



THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
7.00 p.m. Thursday 16th January 2025
Parish Rooms, Rothbury

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

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

- 1. Apologies for absence Fran Tait (FT).
2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 21st November 2024 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (Proposed AT, Seconded (PH), All in Favour).
3. Matters arising from the minutes not included in the agenda. None
4. Police Report . Police unable to attend the meeting but reported that there were no specific issues for the Parish. Local reports had been shared by Northumbria Connected. A Northumbria Connected email had been received advising residents to be alert to door-to-door sales people. Currently there were two charity salesmen in the area, calling late in the evening. Older residents could be particularly vulnerable to this type of approach.
5. Highways and Footways
i) Highways: The new pothole East of Carterside Farm had been reported. NCC had a target of 14 days to fix this.
ii) Footpaths: No issues with footpaths had been reported.
iii) Verges: The trees at the southern end of the bridge in Rothbury had been listed for pruning and should be reduced in springtime before the leaves begin to sprout and start to obstruct the view of oncoming traffic again.
iv) Seats & Road Signs: PH to collect 2 benches from the sawmill and very generously agreed to pay for these. These to replace the one removed from Whitton Village and the one on Whitton Bank.
v) Drains: The drains were checked and cleared before the snow and ice arrived. There was some concern over Tosson Bank where the water runs over the road and freezes. The culvert at the top of the bank needed to be inspected and possibly cleared or repaired. Action: AT
The sandbags from last winter had now deteriorated. Agreed to purchase 20 replacement hessian sand bags which were to be stored unfilled. Action: Clerk/AT

6. Finance

i) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

Table with 4 columns: Date, Description, Amount, Total. Row 1: 02/12/2024, Barclays A/C 70103195, Interest, 7.67

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

Table with 4 columns: Date, Description, Amount, Total. Rows include Rothbury DCC, David Smith, HMRC PAYE, G Rhodes, GNASS, and a Total of 763.66.

iii) Requests for donations. None.

iv) Notice of further reduction in business savings account interest rate. Rate at 11 March 2025 would further reduce from 1.40% to 1.35%.

v) Bank Reconciliation. Approved.

Table titled 'Bank Reconciliation at 7th January 2025' with 3 columns: Description, Amount, £. Rows include Balance per E-bank statements, at 7th January 2025, Less unpresented cheques, Uncredited Deposits, Balance, and Balance per cash book.

- vi) Agree Budget and Precept for 2025/26. The budget for 2025/26 was agreed with a 22.72 % increase to the Precept to £6750 (£5500 in previous year), in order to maintain an adequate reserve for contingencies (including the possibility of the costs of an election in May). Proposed PH, Seconded AT, All in Favour. This amounted to an annual increase of £19.04 (£1.59 monthly). **Action: Clerk**

7. **Planning:** To consider any planning applications.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
24/03309/FUL	Juniper Whitton Morpeth NE65 7RL	Permitted	No objection
4/04127/VARYCO	Rams Wood Whitton Northumberland	Application Registered	This application is for a historic site within the Whitton Conservation area. All developments within the site need to meet ecological regulations and be sympathetic to this conservation status.

8. **Community Flood Plan** including:

- i) Flood defence improvements at Ryehill. Alan Winlow (AW) had reported that NCC had agreed to proceed with the design and build at Ryehill. NCC’s construction manager to work with him on the requirements for the final part of the project. Patrick Smith (NCC) thought a trash screen was not needed. AW had confirmed that the PC were happy to proceed with this arrangement, provided we arrange for the branches/debris on the upstream banks to be removed regularly. The design must be fail-safe to ensure that if the culvert entrances block up, the water flowed over the road to the east of the culverts, away from the cottages. If the culverts blocked up regularly, the PC should seek to fit a screen. An on-site meeting had been arranged.
- ii) Flood Signage at Cow Haugh Awaiting the recommendations and designs from Graham Bucknall, NCC Highways. He has emailed AW to say he has not forgotten about this.

9. **Rothbury JBC Report**

- i) The problems with the land drains were being addressed but had been complicated by no plans being available.
- ii) Review of available plots had been undertaken, and it was estimated that there were between 150- 200 spaces.
- iii) Consultation on the restoration of stream to its original course was ongoing. It was understood that Natural England would not oppose this work. Restoration of the stream would provide further space for additional plots within the cemetery and with the outcome of the plot review meant that identification of additional burial land was not so crucial at this time.

10. **Coquetdale Cluster Report** No meeting since last PC meeting.

11. **Any Other Business**

- i) Sale of the Rothbury Estate. PH asked if there was an update on the sale of the Estate. The Wildlife Trusts and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust (NWT) had purchased part of the estate and begun a £30m appeal to buy the rest. The current purchase included the Simonside Hills and a mixture of lowland, woods, riverside and farmland on the western side of the Estate. No further information on the sale had been publicised since this announcement.

12. **Date of next Parish Council Meeting: Thursday at 7.00 p.m. 20th March 2025 in the Rothbury Parish Rooms.**

Meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.

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