Minutes of the Meeting of Chollerton Parish Council, Wednesday 23 September 2026, 7.00pm at Gunnerton Church

Present: Cllr Andy Bennett (Chair/minute taker), Cllr Ian Lancastle-Smith (Vice Chair), Cllr Bruce Lowdon, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr James McArdle, County Cllr Antonia Azocar-Bragg.

1. Apologies for absence: Mel Bramley, Parish Clerk

2. Open forum (maximum 15 minutes) when members of the public may raise matters with the Council
There were no members of the public present.

3. Declarations of interest from Members
Cllr Brown declared an interest in discussions relating to planning applications at Well House Farm, Colwell as he is a Colwell resident and had previously objected to the Poultry Farm application. The Chair noted that the PC's position on the application site was clear and already submitted, so Cllr Brown need not remove himself from any discussions.

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2026
These were approved.

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

Item 5b Quotations for repairs - Chishillways
The S106 forms requesting funding have been submitted to NCC by the Clerk.

5. Correspondence

(a) Consultation on Proposed Countywide Alcohol Public Spaces Protection Order. (PSPO)
Noted and agreed not to comment.

(b) Invitation to Town and Parish Council event, County Hall, 8 October 2026, 5pm
Cllr Bennett will try to attend. The invitation was extended to anyone else to share transport under the transport cost reimbursement policy.

(c) Northumberland Local Plan Update and consultation
Noted as a very early but important 'Gateway Asessment' stage of consultation regarding the structure of the process. A watching brief will be maintained.

(d) Consultation on County Council refreshed draft Gambling Licensing Policy
Noted with no specific input.

(e) Sport Tynedale request for donation 2026/27
It was discussed and agreed to donate £50.
ACTION: The Clerk to arrange donation.

(f) Tynedale Talking Newspaper (TTN) request for donation
It was agreed in principle to donate £50. However, a request had been sent for information regarding the local reach of the organisation. This has not yet been responded to so the donation will be held.
ACTION: The Clerk to chase response to request. Donation to be sent only after approval by the Chair.

6. County Councillor Report
The report has been circulated to all Councillors and will be uploaded to the PC website.
Cllr Azocar-Bragg talked through her report. She was thanked for her continued pressure on securing the Mobile Library service within the overall Library Review.
Councillors also asked about NCC's compliance with Government recycling legislation, which requires additional kerbside collections from 1st April 2026, including for glass and more types of plastic. Cllr Azocar-Bragg advised that NCC did not receive sufficient funds from central government to comply. Additional collections were being rolled out to urban areas. Councillors noted that this was exactly where they weren't required since there was generally easier access to recycling facilities in urban areas. However, it did of course mean that on a population headcount basis this enables NCC to claim higher compliance than if they spent the limited funds on providing the services in rural areas.
ACTION: The Clerk to write to NCC seeking an understanding of the current plans and relevant policy regarding recycling in rural areas.

7. **Items for discussion**

(a) Grass Cutting contract
The current 3 year contract runs to the end of 2026. It was agreed that the service supplied by Dickinsons was consistently high and value for money. As such, as a first stage they will be invited to extend the current contract.
ACTION: The Clerk to contact Dickinsons to ensure that the 2026 invoice is submitted, to retrieve the current contract and to invite Dickinsons to extend it.

8. Financial Matters
(a) Bank reconciliation – Balance at 10/9/2026 £16,403.

(b) List of payments since last meeting:
These were noted and agreed as stated on the agenda.

(c) The following payments were approved
Parish Clerk salary Q2 TBC
Parish Clerk stationery £32.50
It was noted that the centrally negotiated increase to NJC pay scales has been set at 3.3%, back dated to 1st April. Sarah at TyneRede has confirmed the present hourly rate of £16.35

increased to £16.89 per hour as of April 2026. It was agreed to apply this increase to the Clerk's hourly rate.
ACTION: The Clerk to confirm with TyneRede and seek advice on how to apply the back-dated element.

Cllr Lancastle-Smith confirmed that he was still progressing the approvals to enable him to become a 3rd full signatory on the bank account, along with the Chair and Parish Clerk.
ACTION: The Clerk will continue to liaise with Cllr Lancastle-Smith on this issue.

9. Planning Applications

26/02648/FUL Land East of Gunnerton Waterworks treatments Gunnerton Northumberland NE48 4AY. Installation of contact tank and kiosk, formation of access track and associated works - AWAITING RECOMMENDATION OR COMMITTEE.

26/02057/FUL Land South Of Low Farm Tone Lane Birtley Northumberland NE48 3JQ. Erection of a steel portal framed forestry workshop building – CONSULTATION CL0SES 16/09/2026.

26/02132/FUL Wayside Cottage Gunnerton Hexham Northumberland NE48 4AU. Rear extension – REFUSED.

26/01361/FUL Land West Of Well House Farm Colwell Northumberland NE464HX. Erection of poultry farm buildings - AWAITING DATE FOR NCC STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING.

The PC has been advised that a further submission from the applicant regarding analysis of all sensitive receptors (neighbouring properties/businesses/employees etc) across all expert reports is awaited. Councillors expressed disappointment that, a year since the original application was submitted and following countless requests for additional information from NCC departments, the applicant is still being given more time to alter documents.

The PC has been advised that NCC Enforcement team are visiting Well House Farm specifically regarding the retrospective application 26/01361/FUL, to regularise the use of the agricultural building as a centre for 'a number of local enterprises'. It was noted that, before the application was withdrawn, the PC had submitted a response NOT objecting to the application.

10. Clerk's matters
None.

11. Chair's matters
Northern Powergrid, Extra Care
Northern Powergrid have been contacting some residents (including the Chair) to let them know that they are now on the 'Extra Care Team' list. Apparently this is activated once a threshold number of power cuts is reached in an area. It is unclear exactly what the 'Extra Care' listing offers; when questioned in detail it was said that they were a 'conduit' to get answers to questions for the resident for a period of 90 days after being added to the list. There was no suggestion that this listing triggers any form of review of infrastructure to ameliorate the problem.

ACTION: The Clerk to contact Northern Powergrid to seek specific information as to what they are doing to resolve infrastructure problems in areas identified as suffering unacceptable levels of power cuts and so triggering 'Extra Care'.

12. Any Other Business

Cllr Brown and CC Azocar-Bragg are meeting with Neil Snowdon, Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement) on Friday 25th September to view the problems with Highways access from domestic properties in Colwell at the 60mph entry to the village. Cllr Bennett will join them.

13. Date and Venue for next meeting

Wednesday 25th November 2026, 7.00pm to 9.00pm, Barrasford Park

The meeting closed at 8.14pm.