

Belsay Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Belsay Parish Council held on **Wednesday, 26 November 2025** Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall, Belsay First School

Present:

Chair: Cllr Roe

Cllrs: Common, Mole, Sadler, Storey, Straughan

In attendance:

Clerk: Annie Howliston

Annie Lloyd – CPRE Northumberland Branch Co-ordinator

Two Members of the Public

27. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from County Cllr Richard Dodd.

28. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk advised she would declare an interest at agenda item 8(d).

29. Public Questions (Maximum 5 minutes per person)

a) Grade II Listed Pant (Belsay village)

A request was received from the public attendees to discuss both the upkeep of the pant and the addition of a stone trough or plaque.

It was AGREED:

A joint approach should be made with the owners (Belsay Estates) to ask about beneficial pointing and signage. The land tenant would also be contacted to request continued cutting back of the surrounding hedge.

30. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Belsay Council held on 24 September 2025

Confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

31. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

a) Completed Declaration of Members' Interest

Received from Cllr Storey.

b) Move to new Parish Website and gov.uk Email Address

The Clerk confirmed that this had been formally requested through Hugo Fox. It is expected that the new email address will be accessible in the new year, followed by the move to the new website. A review of the Parish photos will also be done.

c) Emergency Resilience Base and Generator

The Chair reported that Belsay Estates are supportive of the school hall being used and that the Parish Council would keep them informed of progress with the school.

Cllr Straughan reported that she had attended a recent Community Action Northumberland (CAN) and Climate Action in Rural North East (CAIRN) workshop, "How to Turn a Great Idea into a Real Community Energy Project." The session was facilitated by Matt Baker from Sycamore Net Zero and covered project shaping, as well as how to connect with advisors and explore funding opportunities. Cllr Straughan agreed to approach Matt with a view to making a presentation at one of our meetings and to investigating any funding opportunities through the Ray Wind Fund.

32. Highways Matters

a) Gateways

County Cllr Dodd was not present to give an update.

b) Overhanging Branches and Hedges

County Cllr Dodd was not present to give an update.

c) Footpath Step at Wallridge

A letter was sent to Wallridge residents by Joe Morris MP, expressing concerns about the step outside Wallridge Cottages. NCC Highways does not plan to upgrade this section; instead, ad hoc inspections would be carried out by the Highway Inspector.

33. Planning Matters

a) Previous applications detailed on the agenda had been circulated to members.

b) Application 22/01909/CCMEIA

Members raised concerns over the heavy plant and lorries that would be passing through the village.

It was **AGREED:**

The Chair raise concerns with the County Council from a safety aspect for the school.

34. Financial Matters

a) Members approved the following payments:

Payee	Detail	Chq No.	£
Hall Hire	Sep, Nov 2025	605	40.00
Clerk Salary	Oct, Nov 2025	606	346.82

a) Appointment of Internal Auditor

Members agreed on the appointment for 2025/2026

b) Bank Account Signatories

Proformas were circulated by the Clerk for completion by all members and were to be returned to the next meeting. This will permit all members to act as a signatory for cheque payments. The requirement for two signatures will remain, with the Chair or, if absent, the Vice Chair as the first signatory.

c) Review of Clerk Salary

The Clerk left the room while a salary review discussion took place.

It was **AGREED:**

To backdate pay for May 2024 to March 2025 and April 2025 to November 2025, in line with the current 2025-2026 National Pay Award. This will be reviewed yearly with the NJC pay scale.

d) Grants and Donations Policy

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

e) Budget and Precept Setting 2026/2027

The Clerk presented a report of this year's actual and projected spending, together with an estimated budget for 2026/2027.

It was **AGREED:**

To accept the budget for the next financial year and set the precept at £5,000 with no increase from the following year.

f) Grant Applications

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

35. Community Governance Review Questionnaire

The Clerk circulated a pre-consultation questionnaire for completion on the future governance arrangements for parishes within Northumberland.

It was **AGREED:**

That the governance arrangements for Belsay did not need changing.

36. Restoration of Heritage Fingerpost, West Bolam

A presentation was given by Annie Lloyd (CPRE Northumberland) on potential restoration of the fingerpost at West Bolam, through their heritage skills project, and Signpost Restoration Ltd, with a contribution being made by the Parish of £1,800.

It was **AGREED:**

That having set the budget priorities and precept demand, the Parish did not have the reserves to fund this project.

37. Correspondence Received

The following was circulated with nothing to report:

- NCC - Winter Service Preparedness Document 2025-2026
- NCC - Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation - Control of Dogs
- NCC - Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- NALC – AGM
- Home Office - Prevent Radicalisation Handbook

38. Any Other Business

To consider any other business which is for information only.

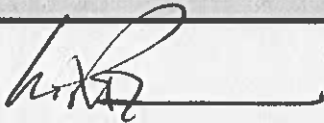
- July meeting – agreed not to hold
- Cllr Mole reported his attendance at the Northumberland NALC AGM at County Hall, feeding back on the importance of training for both members and staff

39. Date and Time of Next Meeting and 2026 Meetings

Confirmed as Wednesday, 28 January at 7:00 pm and all bookings confirmed with the school:

- Wednesday 28 January
- Wednesday 25 March
- Wednesday 27 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish and Parish Council)
- Wednesday 30 September
- Wednesday 25 November

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

These minutes will remain as a draft until approval at the next Parish Council Meeting	
Chair Signature: 	Date: 28th January 2026