



**Minutes of the Meeting of Chollerton Parish Council,
Wednesday 28 January 2026, 7.00pm at Barrasford Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Andy Bennett (Chair), Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Edward Heslop, Cllr Fiona Charlton, Cllr Bruce Lowdon, Cllr Ian Lancaster-Smith, Cllr James McArdle

In attendance: Cllr Azocar-Nevin, County Councillor; Mel Bramley, Parish Clerk

Members of the public: Dorothy Pigg, Rex Robson

1. Apologies for absence: None

2. Open forum (maximum 15 minutes) when members of the public may raise matters with the Council

Rex Robson raised concerns about the ongoing issue of Japanese knotweed growing on land adjacent to his property in Gunnerton. Cllr Bennett summarised the various findings from research the PC had undertaken over the many years Mr Robson had been raising the issue. Present ownership of the land is unclear and it is unregistered. However, it is not public land and so the PC would not be able to spend the £10K+ previously quoted to have the land cleared. However, the PC understood that a neighbour was willing to assist by clearing the land in the Spring.

ACTION: Cllr Bennett will summarise the discussion from this meeting for the Clerk to e-mail to Mr Robson.

The public forum was then closed.

3. Declarations of interest from Members

None.

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2025

These were approved

(a) Matters arising from the above not addressed elsewhere on the agenda:

Barrasford Park bus stop

The Clerk stated she was still waiting to hear back from the NCC lighting Department regarding the request for improved lighting close to the bus stop.

ACTION: The Clerk will chase this up and provide feedback.

Road naming on new build site in Barrasford

Confirmation had been given from NCC that they have largely accepted the PC's position, had withdrawn the names proposed by the developer, and would adopt 2 of the PC's suggestions, being Whinstone Lane and Steppings Close.

Speed signs

Cllr Heslop confirmed that the Colwell speed sign funded by the quarry had been delivered to his property.

ACTION: The Clerk will contact Paul Armstrong at NCC to inform him that the signage had arrived and request that all three signs be installed at the same time.

NALC

The Clerk had contacted NALC to seek advice and clarify protocol in terms of the PC's Chair contacting the Chairs of other NCC Parish Councils to ask questions and seek information. NALC confirmed that the contact made by the Chair was not inappropriate. Their response has been copied to all Councillors.

5. Correspondence

(a) Tynedale Hospice donation request

It was agreed to donate £50.00.

ACTION: The Parish Clerk will arrange payment and inform the Hospice.

(b) Joint Town and Parish Conference

The conference is being held on 5 March 2026 at County Hall.

ACTION: Cllr Bennett will try to attend and if anyone else wishes to go, please let the Parish Clerk know.

(c) Digital Support

Posters have been placed on local noticeboards, and a news item added to the website, highlighting the digital support session to be held at Barrasford Village Hall on 11 February 2026, 10am-11am. The sessions are free and are being run by the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise. It is hoped to expand this service across the County. Volunteers are also sought (digital champions) to offer assistance and advice. Training is offered.

ACTION: Anyone wishing to volunteer should let the Parish Clerk know.

6. County Councillor Report

The report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Azocar-Nevin added the following updates:

The new tax scheme referenced in her report relates to Council tax benefit. NCC is proposing a simpler process, which will deliver significant cost savings to the Council.

The process for Section 106 funding is that groups must pay up front and then be reimbursed by NCC. The Parish Council stated this would not be possible for many groups who do not hold a lot of reserves.

ACTION: Cllr Azocar-Nevin will seek clarity from NCC.

Cllr Azocar-Nevin informed the Parish Council that she is away from 14th – 30 March 2026.

Cllr Lowdon asked when the contract for services buses expires.

ACTION: Cllr Azocar-Nevin will ask and advise the Parish Clerk.

7. Items for discussion

(a) Parking at East Acres

Two meetings took place, on 8th and 9th January 2026.

Dorothy Pigg attended the **first meeting** with Cllr Lancaster -Smith, 15 other local residents and 3 Karbon Homes representatives. The meeting primarily concerned the paved recreational area in front of 23-25 East Acres. The paving is in need of repair. Karbon Homes are considering options for its future, including fencing it off to return it to amenity use. Karbon Homes has offered to sell the land to the PC. The PC cannot purchase the land as the cost of maintaining the area, repairing, upgrading and managing it would be too great. It is also unclear if NCC would allow a change of use to vehicular parking and how much it would cost for planning permission and to install formal dropped kerb access etc. Karbon Homes has estimated £25k to tarmac the area, but are unwilling to do this for a limited number of private residents. This will also not provide a surface designed for vehicles and so will likely become damaged again. Karbon Homes' previously stated preference was to fence off the area from all vehicular use before repairs are undertaken. Dorothy Pigg says she and other residents are in discussion with Karbon Homes to consider purchasing the area and so maintaining it themselves.

