

WARK PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Edward Jeffrey **Contact:** clerk@warkparishcouncil.gov.uk

Meeting to be held 9th July 2026 at 7pm in Wark Town Hall

Draft Minutes

15/26 Welcome, declare the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of the minutes: Present Councillor Judith Weir (JW), Councillor Jason Riches (JR), Councillor Sean Miles (SM), Chris Reid (CR) (Clerk) Councillor Sean Miles will be Chair for this meeting SM, Proposed JR Seconded JW

16/26 Apologies for Absence; Councillor Edward Jeffrey (EJ) (**chair**), Councillor Lisa Lorraine (LL), Councillor Steve Batey, County Councillor Antonia Azocar-Nevin (AAN)

17/26 Notification of Other Business None

18/26 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest None

19/26 Approval of Minutes. Minutes from 4th & 9th June 2026 (already circulated in advance of meeting) – SM signed.

20/26 Report from County Councillor Antonia Azocar-Neven. AAN was unable to attend. The following report was sent through from AAN.

Wark PC report 09.07.26

1. The bus drop in event. This was a great session on Saturday the 27th of June. We had a great turn out. Over 40 members of the public came to ask questions to representatives from NCC transport, GoNorthEast and Stagecoach. We also had a representative from a bus trade union, 6 county councillors including myself and Joe Morris attend the event as well. The breakout discussions were very insightful and lots of notes were made which are now being turned into documents to send to the necessary people.
There were general discussions around 1) the quality of information provided (both through mobile phone apps and information boards) and the quality of communications around problems with services, 2) the poor level of integration with train services 3) the fact that it wasn't possible to take bikes on buses. One attendee pointed out that many children in the Tyne Valley were unable to access the new mountain bike trails at Kielder because they couldn't take their bikes on the 680 or 693. 4) There was also a general discussion around the fact that buses provide a critically important service for those who can't or choose not to drive. One lady told a story about how she struggled to get home from Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington by bus, and many of the attendees agreed that more should be done to make significant attractors such as hospitals easier to access via public transport.
2. **Full council meeting 08.07.26.** At the full council meeting yesterday, we were asked to vote on two motions.

1: To formally oppose any proposals to reintroduce the Eurasian lynx within Northumberland.

To write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to Natural England, setting out this Council's opposition and detailing the concerns of Northumberland's rural communities.

To call upon any organisation or public body considering species reintroduction projects to engage openly and transparently with Northumberland County Council, local parish councils, farmers, and residents directly impacted by reintroduction, before any decisions are made.

To reaffirm this Council's support for conservation initiatives that enhance biodiversity through locally led, evidence-based, and local community-supported measures that protect rural livelihoods and the safety of people, pets, and livestock.

That this Council will not provide financial assistance, partnership support (other than what is required by law and statute), or other forms of endorsement to any organisation or project that is currently supporting, encouraging, or actively leading efforts to reintroduce the Eurasian lynx into Northumberland.

This is the amendment.

Cllr Sanderson's proposal

To write to Secretary of State, DEFRA and Natural England setting out this Council's opposition detailing the concerns of Northumberland's rural communities and requesting that Northumberland County Council become a statutory consultee should any projects relating to the reintroduction of the LYNX come forward.

(Para 4)

That this Council will not provide financial assistance, partnership support (other than that is what is required by law and statute) or other forms of endorsement to any organisation that is currently supporting, encouraging, actively leading efforts to reintroduction of the Eurasian LYNX project into Northumberland.

2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.9, Councillor Sanderson to move the following motion, received by Democratic Services on 16 June 2026:-

The Council has, across all groups, long held significant concerns about safety on the A1, particularly where the road changes between dual and single carriageways. Over decades, this has resulted in high levels of death and serious injury.

Last month, five people were killed on the road. This is both tragic and unacceptable and our thoughts are with the families affected by these awful events.

Since 1978, whilst I appreciate the A1 has changed since then, there have been over 170 collisions which have caused fatalities in Northumberland. This has resulted in far too many fatalities on this stretch of road in Northumberland, devastating families and changing people's lives forever.

Whilst National Highways are planning to implement local safety schemes, these will not address fully the issues of overcapacity and lack of dual carriageway.

Prior to the dualling scheme being cancelled in October 2024, some £68.4m had been spent on preparation for dualling the stretch of the A1 between Morpeth and Ellingham.

In November last year, a cross-party letter was sent to the Transport Secretary on this important matter.

The Leader of Council and Mayor of the Strategic Authority have recently written a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Transport on this important matter.

1. My response to this motion was that there currently isn't an application in for a license to reintroduce the Eurasian Lynx and 'the missing lynx project' is still putting together all their evidence and research that they have gathered. And so I felt this motion was premature. If this were a planning application we would defer this application until we have heard all the information. However, this motion was passed.
2. My response to the duelling of the A1 was in support of what amendments my party leader suggested which were a cross-party group of senior leaders be established to consider an evidence-based, expert report on the different ways to improve road safety in the short and medium terms as well as the long term. As well as this, improvements to bus and train services would also contribute to more people using public transport rather than having to rely on driving. This motion was also passed.
3. **River meadow (long dropped curb).** I am afraid I haven't got very far with this. I have contacted Phill Hall and the highways program
4. **Extra parking in Wark:** I received this response from an officer regarding the grass area changing to hard standing for more parking:

Thank you for the information provided regarding parking in Wark village. With regards to the suggestion of turning the grass verge area identified near Church Lane into an off-street parking area, these types of initiatives are usually very expensive in comparison to the level of works involved and due to the volume of requests received across the County to convert grass verges into hardstanding areas for parking, our Local Transport Plan budget cannot cater for them all. NCC do not own all of the land highlighted in this grassed area so could not utilise much of it anyway.

