

**Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting**

Blanchland Village Hall

On Tuesday 17th February 2025 at 7:00pm

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr M Kennedy Mr T Bowers, Mr D Kelly, Mr G Kennedy, Councillor C Horncastle, Clerk Mrs C Asquith. Members of the public: Mr T Beadle, Mr D Asquith & Mr R Harrison (Blanchland Village Hall).
 - 1.1: The Meeting was opened up to the Public with regard to the following minutes - (5.1, 5.5)
2. **Apologies:** Mr M Forster
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Michael Kennedy, Tim Bowers, G Kennedy - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee. D Kelly - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee & Blanchland Village Hall. Carolyn Asquith Blanchland Artisan Markets & Blanchland Village Hall Treasurer.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 9th December 2025:** Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance:** Issues have been reported to NCC, most recently flooding of the Village Hall/Showfield, pooling of water at the bottom of Shildon Road (outside the Tea Rooms) and on the approach to Cowbyre Bank. R Harrison and D Asquith have taken a look at the drainage system above the Show Field on the opposite side of the road and discovered that both drains were blocked, once unblocked they feel that a bung could be fitted to prevent run off water coming onto the field and it would instead be diverted to the village. The Clerk put a Fix my Street report and an email into Glen Harrison (cc CH) and had received a positive response to both. Councillor Horncastle confirmed he would follow this up with NCC after budget day. A resident spoke to the Clerk before Christmas and said their wife had fallen on the road at Shildon where the road is very uneven, he was in touch with NCC but no further updates have been forthcoming.
 - 5.2 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** No progress with repairs to the boardwalk at Baybridge. Due to erosion on the fell the wooden bridge at Pennypie is almost unusable and is a risk for walkers, Clerk to flag with NCC and fix my street if it picks it up.
 - 5.3 **Local Transport Plan/Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** Councillor Horncastle confirmed that there is allocated money in this year's budget for Blanchland, and he will obtain more information over coming weeks to share with the PC.
 - 5.4 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** Work has commenced between Slaley and Pennypie.
 - 5.5 **Artisan Market/Car Parking:** The Showfield is still in need of work, but due to the heavy and consistent rain, it is still too wet to work on. Once it is drier, R Harrison will be making appropriate repairs at the cost of the Village Hall. R Harrison and D Asquith met with Anne Dyer (new Savills Representative, who has replaced Ed Hanson) to discuss parking options for large village events, alternatives were discussed including using the fields further along the plain, making suitable adjustments, widening the slip road down to the field and using/embedding matting to offer a hard surface at gateways. It was agreed that this could also benefit the Show and other large events, such as the plans in 2027 for the Abbey project re-enactments etc. Funding and permission of incoming tenants was discussed and the Clerk and VH representatives will keep the PC up to date with developments.
 - 5.6 **Website:** The Clerk has applied for the domain name BlanchlandParishCouncil.gov.uk. The process with Hugo Fox has commenced and it should take between 3 and 6 weeks for the domain name to be confirmed. The clerk has opened up an account and the PC can start work on the website in advance. A banner and profile picture have been added and the Clerk has asked Mr G Kennedy for support in migrating the documents from the old site to the new. She has shared the passwords for both sites with GK he requested she check in with him in 3 weeks.

6. Finances

6.1 Current statement/Balance: £505.12

6.2 Petty Cash: Petty Cash in credit to the amount of 10.53 (cash held by Clerk)

6.3 Clerk Wages: £86.40 (chq no.096? signed by TB and MF)

6.4 VAT: Ongoing

7. New Business:

7.1 Donations: No new applications this quarter.

7.2 Planning Applications: No new applications since last email. Issues with opening the link sent by Clerk to the Councillors. Clerk to investigate an easier method to share information on Planning applications.

7.3 Village Bench Replacement: TB suggested that the bench at the bottom of the road opposite the Tea Rooms is broken and not fit for use and asked that it be replaced. He suggested that the new bench could be a memorial bench for the recently passed John Ridley. Helen Ridley is in favour of the idea and it was muted that contributions could be made by PC, B&H Show and Village Hall representatives to speak to their respective committees and feedback at the next meeting. R Harrison suggested he would check that the current bench isn't a memorial bench and he will remove the old one and will seek quotes for a new bench, this was agreed.

7.4 New Parish Councillor: Mr D Clegg has been contacted re: coopting onto the council when M Kennedy steps down in May, Clerk to facilitate.

7.5 Village nativity in the Pant: It has been requested that an alternative arrangement be created to replace the nativity scene from last year as it was open to some ridicule and it was not weather/wind resistant. The Clerk will contact Alice Ellison in the first instance.

Meeting closed 20:30 pm:

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 19th May at 7pm 2026 - This will be the Annual General Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting