

## MINUTES OF MEETING

<b>Meeting on:</b>	<b>9th September 2025</b>
<b>Meeting at:</b>	Longframlington Memorial Hall
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	7.30 p.m.
<b>Present:</b>	Clrs: Steven Bray (SB), Richard Elphick (RE), Mark Fenwick (MF), Lesley Hall (LH), David Owen - Chair (DO).
<b>In attendance:</b>	Cllr Glen Sanderson. Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence.** Jackie Scarpa (JS), Jamie Whicker (JW)
- 2) **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 19 below.**
  - a) Northumberland National Park Authority Meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025
- 3) **Declaration of Interests.** None.
- 4) **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
- 5) **County Councillors Report.** The Chair welcomed Cllr Glen Sanderson and said he was delighted that he was our new County Councillor but not so delighted about the circumstances in which this came about, namely the imposed revisions to the parish boundaries. The members introduced themselves to Glen. GS also shared his concern about the parish boundaries and how little the Boundary Commission had taken local views into consideration. He told the meeting that he had agreed to continue as Leader in the new administration during challenging times. Although the Conservatives did not have a majority, the other parties (except Reform) had agreed to the arrangement. NCC now had a new senior management team and with them he hoped to move forward in a calm and collaborative way. He outlined some of the current achievements and developments in the County, including the new £50m school in Seaton Valley, the new school in Amble, and the imminent announcement of another new large school development. The next station to be opened on the Northumberland Line was at Bebside in Blyth, although this had been challenged by some major infrastructural obstacles. The £10bn investment in a new artificial intelligence data centre in Cambois to be built over the next 10 years would be one of the largest in Europe and £110m had been secured towards employment opportunities at the site. Taste Northumberland had been launched to support the county's food and drinks industry and would be supporting local businesses. The Council had set out its Corporate Plan for the next four years and welcomed comment from parish councils and the local community. The Northumberland Plan was also under review and this too needed to gain local views. GS stressed the importance of affordable housing for local people and hoped that BHPC would consider this when it made its response.  
With respect to development and the County Council's plans, Members expressed their concern of the impact being made by significant developments in surrounding sustainable parishes on the infrastructure of smaller parishes. The impact of increased numbers of vehicles and speeding traffic was cited, as was the lack of adequate provision of utilities in our smaller communities. Some other specific issue members raised were:
  - a) Delayed Road Works between Pauperhaugh and Gleadheugh Wood /Forestburn. GS said that generally road conditions had improved significantly across the county with £20m being invested in repairs to roads and bridges. He was aware that there was still work to be done and would speak to Highways about this particular issue. **Action: GS**
  - b) Quality of the DAB reception in the Coquet Valley. GS agreed to investigate this. **Action: GS**
  - c) Bus Stop Request at the NEW Houses B6344 Crossroads on the X14 route. Clerk to forward information.GS to follow up. **Action: GS**
  - d) Height of hedges in the county. Landowners were keeping hedges cut back low which was disadvantageous to biodiversity. GS was in favour of allowing hedges to mature and was doing this where it was applicable upon his own land. However, it was not something he felt that the County Council could legislate for.The Chair thanked Cllr Sanderson for his attendance, valuable contribution and information provided.
- 6) **Minutes of Previous Meeting .** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8th July 2025 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (proposed: RE, Seconded: SB, All in Favour).
- 7) **Matters arising out of Minutes.** To receive updates on matters not appearing elsewhere on the agenda including:
  - a) David Smith (DS) MP & Letters to Boundaries Commissions. There had been a delay in sending this letter to the Commission, but this had now gone, and a response was awaited.
- 8) **Police Update.** Police although able to attend, there being such a long agenda, Clerk had asked them to submit a written report:

*'Please do pass on concerns surrounding door to door sellers doing the rounds in the local areas (not just Longframlington). More to be vigilant and an awareness that individuals are going about trying to sell door to door without the correct pedlar's certification. These are usually ex-prisoners who are charging excessive prices for dusters etc...These individuals do prey on vulnerable or elderly residents and are sometimes aggressive in their manner or behaviour which can pressure persons into purchasing items from them. If in doubt or any concern is raised, please encourage residents to report them to Police'*

