
Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on:	11th January 2022
Meeting at:	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time:	7.00 p.m.
Present:	Cllrs: Steven Bray (SB), Mark Fenwick Lesley Hall (LH), Vincent Milburn (VM) David Owen- Chair (DO), Jackie Scarpa (JS) Jamie Whicker (JW).
In attendance:	Paul Jones: Service Director - Local Services, NCC, Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

- 1. Apologies for Absence.** County Cllr Glenn Sanderson, Cllrs Steven Bray and Lesley Hall.
- 2. To discuss issues of relevance to the Parish Council with Cllr Sanderson, Leader Northumberland County Council and Paul Jones, Service Director - Local Services.**

The Chair welcomed Paul Jones to the meeting and invited him to respond to the issues that the PC had identified for discussion. PJ informed the meeting that Cllr Sanderson had sent his apologies as he had to attend another pressing council meeting.

- i. Storm Arwen** had proved to be a massive incident in the North East especially for Northumberland. From the first Saturday following the storm until the end of the incident, PJ had been the appointed senior officer in charge of emergency services. Throughout the crisis, NCC had managed to maintain normal frontline services whilst providing emergency services throughout the county. This had been the most challenging severe weather emergency within the county for the last 30 years or more. Most others had been localised to certain parts of the county. With no form of electronic communication, this had been a particularly challenging event. In addition to the lack of electricity there had been lots of water outages. NCC were aware that the information received from Northern Powergrid was not very good and had not kept pace with what was happening on the ground. In addition to the Government's inquiry, NCC has had announced its own inquiry which will be overseen by its Scrutiny Committee. There will be opportunities for local businesses, community organisations and individuals to feed into both national and countywide inquiries. However, the details and timescales had yet to be announced. It was estimated the costs of repair to the County would be many millions. Damage included: clearance and repairs to roads; damage to street lighting and significant repairs to the Holy Island Crossing. Council teams supported by local farmers and volunteers were able to deal with most highway access blockages very quickly. However, some blockages took some days to clear. Whilst roads were now clear the priority was to clear highway ditches and debris on the sides of roads as these are deemed to be hazardous. This would take several months to complete. Most country parks and open spaces, which were the responsibility of NCC, were open within the week, although their remained areas within these that were still closed to the public. There was also significant damage to NCC's cemeteries and to many 'gateways' into settlements which required attention. NCC were working with landowners to ensure rights of way were cleared. DO asked if NCC would be consulting with Parish Councils regarding their issues. PJ expected that this would happen. VM asked why it had taken so long for the crisis to be declared a major incident. PJ explained that there was a significant process to go through to determine whether local services could contain the situation and what additional resources would be needed (especially risk to life), from outside the area. The situation had been reviewed by the senior executive group daily and when it was clear that Northern Powergrid were not going to get power back to many areas a major incident was declared. DO stated that to people on the ground it was clear that there was a major incident very early on and policy makers should have reacted more quickly. People lost confidence in the Services, particularly Northern Powergrid (NP) because of lack of accurate information. Indeed, much of NP's information about when reconnection was to take place was misleading. Many people were given a false sense of security and did not leave their homes as NP had told them that power would be restored imminently, when in fact it had been many days before this occurred. VM said the problem did not lie with the engineers and operatives on the ground who had done an excellent job, working night and day to clear debris and make repairs. PJ agreed and said that the issues lay at NP management level. One major issue was that power to many water transfer stations were without electricity causing significant knock-on effects. Concern was raised about the quality of the response from our local county councillor. There had been no direct contact with residents and when asked if he could help with sourcing an electric generator for vulnerable people and key workers had told the PC that people could go to the soup kitchen in Rothbury for support. This response had angered and frustrated many residents. PJ said generators were at a premium, most going to care homes and schools. The usual arrangement in emergency situations was to set up respite stations and there were designated buildings across the county for this, but in this situation, this had proved difficult as many of these places did not have power. JS suggested that NCC could work with local hospitality services who could provide such services. This was obviously something important to explore for the inquiry. JW made several suggestions for the future:
 - Communities to be provided with a hard copy list of emergency and local services
 - Produce a list of vulnerable people. NCC did have a list provided from information by Adult Community Services and GP services, although this perhaps did not capture all those in need within an emergency situation.
 - Produce a list of volunteers, their expertise along with buildings and amenities (such as suppliers of generators) that could be accessed in times of emergency
 - Village hall access as emergency hubs. Clerk informed the meeting that Longframlington Parish Council were in discussion with the Longframlington Memorial Hall and the village churches to develop such facilities and that BHPC may wish to join in with this arrangement.
 - Place electric cabling underground as most of damage to power network was caused by trees pulling down wires. Whilst this was an excellent suggestion, the costs were prohibitive and there were significant technical difficulties in doing this NCC recognised that both NP and BT had significant issues concerning the maintenance of their networks and this would be a major focus within the review. Northumbria Water also had issues in dealing with emergency situations. They often called on NCC for support as their provision appeared inadequate. DO thanked PJ for his honest and valuable input. On behalf of

