

**Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting**

Blanchland Village Hall

On Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7:00pm

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Mr M Kennedy Mr M Forster Mr D Kelly, Mr G Kennedy, Mr G Owen, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.
2. **Apologies:** Councillor C Hornscastle
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Michael Kennedy, Michael Forster, Tim Bowers - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee. Dave Kelly - Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee & Blanchland Village Hall. Carolyn Asquith Blanchland Artisan Markets & Blanchland Village Hall Treasurer & Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th May 2025 2025:** Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Shildon Road and Clapshaw:** Clerk to continue flagging up the issues and contacting NCC to ask about repairs.
 - 5.2 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** Duncan Lovatt has contacted Luke Hemmings from Savills regarding the riverside path, The Clerk will continue to follow up and report back to the PC.
 - 5.3 **Local Transport Plan:** InfoCouncillors have a copy of the email and will feedback their thoughts to the Clerk, if required an earlier meeting will be called to discuss.
 - 5.4 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** No updates from Savills or NCC
 - 5.5 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** Ongoing, nothing to update.
 - 5.6 **Fix my Street:** Tim Bowers will report the manhole cover at Cowbyres as an issue.
 - 5.7 **Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Donation:** The Show purchased banners and the PC contributed £360 (inc vat) chq no. 88, which has yet to be cashed.
 - 5.6 **Artisan Market:** The market on Sunday 3rd August went very well and plans are now underway for the next event on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November. Carolyn asked if the Christmas tree could be in-situ before this, so that the Square looks festive, MK and MF agreed and asked for a reminder.
 - 5.7 **Bridge and Debris in the River:** The Clerk is to contact the Environmental Agency and see what they recommend.
 - 5.8 **Village Hall Car Park:** The Councillors discuss measures to sort the car park and they will get some quotes and share with the VH committee
 - 5.9 **Funding from Colin Horncastle:** The Village Hall has someone lined up to do the work, but are waiting for a date for work to commence. The Village Hall will liaise with the PC regarding payment, invoices will be sent directly to the PC for payment.
 - 5.10 **Co-Opting New Councillor:** Geoff Kennedy has agreed he would be interested in joining the PC and the Councillors agreed he would be a good fit and he was welcomed unanimously onto the PC.
6. **Finances**
 - 6.1 **Current statement/Balance:** £2754.75
 - 6.2 **Petty Cash:** Petty cash receipts need to be tallied for the next meeting.
 - 6.3 **Clerk Wages:** £172.00 (chq no. 89 signed by TB and MF)
 - 6.4 **VAT:** The Clerk will be able to claim VAT back on some of the PC's purchases over the past 2 years.
7. **New Business:**
 - 7.1 **Donations:** The Village Hall has requested a donation towards the Annual Bonfire on Saturday 2nd November. The Councillors agreed a payment of £100 for the event and a further £100 as a donation for the use of the building for meetings. Chq no. 90 signed by TB & MF

7.2: Website: Following on from information from NALC, the PC must have at least 1 email with a .gov address, the website also needs to follow suit, the current website will terminate in March 2026. The Councillors discussed the pros and cons and agreed to go with the recommendation suggested by NALC, which is discounted for the first 12 months. The company is HG Fox and the package would be the Bronze Subscription. The Clerk will initiate this.

7.3 Wooden Boardwalk Issues: The Clerk has noted that a number of the wooden slats are rotten and broken, they are covered by chicken wire, however there is a trip hazard and she will report this to NCC for repair.

7.4 Pennypie Incident: Following on from the incident on 11th August where a group of young visitors walking in the areas caused substantial damage to stone walls, left rubbish and debris in the beck and along paths and caused distress to sheep. Gary Owen and Geoff Kennedy have reported the incident and sent a letter outlining the incident to the PC. Following on from this discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Charity who we believe was involved in the excursion, as will Geoff Kennedy.

Meeting closed 20:30 pm

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 2nd December at 7pm 2025