In response to the request for consideration of waiting restrictions in the form of double yellow lines on Church Lane, there are a lot of residential properties situated along this route who are unlikely to be supportive of a loss of parking. As these properties have driveways the road would not be considered for residents' only parking. In addition, Wark is not an area which forms part of our enforcement route by Parking Services' Civil Enforcement Officers and would therefore be extremely limited due to our available resources if restrictions were to be implemented. If the parking issues are largely during busier summer months such as school holidays by visitors to the area, we could consider some 'no waiting' parking cones to discourage obstructive and indiscriminate parking in problem areas however we are currently unaware of the level of issues in this vicinity and may need to carry out camera surveys to gain more understanding of it.

21/26 Public and Police participation (10 mins maximum) None

22/26 Matters Arising

22/26.1 Purchasing a new rubbish bin, other side of Wark bridge. An email was received earlier in the year, about the condition of the rubbish bin in question, from NCC and needs to be replaced. JR to source a replacement. Once purchased this will be put in place. Proposed JW Seconded SM

22/26.2 Stonehaugh play area inspection. Following a discussion CR will put a notice up to find out who has placed the padlock on the PC shed and who holds the key. It was agreed that in future any repairs that need to be completed within Stonehaugh Ward nothing is to be purchased until there is a contract agreement in place to complete the work. CR will sort problem with bolts on the slide.

22/26.3 Up date about the road around Wark village green. Still have the offer of plainings. Problem getting JCB + driver to complete the job.

22/26.4 Up date from Karbon Homes on land for possible play area in Wark. Please see the following email from Karbon Homes.

Hi Lisa

Thank you for your recent enquiry about Karbon installing a new play area at Westacres in Wark.

Whilst Karbon have a number of existing play parks across its portfolio, they have formed part of the various stock transfers, as opposed to being new sites installed by Karbon. Therefore, we would not consider creating a new play area at Westacres.

However, should the local or parish council want to fund such works, we could consider either leasing or transferring land to the parish or local council to facilitate such a facility, subject to resident consultation and the relevant approvals.

Kind regards,

Glen Pearson | Head of Regeneration & Facilities

Following a discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council could not take on an additional asset or liability there off. Proposed JR Seconded SM

Should the community wish to pursue this further the contact details are

Glen.pearson@karbonhomes.co.uk

23/26 Financial Matters

23/26.1 Accounts and Approve Payment Schedule – circulated during meeting. Discussed the cost of water for Wark. Look at getting metre checked, check equipment in the toilet is working correctly, is water being wasted?? Running taps, flush lasting longer than necessary? JR will investigate.

Date	Cheque Number	Amount	Person/company	Detail	Invoice No.
26/05/2026	DD	£8.75	Lloyds Bank	Service charges	
29/05/2026	DD	£4.75	Lloyds Bank	Service charges	
05/06/2026	BACS	£670	Stonehaugh Campsite	Stonehaugh grass cutting	SCM0004
08/06/2026	DD	£2.99	Gocardless Hugofox	.gov.uk email	
09/06/2026	BACS	£30	Wark Town Hall	Room hire	
17/06/2026	DD	£25.53	EDF Energy	Electric Wark toilet	
23/06/2026	DD	£226.45	Anglian Water	Water Wark toilets	
24/06/2026	DD	£47	ICO	Information protection	
29/06/2026	DD	£5.75	Lloyds Bank	Service charges	
09/07/2026	BACS	£114	ROSPA	Stonehaugh play area inspection	99558
09/07/2026	BACS	£330.56	XXXXXXX	Wages	
09/07/2026	BACS	£83.56	XXXXXXX	Wages	
09/07/2026	BACS	£30	Wark Town Hall	Room Hire	
09/07/2026	001820	£26.20	HMRC	PAYE	

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23/26.2 Direct debit set up for the ICO

23/26.3 Financial forecast and remaining cash – circulated during meeting – water for Wark toilets has been underestimated in the forecast, to be looked into. SM will update the annual forecast.

24/26 Reports from Representatives to Other Bodies (Wark Town Hall, Stonehaugh Community Hall and Giles Heron Trust) Wark Town Hall doing looking forward to scruffs on Saturday, quiet August and a good Autumn of events calendar coming up.

Giles Heron meet again in September.

CR to invite Stonehaugh Community Hall to put an update in for following meetings.

25/26 Highway Matters, discuss parking in Wark with AAN at next meet to see what else can be done to resolve issues the cars parking near corners and parking that causes obstructions, as the response from NCC, they are unaware of the level of issues. In light of NCC's negativity towards additional parking in the village, for WPC to write to the David Heley in respect to obtaining a timescale for when the parking on the old garage land would become available, SM to draft letter.

26/26 Other Business – Not for Decision

27/26 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings Stonehaugh Star Gazing Pavillion, Stonehaugh grass cutting.

28/26 Dates for Next Meeting 10th September, 7pm Stonehaugh Community Hall

Meeting closed at 19.58.

Chris Reid

Clerk to Wark Parish Council