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the Parish, he thanked NCC for their fantastic work on tree and road clearance and asked that Paul convey our comments to the County Council.

- ii. **Subsidence at Todstead on the B6344 between the Anglers Arms and Brinkburn New Houses.** This was a long-standing issue as the hillside was constantly moving due to an active landslide. The road had been regraded numerous times and NCC had agreed that a permanent engineering solution was required as it was aware that if this was not carried out a catastrophic failure could occur resulting in a much greater cost for repair. Detailed investigation was now complete, and the final geo-modelling report was near conclusion. This had been a very complicated procedure due to the very complex geology. The artesian pressure being released during the drilling of bore holes had resulted in vast amounts of groundwater coming to the surface which had to be captured so that it did not flow into the watercourse. Geo-consultants were now in the process of producing an engineering solution which was hoped to be completed by April 2022. Currently NCC is in discussion with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the funding for the work. JS informed the meeting that at the recent Cluster meeting it had been reported that the B6344 at this point had been built during World War II as a military road and it had never been the intention that the road would become permanent. NCC were aware of the concerns about a diversion via Rothbury Road, Longframlington, especially as the estimated time for the work was around 60 weeks. It was likely that the official diversion would be via the New Moor Crossroads. MF asked for assurance that traffic to Brinkburn would not be required to use the New Moor Crossroads diversion as they would have a real impact on business. PJ agreed to take back this concern for consideration. Once funding has been agreed with DfT, which was by no means a certainty because although DfT recognised the B6344 as a significant highway, the repairs were not included within its planned activity, then it would take approximately 20 weeks for procurement procedures to take place before work can begin. There was no further work or road closure planned in the meantime but this did not mean that this could not happen if there was a further landslide. It was noted that our MP was very supportive of the planned engineering solution and had been lobbying Government on this. DO asked that NCC keep the PC informed of developments to which PJ agreed.
- iii. **Residents at Todstead concerns about the condition of the road on Villa Lane at Todstead and the frequent traffic using as a rat run and travelling through Todstead at high speed. Hedges need attention to enable visibility.** PJ said that he had travelled the road to get to the meeting. It was his opinion that the road would not fit DfT criteria for a speed limit and there was no real evidence to support further detailed investigation or surveying at this point. The residents and/or PC would need to provide much more detailed evidence before Highways would investigate further. DO agreed to ask Todstead residents to gather more detailed evidence.

Action: DO

- iv. **Embleton Terrace.** SB had reported to DO that all the road signs were now back up. Thanks to Barry Knox at Highways. Also all grit boxes had been filled and gritting routes were now being correctly followed. DO informed PJ that the road surface condition of many of the roads in the parish were in a poor state of repair. Road surfaces were inspected regularly, but it was important that local residents and the PC report any road damage on the NCC website where there is an auditable process linked to a planned programme of works. Whilst there is significant funding for road repairs, given the length of the county's road network, this meant the money was stretched thinly and not all repairs could be addressed at once.

DO welcomed the detail and openness of PJ's contribution and thanked him for his attendance. He hoped, as there were a few outstanding issues that communication between NCC and BHPC would remain open. He asked PJ to inform Cllr Sanderson that he would be very welcome to attend the next meeting of the PC.

