

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on:	11th November 2025
Meeting at:	Longframlington Memorial Hall
Meeting Time:	7.30 p.m.
Present:	CLrs: Steven Bray (SB), Richard Elphick (RE), Lesley Hall (LH) - Chair, Jackie Scarpa (JS), Jamie Whicker (JW)
In attendance:	Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence.** County Cllr Glen Sanderson (GS), Cllr David Owen (DO), CllrMark Fenwick (MF)
- 2) **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 19 below.** Only urgent items councillors have become aware of since the publication of the agenda will be discussed at the end of the meeting.
 - a) NCC Community Governance Review
- 3) **Declaration of Interests.** None.
- 4) **Gifts and Hospitality.** None.
- 5) **County Councillors Report.**
 - a) Matters GS had agreed to follow up with NCC:
 - (1) Road Works: Pauperhaugh to Gleadheugh Woods/Forestburn. This work was currently ongoing.
 - (2) Quality of DAB reception in the Coquet Valley. GS had asked one of his officers to follow this up, but no response received to date. Agreed for Clerk to follow up. **Action: Clerk**
 - b) Report Cllr Sanderson was on holiday but submitted the following report:
'We have to make £20m in savings this year but at the same time we want to protect all our frontline services, our parks, leisure services and free town centre car parking so we are working hard at how we organise and deliver those 200 services that residents wish us to continue. I have been involved in a number of meetings across the County to discuss the budget and hear from a wide range of residents what they want us to continue to focus upon. We have also held an online consultation which attracted almost 2000 replies which is a record response. I have written to the government about the financial pressures we are under with our SEND provision - children with special needs are just as important as children in mainstream education but the figures are getting extremely difficult. In just 4 years demand has increased by 92% but the funding received has only increased by 16%. That means we are overspending in this area by millions that then needs other services to top up that deficit. I have also written to the roads secretary of state to ask that we don't let the A1 dualling get forgotten - we are seeing rat runs through villages, the road coming to a standstill almost every day in the summer, road safety remains a great concern and we are seeing more traffic leave the A1 to use the A697 - that road is a NCC maintained road whilst the A1 is run by Highways England. I am in discussions with Northumbria Police about speed cameras on the route given it will only become more busy and difficult for villagers in the settlements up to Cornhill. We are announcing a new recycling initiative which will see hopefully an easier system and increase our recycling rate. Within a year we will be supplying a new bin with a dark red lid for fibre such as cardboard and paper and our blue bin can be used for bottles and other similar materials. More details will follow soon. As always if I can help with anything please let me know and I will be glad to be involved.
Glen.'

The Members expressed their appreciation Councillor Sanderson's for the report and his offer of help. Members agreed it would be important to express to GS the areas which should not suffer cuts within the NCC budget.

- 6) **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** The minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 9th September 2025**, were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (proposed: JS, 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. No further information.
 - b) Bus Stop Sign New Houses B6344 Crossroads X14 Service. NCC had responded. They were currently investigating the previous history of the bus stop. Clerk to follow up. **Action: Clerk**
 - c) Purchase of the Playground Land. Response received from the Rothbury Estate :
'Our surveyor has confirmed that there is no new update or change from your last correspondence. There will unlikely be any progress on this until the Rothbury sale is complete.'
It was agreed that due to the decisive nature of this response, the item be removed from future agendas until the outcome of the Rothbury Estate sale was known.
 - d) Wards Hill Woodland Creation. Response received from the Rothbury Estate :
'The planting proposals have gone through the whole process and been approved, with planting contracts signed and ready. However, with the ongoing sale complicating the progress, we are unable to continue to progress these plans at the current time whilst the land is subject to sale. Until there is clarity on the sale,

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the planting will not be taken forward. Our Land Agents anticipate no change for the next 12 months and should be clearer by this time next year, at which point we can update you accordingly.'

It was reported that whilst the new tenant at the Lee was allowed to farm at Wards Hill, the land was not actually within the current tenancy agreement. Duncan Hutt of Northumbria Wildlife Trust had indicated that the Trust had no intention of planting the plantation at Wards Hill if the sale went through.

8) Police Update. To receive a report from the Community Police: The following was received:

'There is nothing of note to pass on or that will impact the local community. There have been some quad bikes and other farm related/building items stolen from rural areas recently. It may be worth mentioning this and the importance of keeping things secure/reporting any suspicious incidents or vehicles if seen in the area. Also as always be mindful of door-to-door sellers that try to prey on vulnerable or elderly people.'

JS reported that there had been a number of cars broken into in Swarland and Longframlington and reports of a recurrence of graffiti and fires around the Pauperhaugh area. The police were aware of the miscreant and keeping watch. There had been a number of break-ins in the Rothbury Industrial Estate and Cllr Bridget had arranged for the installation of security cameras.

9) Finance.

a) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. None.

b) Approval of Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

11/09/2024	Longframlington PC	Printing Services	100.00
11/09/2024	Colliedog Computers	Extra Mailbox	33.00
20/09/2025	Julie Ayre	Removal Wildflower Cuttings Playing Field	50.00
20/09/2025	Julie Ayre	Maintenance of 'Buffer Zone'	340.00
22/09/2025	Oakwood Maintenance	Repairs to bus shelter & WD40	103.57
23/09/2025	Rothbury Parish Council	RJBC Second half	231.00
24/09/2025	Jackie Scarpa reimbursement	Nixon Toilet Hire WWCF116 Info Day	144.00
10/11/2025	Jackie Scarpa reimbursement	Flowers for Wingates Community	70.00
29/09/2025	HMRC	PAYE	495.60
29/09/2025	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	884.27
13/10/2025	B & K Wharf	3kg Meadow seed	154.80
10/11/2025	Garth Rhodes reimbursement	Simplex Health x1 Ammonia Test strips	14.49
		Total	2620.73

c) Requests for donations. Longframlington Memorial Hall Sports Floor. LMH had reached their target, so no donation necessary.

d) Bank Reconciliation to 10th November 2025. Approved.

			£
Balance per e- bank statements at 10th November 2025			<u>2348.08</u>
Less unrepresented payments			
	10/11/2025	Jackie Scarpa	70.00
	10/11/2025	Garth Rhodes	14.49
			<u>84.49</u>
Uncredited Deposits -			0.00
Balance			<u>2263.59</u>
Balance per cash book			<u>2263.59</u>

e) Precept 2026/27

i) Submission deadline. Friday 25 January 2025.

ii) Agree projects for next financial year to put into budget. It was agreed to submit applications to the WWCF to fund the purchase of the two new notice boards at Todstead and Weldon Bridge and two Grit Bins at Weldon Bridge and Todstead.

Action: JW/LH

iii) Prepare Budget and Precept for January Parish Council Meeting.

Action: Clerk

f) Hospice Care Collection. Message received to say a big 'Thank You' for hosting the collection boxes. The total raised from the collection at the Biodiversity Information Day was £51.32. It was agreed to inform Julia Plinstone, WWCF as she was keen to know of the subsidiary impact of activity funded by the WWCF.

