Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on:	**14th July 2026**
Meeting at:	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time:	7.30 p.m.
Present:	Cllrs Steve Bray (SB), Mark Fenwick (MF), Lesley Turnbull-Hall (LH)- Chair, Jackie Scarpa (JS), Jamie Whicker (JW).
In attendance:	County Cllr Glen Sanderson (GS, Clerk.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

1) **Apologies for Absence.** David Owen
2) **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 19 below.** None.
3) **Declaration of Interests.** MF: Planning Application 26/01927/LBC
4) **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
5) **County Councillors Report.** Cllr Glen Sanderson reported that:

a) A1 Dualling and Road Safety: He continues to press for a rethink on the A1, working collaboratively with the North East Mayor to make the case for improvements. Concerns remain regarding road safety and capacity, particularly due to the mix of dual and single carriageway sections. A motion calling for the Council to take its own action was unanimously approved at Full Council, and an all-party letter has been sent to the new Transport Minister. Further evidence and data are being prepared for submission to National Highways in September to support the case for investment.

b) Highways Maintenance. Progress on road repairs across the county was reported to be positive following the difficult weather conditions experienced earlier in the year. Councillors were encouraged to continue raising any local highway issues requiring attention.

c) Lynx Reintroduction. Councillor Sanderson informed the Council of the recent decision by Northumberland County Council not to support proposals for the reintroduction of lynx into Northumberland. The Council's position reflects concerns about potential impacts on farming and rural communities. It was also noted that the Chair of the National Park had previously recommended that lynx reintroduction would not be appropriate for Northumberland, while the Northumberland Wildlife Trust had been one of the principal organisations promoting the proposal.

GS ended by saying that he was keenly interested in the work of the Parish Council and although very busy in his capacity as Leader and as a full-time working farmer he would try to get along to PC meetings whenever he could, but that he should be contacted if there were any issues he could help with. The Chair and members expressed their thanks for Cllr Sanderson's continued support.'

6) **Minutes of Previous Meeting .** The minutes of **12th May** were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record (proposed by JS, seconded by SB ; all in favour).
7) **Matters arising out of Minutes.** To receive updates on matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda including:

a) Brinkburn Parish Councillor Vacancy. A single application had been received from Mark Ahearne who was unanimously co-opted onto the Council (proposed by MF; seconded by SB ; all in favour). As only one application had been received, it was permissible for the applicant to be co-opted. Whilst concern was expressed that this would mean a further councillor from Embleton Terrace, the Clerk advised that this was not a matter which would affect the appointment. It was agreed that a wider geographical spread of members would be preferable but as no further applicants had come forward, this was not an option. Cllr Ahearne would be welcomed onto the Council at its next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

b) Update on the Wildlife Trust purchase of the Rothbury Estate. A public meeting was to take place Monday 13th July at the Rothbury Jubilee Hall for the Wildlife Trusts to update people on progress and funding. JS/JW/Clerk to attend and report back. **Action: JS/JW/Clerk**

c) Quality of DAB reception in the Coquet Valley. Nothing further.

d) David Smith (DS) MP: Letters to Boundaries Commissions. DS had sent a further letter to the Boundaries Commission and he had forwarded their response. Members were very disappointed at the predictable response and agreed that there was little point, given the Commission's stance, to pursue this matter further. Members agreed that this may not be the last review of its boundaries but believed it was now better prepared to contest actions in the future. Clerk to send a letter of thanks to DS **Action: Clerk**

e) Bus Stop Sign: New Houses B6344 Crossroads X14 Service. Nothing further. Clerk to write to Neil Easton, Public transport Manager, NCC for an update which had been promised for early March.
JW reported that he had received a number of requests from residents for the reinstatement of the bus stop on the south side of A697 at Weldon Bridge. It had been agreed at a previous meeting that this would be inspected. Clerk to ask NCC Northern Services if they would cut the area so that we can gain access to the stop. **Action: Clerk**

f) Hedging in the Playground. Nothing further. No invoice has been received.

g) Sewage treatment arrangements serving Embleton Terrace. At the last meeting it was reported that the NWL representative had agreed to provide an update on the situation and for someone from NWL to come to talk to the

Council. The PC decided to wait for their response before agreeing further action. Nothing further has been received. The tractor and trailer is continuing to do its twice daily, three times per week collections. The farmer was very concerned about the damage the tractor was doing to the field. This would only get worse as the year progressed and would require a proper access arrangement to be installed. The PC needed to know exactly what the position was regarding the treatment works. It would like to consider and explore alternative sustainable solutions to the preset arrangement which were clearly not working. The Clerk to write to the Environment Agency to ask what they know about the sewage treatment works at Embleton Terrace. **Action: Clerk**

h) Retention-based rationalisation of the Council's email and online documentation. Ongoing.