PJ left the meeting at 8.35 p.m.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** - The minutes of the meetings held Tuesday 28th September 2021 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such.
4. **Matters arising out of Minutes.**
5. **Correspondence** – All key items were included in the agenda.
6. **Finance**

- a. Receipts since the last meeting. None
- b. Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved

15/11/2021	Julie Ayre	Grasscutting	BACS	320.00
01/12/2021	NCC 018647232049	PC Insurance	BACS	175.07
01/12/2021	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses (Oct-Dec)	BACS	383.80
01/12/2021	HMRC	PAYE (Oct- Dec)	BACS	92.40
03/12/2021	Mike Evens	Scarify football field	BACS	25.00
05/01/2022	Thropton PC	Coquetdale Cluster Fee	BACS	13.00

- c. Requests for donations. None
- d. Bank Reconciliation to Bank Reconciliation on 11th January 2022. Approved.

Balance per bank statements		£
on 10th January 2022		2664.42
	Less unrepresented cheques	0.00
	Uncredited Deposits	0.00
Balance per cash book		2664.42
Balance per cash book		2664.42

- e. To agree Budget and Precept for y.e. 31/03/23. The budget and Precept (£5090) were approved (Appendix 1).

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- f. On-line Banking. This was now fully operational. New procedures to be approved within the Council's Standing Orders which were dealt with under Item 13.

7. Planning

Ref	Address	Type	Status	PC Comment
21/03166/FUL	Building Northeast Of Wardshill Farm House	Application	Registered	No Objection

8. Highways

- a. Highways and Footpaths Report JS reported that repairs to bridge at Magnum Burn were still outstanding. She was asked to follow up on this. **Action: JS**
- b. Report on any issues raised/ to raise with Highways Department including:
- i. **Traffic Calming Measures: Embleton Terrace & B6344 at Todstead.** Following the consultation with the residents of Embleton Terrace, the Parish Council agreed to go with Option 1: refreshing the existing 'slow' road markings and adding 1m wide red bands above and below the 'slow' road markings between the extents of the existing 'Playground' signs. The project would automatically go forward for implementation in 2022-23, though if any funding becomes available before then NCC will bring it forward. The Clerk had made enquiries with NCC about installing VAS signs 'Children Playing/ Playground/Slow Down'. Swarco and Unipart Dorman (UD) are the main two NCC preferred suppliers. SWARCO had provided information but after several attempts to contact them UD had not replied. If the Council decided to go ahead with the VAS signs, it would need NCC to approve the sign locations. SWARCO quote for 1 sign is below. If we were to go for two signs, price would be doubled. We would need to supply and site the post. NCC would probably do this at a cost. This quotation from Swarco was £3,033.83 ex vat. Additional cost for solar including Install was £516.17 ex vat. Members agreed to move forward with submitting a request from the Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund. As the final cost for the installation of two signs would be in the region of £10,000 which was outside the normal grants from the Fund it would be necessary to follow this up with its administrator. A report on this to be submitted at the next meeting. **Action DO/Clerk**
- ii. **Subsidence B6344 at Todstead.** See item 2.ii above
- iii. **Damage to signage at Embleton Terrace.** See item 2.iv above
- iv. **Road Condition Todstead** - Villa Lane. See item 2.iii above

9. Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund

- a. BHPC Replacement representative on WWFCF. DO reported that SB had offered to replace MF on the committee. It was agreed that MF remain as representative until such time that the handover can be formalised at a future PC meeting.
- b. Upgrade of land at Southwest corner of crossroads above Embleton Terrace. JS had made contact with a person who had agreed to do the 'topping' of the area, but this had been delayed due to the wet conditions and will take place in the Spring following which a survey of the plant species will take place. It will then be possible to produce recommendations for the conservational development of the area. DO reported that the wild flower area in the playing field was proving to be very successful with many species of plants and a noticeable increase in insects.
- c. Defibrillator Final Report. This had been deferred until the end of August by WWFCF to enable the training to take place and associated costs to be included in the report. Training yet to be arranged but this had been held up as face-to face training sessions have been suspended due to Coronavirus. It was agreed that the training event would take place as part of the Community engagement event in the summer. Meantime the online training would be circulated to residents via WhatsApp. **Action: DO/SB**
The telephone box in which the defibrillator resides had been damaged in Storm Arwen and had been temporarily repaired by JW. **Action: JW**

10. Coquetdale Cluster Meeting

- a. Report from last meeting – The key item for discussion at the meeting was the subsidence at Storm Arwen.
- b. **Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda:** Storm Arwen: Impact and Review of Emergency response **Action: JS**

11. Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports

- a. **Longframlington Cemetery.** Procedures for the full transfer of ownership of the cemetery land from NCC to Longframlington PC were well underway. Home Office Planning Permission for the land to be designated for a cemetery agreed in the 1950's had been verbally confirmed by NCC as remaining legally binding and LPC were awaiting official confirmation. The consecration of the extension was on hold until the transfer of ownership was complete.
- b. **Rothbury JBC.** Following a tree inspection there was planned tree removal and conservation work to be carried out at a cost of £3000. The RJBC were considering diverting the stream, that runs North- South through the cemetery land, directly into the Coquet which would free up a considerable area for burial plots. Discussions regarding the future of RJBC were ongoing. A suggestion had been made that the RJBC be disbanded and a sub-committee with reps from each 'member' council be established. Clerk was asked for his advice, and said he thought that clear guidance from NALC and NCC should be sought before any decision be made.

12. **Police Update.** The following report was received: I am Police Community Support Officer Rob Younger 4481 and I have recently joined the Alnwick Neighbourhood Team from Berwick. I have been given the rural areas and cover Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst. Unfortunately, due to our shifts I am unable to attend the meeting in person. I have had a look through our systems and there is nothing to report for the Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst area other than a couple calls reporting suspicious vehicles. These vehicles have been checked on our systems and circulated to patrols during the times of the calls. Please can I encourage the parish to report any suspicious vehicles/goings on to police so we can help prevent any potential crimes etc. I do have some information from slightly further afield in relation to poaching and vehicle thefts.

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Belford -Vehicle Seized and uplifted - Poaching Prevention Act. A Silver Skoda Octavia was seized and uplifted under the Poaching Prevention Act after reports of wildlife crime in the Belford area last night (020122)

Rothbury – Theft of Motor Vehicles. Occurred at 1830hrs on Thu 30th December. Two Land Rovers stolen from a farm, one was located in Colwell, Hexham after crashing into a wall, the second Land Rover remains outstanding. Possibly sightings in Durham – enquiries are ongoing. Vehicle Registration - SY12CAA (may now be on false plates. Land Rover Defender (Green) Incident Number NP-20211230-0787

If you have any queries, then please get in touch and I will get back to you when I can. If it is an emergency, then please use the 101/999 or online submissions to report it.

It was agreed to invite the Community Police representative to the next meeting

- 13. Review of Internal Procedures.** *The Council was required to review its internal procedures every two years. Chair and Clerk had reviewed the documents and members had received the amended documents in advance. Most remain unchanged. There were three however that needed discussion prior to agreeing the procedures en bloc:*
- a. ***Standing Orders.** New procedures for on-line banking had been added. They had been adapted from the NALC's Financial Accounting Procedures after taking advice from Stephen Ricketts and would enable the Council to carry out banking on-line as agreed at the last meeting.*
 - b. ***Social Media Policy.** This was a new policy and would be required as and when we communicate through social media and have again been adapted from NALC's proforma.*
 - c. ***Privacy Notice.** This notice would cover the Council's responsibilities to meet GDPR requirements on its webpage. Clerk had consulted with Stephen Ricketts, and he was advised that the NALC Privacy Notice which sits at the front of the Northumberland ALC website (on which our webpage sits) is intended to cover all parishes on the site. Therefore, it was unnecessary to produce a separate policy. It was proposed to place a note/link on our webpage to the NALC Privacy Notice. Members were in agreement. The Council unanimously agreed to the amendments to its Internal Procedures.*
- 14. Communication with residents.** To discuss proposal for a Social Event. It was agreed at the last meeting that this would be the preferred method to communicate with residents (including children) giving an opportunity to share key issues. A summer B-B-Q appeared to be the most popular option. One of the main focal points would be the defibrillator traing It was agreed to discuss the arrangements for this at the next meeting.
- 15. Lee Farm Woodland.** To discuss a proposal to create a woodland cemetery. At the last meeting MF suggested the possibility of creating a woodland cemetery in the new plantation. Members had continued interest in the idea and agreed that this item be an item for further detailed discussion at this meeting.
- 16. Any Other Business.** *None to date*
- 17. Items for Next Meeting.**
- a. **BHPC Defibrillator Training and Communication & Social Event**
 - b. **Lee Farm Woodland. To discuss a proposal to create a woodland cemetery.**
- 18. Date of and Venue for Next Meeting.** **Tuesday 15th March 2022 at 7.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Longframlington**

The meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

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