

Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on: 12th May 2026
Meeting at: Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time: 7.30 p.m.
Present: Steve Bray (SB), Lesley Turnbull-Hall (LH), David Owen (DO) – Chair, Jackie Scarpa (JS)
In attendance: Clerk

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence.** Jamie Whicker (JW), County Cllr Glen Sanderson.
- 2) **Urgent business for consideration under Item 22.**
 - a) Ray II Wind Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification
- 3) **Declaration of Interests.** None.
- 4) **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
- 5) **County Councillor's Report.** None. The Clerk was asked to write to GS to say he was missed and to ask him to forward anything of importance. **Action: Clerk**
- 6) **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** The minutes of **10th March 2026** were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record (proposed by SB, seconded by JS; all in favour).
- 7) **Matters arising from the minutes.** Updates were received on matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda, including:
 - a) Update on the Wildlife Trust purchase of the Rothbury Estate. Nothing further.
 - b) Quality of DAB reception in the Coquet Valley. DO had sent a letter of concern about the condition of DAB radio to the BBC but had received no response.
 - c) David Smith (DS) MP: Letters to the Boundaries Commission. No further information had been received. The Clerk was asked to write to DS for an update. **Action: Clerk**
 - d) Bus Stop Sign, New Houses B6344 Crossroads, X14 Service. No further information had been received. **Action: Clerk**
 - e) Hedging in the Playground. No invoice had been received to date for hedge cutting. The Clerk was asked to contact JW about this. It was noted that the laid hedge would need attention/cutting in the autumn. **Action: Clerk**
 - f) Libraries Consultation 2026. DO had submitted the response saying what we received currently was very good but that it would be helpful to have a more structured timetable for the service.
 - g) Sycamore Gap Saplings. The saplings were not ready for replanting, and this has been delayed until next year.
 - h) Rothbury Town of Culture (RTOC) 2028 Expression of Interest Received a response from the RTOC team to say 'differing perspectives within the wider community, combined with the time pressure, meant (they) did not yet have the clear mandate that a bid of this scale deserves.' Therefore, the bid was not submitted.
- 8) **Police Update.** A report from the Community Police was noted. The Clerk was asked to invite the new community police officer to a future meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- 9) **Finance.**
 - a) Notification of receipts since the last meeting, including VAT Return 2025-26. Noted

08/04/2026	NCC Ref 5769070	Precept first half	5000.00
22/04/2026	HMRC VTR 0000186	VAT repayment	156.56
		Total	5156.56

- b) Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI, and approval of other payments since the last meeting. Noted

<u>2025/26</u>			£
31/03/2026	HMRC	PAYE	568.40
31/03/2026	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	930.75
26/03/2026	ICO Ref ZC103054	ICO Registration	47.00
<u>2026/27</u>			
08/04/2026	Go Cardless HugoFoxltd-FXM3XNE	Email.gov domain fee	2.99
11/05/2026	NorthumberlandALC	Annual fee less Website refund £59.94	28.13
11/05/2026	HugoFox	Website Build	238.80
08/05/2026	Go Cardless HugoFoxltd-FXM3XNE	Email.gov domain fee	2.99
11/05/2026	Rothbury Parish Council	JBC fees first half	262.50
		Total	2081.56

- c) Requests for donations. A request from Citizens Advice Northumberland for 2026/27 was not approved. However, it was agreed that a collection box for CAB would be placed at the Biodiversity Information Day on 11th July. The Clerk was asked to inform CAB. **Action: JS/Clerk**

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d) Bank Reconciliation.

Bank Reconciliation at 10th May 2026		£
Balance per e-bank statements at 09 May 2026		7229.90
Less unpresented cheques		
11/05/2026	NorthumberlandALC	28.13
11/05/2026	HugoFox	238.80
11/05/2026	Rothbury Parish Council	262.50
		529.43
Uncredited Deposits -		0.00
		0.00
Balance		6700.47
Balance per cash book		6700.47

