Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 14th July 2025.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Barbara Wood
Cllr. Ellen Rutherford
Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Lucie Armstrong
Cllr. Bridget Jones

In attendance:

County Councillor Nick Oliver
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
2 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.25 pm.

25/98 **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Andrew Ayre and David Irwin.

25/99 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Armstrong declared an interest in Item 4(iii) – Junior Football team, as she was involved in setting up the new team.

25/100 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 9th June 2025**

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

25/101 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 25/86(i) – WAN Signal.* The Clerk confirmed that she was continuing to work with residents and, so far, 8 households had had a cellular hub fitted which meant they now had a functioning smart meter. There were still a number of residents working with their energy suppliers to resolve the problem and new residents kept coming forward to report similar issues so a further request for investigation had been sent to the Data Communications Company;

(ii) *Minute 25/88 – Woodland Survey*. It was noted that the arboricultural survey would be undertaken in early August;

(iii) *Minute 25/97 – Junior Football team.* Cllr. Armstrong circulated a paper detailing the plans for starting an under 7s football team in September with the potential for expanding to other age groups if additional coaches could be found. She submitted a breakdown of the costs for the essential equipment required to start the team and join the FA league. These costs were around £2-3,000, with the main element being the goalposts. Cllr. Oliver very kindly offered to make an award from his Members Local Improvement Scheme of £2,000 and it was agreed

that the Parish Council would cover the difference and purchase the goalposts so that VAT could be reclaimed.

ACTION: CLERK to draft MLIS form

It was noted that the chair of the sports club would also act as the chair of the football club and that the finances of the football club would be administered through the sports club's bank account. Councillors welcomed this level of cooperation from the sports club and looked forward to hearing about future developments.

(iv) *Minute 25/97 – Sports field*. The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had made basic repairs to the fence running along the northern boundary of the sports field. She had also sought a quote for a possible new fence from the company responsible for erecting the fence at the cricket field. Additional quotes would be required as the estimate was quite high.

ACTION: CLERK

25/102 **County Councillor Report**

Councillor Oliver reported on the following matters:

(i) *Speeding complaints at Beauclerc* – a resident had written to request measures be adopted to slow the traffic entering Beauclerc. Cllr. Oliver had agreed to meet the resident and hoped to organise a new speed survey at the suggested location;

(ii) *Local Transport Plan* – Cllr. Oliver reported that the format of the LTP would be changing to a 3-year programme rather than a yearly programme. It was hoped that this would allow the work to be better managed and coordinated as well as allowing time for jobs to be tendered for properly thus potentially saving money . Cllr. Oliver also reported that he planned to meet with Cllr. Ayre who was preparing a paper for the September meeting regarding speeding on the A695;

(iii) *Hexham to Corbridge Active Travel Route* – Cllr. Oliver noted that work had recently begun on installing the new cycleway;

(iv) *Requests for street name signs* – Cllr. Oliver confirmed that he would follow up the residents' request for improved street signage at Broomhaugh;

(v) *Sport Tynedale* – Cllr. Oliver noted that Sport Tynedale was looking to increase the number of sports clubs featured on its site. The Clerk would circulate details to local clubs;

ACTION: CLERK

(vi) *Speed camera* – Cllr. Oliver reported that the County Council had been part of a speed partnership managed by Gateshead Council but was now looking to buy and install its own speed cameras for use in Northumberland;

(vii) *Broadband* – Cllr. Oliver reported that the Hexham constituency had one of the worst rates for broadband coverage in the UK and one of his remits at the County Council was to look into improving this. It was noted that Openreach had not included most areas of Broomhaugh in its ultrafast broadband rollout and this was the type of issue he would raise.

25/103 **Repairs to the abutments at the weir footbridge**

Having found a contractor who was prepared to repair the abutment scour pockets, the Clerk had been advised that an ecological assessment would be required before permission to work in a watercourse would be given. A breakdown of the costs of such an assessment was given together with the likely costs for the work, although it was noted that this could change if the assessment identified additional mitigation measures were needed. As work would need to be completed by the end of September if it was to be undertaken this year, it was agreed to proceed with the ecological assessment and submit an application to the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Team as soon as possible (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

ACTION: CLERK

25/104 **Enhancement work to the area at Broomhaugh**

Cllr. Howe asked for clarification from councillors on a plan she had prepared to redesign the grassed area by the Broomhaugh bus stop which could include new trees and a planter. Cllr. Armstrong noted that Osbit, as part of its new building scheme, was required to make a financial contribution to improve highway infrastructure and this would include a redesign of the bus stops at Broomhaugh to include raised kerbs to assist passenger mobility. It was therefore agreed to wait until this work was completed before making any alterations to the amenity land beside it.

25/105 **Climate Change**

Cllr. Jones highlighted an idea to hold an apple pressing day for villagers as there was always an abundance of apples from local gardens each year. She agreed to speak to the organiser of a similar event in Corbridge as it was hoped that it might be possible to loan an apple press for the day.

ACTION: BJ/CLERK

25/106 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

David Ballantyne – tree work	£480.00
Tyne Rivers Trust – invasive species control grant	£200.00
T Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting / field line marking	£680.00
Community Heartbeat Trust – yearly contract for defibrillator	£266.40 (inc. VAT £44.40)
Lambert Taylor Gregory – Land Registry charges	£12.20 (inc. VAT £1.20)
Northumberland County Council – Clerk's June salary	£1,216.28 (inc. VAT £1.75)
The Play Inspection Company – yearly inspection of play park	£178.80 (inv. VAT £29.80)
Northumberland County Council – installation of street light	£4,366.80 (inc. VAT £727.80)
Neetfleet – additional maintenance (play park inspection, weed area by Dene Terrace, bedding plants and compost, Rights of Way maintenance (£300 to be refunded by NCC)	£500.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Mail Chimp subs, plants, Land registry charges)	£111.37 (inc. VAT £5.42)

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

Nest pension – June pension contribution	£40.83
Neetfleet – monthly handyman fee (paid in arrears to cover June)	£310.00
Monthly bank charges	£6.00

The following receipts were noted:

Triodos – quarterly interest payment	£86.02
Unity Trust (Bridge fund) – quarterly interest payments	£2.82
Resident – contribution to hedge maintenance	£25.00

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and approved. There were no issues to note.

