



Minutes of Meeting 23 June 2025 held in Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

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

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

2. Apologies for Absence All in attendance.

3. Declarations of Interest Cllrs Oliver and Finlayson for Item 12 (Village Hall).

4. Public Questions None received

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 May 2025 These were read and approved.

6. General Amenities

6.1 Footpaths. The footpath from Falcon Grange to the A69 has been reported to the County Council to see if it can be resurfaced as there is an unmade section which is usually muddy or waterlogged.

6.2 Seating. Nothing to report.

6.3 Street Lighting. Nothing to report

6.4 Verge Maintenance. There are verges next to Henshaw School and the nearby junction which for some reason are still not being cut. The Clerk has raised this with the County Council numerous times and will again ask for these areas to be included in the County's maintenance programme.

6.5 Litter bins. The County Council have still not repaired the bin at Henshaw School. Clerk and Chair to look at undertaking this work ourselves.

6.6 Dog Bag Dispensers. A supply of refill bags has now been delivered. There is an additional dispenser which is to be placed near to Bardon Mill Village Green.

6.7 Bus Stop at Towhouse. The County Council have approved the request for a seat to be placed next to the bus stop (the one opposite to the bus shelter). Members agreed the purchase of a bench from Glasdon and Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

7. Miscellaneous

7.1 Grazing Site. Clerk has issued an invoice for this year's rent.

8. Village Greens

8.1 Henshaw Village Green. The tarmacked section of the access road across the green has deteriorated rapidly over the past few months with numerous potholes. Chair and Clerk to meet on site to look at the potential repairs.

8.2 General matters. It was reported that a local resident (who has a bench on the Bardon Mill Village Green and carries out maintenance of the shrub beds) is telling people they cannot sit on this bench. The green, and all seating, is community land and must be accessible to all. Chair agreed to speak to the resident.

9. Planning Applications and Issues

9.1 There were no general planning matters raised.

9.2 Planning Application. No new applications to consider.

10. Transport and Highway Matters

10.1 A69. The junction out of Henshaw (west side) has now been resurfaced.

10.2 Bardon Mill Station Road Access. The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership have submitted the updated quote for repairs to Network and Northern Rail to seek match funding.

10.3 Additional road markings at Bardon Mill. This has been agreed and work should start soon.

10.4 Road Maintenance and Potholes. Patching and resurfacing has recently been completed throughout Bardon Mill. Many of the road markings (eg 'SLOW') need repainting – Clerk to chase up. The Clerk has written to the County Council regarding Park Lane as there are numerous areas which were marked for resurfacing but have been left untouched. It was also raised that most of the drains and gullies in the area are blocked. Cllr Sharp agreed to ask for these to be cleared.

10.5 Wellbank, Henshaw. An update is awaited from the County Council on proposed works.

10.6 Access road through Wark Forest. Wark Parish Council have asked the Henshaw Members to support the request to have a section of the 'road' through Wark Forest to be re-designated as a road. The Clerk had drafted wording for our submission and this was agreed with the Clerk to send it to the County Council and advise Wark Parish Council of the action taken.

11. Redburn Park

11.1 General Maintenance. Anti-slip strips have been added to the treads on the main slide steps.

11.2 Monthly Inspections. The latest report noted the recent improvements carried out in the park.

11.3 Bike Track. It was raised that part of the woodland is being used as a bike track with 'jumps' etc being placed near to the bottom end of the car park. It was discussed that such practices should be discouraged as it was a liability for other users. There was general discussion about the provision of a bike track, possibly on the grazing site, but most Members felt this would be costly to install, maintain, and insure. Agreed that consideration of this be deferred to a later meeting.

12. Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

12.1 There are a number of works planned such as repair/replacement of the hall floor, heating system, and solar panels.

12.2 A request has been received from the Village Hall Committee for a contribution towards the works referred to in 12.1. Consideration of this item had been deferred from the May meeting as there were only 3 Members present who could vote on whether to approve the request (Cllrs Oliver and Finlayson had declared an interest). The Clerk reported that there was an allocation for such donations in the current budget and Members agreed a donation of £1000.