- e) To consider the 2026/27 Insurance renewal. Awaiting details from NCC.
- f) To consider making a proportional contribution to the Clerk's membership of the SLCC. Membership of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks), the professional body for parish and town council clerks, provides expert advice, training, resources and professional support that help parish councils operate lawfully, efficiently and in accordance with best practice. The Clerk, on behalf of BHPC, has used its advice, guidance and materials over the years. The Clerk's contract recommends SLCC membership, and it is common practice for a parish council to pay this fee on behalf of the Clerk. Until this year, Longframlington PC had paid the fee. However, Longframlington PC has now asked BHPC to pay its proportion based on the Clerk's overall salary. The BHPC contribution would be £58.00 (29%). Longframlington PC will continue to pay the fee in May each year and invoice BHPC for its contribution. **Action: Clerk**
- g) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2025/26:
- i) To consider and agree any actions arising from the AGAR report of the internal auditor. None.
 - ii) To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption 2025/26. Approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
 - iii) To approve and sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement. Approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
 - iv) To approve and sign Section 2 - Accounting Statements. Approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
 - v) To approve the Explanation of Variances and End of Year Bank Reconciliation to be submitted with AGAR.
Approved.
 - vi) To agree the period for the exercise of public rights. Members approved the proposed dates.

Date of Announcement:	02 June 2026
Commencing on:	03 June 2026
Ending on:	14 July 2026

10) Action Plan: May – June 2026. Progress was reviewed on regular duties, priority initiatives, resource allocation and other important goals not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

- a) Prepare accounts, bank reconciliation, agenda and minutes for meetings. Complete.
- b) Consider and process planning applications. See Item 11.
- c) Annual General Meeting. Elect Chair/Vice-Chair. Election took place at the Annual Meeting.
- d) Agree roles and responsibilities for the Clerk and councillors. Agreed at the Annual Meeting.
- e) Review the Action Plan. Deferred until the next meeting.
- f) Role of Clerk - review hourly rate as per contract of employment and performance, as and when details of new rates are published by NALC, or annually from the last rates change until new rates are published. The National Pay Award has not yet been agreed. It was agreed to review the Clerk's pay and hours of work at the next meeting.
- g) Playground – inspect condition and record equipment. **Action: JW**
- h) Parish Inspection – check hedges, trees and weeds for report to NCC. Members were asked to report any issues at the next meeting. **Action: All**

11) Planning.

- a) Planning matters since the previous meeting. There were currently no requests for consultation that had not already been commented on.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
26/00097/FUL	20 Embleton Terrace	Permitted	Insufficient responses from members to submit a PC comment.

- b) Planning Reform, NCC Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP. Northumberland County Council was preparing a new Northumberland Local Plan because of the significant changes in Government Planning Reform. The local plan was a statutory document that sets out the vision, policies and framework for the future development and use of land.

The Council was also preparing a new form of plan called the Northumberland Housing Design Standards Supplementary Plan. It would cover requirements and guidance for the design of new homes and residential areas. The detailed documentation has already been circulated. We will be informed at each stage of consultation. Rob Murfin gave a presentation to Longframlington PC on the 'Local Plan Challenges' which had been made available to members. There was to be a huge increase in housing within Northumberland until 2045, whether or not this would have an impact on Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst was uncertain at this time.

12) Highways.

- a) Highways and Footpaths Report. JS reported that the condition of the footpath between Lee Farm and the iron bridge was becoming extremely difficult, with some of the wooden bridges becoming impassable. The Clerk was asked to provide JS with the contact details of the Rights of Way officer. **Action: Clerk/JS**
- b) Report on any issues raised/ to raise with NCC Highways.
 - i) Road conditions between the Lee and Todd Burn, (particularly between the Gusset & Embleton Terrace Crossroads, around Magin Burn and Todd Burn) and also between Forest Burn and the Lee Siding (particularly at Suers' Hill). No further information. Currently work was ongoing and it was agreed not to pursue this matter any further until the work was complete.
 - ii) Signage on B6334. The new signs were part of the Route Action Review of the entire route along the B6344/B6341 from the A697 at Weldon to the A696 near Otterburn and nothing to do with our LTP priority.
 - iii) Road between Pauperhaugh and Embleton Terrace 20 mph on GPS/SATNAVS. Clerk wrote to Highways to ask them about this. He received a detailed reply stating that the speed limit on this road was the national speed limit of 60 mph; that GPS/SATNAV speed indicators were based on the average speed their software had detected for vehicles travelling the route. They also provided this link: [Highways Maintainable at Public Expense - List Of Streets](#) which provided information roads/streets including speed limits.

13) Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund.

- a) Report. SB reported that £45k was to be paid imminently into the Fund by the Windfarm company. The Embleton Terrace Community Fund bid for Part III of the Centenary Celebration had been approved. No further action to be taken regarding the request to the PC for this event at this time. An application for funding for the Biodiversity Information Day was to be submitted in advance of the next WWCF meeting on 1st June with copy to be sent to SB. **Action: JS/JW/Clerk**
- b) Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. Deferred.

14) Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee Report.

To receive a report from the Committee. Deferred

15) Emergency Planning including:

- a) 9th June Flood Plan exercise. To take place in the large meeting room in the Longfram Memorial Hall for Tuesday 9th June 7.30 – 9.30
- b) Check and oil flood warning signs. **Action: JW**
- c) Test emergency two-way radios. **Action: JW**
- d) Defibrillator status. SB reported that all was in order.

16) Coquetdale Cluster Meeting.

- a) Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. JS reported that County Councillor Mark Mather, Cabinet Member responsible for the Roads and Highways portfolio, had attended the meeting and had been very sympathetic to the needs of the parish councils. He reported that the road between Rothbury and Thropton was scheduled to be closed for extensive repairs, but there had been several complaints from residents in Thropton because of the extremely long diversion arrangements.
- b) Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda. Members were asked to consider items they would like included and pass **these on to JS**.

17) Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports.

- a) Longframlington Cemetery. Ongoing maintenance work to secure loose headstones, undulation on the burial ground and attention to footpaths was underway.
- b) Rothbury JBC. No report available

18) Brinkburn Parish Councillor Vacancy.

There had been no signatures received to call a by-election for this vacancy following the resignation of Richard G Elphick, and the PC could now co-opt at the earliest convenience. Members were asked to make enquiries, and it was agreed to post a notice on the parish website and noticeboard, and also on the WhatsApp group. **Action: All/SB/JW/Clerk**

19) Information Governance – Email and Online Records.

Members agreed to engage specialist IT support to assist with retention-based rationalisation of the Council's email and online documentation, in line with the Council's adopted Retention & Disposal Policy and its obligations under UK GDPR and Freedom of Information legislation, as part of a joint project with Longframlington and Whitton & Tosson Parish Councils. The Clerk was authorised to explore this work as a joint project with the other two councils for which he works, on the basis that costs would be divided proportionately between the councils. **Action: Clerk**

20) Sewage Treatment Arrangements Serving Embleton Terrace.

Clerk wrote to Northumbria Water (NWL) about the concerns on the sewage treatment arrangements at Embleton Terrace. NWL advised that the Embleton Terrace system is an engineered sewerage and surface water arrangement, not a septic tank. It is maintained by Northumbrian Water, inspected weekly, and additional tankering during heavy rainfall is part of normal operational management rather than evidence of failure. Residents have no direct maintenance responsibility, and the system is operated under environmental controls intended to minimise pollution risk. JS reported that she had spoken again with NWL representative who said that

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they were emptying the tank three times a week and on some days; twice. The leaseholder of the land was very concerned that the track would become a quagmire as it was deteriorating with the constant usage. The NWL representative agreed to provide an update on the situation and agreed that someone from NWL would come to talk to the Council. Agreed to await for their response before agreeing further action.

21) Dates of Meetings for the Forthcoming Year. The dates for the next two years were agreed:

	May	July	September	November	January	March
2026/27	-	14 th	15 th	10 th	12 th	9 th
2027/28	11 th (2027) 9 th (2028)	13 th	14 th	9 th	11 th	14 th

22) Any Urgent Business.

- a) Ray II Wind Farm - EIA Scoping and Consultation and Regulation 11 Notification. Information had been circulated to members. The PC was invited to comment by 4th June 2026. It was agreed to ask Elsdon PC for their views on the matter. DO and the Clerk were asked to review the proposal and submit a response on behalf of the PC. **Action: DO/Clerk**

23) Items for Next Meeting.

- a) To review the Action Plan
- b) To review the Clerk's pay and hours of work

24) Proposed Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 14th July 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington.

The meeting closed at 9.29 p.m.

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