Action: Clerk

- 10) **Action Plan: November -December 2025.** To address regular duties, prioritize initiatives, allocate resources, and track progress towards important goals not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.
- a) Review of internal policies & procedures. As there were now so many policies and procedures it was difficult to review these all at once and not all needed reviewing each year. It was agreed the Clerk produce a programmed review across the year and amend the Annual Action Plan accordingly. **Action: Clerk**
 - b) Playground – Review condition and record equipment. **Action: JW**
 - c) Discuss and formulate next year’s Action Plan. As the plan had only just been introduced there was no need to amend the current plan at this time (except those outlined in 10a above).
- 11) **Planning.**
- a) To note and discuss any planning issues since previous meeting. There were currently no requests for consultation that had not already been commented on.
- | Reference | Address | Status | Parish Council Comments |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------|
| 25/01102/VARYCO | Cockshot Farmhouse | GRANTED | No objection |
| 25/01096/VARYCO | Cockshot Farmhouse | GRANTED | No objection |
- 12) **Highways.**
- a) Highways and Footpaths Report. The tenant at the Lee had been repairing fencing on the farm and had inadvertently laid barbed wire across the footpath close to Lee Ford. He would be politely asked to make alternative arrangements to allow access to walkers. **Action: JS/JW**
 - b) Report on any issues raised/ to raise with NCC Highways. None, other than those addressed elsewhere in the minutes.
- 13) **Wingates Wind Farm Community Fund.**
- a) Report. Next meeting early December. If an application for a hedgelaying apprentice was able to be put together in time, then SB had sufficient information to support this.
 - b) Notice boards at Todsteads & Weldon Bridge application. Quote for notice board received. Need to check with WWCF whether additional quotes required. **Action: JW**
- 14) **Climate Change & Biodiversity Committee.** To receive a report from the Committee including:
- a) WWCF 116 Project Report. The final report had been submitted. Julia Plinstone had said the report looked good. There was an overspend of the £122.62. She was submitting a request to the WWCF December meeting for approval to pay the overspend. Once agreed they would release the remaining funds: £2622.62.
 - b) Review of the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Plan was currently under review which would set out actions/outcomes for the remainder of the five-year period. RE suggested an alternative approach to increase the amount of hedgelaying in the Parish, by employing an apprentice hedgelayer and requesting funding from WWCF for training and salary. Members were very interested in the idea and asked the Biodiversity Committee to explore this further. **Action CC&B Committee**
 - c) Current Activity. 40 bird boxes had been recently sited. RE was to be trained to undertake invasive species identification and eradication. CRAG’s intention was to survey the whole of the Coquet and its tributaries. It was hoped that teams of volunteers would begin identification and eradication in the summer 2026. A young resident was undertaking litter picking as part of his Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and the CC&B were to validate his activity. He had received a briefing and instructed that he would need adult supervision when on the highway, as he was under 16yrs. Members acknowledged their gratitude to the young man.
 - d) Sale of Rothbury Estate and impact on project activity. Given the uncertainty of its sale, a request had been sent to Northumberland Estates (NE) asking if we could work with them now to re-install nest boxes along the Lee & Maglin Burns and conduct surveys on estate land. NE had replied to say that permission had been denied. Whilst this was very disappointing it did mean the CC&B Committee had a definitive answer and could now concentrate their efforts in the remaining areas of the Parish.
 - e) Meeting with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. There had been a number of informal discussions with representatives of the NWT. It had been agreed to set up a formal meeting now the outcomes of the request to NE were known. **Action: CC&B Committee**
 - f) Annual Inspection of Biodiversity Tools and Equipment Report. **Action: JW**
 - g) Hedging in the Playground. Julie Ayre has reported that the hedge adjacent the road needed significant cutting back. It was agreed that this should be undertaken by hand, once the berries had died. Local farmer who had agreed to do this by machine to be informed and thanked. A group of volunteers to be brought together to undertake the task in January. **Action: JW/RE/CC&B Committee**
- 15) **Emergency Planning.**
- a) Approve Community Flood Plan. The plan was approved. To be circulated to members. **Action: Clerk**
 - b) Warden’s WhatsApp group. It was agreed to set up a Warden’s WhatsApp group. **Action: LH**
 - c) Check and oil flood warning signs. **Action: JW**
 - d) Test emergency two-way radios. Testing had been undertaken and been successful. Agreed there was a need to acquire a further two radios to ensure sufficient coverage. JW to ask Julia Plinston if a bid could be considered for this at the December meeting. JW to prepare application. **Action: JW/Clerk**

- e) Defibrillator status. In full working order but the cabinet light had failed. David Young, Electrician had been asked to repair.
- f) Longframlington Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Review. The revised plan had been approved by the LEAP Committee, and a number of actions were agreed including an article to be placed in FramNews to alert people to be make winter emergency preparations and a call for volunteers. Clerk to circulate revised plan to members. **Action: Clerk**

16) Coquetdale Cluster Meeting.

- a) Items to discuss from the latest Cluster Meeting. At the last meeting some Cluster members had expressed concern at the conduct of some of the other members, when representatives of the Wildlife Trusts and the National Parks were in attendance. Unfortunately, the Chair and JS were unable to attend. A review of the Terms of Reference was to be undertaken at the next meeting, when it was hoped that members' conduct could be sensitively addressed.
- b) Items for next Cluster Meeting Agenda.
 - (1) Planning Officers/Committee not listening to the voice of Parish Councils
 - (2) Speeding on B6334

17) Cemetery & Joint Burial Committee Reports.

- a) Longframlington Cemetery. No current issues.
- b) Rothbury JBC. Northumberland estates had agreed in principle to the re-siting of the stream through the cemetery.

- 18) **New Parish Website and .gov domain.** The joining information from HugoFox (HF) had been received. The PC would get 6 months free membership from HF. It would be responsible for the second 6 months payment but would get a refund from NALC for this (less VAT which we will be able to reclaim) as a discount off next year's NALC membership. There would be no NALC website invoice in 2026 as the website would shut down on 1st April 2026. It was agreed to go with HF for both the Website and .gov address. The first process, once the domain was registered, would be to transfer the current website. There were three pricing levels from yr 2 of the website (options to be agreed at a later date). The cost for one mailbox was £2.49 per month. Government advised that it was good practice that all members have a mailbox, but this was not a requirement. If we did go for all to have a mailbox then we would have to go to the 10-mailbox package at £17.49 per month (a significant difference £180 p.a.). It was agreed to go for one mailbox for the Clerk at the present time. It was also agreed to take up the offer from HF of the 'done-for-you' website build at a cost of £199 (proposed JS, seconded JW, All in Favour). This would be significantly cheaper than asking the Clerk to carry out this work and put less demands on his time. The unanimous decision of members was for the domain name: brinkburn-pc.gov.uk. and the email address: clerk@brinkburn-pc.gov.uk. Clerk was asked to request that HF proceed with setting up the domain name, website and email address forthwith. **Action: Clerk**

- 19) **Proposed Centenary Celebrations for Embleton Terrace and possible Parish involvement.** 2026 will be the centenary year of the Terrace being built. Residents were strongly in view of the celebration and were planning an event on 4th July 2026 on the Playground. Residents of the Parish and ex-residents of the Terrace were to be invited. The Embleton Terrace Committee were in the process of putting together an application for funding from WWFC. The PC agreed to the use of the Playground for the event but would require the Committee to write to the Clerk for permission, in order that there was an audit trail to satisfy insurance and regulatory requirements. **Action: JW/JS**

- 20) **To review community engagement.** As there was insufficient time to discuss this matter it was agreed to defer this until the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

- 21) **To agree comments on NCC Corporate Performance Report** DO had hoped to attend the PC briefing meeting to help inform the Council when deciding on its response. In his absence it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

- 22) **To agree comments on the Northumberland Plan Review.** Currently there was a call out for proposed development sites. NCC Planning had written to advise that there would be future opportunities for the PC to make comment on the Plan and it would be kept informed.

- 23) **To agree Local Transport Priorities.** As reported at the last meeting, NCC had revised its approach to the LTP which had moved to a 3-year planning cycle. RE/Clerk attended a briefing on Monday 29th September. It was interesting but nothing profoundly different, other than some helpful hints on how to submit priorities and guidance on how to deal with speeding vehicles.

The BHCP Priorities 2026-29 were agreed:

Priority 1 Road Safety Concerns and Proposed 40-mph Speed Limit Reduction on the B6334 Weldon Bridge to Rothbury
Proposal Given the multitude of risks outlined—including increased traffic, regular use by vulnerable road users, the presence of heavy and wide vehicles, numerous blind bends, and the frequent evidence of accidents—a reduction of the speed limit to 40mph from Weldon Bridge to Rothbury is both justified and necessary. This action would create a safer environment for all users and is supported by the successful precedent already set near Rothbury. While average speed cameras could further enhance compliance, their high capital cost may be prohibitive. Therefore, immediate implementation of a 40mph speed limit is recommended as the most practical and effective safety intervention.

Priority 2 Proposal to Address Safety Concerns at Pauperhaugh Bridge / B6344 Junction

Proposals. 1) Request the installation of a "Hidden Junction" warning sign for westbound traffic, and a sign stating "Caution: vehicles from the right may be hidden in the dip" for vehicles travelling from the south over the Pauperhaugh Bridge
2) Consider a "Blind Bend Ahead" warning sign for drivers traveling towards Rothbury, to alert them to the limited visibility at the junction

Priority 3 Proposal for the installation of advance "Ford Ahead" warning signage at strategic points on the approaches to the C136 Maglin Burn crossing.

Proposal The installation of "Ford Ahead" warning signs at recommended locations. **Action: Clerk**

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- 24) **Neighbourhood Plan (NP)for BHCP.** To discuss viability, advantages and disadvantages of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Government had withdrawn its funding to pay for NP consultancy. However, NCC continued to provide advice and guidance. Rob Naples Planning Officer, Neighbourhood Planning had been appointed to assist us. It was agreed to invite Rob to the January 2026 Parish Council meeting to discuss this further. **Action: Clerk**
- 25) **New Felton sewage treatment catchment area project.** Thirston Parish Council (TPC) has been in touch concerning a Northumbria Water £47 million pound development to upgrade the sewage system which included those parishes feeding into the system. Members agreed they wanted to be kept informed of information sent to TPC . Northumbria Water’s online link to the project overview can be found at: [Felton Environmental Improvements](#) .
- 26) **PREVENT:** Members were asked look at the Prevent Handbook for Elected Members to be discussed at the next meeting. Clerk to recirculate the document. **Action: Clerk**
- 27) **Ad Gefrin Tácnbora Tour: Call for Tácnbora (‘Standard Bearer’) nominations.** The members noted this information and agreed no further action.
- 28) **Any Urgent Business.**
- a) NCC Community Governance Review Members agreed they wished to maintain the current governance arrangements for Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst and asked the Clerk to complete the questionnaire on their behalf. **Action: Clerk**
- 29) **Items for Next Meeting.**
- a) To agree budget and precept 2026-27
 - b) To review community engagement.
 - c) To agree comments on NCC Corporate Performance Report
 - d) Neighbourhood Plan for BHCP
 - e) Prevent: National Anti-terrorism Programme
- 30) **Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7.30 p.m. In the Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington.**

The meeting closed at 10.03 p.m.

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