13. Northumberland National Park

13.1 Cllrs Oliver and Armstrong, and Cllr Sharp, had recently met with Tony Gates to discuss the interactive signboard, and the request for dogs to be allowed into the Sill. The meeting was positive and a response from the NNPA is awaited.

13.2 Cllrs Saunders and Gibson have applied to again be Parish representatives on the NNPA board and a decision on appointments is awaited.

14. Henshaw School

14.1 All was reported to be going well at the School with no issues to report.

15. Report by Clerk on Financial Matters

15.1 A draft report on Finances was presented by the Clerk (figures updated post meeting following receipt of the bank statement on 24 June). Funds held as at 18 June is £31,135.74

15.2 Expenditure and Income to approve/note:

- Mark Watson (Redburn Park Works) £1,320.00.
- JRB Enterprise Ltd (Dog Waste Bags) £91.86.
- Clerk (Wages & Expenses) £923.99.
- HMRC (Tax) £203.40.
- Bardon Mill Village Hall (Donation) £1,000.00.
- Peter Dodd Contracting (Tree Services) £2,430. *Approved in May but not yet cleared.*
- Society of Local Council Clerks (Membership) £110.00. *Approved in May but not yet cleared.*
- TVCRP (Membership) £20.00. *Approved in May but not yet cleared.*
- Great North Air Ambulance (Monthly Donation) £10.00. *Pre-approved and accounted for.*
- HSBC (Charges) £14.00. *Already accounted for.*
- Bardon Mill Parish Council (Shared assets contribution) £372.87. *Income received in May and already accounted for.*

Estimated balance following above transactions is **£25,036.49** of which £7,563.49 is operating funds and £17,500 is ringfenced for the Capital Programme.

15.3 Capital Programme. This programme is reviewed each year and is to ensure funding originally acquired from the granting of easements is used on physical projects rather than general spend. The current projects identified are to resurface the access road across Henshaw Village Green, improve and extend the Pitman's Trail, and to provide soft surfacing around the children's play equipment at Redburn Park.

15.4 Banking arrangements and signatories etc have been reviewed following the recent elections. As previously all cheques to be signed by the Clerk and two Members. The new bank mandate was completed and signed with the Clerk to submit this to the HSBC.

16. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25

The Clerk provided a report on the completed accounts and the following decisions were taken,

16.1 The report of the Internal Auditor was considered and agreed.

16.2 The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed.

16.3 The Draft Annual Accounts were approved.

16.4 The Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances were approved.

16.5 The Certificate of Exemption was confirmed and signed.

The next steps are that the Council must notify the External Auditor that it has declared itself exempt from a full audit (on the basis that the accounts are complete and in accordance with financial regulations) and publish the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and all accounts on the Parish Council website. Notices are to be placed on the noticeboards to advise there is a 30 (working) day period whereby the accounts can be inspected with this period starting on 1 July and ending on 11 August. All of these actions must be completed by the 30 June with the Clerk to confirm to Members that these actions have been done.

17. Northumberland County Council Update

17.1 Cllr Sharp provided updates throughout the meeting.

18. General Matters and Correspondence since last meeting

18.1 Update by Clerk. Nothing other than earlier updates.

18.2 Website and Email Address. The Clerk provided an update on the move to a new website and email address (both of which must now be .gov.uk to comply with relevant legislation). There will be an annual cost for this. Members agreed that the Clerk be authorised to make whatever changes are needed and report back in due course..

18.3 Standing Orders and Financial Procedures. These have been updated in accordance with the latest guidance. Both were agreed and adopted.

19. Items to be included on the next Agenda. Clerk to invite Joe Morris MP to a future meeting.

20. Date and time of next meeting. This will be on Monday 28 July 2025.

The meeting finished at 8.20pm.

Signed and Approved at the Meeting held on 28 July 2025.....