It was agreed to ask the police to talk about what could be done about the excessive speeding on the B6634 at Brinkburn and Todstead and to ask them to provide any relevant statistical records. **Action: Clerk**

9) **Finance.**

- a) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

08/09/2025	NCC	Precept Second Half	3500.00
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- b) Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

15/07/2025	Julie Ayre	Mowing Playing field Apr/May	225.00
15/07/2025	Garth Rhodes reimbursement	Direct 365:X2 Sets Defib IPAD SP1/SPS	146.60
21/07/2025	Colliedog Computers #GR01-20250717	Extra Mailbox	39.00
15/08/2025	Julie Ayre	Mowing Playing field June/July	270.00
15/08/2025	Garth Rhodes reimbursement	Direct 365:X 1 battery pack	246.00
19/08/2025	Wingates Village Institute	Afternoon Tea/Hire Biodiversity Event	340.00
21/08/2024	Northumberland Estates	Annual rent Playing field	75.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>1341.60</b>

- c) Requests for donations. None.

- d) Bank Reconciliation to <sup>th</sup> September 2025. Approved.

Balance per bank statement at 08/09/2025	4884.32
Less Unpresented Payments	0.00
Uncredited Deposits	0.00
Balance	4884.32
Balance per cash book	4884.32

- e) 2025/2026 Pay Award and Salary Review.

- i) Annual Pay Award The Local Government Association had reached an agreement on rates of pay, applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It was agreed to implement the award at the new rate for the Clerk at the current spinal point 16 of £15.82 p.h. An increase of £0.49 p.h. **Action: Clerk**
- ii) The annual incremental pay review for 24/25 for the Clerk. It was agreed to award the Clerk one increment to SCP 17= £16.08 p.h., backdated to June This would place the Clerk at the top of the LC1 scale. It was agreed to review the Clerk's employment contract and salary before the next incremental rise was due to be considered in June 2026. **Action: Clerk/DO**
- iii) Home working. Currently the Clerk claimed £5.00 per month for homeworking and had done so for a number of years. This in no way reflected the outlay for working at home. It was agreed to support claims at the HMRC flat rate (where no receipts were required) of £6 per week for home working . This arrangement applied where the employer required the worker to work from home and was not dependent upon whether the post was full or part-time or the number of hours worked. **Action: Clerk**
- f) Contribution to Longframlington Parish Council (LPC) for purchase of printer. The office printer, paid for by LPC had been replaced. It was agreed to pay LPC £100 towards printing costs. **Action: Clerk**
- g) Arrange/Confirm Internal Auditor for 2025/26. Currently Des Barker (DB) carried out the role of internal auditor. As DB now sat on the Biodiversity Committee this could be considered not to be Proper Practice and possibly breach the conditions for the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities. Finding a new internal auditor would prove difficult. DO agreed to speak to DB, to agree a way forward. **Action: DO**

**10) Action Plan: September – October 2025.** To address regular duties, prioritize initiatives, allocate resources, and track progress towards important goals not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

- a) Consider Playground Maintenance contract for the following year for grass cutting and maintenance. Agreed to ask Julie Ayre to provide a quotation for this work. **Action: Clerk**
- b) General Service review and assessment Ensure asset register is up to date with transfers and purchases. Archive and remove out of date on-line and hard copy data/documentation. **Action: Clerk**
- c) Review community engagement. Deferred until the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- d) Playground Inspection of condition and recording of equipment. **Action: JW**
- e) Review preparations for winter Any issues identified to be reported on 'Fix my Street' as this appeared to be a quick and reliable reporting procedure. **Action: All**

**11) Planning.**

- a) To note and discuss any planning issues since previous meeting. *There are currently no requests for consultation that have not already been commented on.*

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Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Comments
25/01102/VARYCO	Cockshot Farmhouse	Registered	No objection
25/01096/VARYCO	Cockshot Farmhouse	Registered	No objection

- b) Wards Hill Woodland Creation. Vivienne Cartmell had reported that they did not have any detail/information about the woodland development itself and suggested that the Parish Council contacting the applicant directly.

