

Belsay Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Belsay Parish Council
held on **Wednesday, 25 March 2026**
Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall, Belsay First School

Present:

Chair: Cllr Roe

Cllrs: Mole, Storey, Straughan

In attendance:

Clerk: Annie Howliston

51. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Common, Sadler, and County Cllr Dodd.

52. Declarations of Interest

None Received.

53. Public Questions (Maximum 5 minutes per person)

There were no members of the public present.

54. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (28 January 2026)

The minutes were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

55. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

a) Emergency Resilience Base and Generator

Cllr Straughan reported:

- **Ray Wind Funds**

Contact was made with Jo Willis (Community Development Officer), who confirmed that although the parish falls outside the funding area, applications may still be considered if they demonstrate potential use by people within the area of benefit.

- **Green Rigg Fund**

Administered by the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear. As part of Belsay Parish falls within the eligible area, funding may be available.

AGREED: To approach the Green Rigg Fund for further information.

- **Northern Powergrid**

Previously discussed.

AGREED: To complete the online eligibility quiz and report back at the next meeting.

- **CAN– CAIRN Project**
Focuses on reducing carbon emissions through village heating solutions; not considered suitable for this project.

- **Great Whittington Village Hall Committee**
Has secured funding for a battery project.

AGREED: Clerk to contact the committee for further information and report back. County Cllr Richard Dodd may assist.

- **CAN – Community Building Energy Project**
Run by Jake Delacey, focusing on energy audits for community buildings. Initial contact was made but no meeting arranged.

AGREED: To follow up.

56. Highways Matters

a) Gateways/Rumble Strips

No update due to absence of County Cllr Dodd.

b) Overhanging Branches and Hedges

Cllr Straughan contacted Kris Westerby (NCC Head of Highways) with a map identifying the areas of problem. This had subsequently been passed to a (Highways Maintenance Senior Team Leader to arrange a contractor. Work was not completed before the nesting season.

AGREED: To follow up NCC in early September as a priority and keep this item on the agenda.

c) Speed Limit Request at Wallridge Cottages

A resident requested a reduction to 30mph due to safety concerns (lack of footpaths, dangerous driving, impact on community spaces).

AGREED: To refer the request to NCC Highways.

57. Planning Matters

a) No previous applications received.

b) One late application received (Ref: 26/01035/FUL) – no observations made.

c) Application 22/01909/CCMEIA

The Chair spoke on behalf of the parish at the planning committee meeting (3 February 2026). The application was approved.

AGREED: To include a broader discussion on traffic matters at the May meeting.

58. Financial Matters

a) Payments approved:

| Payee | Detail | Chq No. | £ |
|--------------------|---|---------|--------|
| CI Accountancy Ltd | 2025/2026 Payroll Services | 610 | 264.00 |
| Clerk | Reimbursement of cash paid for hall hire Jan 2025, Jan, Mar 2026 | 611 | 60.00 |
| Clerk Pay Slips | Feb, Mar 2026 | 612 | 371.30 |
| HMRC | Quarter ending Mar 2026 | 613 | 184.60 |
| Bolam PCC | Grant | 614 | 200.00 |
| Tynedale Hospice | Grant | 615 | 200.00 |

b) Monthly Bank Reconciliation – Approved

c) Interim Internal Audit Report

Received and noted. The Clerk confirmed the auditor may attend the May meeting.

d) School Hire Payments

The Pele Trust will no longer accept cheques.

AGREED: Clerk to pay in cash, obtain receipts, and be reimbursed.

59. Correspondence Received

None received.

60. Adoption of Policies

The Clerk presented a number of policies to ensure compliance with Assertion 10. These were agreed in principle, with any proposed amendments to be brought back to the next meeting for consideration.

61. Any Other Business (Information Only)

- Response submitted to NCC Community Governance Review (no changes requested).
- No update on the Listed Pant.
- NCC Community Resilience Forum: Cllrs Mole and Straughan attending on 30 April at Stannington Village Hall.
- Clerk registered for AGAR online submission via the SAAA pilot scheme.

62. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 27 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish and Parish Council)

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

| These minutes will remain in draft until approval at the next Parish Council Meeting | |
|---|------------------|
| Chair Signature:  | Date: 27/5/22 |

Public speaking reference is SP/030226/36

RE: Proposed extraction of 2.8 million tonnes of dolerite, important of inert infill material etc.

Applicant North East Concrete Ltd.