Karbon Homes stated at this meeting that they also own 'The Green' in East Acres and were considering options for it (and other grassed areas), which could include fencing off to prevent car parking.

In attendance at the **second meeting** were Cllrs Bennett, McArdle and Lancaster-Smith, County Councillor Azocar-Nevin, Dorothy Pigg and Neil Snowden (Principal Programmes Officer, Highways Improvements Team). This meeting was to discuss parking as a whole in East Acres.

Neil Snowden recognised the parking problem in East Acres, with insufficient spaces for residents. However, he stated that even if The Green was owned by NCC it would not be considered under Local Transport Plan funding because there were too many similar issues throughout Northumberland and no LTP funds to cover them. He added that, whilst converting the edge of The Green to accommodate vehicles was, in principle, acceptable, the Council did not have the funding to undertake the works.

Neil Snowdon subsequently confirmed that Karbon Homes does own 'The Green'.

ACTION: Cllrs Bennett and McArdle will prepare a letter seeking advice from Karbon Homes as to their plans for the communal areas around East Acres. Specifically in respect to fencing and the risk to blocking access for emergency vehicles around The Green.

Dorothy Pigg will keep the PC informed of residents' plans to take ownership of the area around 23-25 East Acres. She confirmed that if this occurs, the residents will be responsible

for the repair and upkeep.

(a) Station Road, Barrasford

Cussins have been cleaning the roads of mud left by construction traffic. However, the issue has not been completely resolved.

ACTION: Cllrs Lancaster-Smith and McArdle will monitor the situation.

(b) New website

The website is almost complete, and Cllr Bennett and the Parish Clerk are liaising with Hugo Fox (domain supplier and web hosting) to ensure the deadline for completion at the end of March is adhered to.

ACTION: Cllr Lancaster-Smith agreed to forward some photographs taken around the Parish for the website and Cllr Bennett agreed to circulate the final draft of the website to all before the launch.

8. Financial Matters

(a) The Clerk had previously circulated a bank reconciliation record showing a balance of £11,558.06.

(b) A list of payments made since the last meeting were noted.

(c) The following payments were approved:

Dickinsons (grass cutting) £2388.00

Barrasford Village Hall room hire (multiple bookings) £68.00

Gunnerton Play Committee £130.00 (50% donation towards costs for insurance)

Tynedale Hospice £50.00 donation

9. Planning Applications

There are no new planning applications.

25/03717/FULES - poultry unit, Land West Of Well House Farm Colwell

The Clerk has obtained an update from Richard Laughton, Planning Officer:

“This one may take a while given the issues raised and requests of information from consultees. It will go beyond the current deadline and be extended but I don't have any timescales as of yet. You will be notified when the application will be heard at Strategic Committee.”

This is as we would expect under the circumstances, given that there are now some 327 public and consultee responses.

It was noted that the Gunnerton treatment works will be submitting a planning application to install filter beds and gravel for what appears to be an equipment renewal/upgrade process.

10. Information Items

Cllr Lancaster-Smith forwarded notes on his attendance at a NALC training session on communication. Some of the points raised may be pertinent to the PC to implement.

ACTION: All Councillors will consider the report and this will be discussed at March's meeting.

11. Any other business

(a) Cllr McArdle stated that some residents had expressed a wish to sow wild flower seeds on the grass verge opposite the Barrasford Arms.

ACTION: Cllr Lowdon will check who cuts the grass in this area and seek clarification in respect to ownership. Cllr McArdle will then discuss with residents.

(b) It was noted that the new processing plant at Barrasford Quarry was now operating, including the requirement for lower intensity lighting in the plant area.

Cllr Lancaster-Smith has taken photographs from the public footpath of the rubbish and discarded equipment at the rear of the quarry site. This consists of batteries, compressors, steel drums etc.

ACTION: Cllr Lancaster-Smith will forward photographs to the Parish Clerk, who will write to the Quarry Manager asking for the area to be cleared.

11. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 7pm at Barrasford Village Hall.

This meeting will include discussion of the budget for 2026/27.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm