



THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
11th December Thursday 2025
Parish Rooms, Rothbury

Present: Hilary Dunn (HD -Chair); Alan Tait (AT) Fran Tait (FT).
In attendance: Clerk.

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

- 1. Apologies for absence. Peter Henry (PH).
2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18th September 2025 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (Proposed (AT), Seconded (FT), All in Favour).
3. Matters arising from the minutes not included in the agenda. None.
4. Police Report The following report from the Community Police had been received:
'There is nothing of note to pass on or that will impact the local community. There have been some quad bikes and other farm related/building items stolen from rural areas recently. It may be worth mentioning this and the importance of keeping things secure/reporting any suspicious incidents or vehicles if seen in the area. Also as always be mindful of door-to-door sellers that try to prey on vulnerable or elderly people.'

There had been a number of cars broken into in Swarland and Longframlington and reports of a recurrence of graffiti and fires around the Pauperhaugh area. The police were aware of the miscreant and keeping watch. There had been a number of break-ins in the Rothbury Industrial Estate and Cllr Bridget had arranged for the installation of security cameras.

- 5. Highways and Footways including: AT reported:
Highways: The hardcore stone added to the passing places along Carterside Road has been scraped back into the potholes but will inevitably get pushed out again when cars drive through them. We are exploring the possibility of getting grant funding to make them more permanent and Graham Bucknall suggested he might be able to match fund whatever we raise from next year's roads budget.
Verges: No issues on the verges of junctions as the vegetation is dying back now the winter months have arrived.
Footpaths: No issues with footpaths have been reported
Verges: No issues on the verges of junctions as the vegetation is dying back now the winter months have arrived.
Seats & Road Signs: No new potholes have been reported, although Dylan Handyside has arranged for repairs to the numerous small potholes on Carterside Road to be repaired. This work has now been completed.

There are no issues with the roadside benches.

Drains: Dylan Handyside joined Fran and I to discuss the drain gullies at the top of our lane which are almost completely full of silt and road chippings. He agreed that they needed to be emptied by their tanker and has asked for this to be prioritised. We also showed him the ditch near the bale store which should drain the pipe under the road but is very overgrown. Dylan agreed to get the ditch "refreshed" so that the drain gullies near to the field entrance will be able to function properly. Grips and drain gullies have been cleared of vegetation and silt several times when the rainfall has been at its peak.

- 6. Finance
a. Notification of receipts since the last meeting. None.
b. 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 Red Squirrel Group, Alan Tait Reimbursement, HMRC, Garth Rhodes, Rothbury DCC, Longframlington Parish Council, and a Total of 758.20.

- c. Requests for donations. None.
d. Bank Reconciliation to 17th November 2025. Approved.

Bank Reconciliation at 17 November 2025 table with 3 columns: Description, Amount, £. Rows include Balance per online e-bank statements, Community account, Business Saver, Less unrepresented cheques, Uncredited Deposits, Balance, and Balance per cash book.

7. **Planning:**

a. To consider any planning applications.

Reference	Address	Type	PC Comments
25/04280/LBC	Whitton Grange Whitton Morpeth Northumberland NE65 7RL	Registered	No Objection

b. 25/03415/AGRGDO Proposal Agricultural Determination: Stock and general-purpose shed, Land East Of Newtown And South Of Carterside Road Newtown Applicant Mr Tom Ducker Coppice House Farm Rivelin Valley Sheffield South Yorkshire. WTPC were not consulted as this was an agricultural building. Planning confirmed that prior approval was not required for the proposed development.

8. **Emergency Planning & Community Flood Plan Reports.** The Environment Agency had introduced a new Warning System and 'Get flood warnings' service on GOV.UK to enhance the delivery of flood alerts nationwide. Existing users had been securely migrated, and the updated system offered improved accessibility and accuracy, including dedicated resources .

9. **Rothbury JBC Report .** Two JBC meetings had taken place since the last PC meeting. At the first meeting there had been concerns that no response had been received from the Northumberland Estate regarding reverting the stream back to its original course. This had now been received, and the Estate appeared supportive but had insisted on a number of requirements including indemnities and an ecological assessment. There was to be a biodiversity area of wildflowers on land not suitable for burials. It had been reaffirmed that the financial reserve held by Rothbury PC remained high but was being kept at this level due to potential imminent expenditure. Quotes for the new shed had been requested. Checking was ongoing as to whether planning permission for work on the pond was required.

10. **Coquetdale Cluster Report.** AT/FT reported that the Police had attended the last meeting. The Cluster had re-elected Julie Famelton as Chair. AT had raised the issue of WTPCs passing places initiative and this had instigated a wave of negativity. Whilst the Cluster's intention was to bring parishes together, AT/FT had frequently found that the group currently had limited ability to make collective decisions or to drive shared improvements for the communities it served. Meetings lacked positive energy and engagement. Although the Cluster did offer a way to share information about important local issues this information was already available through other channels and led to an unnecessary duplication of effort. There seemed little benefit from attending the meetings and it was agreed that WTPC would withdraw from the Coquetdale Cluster forthwith.

Action: Clerk

11. **New Parish Website and .gov domain** The joining information for HugoFox (HF) had been received. The PC would get 6 months free membership from HF to manage the domain/website. It was responsible for payment of the second 6 months but would get a refund from NALC for this (less VAT which we will be able to reclaim) as a discount off next year's NALC membership. There would be no NALC website invoice in 2026 as the website would shut down on 1st April 2026. The new .gov domain, website and email must be up and running by then. It was agreed to go with HF for them to set up the domain, website and .gov address. There would be three pricing levels from yr 2 of the website (which could be agreed at a later date). The price for an email mailbox would be £2.49 per month. Government advised that it was good practice that all members have a mailbox, but this was not a requirement. It was agreed that only one mailbox was required for the Clerk at this time. It was also agreed to request that HF undertake the website content transfer at a cost of £199 as this would be considerably cheaper than asking the clerk or other IT consultants to undertake.

Action: Clerk

12. **Dog Waste at Forestry England Car Park, Simonside.** An email had been received about problems of dog poo bags at Simonside FE car park. Clerk emailed Alex McClennan (AM) about the issue. A meeting with AM was arranged and attended by Alan Winlow and Katie Scott representing the Rothbury Rubbish Friends. The outcomes of the meeting were to:

- hold an event in the Spring to highlight NCC's Green Dog Walkers Scheme.
- try to get a litter/dog waste bin at Simonside Car park (and possibly one other).
- try to get NCC to agree to collect this waste.

Alex has been in touch with the National Park, and they were keen to work together on making progress. No further action for the PC at this time.

13. **Report from Meetings for Town & Parish Councils and agree NCC Corporate Performance Report Response.** FT/AT attended this meeting and reported that:

- Glen Sanderson said the main priorities for the county council were Value for Money; New businesses; Reducing inequality in education. Their budget this year is £1Billion.
- The bulk of the meeting was taken up by questions from the audience and things like the wait times for phone calls to be answered were raised. The Local Transport Plan was mentioned and that some training was available to help parishes in submitting suggestions.
- The county council want to create a Tree Management policy and plan as they are responsible for millions of trees in the county.
- The conference with all parish councils will take place in March 2026 and again in October 2026.
- NCC are considering installing average speed cameras on the A697 from Heighly Gate Garden Centre through to Wooler. Members agreed no further action.

14. **Report from Beyond The Precept: Exploring Alternative Income Sources training event.** AT reported that the event had not been as helpful as first thought. Ideas of crowd funding and 'buy a brick' scheme were interesting but not appropriate as a funding source for the passing-places project. It was agreed that an approach to Northumbria Water was worthwhile.

Action: AT/FT



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15. **Agree NCC Three-Year Local Transport Plan Priorities.** The following priorities had been agreed via email exchange due to the postponement of the 20th November meeting and agreed by a majority decision. The priorities agreed were:
- Priority 1: The upgrading of thirteen passing places with 'Passing Place' signage along Carterside Road between Whitton Bank and Little Tosson.**
- Location:** [What3Words ///panoramic.frosted.position to ///jubilant.gossip.telephone](#)
This stretch of road is used extensively by motorists, cyclists and walkers. This road is virtually single width along its extent. Frequently vehicles are required to reverse back to passing places as vehicles coming from the opposite direction have missed an unmarked passing place. Currently the surface of the passing places is of hard core. The appointed parish councillor who has the portfolio for highways and footpaths in the Parish, has for many years maintained these passing places. Replacement hardcore is regularly applied and drains have to be cleared of the hard-core debris that is washed out, causing a back-up of water. If this regular maintenance work was not carried out, the passing places would rapidly deteriorate, making passing a more difficult and hazardous experience. The Parish Council is concerned about safety concerns, effective traffic management and the constant burden on our councillor, and request a more permanent solution. Our preference would be for the passing places to have new tarmac surfaces with kerb stone backing and 'passing place' signposts. The Parish Council would be more than happy to work with Highways to map the location of the thirteen passing places.
- Priority 2: Installation of safety rails with warning sign west of the caravan site on Carterside Road where the track to Whitton Glebe Farm meets Carterside Road**
- Location:** [What3Words ///flock.otter.contracting](#)
This is a re-submitted priority from 2025-26. Currently there is a ditch close to the road at this point, with no markers or warning signage making it dangerous, particularly for those who are unaware.. Whilst not formally recorded, there have been incidents of vehicles coming off the road at this point and requiring assistance to be extricated.
- Priority 3: Two new passing places between Simonside Car Park & cattle grid Southeast of car park**
- Location:** [What3Words from ///pumps.distorts.settled to ///pizzeria.zoomed.dote](#)
This is a re-submitted priority from 2025-26. There are currently no formal passing places along this stretch of road making passing particularly difficult with the risk of vehicles getting stuck in the roadside ditch. The road is frequently used by visitors to Simonside, residents, large agricultural and Northumbrian Water vehicles.
16. **Northumberland Plan Review: Information.** NCC Planning had written to advise that there would be future opportunities for the PC to make comment on the Plan Review, and they would keep us informed.
17. **NCC's Winter Preparedness 2025-26: information.** The Winter Service Preparedness document for the 2025/26 season outlined NCCs operational plans and readiness for winter conditions across Northumberland.
18. **PREVENT: National programme that aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.** The Prevent - Handbook for Elected Members provided information on the programme. It worked to ensure that people who were susceptible to radicalisation were offered appropriate interventions, and communities are protected against radicalising influences. No further required at this time.
19. **Ad Gefrin Tácnbora Tour: Call for Tácnbora ('Standard Bearer') nominations.** The Ad Gefrin Tácnbora Tour (Anglo-Saxon Museum and Whisky Distillery and Destination North East England) of the North East was celebrating the region's unsung heroes and as part of the tour they had launched a call for Tácnbora ('Standard Bearer') nominations to bring people together individuals or groups who made a difference; the unsung heroes from across Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside Durham and Sunderland. Further information had come to light since this was added to the agenda which suggested this was a commercial venture. No further action.
20. **Any Other Business**
- a. [Report from Northumberland Association of Local Councils AGM](#) Noted.
- b. [Proposal to make a Public Spaces Protection Order for the control of dogs.](#) Noted. No further action.
- c. [North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation](#) Noted. No further action.
21. **Date of Next Parish Council Meeting: 7.00 p.m. Thursday 15th January 2026 in the Parish Rooms, Rothbury.**

Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

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