



**Minutes of the Meeting of Chollerton Parish Council,
Wednesday 18 March 2026, 7.00pm at Barrasford Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Andy Bennett (Chair), Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Ian Lancaster-Smith, Cllr James McArdle

In attendance: Mel Bramley, Parish Clerk

Members of the public: four members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Fiona Charlton, Cllr Bruce Lowdon, County Cllr Antonia Azocar-Nevin
It was recorded that Cllr Edward Heslop has resigned from the Council.
2. **Open forum (maximum 15 minutes) when members of the public may raise matters with the Council.**

Cllr Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting. All members of the public advised that they were present to raise matters relating to the proposed poultry farm at Colwell.

The members of the public raised concerns related to:

Odour emissions.

Concerns that, should the application be approved by NCC, this would have potential to “open the door” for future similar facilities.

Animal welfare issues and how there is growing concern as large conglomerates of poultry farms are increasing across the country.

The impact of greenhouse gases on global warming, and other local environmental issues.

Noise management and road safety including from automatic feeding equipment, ventilation fans, machinery and transport vehicles through the area.

It was noted that timescales for the decision making by the County Council were not yet set. The application will however be heard at Strategic Planning Committee. It was suggested that if individuals wanted to speak at this meeting they should proactively contact the Planning Department.

The public forum was then closed.

3. Declarations of interest from Members

Cllr Smith declared an interest in discussions relating to lighting improvements at Barrasford Park bus stop.

Item 9 Planning 25/03717/FULES – Poultry unit, Land West of Well House Farm Colwell, was brought up the agenda to allow members of the public to listen to the discussion.

A discussion followed, looking at the latest submission from the applicant and the question list submitted by the Council. It was unanimously agreed to object to the application. Grounds to include: information accuracy, the odour impact on neighbours, the environmental impact, risks to Hallington Reservoir, road safety and climate change impacts.

ACTION: The Clerk will submit the objection.

4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th March 2026

These were approved.

Matters arising from the above not addressed elsewhere on the agenda:

The Clerk and Cllr Azocar-Nevin had independently confirmed that Section 106 monies can be paid to groups up front and not, as previously stated by NCC, only available as a reimbursement, where organisations would have needed to find the money themselves first before claiming it back from NCC.

The Clerk has passed this on to local organisations, playground groups etc.

The Gunnerton treatment works planning proposal is to renew equipment and increase the capacity to supply fresh water. The plan has not yet been submitted to NCC.

5 Correspondence

There was no further correspondence to discuss.

6. County Councillor Report

The report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

It was also noted that, as a member of the inequalities group, Cllr Azocar-Nevin has been active in ensuring that, within the consultation of the future of the library service as a whole, the mobile library service provision remains at the forefront of discussions. Consultation links have been added to the PC website. Whilst the consultation has been advertised across a number of channels it was also noted that libraries were still handing out old leaflets without any web links.

7. Items for discussion

(a) Website update

The current NALC hosted site will be switched off at the end of March. The new website, using the required .gov.uk domain, will be ready for this. Both websites will run in parallel for 2 weeks, with a redirect notice from the old site. New email addresses for the Clerk and Chair will be set up by the end of April. The Chair and Clerk have attended online training with Hugo Fox (web hosting company) to familiarise themselves with the content management system for the new site. It was noted that the first year's hosting cost will effectively be zero. There will be a 50% reduction from Hugo Fox and a 50% reimbursement against NALC membership costs in the coming year.

(b) East Acres Parking

Cllr Lancaster-Smith reported that a surveyor from Karbon Homes has been on site to review costs for

new flagstones for the existing paved area outside 23/25.

It is also understood that Karbon will not consider selling this area of land to the residents.

The Clerk has written to Karbon asking that no grassed/paved areas are fenced off without further consideration in respect to general parking and emergency vehicle access. This has been acknowledged and passed to Karbon's ground maintenance team.

It was noted that parking is worse than ever around East Acres. More cars and larger vehicles are coming into the area and parking in some cases is becoming more congested.

ACTION: It was agreed that the PC would keep a “watching brief” on this matter.

(c) Interactive speed signs at Colwell and Gunnerton

The poles for the signs have been erected.

ACTION: The Clerk will liaise with NCC to have the signs erected and the work completed.

(d) Mobile library and library consultation

This had been previously discussed.

(e) Lighting at Barrasford Park Bus Stop

NCC have agreed to improve the area by providing wind/solar powered lighting.

ACTION: The Clerk will liaise with NCC Highways Dept with the goal of completing works by 31 March 2026.

(f) IT policy

The Clerk has drafted a policy for review.

ACTION: Cllr Bennett will review for consideration at the meeting in May.

(g) Parish Councillor vacancies

There are currently two vacancies. In accordance with protocols the vacancies will be advertised on PC website and on noticeboards.

ACTION: The Clerk will collate responses

(h) Parish Councillor travel expenses

It was agreed that where Councillors are carrying out duties such as attending NCC meetings, events and representing the Parish, travel expenses should be paid. The rates are set by the Local Government Association and followed by the County Council.

ACTION: The Clerk has produced a form for claiming expenses, and it was unanimously agreed that claiming expense of this nature should be encouraged.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Budget for 2026/27

The previously circulated budget report was discussed. It was noted that the PC is running to the 5 year

plan set last year and is in a healthier financial position. It was noted that reserves should be around the level of the precept. It is important that the PC try to ensure that all payments are made in the financial year to which they apply, in order to ensure that end of year balance is representative of true spend.

