

Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on: 13th January 2026
Meeting at: Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time: 7.30 p.m.
Present: Richard Elphick (RE), David Owen – Chair (DO) Jackie Scarpa (JS),
In attendance: Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence.** County Cllr Glen Sanderson, Cllrs: Steven Bray (SB), Lesley Hall (LH), Jamie Whicker (JW)
- 2) **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 19 below.** None.
- 3) **Declaration of Interests.** None.
- 4) **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
- 5) **County Councillors Report Tuesday 13th January 2026**

Garth - I can't make it this evening - please pass on my best wishes to the members and as always let me know if I can help with anything.

Coming out of a difficult week weatherwise I have praised our staff and contractors who worked very long hours to keep our roads gritted and open. I hope you felt your parish was treated as you would have wished but if not please let me know any specific issues that may have arisen.

The big issue for us at present is the extra money we have to find to balance the books for the next three years. It still remains our key aim to protect our frontline services across the board and to continue to invest in schools and leisure. The next week or so will be difficult but I am hopeful to balance our budget in time for the Council Budget meeting in February.

The Mayor has begun discussions around a franchised bus service for the Combined Authority as she has the power to do this. I have cautiously agreed to look further at this but only if we in Northumberland get our fair share of the £8million a year it will cost to increase services and that rural bus services will be creative and more targeted in the County.

She has also raised the idea of a tourist tax of around £2/night, and I have argued against this given we want to encourage more tourist stays and not make them more expensive. However, if this does meet approval from the other LA7 Councils then I have also said we must see any money raised in the County staying in the County.

As always please get in touch Garth if I can be of any assistance.

Best wishes

Glen

Councillor Glen Sanderson

Leader of the County Council

The PC noted that the road gritting during the recent wintry conditions had been very good and it was agreed to inform GS of this.

Action: Clerk

- 6) **Minutes of Previous Meeting .** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11th November 2025, were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (proposed: RE, Seconded: JS, All in Favour).
- 7) **Matters arising out of Minutes.** To receive updates on matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda including:
 - a) Quality of DAB reception in the Coquet Valley. Sylvia Pringle had reported to Glen Sanderson on 10th September on this, but the information was not forwarded to us. She reported that the problem was due to poor coverage in the Rothbury area and recommended the PC look at the [BBC Trouble Shooting DAB](#).
 - b) David Smith (DS) MP & Letters to Boundaries Commissions. No further information received.
 - c) Bus Stop Sign New Houses B6344 Crossroads X14 Service. No further information received.
 - d) Hedging in the Playground. This work was scheduled to be carried out in January by Biodiversity volunteers. **Action: JW**
 - e) Litter Picking Volunteers List. RE asked if JW could forward the list of litter picking volunteers in order to contact them regarding forthcoming events. **Action: JW**
 - f) Grass Cutting in the playground. The Clerk informed members that the cost for cutting the grass this year was close on £1k and asked if it was necessary to cut the grass so frequently. It was agreed that Julie Ayre was doing a great job but that it would be worthwhile asking NCC if they could provide any financial assistance as other parish councils had free grass cutting services for their playgrounds. **Action: Clerk**
 - g) Increase in circulation of FramNews. DO indicated that there was a need to increase the number of copies required and suggested that the PC make a donation to FramNews in recognition of this. It was agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting when it was hoped there would be more members present.

- 8) **Police Update.** Report received from the Community Police:

"There is nothing to report this month – if you have anything you want to offer forward to us just let me know"

- 9) **Finance.**

- a) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

12/12/2025	CAN Northumberland	WWCF 116 Grant final balance	2622.62
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- b) Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

01/12/2025	Julie Ayre	Mowing August- October	360.00
15/12/2025	Young's Electricals	Repair light Defibrillator kiosk	53.88

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05/01/2026	HMRC	PAYE	366.80
05/01/2026	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	627.76
		Total	1408.44

- c) Requests for donations. None.
d) Bank Reconciliation. Approved.

Bank Reconciliation at 10th January 2026		£
Balance per E bank statements at 10th January 2026		<u>3477.77</u>
Less unrepresented payments		0.00
Uncredited Deposits -		0.00
Balance per cash book		<u>3477.77</u>
Balance per cash book		<u>3477.77</u>

- e) Agree budget and precept for next financial year. The members discussed and agreed the budget 2026-27 prepared by the Clerk and the precept request for £10,000. The increase of £3000 was required to maintain a healthy balance to the accounts and ensure the Council had sufficient funds to cover election costs if they were required. The annual single property charge at Band D for 2026- 27 would increase by £30.06 annually/ £2.50 monthly for residents of Brinkburn and by £27.06 annually/ £2.26 monthly or residents of Hesleyhurst. **Appendix 1.**

10) Action Plan: November -December 2025. To address regular duties, prioritize initiatives, allocate resources, and track progress towards important goals not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

- a) Annual Insurance – review and obtain quotes. Awaiting information form NCC.
b) Playground – Inspect condition and record equipment. **Action: JW**
c) Review Internal Procedures and Regulations scheduled for review. No imminent issues for this meeting.

