of the estate was to take place by October 2026. The Trusts were keen to work with local farmers and the community, and some areas of friction were addressed and likely to be overcome.
 - b. Repairs to the old bus stop at the B6344 New Houses junction. Work to be completed over the next 3 weeks. **Action: JW**
 - c. Outcomes of meeting with David Smith (DS) MP. Following the meeting with the PC, DS had met with teaching representatives, where the issue of shared parental leave had been raised. DS had agreed to approach NCC to discuss whether the County Council should share the financial burden for rural schools with regard to this matter. No notification of DS writing to the Boundaries Commissions regarding the relocation of Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst into the Longhorsley Division had been received. Clerk to follow up. **Action: Clerk**
8. **Police Update** The Community Police had reported no issues that directly affected the Parish. Northumbria Police had advised that they had ceased to use Northumbria Connected to email crime and policing information directly to members. They intended to give updates on the Nextdoor social media system, but further information was awaited.
9. **Finance**
 - a. Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

y.e. 31.03.25			
27/03/2025	Ahearne M&A	Radio Donation	475.00
31/03/2025	Community Action N/land	WWCF 107 final grant	1019.00
y.e. 31.03.26			
08/04/2025	NCC	Precept First Half	3500.00
24/04/2025	HMRC VTR 0000186	VAT Repayment	764.59
Total			5758.59

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

y.e. 31.03.25			
19/03/2025	D I Boyson Countryside Management	Site visit/hedge prep X1 day training WWCF 116	420.00
16/03/2025	Communicorp BHCP 5478	Freedom Scrolls x2	279.60
28/03/2025	HMRC	PAYE	230.00
28/03/2025	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	948.35
28/03/2025	Jamie Whicker (reimbursement)	Nixon's Toilet hire WWCF116	126.00
13/03/2025	Garth Rhodes (reimbursement)	Onedirect Radios (pack 4) Car chargers 4	518.32

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y.e. 31.03.26			0
07/04/2025	Office of Communication 72075873	Radio licence	75.00
01/05/2025	Longframlington Memorial Hall	Room rental	16.00
01/05/2025	NALC 024 25/26	Annual subs (£89.36) /Website fee (£75)	164.36
		Total	2777.63

- c. Requests for donations. None.
d. VAT Repayment 2024-25. £764.59 claimed and received.
e. Bank Reconciliation to 12th May 2025. Approved.

	£
Balance per e-bank statements 11/05/2025	5729.09
Less unrepresented cheques	0.00
Uncredited Deposits -	0.00
Balance	5729.09
Balance per cash book	5729.09

- f. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25 (attached to email)
- To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor. None.
 - To agree the 2024/25 Statement of Control. Agreed and signed.
 - To approve and sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement Approved and signed.
 - To approve Annual Accounts, Explanation of Variances, and Final End of Year Bank Reconciliation Approved.
 - To approve and sign Section 2 - Accounting Statement Approved and signed.
 - To approve 2024/25 – Certificate of Exemption Approved and signed. **Action: Clerk**
- g. To agree the period for the Exercise of Public Rights. Proposed dates 3rd June – 14th July agreed. **Action: Clerk**
- h. **Annual Insurance**. Awaiting information from NCC.

10. Planning. To note and discuss any planning issues since previous meeting including:

- a. There are currently no requests for consultation that have not already been commented on.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
24/03361/FUL	Land To South West Of Wardhill Farm House	Registered	Objected to this application because there is no justification for the installation of a deer grid.
25/00677/FUL	4 Embleton Tce: Install air source heat pump	Registered	No objection
24/04439/FUL	Lee Siding Cottage	Permitted	No objection
25/01102/VARYCO	Cockshot Farmhouse	Registered	No objection
25/01096/VARYCO	Cockshot Farmhouse	Registered	No objection

- b. Re: 24/03362/FUL Between Wingates and Raven's Cleugh Hesleyhurst. Clerk had written to the Planning Officer expressing dissatisfaction that they would not extend the consultation period for this application. A response had been received, which whilst recognising our frustration, indicated that as the application had already been process for some considerable time, it would have been unreasonable for it to be further extended until mid to late March, especially considering as (in their terms) it was a relatively minor proposal. Members were unhappy with this response and did not view this as a minor issue. There was an apparent total disregard by Planning of the importance of the Council's views. It was reluctantly agreed that unfortunately no further action could be taken.
- c. Re: Planning Application: Ref. No: 25/00677/FUL 4 Embleton Terrace Longframlington Northumberland NE65 8JJ Proposed installation of air source heat pump. Clerk had written to Planning querying the necessity for a planning application for an air-source heat pump at this address. The Planning Officer replied to say that she too was unsure as to why an application had been submitted. She provided details of the planning requirements for air source heat pump applications and agreed to inform the Council when she knew more. Nothing further had been received.