8) Police Update. The following report had been received report from the Community Police**.**

'There has been a Theft of wooden field gates and Tool's from a building site in the Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst area's. This fit's a wide issue related to the Acquisitive Crime side of Rural Crime where Trailer's, ATV's and Tool's are being sought by offenders seeking high value items to steal from Farm and Estate building's. Reporting of suspicious activity needs to be reported to Police at the time it is happening via 999 or 101 / Webchat – be mindful if the witness to the suspicious activity believes an immediate Police response is required due to an offence taking place, this should be done via 999 – calls to 101 / Webchat will lead to delays in Officer deployment.'
Peter Johnson 4187
Northumbria Police

It was agreed to place the report on the WhatsApp community group. **Action: JW**

9) Finance.

a) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Noted.

12/06/2026	Comm Action N/land	WWCF 148 initial grant	803.00
12/06/2026	Comm Action N/land	WWCF 148 grant balance	56.45
		Total	**859.45**

b) Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments. Noted.

21/05/2026	Longframlington Parish Council	SLCC Membership fee (29% proportion)	58.00
21/05/2026	Jamie Whicker (reimburse)	Onedirect x2 Mitex 2-way radios/ Chargers	272.94
03/06/2026	Zurich Town & Parish Insurance	Insurance Policy 03/06/ 2026- 02/0627	241.00
04/06/2026	Julie Ayre	Mowing April/May	250.00
30/06/2026	HMRC	PAYE	366.40
30/06/2026	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	628.16
08/06/2026	Go Cardless HugoFox ltd	Email.gov domain fee	2.99
		Total	**1819.49**

c) Requests for donations.

i) Embleton Terrace Centenary Event. The Parish Council were delighted to hear that the Embleton Terrace Centenary Event had gone very well. David Owen sent a message to say that the organisers had 'slightly overspent what the Wind Farm decided to give them and would be grateful for the £100 we were considering offering.' As this was dealing with public money it was important that the Council had clarity and audit trail with respect to the donation. Clerk was asked to request that the organisers formally write to request this funding, providing the actual costs incurred. On receipt Clerk was authorised to arrange the payment of the donation with respect to the overspend of the WWCF grant up to a limit of £100. The organisers were also to be asked to provide evidence as to how residents outside of Embleton Terrace were invited to the event as this was a condition of our grant. This funding had been agreed to be paid from the 2025/26 accounts which had been brought forward into the 2026/27 accounts. **Action: Clerk**

ii) Purchase of the Rothbury Estate. The Council unanimously agreed to donate its full annual budget of £500 for grants and donations towards the purchase of the estate. The decision was agreed because the donation met the Council's criteria for making such an award; the immense importance of the estate to our community and to the Parish's commitment to climate change and biodiversity. **Action: Clerk**

d) Bank Reconciliation at 13th July 2026

	£
Balance per bank statements01 July 2026	5740.43
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Uncredited Deposits	0.00
Balance	5740.43
Balance per cash book	5740.43

e) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26: confirmation of submission The Certificate of Exemption had been submitted and confirmation received from the External Auditor.