25/107 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman* – The Clerk reported that the handyman had completed the following tasks in June: strimmed footpaths and seating areas, trimmed overhanging branches, weeded and tidied the edible garden and the area by Dene Terrace. He had also removed the spring

bedding plants from the planters and replaced them with summer bedding. He had undertaken regular watering of the planters plus he had conducted a quarterly inspection of the play park;

(ii) *Play Park* – the yearly safety inspection report was circulated in advance of the meeting and the following recommendations were noted:

- Repair loose parts on the Zingo springer – Clerk to check warranty;
- Junior swings – structure had areas of rot in one leg and it should be replaced. Other legs had splits/cracks and needed to be monitored. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek quotes for different options including replacing just one leg or the whole structure;
- Adventure trail – an area of edging fell within the falling space of the equipment and needed to be removed. Action - handyman;
- Other minor issues were identified including loose fixings which needed to be secured and grass mats which were silted up causing the soil to compact which needed to be addressed.

ACTION: CLERK/HANDYMAN

(iii) *Allotment Wall* – Cllr. Dunhill suggested that a further section of the allotment walls be repaired. The Clerk would seek quotes for the September meeting;

ACTION: CLERK

(iv) *Invasive Species* – The Clerk reported that Japanese Knotweed was rife at the riverside this year, as was Himalayan Balsam. The Balsam had been removed where possible along the March Burn but the problem would persist until it was treated further upstream. The Japanese Knotweed was to be treated by the Tyne Rivers Trust in September which was the best time of year for this. There had also been Giant Hogweed plants which the gamekeeper from the Styford Estate had dealt with. The Clerk was asked to check with the Tyne Rivers Trust to see if local landowners had agreed to part fund invasive species control;

ACTION: CLERK

(v) *Defibrillator* – it was noted that the defibrillator at the sports club had needed new pads and the costs for these had been covered by the yearly maintenance agreement with the Community Heartbeat Trust;

(vi) *Sink hole by the river* – it was noted that the sink hole had been filled in and various trees removed. It was not known if this work had been undertaken by Network Rail or the landowner;

(vii) *Cricket Club request for additional funding* – the club had written to the Parish Council requesting funding as a window at the pavilion had been broken and also they wished to change the locks for security reasons. Councillors asked them to obtain at least two quotes for the repairs to the window and would consider whether to make a claim through the insurance. Councillors did not feel they could offer financial assistance to change the locks;

ACTION: CLERK

(viii) *Fence in Marchburn Wood* – the Clerk reported that the section of safety fence above the landslip at the far end of the wood would be installed the next day;

(ix) *Fastening on gate by the station platform* – Cllr. Rutherford reported that the gate hook had been removed from the gate at the end of the station platform which the Parish Council had recently installed following the accident with the dog. Councillors felt strongly that some security measure was needed and it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Network Rail and the landowner to get permission to fit a self-closing spring.

ACTION: CLERK

25/108 **Planning**

Planning applications received and decisions made by Northumberland County Council:

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

- 25/01913/LBC – 6 Hollin Hill Terrace. Remedial repairs including front steps, balustrade. Repair ornate plasterwork. PC – no objection;
- 25/01912/LBC – 6 Hollin Hill Terrace. Internal works including the formation of 2 new bathrooms, replacement of floor in basement, removal of basement fireplace and surround (retrospective). PC – no objection;

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

- 25/01922/FUL – 1 Hollin Hill Terrace. New single storey garage with curtilage.

(iii) It was reported that the following planning application had been refused permission:

- 25/01646/VARYCO and 25/01647/VARYCO – Riding Farm. Alterations to original plans.

25/109 **Correspondence**

(i) The Clerk reported that a resident had been in contact to complain about the amount of litter on the sports field. On contacting the sports club it was apparent that the bins were not sufficient for the amount of use during busy weeks. The Clerk had therefore contacted the County Council to obtain a quote for a commercial bin contract which would allow the bins to be emptied weekly and had shared these costs with the club. The rubbish issue had been noted by other councillors and it was agreed that the Clerk must put in writing the need to proactively manage the problem as it did not want it to attract vermin.

ACTION: CLERK

25/110 **Minor Matters**

(i) *E-Newsletter* – the summer E-newsletter had been well received although only a few extra subscribers had been achieved despite articles on the web and in the Parish News. Additional ideas were suggested for how to increase readership. It was also noted that the editors of the Parish News would be happy to have a discussion to see if there was a way of combining the publications sometime in the future;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Cricket Club Fête* - The Clerk reported that she had been working with the organiser and was confident that the appropriate safeguards were in place including public liability insurance and an events licence. The club had requested a small grant to help stage the event and Councillors agreed to make a £150 award (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Jones);

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Memorial seat dedication* - The family of Cllr. Singer had asked to be allowed to dedicate a seat to him in the village. They had selected the seat at the weir and councillors were happy to agree to this proposal. It had also been suggested that a memorial at the allotments would be an appropriate way to mark his life and it was agreed that the Parish Council would purchase a fruit tree to be sited at a place of the Allotment Association's choosing.

ACTION: CLERK

25/111 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 8th September 2025.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.