I am Maggie Roe, Chair of Belsay Parish Council. I am therefore speaking on behalf of the Community of Belsay Parish. We have four key points of concern with this application:

- 1. Safety on the main A696.** This road runs directly through the parish. It runs through the village of Belsay, an important historic landmark in Northumberland recognised as a gateway to the tranquil National Park and Dark Skies area. Belsay School and Nursery are in the centre of the village adjacent to the main road. There is already considerable congestion, worry about traffic safety issues in and around the School – particularly at certain times of the day when the road becomes a single lane highway. We have considerable evidence of the ongoing concern. **Any increase in heavy vehicle traffic will exacerbate the safety risks.**
- 2. Noise, vibration, nuisance, danger to access, adjacent uses and amenities:** Increased noise and vibration will impact historic homes adjacent to the roads. Environmental impact is a particular concern along the Whalton Road (B6524) and the dangerous A696 junction where there have been RTAs and deaths in recent years. Numerous cyclists and pedestrians use the Road; there are commonly cars parked along one side of the road during the cricket season during the day and evening reducing it to a single lane highway with no pavement. Considerable numbers of young people use the cricket ground to practice as well as teams from all over the county. Increased numbers of lorries using this minor road to cut through to Morpeth and the A1 will exacerbate dangers to the community accessing their drives and the cricket ground; little notice is taken of speed restrictions. **There is no indication in the documents how vehicles will be controlled from going along this unsuitable minor road and how speed limits will be enforced.**
- 3. Health impact from vehicle pollution, inconvenience, wear and tear on roads:** Traffic issues remain a key concern for Belsay Parish Community as evidenced by the replies to the Traffic survey of 2018 and the standing item on our council agenda. Increased numbers of large vehicles through the parish will increase wear and tear on the roads; and importantly impact the health of the young people using the School and cricket club through the emissions from the lorries - particularly Carbon dioxide, Nitrogen oxides and particulates.
- 4. Lack of democratic consideration:** There has been no attempt by the applicants to contact the Parish Council representatives to discuss mitigation of the above impacts; the proposal provides **all impact and no benefit for Belsay Parish community and we feel our voices have not been heard on the above matters.**

MHR/Belsay Parish Council/02.02.2026

2026 - Parish Council Policies Overview

- 1. Asset Register** - A parish council requires an asset register to maintain accountability, safeguard community assets, ensure adequate insurance coverage, and support financial planning. It provides an up-to-date record of ownership, tracks asset values, and facilitates maintenance or replacement planning, fulfilling statutory audit requirements. **Audit & Legal Compliance:** It is required for demonstrating transparency and proper financial management, ensuring the Annual Return reflects the true value of assets held.
- 2. Code of Conduct** - A code of conduct promotes integrity, accountability, and ethical behaviour, fostering public trust in local democracy. It legally binds councillors to principles such as selflessness, objectivity, and honesty, protecting the council's reputation and ensuring fair treatment of all individuals. **Legal Requirement:** Under the Localism Act 2011, councils must adopt a code of conduct governing members' behaviour.
- 3. Equality and Diversity Policy** - This policy ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010, preventing unlawful discrimination in service delivery and employment. It promotes fair access to services, community cohesion, and an inclusive environment that values diversity, improving decision-making. **Legal Compliance:** The policy meets statutory duties regarding the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity).
- 4. Financial Regulations** - Financial regulations provide a framework for lawful, transparent management of public funds, reducing the risk of fraud or error. They govern budget setting, authorising payments, asset management, and internal audits. **Legal & Statutory Compliance:** Ensures adherence to proper accounting practices and audit requirements.
- 5. IT Policy** - An IT policy protects sensitive public data, ensures cybersecurity, and establishes rules for staff and councillors' use of technology. It supports compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, mitigating risks of data loss or cyberattacks. **Compliance with 2025 Regulations:** The Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel 2025 Practitioners' Guide mandates an IT policy for governance standards.
- 6. Public Participation Policy** - Encourages community engagement while maintaining orderly meetings. Guided by the National Association of Local Councils, it defines legal procedures, transparency, and residents' rights to raise agenda items. **Effective Meeting Management:** Sets time limits (e.g., 15 minutes overall, 3–5 minutes per speaker) to ensure focused and productive meetings.
- 7. Publication Policy** - Promotes transparency and access to information, complying with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and using schemes approved by the Information Commissioner's Office. It details routinely available documents, including council structures, financial reports, and meeting minutes. **Legal Obligation:** Adoption of an ICO model publication scheme ensures compliance.
- 8. Risk Management and Assessment Policy** - Identifies, evaluates, and controls risks to employees, assets, and service delivery, protecting the council's financial stability and operations. It addresses liability, public safety, and financial loss. **Legal Compliance:** Meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which mandate a sound system of internal control.
- 9. Standing Orders** - Standing orders regulate internal administrative, procedural, and legal functions, ensuring council business is conducted lawfully, transparently, and consistently. They guide decision-making, enforce statutory requirements, and prevent disorder. **Legal Compliance:** Ensures meetings and procedures comply with statutory laws (e.g., quorum, notice periods).