**Action: Clerk.**

Clerk has also written to Mark Shipperlee (MS), Operations Director of Living Woods for information and support on this matter but have received no reply.

## 12) Highways.

- a) Highways and Footpaths Report. None.
- b) Report on any issues raised/ to raise with NCC Highways.
- i) JW had asked Highways Inspector for an update on repairs to the road between Pauperhaugh Bridge and Gleadheugh Wood /Forestburn ( see 5a). **Action: JW**
  - ii) A request for repairs to road at Maglin Burn was submitted by Clerk. No response yet received.
  - iii) Request to NCC to ascertain ownership of footpath along the Forestburn from Gleadheugh Wood towards the Lee Plantation and to report need for clearing of the path. **Action: JS**
- c) Oil Spill Embleton Terrace Crossroads. GS and Highways rapid response when this was reported was commended. No further action required.

## 13) Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund.

- a) Report. SB reported that
- i) The windfarm had now been in operation for 12 years. The present management company were contributing £45k annually to the WWCF, which currently had a balance of £94k. Over the period of its current lifespan £335,000 would be contributed into the community. The current turbines would operate for 25 years, at which point an extension for a further 10 yrs of operation would be requested. Following the 35 yrs the current turbines would be replaced by 3 (in total) which would be far more efficient than the current models.
  - ii) Four applications were approved at the last meeting:
    - (1) St Giles Church £ 7.5K
    - (2) Netherwitton PC for purchase of x3 defibrillators
    - (3) Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels £3k
    - (4) Harvest Celebration Apple Pressing Day £500
- b) Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. LH said she thought JW was to produce a quotation for this work.

## 14) Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee. To receive a report from the Committee including:

- a) Project Reports. There had not been a meeting of the committee since the last PC meeting.
- b) NALC Star Council Awards 2025/26 Climate Response of the Year Nomination. Over the summer NALCs Policy Officer had read about the BHPC's biodiversity work and had asked us to submit a nomination. This was submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> September. The finalists to be announced in December 2025 and invited to a parliamentary reception at the House of Lords on 24 February 2026.
- c) Sale of the Rothbury Estate. The Wildlife Trusts had raised approximately £8 million toward their £30 million target to purchase the Rothbury Estate. This included donations from individuals and matched funding efforts like the Big Give's Green Match Fund, which doubled contributions during a focused campaign in April 2025.
- d) Annual Inspection of Biodiversity Tools and Equipment – This was part of the annual action plan to ensure full complement of equipment and that this is in full working order. Any faulty equipment to be replaced.

**Action JW/JS.**

## 15) Emergency Planning.

- a) Community Flood Plan & Flood Warning Signage. Arrangements for signage at Blackburn Bridge was still outstanding. It was agreed to pursue this at a later date and to complete the final amendments to the Flood Plan. **Action: Clerk/JW**
- b) Check and oil flood warning signs. Ongoing **Action JW**
- c) Test emergency two-way radios. Ongoing **Action: JW**
- d) Defibrillator status. SB. The electrode pads had been replaced. The defibrillator was checked monthly by SB.
- e) Longframlington Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Review. Clerk had consulted with NCC Civil Contingencies Team (CCT) and made some minor revisions to the plan, (mostly personnel changes).The updated plan had been approved by Longframlington Parish Council. A meeting of the LEAP Committee to rehearse procedures against the new Plan was to take place and Nigel Fisher NCCT CCT hoped to attend. The revised version would then be sent to all plan holders (including all BHCP Cllrs).

