Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 12th May 2025.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Lucie Armstrong
Cllr. David Irwin
Cllr. Barbara Wood

Co-opted at the meeting:
Cllr. Andrew Ayre

In attendance:
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
2 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

25/61 **Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

As this was the first meeting of the Council, following an uncontested election, councillors were asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. They were also reminded of the need to complete the election expenses forms showing nil expense and to complete a new Declaration of Interests form. The Clerk would collate the forms and submit them to the County Council.

It was resolved that Cllrs. Rutherford and Jones should complete the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form before the next meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

25/62 **Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs. Ellen Rutherford and Bridget Jones, County Councillor Nick Oliver.

25/63 **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Cllr. Howe as Chair of Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council in 2024/25 called for nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025/2026, indicating that she was prepared to stand as Chair again. Cllr. Irwin proposed that Cllr. Howe remained as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr. Wood and unanimously agreed. Following the death of Cllr. Singer, the position of Vice-Chair had been vacant. Cllr. Armstrong indicated that she was prepared to take on the role and this was agreed unanimously (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Wood). Cllr Howe was therefore duly elected as Chair and Cllr. Armstrong as Vice-Chair.

25/64 **Declaration of Interests**

None.

25/65 **Co-option of Councillor**

At the previous meeting, Mr Andrew Ayre had given an overview of the experiences and skills he could bring to the Parish Council. At this meeting, he confirmed his willingness to stand as a councillor. A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed to co-opt him onto the Council (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

25/66 **Delegation of responsibilities**

It had previously been agreed that the Chair could delegate to councillors the Chair's authority to take decisions, subject to approval at future PC meetings and working in conjunction with the Clerk, in specific areas. The areas of responsibility were reviewed and the following highlighted changes were agreed:

- Planning Sub-Group – Cllrs. Dunhill, Howe, Wood and Armstrong (3 from 4 would review each planning application)
- Legal/FOI/GDPR matters – Cllrs. Rutherford and Dunhill
- Appraisals – **Cllrs. Howe and Wood**
- Website monitoring/development – Cllr. Armstrong
- Handyman/Village Maintenance/Amenity matters (including edible garden and Spinney) – Cllrs. Howe and Dunhill
- Accounts – Cllr. Irwin
- Sport & Recreation – Cllrs. Wood and Armstrong (**Cllr. Ayre** would act as a reserve)
- East Tynedale Forum representative – Rota basis – all councillors
- RM Play & Regeneration Group – 2 vacancies (*not currently required as group in abeyance*)
- Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership representative – **Cllr. Ayre**
- Marchburn Lane Residents' Association representative – Cllr. Howe
- Footpaths Group – Councillor Dunhill
- Children/Youth issues – Cllr. Armstrong + **vacancy** (*not currently required as no current projects*)
- Neighbourhood Plan/Community Actions – Cllrs. Howe and Irwin
- Playground weekly inspections – Cllr. Wood (if not available due to holidays – Cllr. Armstrong)
- Cycling/Active travel – Cllrs. Irwin and Jones
- Environmental issues/Climate Pledge – Cllr. Jones
- Development of a quarterly E-news – Cllr. Jones

25/67 **Review of Policy Documents - Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Code of Conduct**

It was noted that NALC had recently updated both the Model Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations. The Clerk was in the process of reviewing both documents but reported that she required further time to review the new legal and statutory requirements they contained. It was therefore agreed to readopt the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and the Clerk would table the updated documents as soon as possible (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

Councillors also reviewed the Council's Code of Conduct and this policy was unanimously re-adopted (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Armstrong).

ACTION: CLERK

25/68 **Dates of Future Meetings**

A paper detailing the dates of future meetings for the year was received and approved.