ACTION: All present agreed to the proposed budget for 2026/2027 and to publishing it, which has not previously been undertaken.

(b) End of year accounts and bank reconciliation

The accounts were noted in the report previously circulated by the Clerk.

(c) A list of payments made since the last meeting were noted.

(d) The following payments were approved:

Barrasford Village Hall room hire £16.00.

Tyne Rede payroll services £120 +VAT

Stationery reimbursement M Bramley £29.87

Parish Clerk Q4 salary £683.80

Parish Clerk working from home contribution £100.00.

Hugo Fox website set up (tbc) £199.00.

Councillor mileage reimbursement for NCC meetings £48.60.

Rent for Gunnerton Playing field £150.00 (due on 1 April 2026)

Rent for Barrasford play area £30.00.

9. Planning Applications

25/03717/FULES – Poultry unit, Land West of Well House Farm Colwell

Previously discussed.

26/00657/FUL Conversion of former Barrasford Methodist Chapel to single self-contained dwelling
It was agreed that the PC would positively support this application.

26/00707/VARYCO Threpwood Hill Cottage Birtley

The PC considered the variations and agreed a “no comment” response.

ACTION: The Clerk will add these comments to the planning portal.

10. Information Items

(a) Joint Town and Parish Council meeting 5/3/2026

Cllr Bennett attended the meeting and stated it was useful to attend in terms of meeting a number of

key NCC officers and Julie Leddy from Frontline, a community project which helps signpost the public to local health and wellbeing services.

Rob Murfin, Director of Housing and Planning, spoke about the housing plan for Northumberland and the new Northumberland Housing Strategy to meet increased nationally set targets. A new Local Plan Consultation is beginning, with the requirement to deliver new targets for an additional c1000 homes a year above the current target.

(b) Barrasford Quarry rubbish clearance update and potential visit.

It was noted that Chris Hunter, Tarmac, had acted promptly to the request to clear up the area.

ACTION: The Clerk will write to him thanking him for his assistance and requesting some possible dates over the next few months for Councillors to visit the quarry.

11. Any other business

(a) Northumbrian Water information event

Cllr Bennett attended a recent event at Humshaugh Village Hall to hear about the work underway to improve reliability of supply and deliver improvements to water quality and environmental protection. Further events will take place throughout the year to inform of project updates.

(b) Pocket Park in Chishillways

Cllr Lancaster-Smith reported that the gate post had rotted off at ground level on one side and is unstable on the other. There was some discussion as to the ownership of this area. It is understood that the area was 'gifted' as a part of the development and that the PC has, in the past, covered maintenance costs. The grass is cut under the PC's contract with Dickinson's. It was suggested that a new picket fence be installed, with a double gate to allow lawnmower access, using Section 106 funds. The cost is estimated at no more than £1,000.

ACTION: Cllr Lancaster-Smith to provide photos to the Clerk and the Clerk to approach NCC section 106 team to enquire as to availability of funds for this type of work.

(c) Bus stop at Barrasford Park

Cllr Smith explained a plan to improve and clear up the area around the entrance to Barrasford Park and the bus stop. This work would include a new low wall between the shelter and the Park wall and repairs to the shelter itself, and would all be funded by Barrasford Park. The land belongs to Barrasford Park and the shelter to the PC. Cllr Smith asked for approval from the PC to undertake repair works specifically related to bus shelter improvements. Any requirements for planning permissions will be covered by Barrasford Park. The principle of the proposal was welcomed.

ACTION: Cllr Smith will email the Clerk detailing the proposal. This will be circulated to Councillors for comment and approval.

12. Date and Venue of next meeting

27 May 2026 at Barrasford Village Hall. AGM followed by the scheduled PC meeting.

The meeting ended at 9pm.

2026/27 Budget

Budget Sheet 2026/7

	2025/6 budget	2025/6 F'cast EOY	2026/7 budget			
	£	£	£	£	£ increase over actual	% increase over actual
<u>Receipts</u>						
Opening Balance	£7,040	£8,606		£7,289		
Precept	£8,960	£8,960	£9,856		£896	10%
Other receipts (incl VAT refund)						
Total	£16,000	£17,566		£17,145	£1,145	7%
<u>Payments</u>						
Administration	£4,515	£3,310		£3,740	£430	13%
Ground Maintenance/Rent	£2,773	£5,056		£2,933	-£2,123	-42%
Services	£1,120	£1,286		£1,475	£189	15%
Donations	£500	£625		£700	£75	12%
Contingency	£500	£0		£500	£500	
Total payments	£9,408	£10,277		£9,348	-£929	-9%
Closing Balance (reserves)	£6,592	£7,289		£7,797	£1,205	18%

Notes:

Forward budgeting based on accrual accounting where invoices are paid as services are supplied

Overspend in 25/6 due to: overspend in ground maintenance from previous financial year's grass cutting £2388 paid in this fy.

underspend in administration due to budget overstated, corrected for 26/7 budget

If spend in 24/5 and 25/6 are combined to correct the scheduling of invoices then plan was £20,708 and actual is forecast at £20,008, a £700 underspend

This shows as an increase in reserves at end of 25/6 of £697

Budget for 26/7 proposed at £9348

This is slightly below the original 5 year plan of £9596, whilst supporting a £200 increase in donations and a contribution to restoring reserves