

**Minutes from the Meeting of West Allen Parish Council**  
**Wednesday 27 May 2026 at 17:00 – Ninebanks Church & Community Hall**

**Present:** Lis Dales (Chair), Helen Manson (HM), Jane Braybrook (JB) & Fiona McIlroy (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Gilly Davies (GD)

**In Attendance:** Cllr Colin Horncastle (CH)

**1. Appointment of Chair**

Chair position was discussed. GD had let the Clerk know that she would not put herself forward as did JB due to other commitments. HM said she would prefer not to be chair. GD felt the present chair should remain for continuity. It was AGREED that Lis Dales would remain as chair.

The chair then welcomed everyone.

**2. Public Questions** – No public present as Annual Meeting follows.

**3. Minutes of last meeting on 18 March 2026**

The minutes had previously been circulated, and no issues were raised and therefore they were APPROVED.

**4. Matters arising**

- a) CH updated on the bus situation. Chris Curtis from NCC had offered to partly fund new bus if the route could be changed to the old bus route including Ninebanks but offer was refused by Westmorland Council. There followed a short discussion, and a request was made of CH to have one of the Allenheads buses on a Tuesday to be diverted. CH said he would ask Chris Curtis to investigate.
- b) Joe Morris MP very invested in matter. Northumbrian Water will carry out feasibility test at their own cost. CH will ask if there is any NCC funding available should the project be feasible.
- c) LD explained situation about batteries at mobile mast and the impact it has to CH. He said he would pass to NCC and see if they were able to get any further. LD to copy CH on emails from VM02. LD also explained that a resident had a heart attack and fortunately the power was back on so an ambulance could be called and a neighbour to get the defibrillator. If the power had still been off, no contact could have been made. HM's husband is with mountain rescue and therefore needs to be able to receive messages. It is therefore vital that the backup batteries are working. They used to work, but that is no longer the case, despite being told otherwise by VMO2.

**5. AGAR**

The AGAR was APPROVED and signed by Chair and Clerk and would be uploaded to website at the relevant time.

**6. Improve the quality of life and the environment in the local area**

- a) GD had highlighted the need for new way markers on Mohope Moor. Duncan Lovatt is the NCC Rights of Way contact. The chair is going to walk the route on Friday and send email with W3W locations.
- b) There was a short discussion about the road resurfacing at Chapel Bank and JB said that as NCC were going to do it, they may as well do the whole road from the start of Ninebanks, which CH agreed was terrible. HM commented that the retaining wall was

in very bad condition and falling into the road and that it should be fixed before the resurfacing. LD to copy CH with previous correspondence with will contact Mark Mather of NCC and CH will discuss with Highways.

**7. Working to bring improvements (through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies)**

**a) WAPC Resilience Group**

- The Starlink test has been postponed a few times and awaiting further dates from NCC. LD saw the device at a recent resilience event run by NCC and pointed out that it can run off a car battery.
- LD and clerk to buy UPS at own cost.

**7. Influencing and shaping the long-term development policy for the Parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish**

No comments on applications at Bench Mark.

**8. Deciding how much to raise through local tax in order to deliver services**

- a) Bank balance is £3,357.19.
- b) It was AGREED to pay NALC invoice of £36.73, ICO £52, hall invoice £10 and insurance of £387.42. The clerk will ask insurer's if they would reduce admin fee.
- c) The IT policy was APPROVED and was signed by councillors and clerk.

**9. Correspondence**

- Allendale Almshouses – clerk to publish opening for trustee on website.
- Graeme Hodgson had confirmed to clerk that Whitfield PC had agreed to sort out the mirror at top of Ouston Bank.
- Following a complaint about dog fouling, LD produced some signs from NCC which will be put up in Ninebanks and Mohope. NCC has confirmed that “Stick & Flick” is not allowed and owners must clean up after their dog.

**10.** CH had not been well so did not wish to expand on what was happening in the rest of Northumberland. He asked for contact for Carrshield Village Hall as he'd like to give some financial support out of his budget. Confirmed that the road into Ninebanks was dreadful.

**11. Any other business**

- Review – the PC had made contacts which helped and would them to keep trying to get things improved. Chair to create a list of contacts for the Clerk
- The clerk will look at uploading a map of the parish to the website.
- Communications –the best way to deal with getting things to the residents is still via the website.
- The Chair thanked CH for attending as he had been unwell.

**11. Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2026 at 7pm at Ninebanks Church and Community Hall.