25/69 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14th April 2025**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting were a true record and were duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

25/70 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 25/37 – WAN signal.* The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Arqiva and the Data Communications Company (DCC) regarding the poor WAN signal in Riding Mill. Arqiva had not replied but the DCC offered to review the complaint if each household gave permission and supplied account details. Around 20 residents replied to the additional data request and the DCC was currently contacting each householder's energy supplier. Suggested options included fitting a new smart meter but as some residents could show this had already been attempted 2 or 3 times, there was a possibility of the DCC recommending that the household should be added to a WiFi pilot programme. The Clerk would continue to monitor the responses and would provide an update at a future meeting;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Minute 25/50(iii) – Osbit building work.* Work had started on the extension at Osbit. It appeared that additional parking spaces had been created on site although occasionally there seemed to be a few extra cars parked on Whiteside Bank. No complaints had been received from local residents and the work did not appear to be causing any issues;

(iii) *Minute 25/59(iii) – Lapel microphones.* It had been established that the Village Hall Trust owned a number of microphones to work alongside their sound system. Cllr. Irwin had helped to get them working and they would be available for use at the annual Parish Meeting. The purchase of further microphones was therefore unnecessary.

25/71 **County Councillor Report**

Deferred to next meeting.

It was agreed that a general introductory meeting with Councillor Oliver would be helpful which the Clerk would arrange.

ACTION: CLERK

25/72 **East Tynedale Forum meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were received. Attendance by the various parish councils at these meetings was generally poor although the concept of the Forum was considered a good idea. Cllr. Irwin offered to attend a future meeting if Neil Snowdon from the County Council could attend so that the issue of traffic calming measures could be discussed.

25/73 **Flood AI Update**

The aim of this project was to create a flood prediction service that monitored the smaller burns flowing into the Tyne thereby increasing the flood resilience of communities such as Riding Mill. The project had been ongoing for quite some time and was funded until 2027. An update report was circulated. The Clerk was currently taking part in the testing phase of the messaging service. It was also noted that hydro telemetry was being installed at various locations, one being the bridge across to the double tennis courts where the water level of the burn would be monitored.

25/74 **Invasive Species Control**

A request to help with the cost of invasive species control along the Tyne was received from the Tyne Rivers Trust. The Clerk was asked to clarify exactly how much funding was required as the letter was slightly ambiguous.

ACTION: CLERK

25/75 **Climate Change**

There were no current issues to report.

25/76 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25**

(i) It was noted that the Internal Auditor, Mrs Margaret Weatherley, had raised no issues of concern after auditing the accounts and a copy of her report was received;

The following documents were received in advance of the meeting and were unanimously approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin):

(ii) the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

(iii) the draft annual accounts for 2024/25

(iv) the Accounting Statement for 2024/25

(v) the Explanation of Variances

(vi) It was noted that the dates for the Exercise of Electors' Rights to view the accounts would be from Tuesday 3rd June until Monday 14th July.

ACTION: CLERK

25/77 **Finance**

(a) *Insurance*

(i) Yearly Insurance - The insurance premium for 2024/25 was noted and approved. The PC had entered into a 3-year agreement with the insurance broker and this was the final year of the agreement. It was noted that the increase on last year's figure was because the tennis clubhouse had been added to the policy.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) Sandy Bank Residents' Association – insurance of The Nick

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make its annual contribution to part cover the public liability insurance of The Nick (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

The Clerk was again asked to review whether there was any previous correspondence to explain why this arrangement had been approved in the first place.

ACTION: CLERK

(b) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

The following payments were agreed (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)

Procut Grounds maintenance – line marking, football field	£120.00 (inc. VAT £20.00)
N Bell – grass cutting, football field	£45.00
Northumberland CC – reimbursement of Clerk's April salary	£1,215.78 (inc. VAT £1.67)
Baxter's Exterior Cleaning – bus shelter cleaning	£120.00 (inc. VAT £20.00)
RM VHT – room hire	£32.00
East Tynedale Forum – subscription charge	£30.00
NALC – yearly subscription charge	£249.69
Grant to Sports Club for grass cutting and field maintenance	£850.00
Grant to St James Church for grass cutting	£980.00
Neetfleet – Additional maintenance tasks	£210.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Mail Chimp subs, Award trophy, Microphone stand, Land Registry charges, travel costs)	£96.08 (inc. VAT £13.20)
Land Registry – charge for documents	£11.00
M Weatherley – internal auditor fee	£100.00

<u>Standing Orders/Direct Debits:</u>

Nest pension – April pension contribution	£40.83

Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (April)	£310.00
Monthly bank charges	£6.00

The following receipts were noted:
None

(ii) *Budget report*
The budget report was received and approved.