f) 2026/27 Insurance renewal. Two working days before our current policy expired, we received an email from NCC to say that Zurich were no longer going to offer its grouped policy but instead invited individual PCs to take up an individual policy. Clerk alerted NCC (cc'd to GS) to say there was insufficient time to scrutinise the Zurich offer and look at alternatives. He received an email to say the Insurance manager would be away for a week, and nothing further could be done until then. This meant (at that time) that the PC was left uninsured and therefore a delegated powers decision (DO/LH/Clerk) was taken to take out the individual policy offered by Zurich. This 'appeared' to offer a similar level of cover and at a lower price. Clerk wrote to NCC to express serious concerns about how this matter had been mis-managed. NCC then negotiated with Zurich to extend the current grouped policy until 31st March 2026. Clerk wrote to NCC again to express concern as it was not clear whether or not BHPC was now covered by two policies. Eventually we were given the option to take either option. DO/LH/Clerk agreed that keeping the new policy was the best option. We have now received a full apology from NCC for the mix up. It is not clear whether or not NCC knew in advance that Zurich was to cease the grouped policy. Given that the management of the grouped policy has been poor over the last two years (e.g. in 25/26, NCC failed to send out policy documents to PCs until the Clerk informed them in April 26 that PCs needed to provide these for auditing purposes), it now means that BHPC can communicate directly with Zurich (which was not allowed in the grouped policy). It is recommended that next year the PC carries out a comparison exercise well in advance of the policy expiry date. The Council endorsed the delegated powers decision.

10) Action Plan: May – June 2026. To address regular duties, prioritize initiatives, allocate resources, and track progress towards important goals not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

a) Playground – Inspect condition and record equipment. Ram on the entrance gate and style to the buffer zone require repair. **Action: JW**

b) Review Internal Procedures and Regulations scheduled for review. No procedures to review at this time.

11) Planning

a) To note and discuss any planning issues since previous meeting.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
26/01927/LBC	The Barn 6 Brinkburn Lodge Cottages: Listed Building Consent for changes with access, toilet provision, internal layout, remedial work, temporary placement of canvas teepee in car park, 3no rectangular timber clad sheds with a cattle style 3 bar metal fence and replacement foul water treatment unit	Application	Support the application

b) Planning Reform, NCC Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP

i) Local Plan & National Planning Policy Framework (NPFF) Changes, Challenges and Opportunities. The updated presentation was received,

12) Highways.

a) Highways and Footpaths Report. Ongoing. JW to report at the next meeting.

b) Report on any issues raised/ to raise with NCC Highways

i) Flooding at Todsteads. Following emails to NCC Highways (cc'd to GS) regarding concerns that repairs to road drainage at Todsteads appeared incomplete and the importance of this work being undertaken during the current road closure, LH and the Clerk had met Dylan Handysides (DH), NCC Highways on site, to outline our concerns and discuss the matter further. DH is to investigate whether there were outstanding works yet to be done and report back. He also agreed to carry out a 'flood test' on the drainage once works were complete.

ii) 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). It was agreed to write to Highways for an update on the repairs. **Action: Clerk**

c) Local Transport Plan 2026 -29 Outcomes: Decision on BHCP priorities were:

Priority	Feedback
1. Safety review, B6344 Rothbury to Weldon	This has been completed and signage/road marking improvements have recently been implemented. *(Although we were informed that these had nothing to do with our LTP request.)*
2. Safety Concerns at Pauperhaugh Bridge / B6344 Junction	This was assessed in the recent route safety review and improvements implemented. *(As above).*

3. Advance "Ford Ahead" warning signage at strategic points, C136 Maglin Burn	Included in the programme.

It was agreed that Clerk write to Highways (cc'd to GS) expressing our concern that the safety measures recently installed on the B6334 appeared to be making conditions worse because speeding drivers now knew where to slow down at 'notified' bends and where to accelerate to a high-speed section where there were no warning signs. There was a significant problem on the B6344 as fast- moving commuters and joyriders competed with tourists and heavy vehicles travelling at much lower speeds. Our request had been for a reduced speed limit, but this had to be addressed. The new signs were just a first step to getting sensible speed restrictions in place **Action: Clerk**

13) Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund.

a) Report. SB reported that the recent WWCF meeting had been held on site at the wind farm where they were given an explanatory tour, from Simon Kelly from Nadara. A number of requests for funding had been agreed:
   i) Alnwick Dolphins: £400
   ii) BHPC Biodiversity Event:c£1000
   iii) Longhorsley Local History Community Archelogy Dig
   iv) Solidarity Farm: £3600
   v) Wingates Village Institute: Multi-media equipment
   vi) Coquet Vally Trails: Not agreed as outside the catchment area
   vii) The Roost which exists to nurture spirituality and wellbeing with Young Adults in Northumberland
   The fund currently sits at approximately £60,000.

b) Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. Agreed that JW produce quote for production of the noticeboards **Action: JW**

c) Community Building on Playground. LH proposed that we submit a bid for funding to WWCF for a community building to be sited on the playground (probably a relocatable building) which could be used for community events. Agreed that this be a main item for the next meeting's agenda.

14) Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee Report. To receive a report from the Committee including:

a) Wilds of Wannie, the Coquet and Beyond: outcomes of the event. The Council received a summary of The Wilds of Wannie, the Coquet and Beyond, held at Wingates Institute on 11 July 2026 and organised by the Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee. The event brought together residents, volunteers, land managers, farmers, historians, conservation organisations, storytellers, musicians and community groups to explore the River Coquet, its catchment, local biodiversity, heritage and community connections.
   Members noted that the day was notable for the breadth of knowledge shared and for the strong sense that landscape, river health, biodiversity, farming, heritage, access and community wellbeing are closely connected. Presentations and discussions highlighted existing local activity, including biodiversity recording, habitat mapping, wildflower meadow creation, hedgerow restoration, woodland management, river monitoring, peatland restoration, litter-picking and community engagement.
   The principal outcome was a shared recognition that effective stewardship of the parish and wider Coquet catchment will depend on collaboration between the Parish Council, local residents, volunteers, landowners, environmental bodies and partner organisations. Particular opportunities identified included strengthening river stewardship, improving habitat connectivity, supporting meadows and pollinators, encouraging woodland and peatland restoration, developing ideas around the Wannie Line Greenway, celebrating local heritage and widening community participation.
   The Council thanked the Committee, speakers, volunteers and all those who contributed to the success of the event. It was agreed that the report should be used to inform future discussion by the Parish Council and its partners, and that the Committee should continue to explore practical next steps arising from the day, including possible collaboration with Northumberland Wildlife Trust and others where appropriate.

b) Nature and People in the Coquet: National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) outcomes of research and plans for River Coquet Charter, mapping, coalition and education, access from source to sea. JS/Clerk had attended a workshop on the outcomes of the NICRE 6-month research project. The delegates came up with a set of recommendations; the key ones being plans for a River Coquet Charter, mapping of organisations/activities and issues, coalition and education opportunities, and public access from source to sea. A further workshop was to take place in September. NICRE and Natural England are to produce a draft Charter and mapping exercise which will be developed further at the workshop.

15) Emergency Planning including:

a) 9th June Flood Plan exercise report. Whilst only attended by four flood wardens this had been a very valuable exercise which identified and ironed out a number of procedural issues during flooding.

b) Longframlington Emergency Action Plan report. LPC had set up a small working group to carry out the actions prior to the winter which had been agreed at the last Action Plan meeting, October 2025.

c) Check and oil flood warning signs. JW

d) Test emergency two- way radios. Agreed to take place on Monday 29th July at 7.00 pm. **Action: JW**

e) Defibrillator status SB reported that the equipment was in full working order.

16) Coquetdale Cluster Meeting.

a) Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. No meeting since last PC meeting.

b) Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda. Next meeting 4th August. Any items for the agenda to be passed to JS.

Action: All

17) Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports.

a) Longframlington Cemetery. LPC had updated its regulations for memorials and burial of cremated remains within an existing grave. The latter no longer required approval (a Faculty) from the Diocesan Registrar but could now be agreed at council level.

b) Rothbury JBC. The cemetery continued to have problems with drainage and discussions on shortage of grave space were ongoing.

18) Information Updates including:

a) Digital Switchover update Noted. Information to be posted on WhatsApp **Action: JW**

b) Declaration of Interests - A new section 32A of the Localism Act 2011. The Act required that Cllrs' personal details on their declaration be redacted and not disclosed to the public unless an individual member requested it.

c) NCC Environment and Transport update. Noted

d) Community Governance Update Review Noted.

19) Any Urgent Business. None.

20) Items for Next Meeting.

a) Community Building on Playground

21) Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 15th September 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington

The meeting closed at 9.55 p.m.

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