11) Planning.

- a) To note and discuss any planning issues since previous meeting.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
25/04663/FUL	9 Embleton Terrace	Registered	No Objection

12) Highways.

- a) Highways and Footpaths Report. No issues
b) Report on any issues raised/ to raise with NCC Highways. Road conditions between the Lee and Todd Burn, (particularly between the Gusset & Embleton Terrace Crossroads, around Magin Burn and Todd Burn) and between Forest Burn and Lees Siding (particularly at Suers’ Hill) were becoming quite serious and work to rectify the problems were taking some time. Clerk to ask GS if he could speak to Highways about this matter. **Action: Clerk**

13) Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund.

- a) Report. SB had informed DO that the WWCF committee were currently considering a request for funding for the Embleton Terrace Centenary event.
b) Application for x2 two-way radios. Clerk to speak to JW about this. **Action: Clerk/JW**
c) Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. Clerk to ask JW on progress **Action: Clerk/JW**

14) Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee Report. To receive a report from the Committee. No report as the December meeting had been cancelled. The next meeting was to take place in February. Issues raised:

- a) Meeting with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. The members agreed to ask the CC&B committee to hold this in abeyance until the completion arrangements for the sale of the Rothbury Estate was known. **Action: Clerk**
b) Annual Inspection of Biodiversity Tools and Equipment Report. **Action: JW**

15) Emergency Planning including:

- a) Check and oil flood warning signs. **Action: JW**
b) Test emergency two- way radios. **Action: JW**
c) Defibrillator status. **Action: SB**
d) The Emergency Flood Plan. The Plan and volunteer details were now registered with the Environment Agency who had also passed the details to NCC Civil Contingencies team.

16) Coquetdale Cluster Meeting.

- a) Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. Whitton & Tosson PC had withdrawn from the Cluster Meeting. Whilst the conduct and terms of reference of the meetings was on the agenda, other members were not keen to discuss this issue and so Whitton & Tesson’s concerns remained unresolved. The main issue discussed was concerning road and traffic conditions. All members were keen to see the 40-mph restriction out of Rothbury to the east extended along the length of the B6344 to Weldon Bridge. Apparently, the current restriction was initiated by NCC.
b) Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda.
i) State of the roads.

17) Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports.

- a) Longframlington Cemetery. No issues to report.
b) Rothbury JBC. No report available.

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- 18) **New Parish Website and .gov domain.** The new domain had been registered but the Clerk had been unable to do anything further on this. Details of the new domain address and website to be published in FramNews and other local parish magazines, once they were up and running. The new website and email domain needed to be launched before 31st March as this was a Government requirement and the existing website would be closed down at that time. Progress to be monitored. **Action: Clerk**
- 19) **Proposed Centenary Celebrations for Embleton Terrace and possible Parish involvement.** No current action required. Clerk had acted as referee of behalf of the PC for the application for funding to the WWCF. The PC were in full support of the event.
- 20) **To review community engagement.** The consensus was that exchange of information across the parish should be parishioner led and that the PC did not have the capacity to manage a daily media update system. Concern was raised about the security issues of WhatsApp if this was to be considered as a method of communication. It was agreed to review this item once the new website and email domain was fully operational. **Action: Clerk**
- 21) **To agree comments on NCC Corporate Performance Report** No further action agreed.
- 22) **To agree comments on the Northumberland Plan Review** Nothing further at this time.
- 23) **Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP.** To discuss viability, advantages and disadvantages of a Neighbourhood Plan. Rob Naples, Planning Officer had been unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed to ask him to attend a meeting to take place after the March Parish Council Meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- 24) **PREVENT:** National programme that aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. DO had undertaken training on this matter and could provide summary advice to the PC if required. Members were asked to make themselves familiar with the Prevent Members Handbook and bring any issues to the attention of the Council. **Action: All**
- 25) **NCC Joint Town and Parish Council Conference Thursday 5th March 2026.** Information and booking form had already been circulated. Members to submit booking directly to NCC if they wished to attend. **Action: All**
- 26) **Any Urgent Business.** None
- 27) **Items for Next Meeting.**
 - a) Donation to FramNews
- 28) **Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7.30 p.m. In the Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington.**

The meeting closed at 21.19 p.m.

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