(c) *Bank signatories*
It was agreed that Cllr. Armstrong would become a bank signatory alongside Cllrs. Howe, Dunhill, Irwin and Rutherford. Two signatories were required to authorise each payment.

ACTION: CLERK

25/78 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman* - the Clerk reported that in the previous month the handyman had treated both bridges for moss, cleaned various road signs, stained seats and painted metal support parts. He had tidied the edible garden, repaired the bus shelter roof at Broomhaugh and a seat at the sports field and one at the play park. He had also cut back a resident's overhanging hedge which had been preventing wheelchair users and those pushing prams from using the pavement.

Councillors noted the work and asked that the resident whose hedge had had to be cut should be contacted and asked to make a donation to the costs.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Trees - T*he Clerk reported that she had received an email from the Tennis Club expressing concern about a tree near the bridge to the double tennis courts. She had asked the tree surgeon to inspect. She had also circulated tender documents to four companies asking them to submit a quote for this year's full tree inspection.

ACTION: CLERK

25/79 **Planning**

Planning applications received and decisions made by Northumberland County Council:

(i) It was reported that the following new planning applications were under consideration:

- 25/01377/FUL – The Glebe, Whiteside Bank. Construction of new playmat tennis court with perimeter fence. PC – no objection;
- 25/01647/VARYCO / 25/01646/VARYCO – Riding Farm. Various changes to the approved plans. PC – Generally no objection but will submit comments (Cllr. Howe to circulate a draft response to the planning sub-group first).

ACTION: CH/CLERK

(ii) It was reported that the following planning application had been granted permission:

- 25/00637/FUL – 2 Ford Terrace, Broomhaugh. Single storey rear infill extension.

25/80 **Correspondence**

(i) *Request for street signage at Broomhaugh.* A resident had written explaining that delivery drivers had difficulties finding properties at Broomhaugh and suggested two street name signs would help. This was a County Council matter but it was agreed that the Clerk should make contact with the appropriate officer and find out if this would be possible;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *GB Broadleaved Woodland Survey.* A request was received from the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to undertake further survey work in Marchburn Woods. This woodland had been surveyed periodically since 1971 and the group wanted to take thin cores from a sample of trees and undertake a drone survey and ground-based laser scan. Councillors were happy to approve the request and looked forward to receiving the results of the survey in due course;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Various issues relating to the use of the sports field for football including parking matters*. An email from a resident was received regarding the entitlement to park on the field and the conduct of the football team. These matters would be considered in confidence at the next meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

25/81 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Balsam Bashing.* The Tyne Rivers Trust's volunteers would be holding their Balsam Bashing event on Wednesday 2nd July. The Clerk would circulate the details to residents in case anyone should wish to join them.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Wildflower Area – Sandy Bank.* A suggestion had been made at the recent Sandy Bank Residents' Association meeting to plant wildflowers on an area of unused land on Sandy Bank. Cllr. Armstrong offered to liaise with the two residents and it was agreed in principle that they could use the land subject to (i) agreement with the nearby neighbours, (ii) that they would maintain the area as well as purchasing the seed. If the area wasn't maintained and the Parish Council received complaints then it would be reseeded with grass.

ACTION: LA

(iii) *Resurfacing of The Nick* – The Sandy Bank Residents' Association had informed the Parish Council that a small section of The Nick nearest to the Slaley Road needed to be resurfaced and the work would be undertaken at the end of May.

25/82 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 9th June 2025.

Meeting closed at 9.03 pm