11. Highways

- a. Highways and Footpaths Report. No issues.
b. Report on any issues raised/ to raise with Highways Department. The following had been reported to Highways on Fix My Street:

- Pauperhaugh to the junction to the Lee
- Sauer's Hill
- Embleton Tce – The Gusset

The B6334 from Rothbury to beyond Thrum Mill now had a 40-mph restriction. It was agreed that if this stretch had been approved for traffic calming then there was a good case for similar restrictions at Todstead. This to be included in the Council's next LTP priorities

12. Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund

- a. Embleton Terrace Road application. Following the successful application to WWCF who had granted £5k, along with the raising of £5k from residents, a local contractor had been engaged to carry out the resurfacing work. Item to be removed from agenda.
- b. Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. Awaiting quotations.

13. Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee.

JW reported that the current projects for 2024-25 were coming to a close. There was still some outstanding grant money available to be used towards the information day in July, further production of bird boxes and a hedge laying course in the autumn. The Toughbook had been returned from Judith Baker. She had populated it with a large amount of data. Further survey work was planned to begin shortly. Water testing was ongoing with the addition of e-coli testing over the summer months. The data would be used to support a CRAG application for a Blue Bathing Award for Amble. At the recent Wildlife Trust open meeting in Rothbury, biodiversity activity on the Brinkburn- Rothbury railway line had been listed high on the agenda. The CCBC committee would be drafting a letter to the Wildlife Trust to outline our work, and ideas about the railway line, and propose that we work together on such matters.

14. Honorary Freedom of the Parish Presentation Ceremony.

JS provided final information and refreshment costs for the event. All members confirmed their attendance.

15. Emergency Planning:

- a. Community Flood Plan Nothing further had been done as it was agreed to wait for the installation of the flood warning signs.
- b. Flood Warning Signage . Signage was in the process of installation. MF to provide Clerk with locations of the signs in order that these can be included in the Flood Plan and to agree procedures for opening signs in times of flooding. Sign hinges would need to be regularly oiled to ensure they would open freely. **Action MF/JW/Clerk**
- c. Radios. Test of the radios had proved successful. To be tested on a regular basis prior to each PC meeting.

Action: Clerk

16. Coquetdale Cluster Meeting

- a. Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. No significant issues from the last meeting. Agreed to invite the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and possibly the National Trust to the summer meeting to discuss the future of the Rothbury Estate.
- b. Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda The following items were suggested for the next meeting:
 - The Plan for Wards Hill
 - A cluster/collective approach to addressing shared planning issues.

17. Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports

- a. Longframlington Cemetery. The Consecration Ceremony by the Bishop of Newcastle, the Right Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley took place on Tuesday 18th March . MF & Clerk had attended to represent BHPC.
- b. Rothbury JBC No new issues to report. Discussions regarding drainage and reverting the stream back to its original course were ongoing.

18. Public Rights of Way: Definitive Map Modifications Orders (DMMO).

- a. DMMO (No 12) 2024 BOAT No 27 (Parish of Brinkburn). Following the withdrawal of our objection NCC had confirmed the order which came effective on 30th April 2025.

19. To agree the Parish Council Nomination for The Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA).

The members agreed to support MF as the council's nominee. (proposed JS, Seconded DW, All in Favour). MF to initiate the application process and inform Clerk, if the PC was required to formally propose him.

Action: MF

20. To consider amendments to Standing Orders following recent amendments to NALC's Model Standing Orders.

NALC had recently updated their Model Standing Orders to comply with new procurement legislation and ensure consistency with their Model Financial Regulations, and to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements. They had also changed the language to gender-neutral terms to align with the policy and the Civility and Respect Project. Model Standing Orders to be circulated to members for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

21. To receive information on requirement for a new website platform with .gov address and .gov email address for the Clerk to comply with changes coming into effect on 1st April 2026.

As a minimum to comply with the changes coming into effect on 1st April 2026, NALC were working with an IT company to provide a new website platform for each Council they presently support. The website would have a .gov address . They were also investigating providing a .gov email address for the Clerk. NALC to provide a projected timeline for the changes and projected costs to allow the Council to budget accordingly. The amount of work involved in the changes and impact on the day to day running of the Council was yet unknown. A watching brief was agreed.

Action: Clerk

22. Any Urgent Business.

None.

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23. Items for Next Meeting:

- a. To consider amendments to Standing Orders

24. To agree dates of Parish Council meetings for the forthcoming year:

Tuesday	08/07/2025	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Tuesday	09/09/2025	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Tuesday	11/11/2025	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Tuesday	13/01/2026	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Tuesday	10/03/2026	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Tuesday	12/05/2026	19:30	Longframlington Memorial Hall

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

Garth Rhodes, Clerk, 5 Wardle Terrace, Longframlington, NE65 8AB, Tel: 01665 570347, Email: Clerk@Brinkburn.net