

HEPPLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 2nd Feb 2026 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall, Hepple.

1. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Cllr Christopher France (Chair); Cllr Ian Wilson (Vice Chair); Cllr Jennifer Bates; Cllr Carol Bell.
3 Parishioners
2. Apologies received: Cllr Lucy Riddell
3. Declaration of any interests and the grant of any dispensations. - None
4. Minutes of the meeting on 3rd Nov 2025
 - 4.1 Agreed as a true record. Signed by The Chair.
5. Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda
 - 5.1 New Hepple Defibrillator Guardians are presently undertaking training.
 - 5.2 NCC Community Governance Review – chair responded. NCC Review ongoing.
6. Roads, Transport.
 - 6.1 Village west blocked/collapsed drain still hasn't been fixed, water flowing fast downhill possible hazard due to potential for freezing.
Action: Chair to contact Highways to find out what is happening and urge action.
 - 6.2 Village drains East – gutters and gullies blocked/drain collapse/ flooding bottom of village. Water runoff from fields opposite the Tower reduced to recent field drainage works.
Action: Chair to contact NCC Highways, erect flood warning signs.
 - 6.3 Bickerton flooding – drains collapsed opposite cottages.
Action: Chair to contact NCC Highways.
 - 6.4 Bickerton corner to Tosson. Drain broken, kerb stones displaced – severe flooding.
Action: Chair to contact NCC Highways.
 - 6.5 Badger Bridge at Swindon – Major Accident again – report completed by Resident. Urgent safety action required – signage, chevrons, road markings and safety barriers.
7. Website domain and email address to comply with government advice.
 - 7.1 Discussion at last two meetings about complying with government advice to have .gov. domain and email address.
Action: Agreed to register new domain name, develop new website and parish clerk email address with Hugo Fox. Annual cost £180; host website and one email address (parish clerk)
8. Correspondence – None

9. Planning - None

10. Finance Report

11.1 Bank balance £2,236.49 (30 Jan 2026)

11.2 NCC has significantly reduced Election Costs.

11.3 Agreed to pay following invoices:

- Hepple Village Hall Annual Rent £200
- NCC Final Installment Election Costs £40.36
- Parish Cluster Annual Fee £11.60
- Hugo Fox Domain name, website hosting and 1 email address £180

11.4 Annual budget requires adjustment due to revised election costs.

11.5 Increase in Precept to £1,350 has been submitted to NCC for approval.

11. Meetings attended by councillors or the clerk

12.1 The Chair and Cllr Bell attended Parish Cluster meeting on 2 Dec 2025. Main issues: condition of roads; new passing places between Whitton and Newtown; police report – trail bike problems, quad and tool thefts.

12.2 Chair attended Farmers meeting at Hexham on 12 Jan 2026. Future of farming – Northumberland farming issues – training, support, too much focus on the environment and not enough on food sustainability.

12. Any other business:

12.1 Hepple sewage issues – Northumbrian Water is spending a lot of time trying to keep the existing system open. Septic tank in field overflowing – possibly due to the amount of road/field surface water adding to the problem.

12.2 Paul Barrett (Community Development) Northumberland Wildlife Trust asked if he could give a presentation on the Trusts' purchase of Rothbury Estate. The Councillors felt it would be more appropriate to speak to the wider parish community, therefore, to suggest he contacts the Village Hall to arrange a presentation.

Action: Chair to contact Paul Barrett.

13. Date and time of next meeting: **11th May 2026**

- Annual Parish Meeting.
- Annual General Meeting Hepple Parish Council.
- Hepple Parish Council Meeting.

Signed: Cllr. C. Bell (Chair) 11-05-2026

Vacant

Clerk Hepple Parish Council