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- 16) **Coquetdale Cluster Meeting.**
- a) Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. Clerk to ask JS for an update to be circulated to members. **Action: Clerk/JS**
  - b) Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda.
    - i) The impact on smaller parishes from development within sustainable parishes.
- 17) **Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports.**
- a) Longframlington Cemetery. No issues to report.
  - b) Rothbury JBC. No report available.
- 18) **Purchase of the Playground Land.** Rothbury Estate had agreed to discuss the possible sale of the playground land once the outcomes of the sale of the Estate were known. BHPC had recently received the invoice for this year's rent which had risen by 50 % to £75. It was agreed to write to the Estate to ask if there was any progress towards the sale of the playground. **Action: Clerk**
- 19) **Update on Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.** Clerk had written to Northumberland NALC for advice regarding the adoption of the NALC 2025 Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and whether Northumberland NALC were going to produce an abridged version for small councils, (like the ones adopted in 2015), as the 2025 were lengthy and onerous for small councils. They advised adoption, as the new regulations addressed recent legislation and gender neutral nomenclature. They said Northumberland NALC had no current plans to produce abridged models. Further advice was taken from David Francis (member of NALC's national smaller councils committee) who said that the national committee had begun to prepare several model documents and guides specifically for smaller councils, with the intention of publishing these on the National ALC website. Work on the production had begun, using the current Northumberland model as a starting point. He suggested not to adopt the new National ALC models, as they were far too complicated for a small council such as BHPC. Members agreed to wait for the proposed national models for smaller councils rather than adopting the new 2025 versions.
- 20) **NCC Corporate Performance Report (CPR) & Meetings for Town & Parish Councils.** As discussed in Item 5, NCC had produced their CPR for the next four years and the letter from (GS) invited PCs to respond. Members were also invited to attend a special briefing meeting. Clerk to resend access details to the CPR report. Members discussed a number of issues raised in the CPR and also the Northumberland Plan (NP) Review (to which the Council would be asked to formally respond in due course). As previously mentioned, the major concern was the impact on the parish's infrastructure and it's community as a result of the considerable property development within neighbouring parishes e.g. traffic on B6634, provision of utilities. Members were asked to consider the CPR report and NP related issues and to prepare questions and/or comments for the next meeting. DO may attend the CPR meeting. **Action: ALL**
- 21) **NCC Local Transport Three-Year Plan.** NCC had revised its approach to the LTP which would now move to a 3-year planning cycle. There were significant changes with much broader parameters. NCC was providing a briefing on Monday 29th September. RE and Clerk to attend and report back at the next meeting, prior to the priorities being set. NCC had agreed to extend the submission date for our priorities until after the next PC meeting in November. **Action: RE/Clerk**

Feedback from Current BHCP LTP:

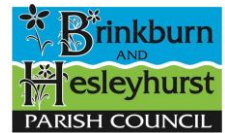
Priority	NCC Response
Raise ford/new bridge C136 Maglin Burn	We have no plans to replace the existing bridge. The decision whether to cross the ford or not is the responsibility of the motorist. We will consider placing ford warning signs in advance at the point where the alternative routes are available so that drivers can opt to avoid it.
Resurfacing of C165 junction between Embleton Terrace and the Gusset Farm.	This maintenance issue has as been formally recorded and will be taken into consideration during the development of future planned maintenance programmes. In the meantime, our Area Maintenance teams will continue to monitor the situation and undertake any necessary minor works to ensure the area remains safe.
Resurfacing of road between Pauperhaugh and Lee Siding (including replacement of culverts at Suers Hill).	Phase 1 included in this year's LTP programme.

- 22) **Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP.** To discuss viability, advantages and disadvantages of a Neighbourhood Plan. Agreed to obtain further advice from NCC on this. **Action: Clerk**
- 23) **Any Urgent Business.**
- a) Northumberland National Park Authority Meeting: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Information for the meeting was circulated. DO would possibly be able to attend. **Action: DO**
- 24) **Items for Next Meeting.**
- a) To review community engagement
  - b) To agree comments NCC Corporate Performance Report
  - c) To agree comments on the Northumberland Plan Review
  - d) To agree Local Transport Priorities

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# Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council

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e) To further consider a Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP.

25) **Date of Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7.30 p.m.**  
**Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington.**

Garth Rhodes, Clerk, 5 Wardle Terrace, Longframlington, NE65 8AB, Tel: 01665 570347, Email: [Clerk@Brinkburn.net](mailto:Clerk@Brinkburn.net)