# Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 8th December 2025.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Bridget Jones
Cllr. David Irwin
Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Andrew Ayre
Cllr. Lucie Armstrong
Cllr. Barbara Wood

**In attendance:**

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

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.45 pm.

25/169 **Apologies for Absence**

None

25/170 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Irwin declared an interest in Item 12c – S137 grants as he was a member of the Tennis Club and they had made an application for funding.

25/171 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 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).

25/172 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 25/157 – Riding Mill Outdoor Pre-school – Use of the Spinney*.

The Pre-school reported that they were still looking to secure use of toilet facilities and a kitchen which they would need to use alongside the Spinney. Decisions on these matters would not be known until January so the required application for a Change of Use of the Spinney had not yet been submitted to the Planning Department. In addition, parallel discussions were still being held to see if permission might be granted for a temporary building on the Wentworth Grange site and, again, the outcome should be known in early January.

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(ii) *Minute 25/159 – Newsletters.*

Cllr. Jones circulated the Christmas card design and newsletter which would be delivered to every house in the parish. The cards should be ready to be delivered by the end of the week and the Clerk would coordinate their distribution to councillors. Cllr. Jones also confirmed that she and the Clerk were working on the E-news which would be sent out to the subscribers just before Christmas.

**ACTION: ALL**

25/173 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Oliver reported on the following issues:

(i) *Active Travel Route between Hexham and Corbridge* – Cllr. Oliver reported that a meeting would be held to discuss how the route would deal with the bridge at Dilston. He also noted that further funding had been secured to continue the route between the bridge at Corbridge and the railway station;

(ii) *Local Transport Plan* – Cllr. Oliver reported that the outcome of the LTP process would be known in January and that further discussions about traffic safety improvements along the A695 should be held after that;

(iii) *Budget Funding* – Cllr. Oliver noted that the budget preparation was in its final stages with the outcome of government funding known on 15th December;

(iv) *Rights of Way* – Cllr. Oliver had held a useful meeting with the Footpaths Officer and had walked a number of the Rights of Way with him to see some of the reported issues. It had been agreed that the Footpaths Officer would contact some of the landowners to deal with overgrown hedges. They had also assessed the Right of Way along the river to Corbridge. Unfortunately, there was still evidence of continued landslides making the Network Rail issues insurmountable and the path would therefore not reopen;

(v) *Speed signs at Farnley* – Cllr. Oliver noted that the signs were still to be recalibrated.

25/174 **Budget & Precept Requirements**

Documents showing current budget spending and a summary of anticipated costs in 2026/27 including capital expenditure ideas were received. After review the budget was unanimously agreed as follows (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Ayre):

| **Budget Category** | **Proposed budget for 2026/27** | **Last year's budget 2025/26** |
|---|---|---|
| Staff Costs | £15,900 | £14,500 |
| Insurance | £1,775 | £1,800 |
| General Admin | £2,100 | £2,250 |
| Professional Fees | £1,000 | £3,900 |
| Donations/Grants | £5,280 | £5,750 |
| Maintenance | £16,600 | £13,300 |
| Capital Expenditure | £8,200 | £5,500 |
| Miscellaneous | £800 | £1,800 |
| Bridges sinking fund | £1,000 | £3,250 |
| Additional funds to the reserves | £2,000 (Old Playground Resurfacing – future fund) | --- |
| TOTAL | ***£54,655*** | ***£52,050*** |

*Points to note:*

- *Staff Costs:* This was increased to cover the changes in employers' National Insurance contributions;

- *Insurance:* Councillors discussed the insurance contributions to some of the resident associations. The current arrangements meant that some groups received funding whilst others didn't. Reasons for these arrangements had become lost with time and, with the pressures on the Council's funds, it was agreed to cease all contributions;

**ACTION: CLERK**

- *Legal & Audit:* No surveys were planned so this budget was reduced. Funds held in the reserves as a legal contingency fund would be reallocated to more general matters such as future bridge or tree surveys. It was agreed that the Parish Council should aim to set aside some money into this fund each year;
- *Admin budget:* this was decreased as the plan was to no longer print a paper newsletter;
- *Maintenance Budget:* Councillors considered the basic yearly maintenance costs and, in addition, set aside funds to cover additional tree work and a potential increase in the handyman's monthly fee;
- *Donations:*
  - A grant of £980 was awarded to St James Church to assist with the upkeep of the churchyards
  - A grant of £2,200 was awarded to the Sports Club for maintenance of the football field and outer cricket field. With the agreement of the Club, some of these funds would be held back and the Parish Council would pay for elements of the required work;
  - An additional sum of £1,000 was set aside for possible donation to the Pre-school should its move to a new site progress;
  - £1,100 would continue to be set aside to help smaller village groups and local charities;
- *Capital expenditure projects*: It was agreed to set aside £8,200 for future projects including speed calming measures on the A695 (£3,500), new play equipment (£3,500), barriers on Marchburn Lane bridge to replace the planters (£1,200);
- *Miscellaneous budget*: It was agreed to set the usual budget of £800.
- Councillors agreed to continue to set aside money for the future replacement of either Marchburn Lane bridge or Millfield Road bridge and agreed a budget of £1,000.

<u>Unspent funds from 25/26</u> – it appeared that there could be an underspend on this year's budget and it was provisionally agreed that funds set aside for a streetscape project at Broomhaugh should be reallocated to help fund work to create a dry garden by the MUGA court. Unallocated grant funding would be reallocated to the play park fund. These decisions would be ratified at the end of the financial year.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**Precept Calculation**

It was agreed that no funds would be taken from the Reserves and that the Precept would be set at £54,655, an increase of £2,605 (5%). This was proposed by Cllr. Howe, seconded by Cllr. Irwin and unanimously agreed.

**ACTION: CLERK**

25/175 **Cycling Route Developments**

Cllr. Irwin reported that he had met with Rob Aubrook who was one of the people involved in the idea of a Tynedale Cycle Super Highway and was involved in the preparation of the Tynedale Cycling Strategy 25-30. Cllr. Irwin had confirmed that the parish council was firmly behind the plans. Apparently, a new group was to be convened in January to look at cycling across the county and Cllr. Irwin would be invited to participate. They had discussed that many routes could be provided at considerably less cost if built to a slightly lower standard. Cllr. Irwin now proposed



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to rework his earlier cycling options paper into firm proposals so that they were ready should funding become available.

**ACTION: DI**

25/176 **Delegation of Responsibilities**

It was agreed that Cllr. Ayre should work with Cllr. Dunhill on issues relating to Legal/ Freedom of Information and GDPR matters and could make decisions using the Chair's authority subject to approval at future PC meetings and working in conjunction with the Clerk (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

25/177 **Consultations**

(i) Northumberland Design Code – It was agreed that Cllr. Howe would prepare a response to the consultation which would be submitted by 9th January 2026. Details of the consultation would also be shared with residents in the E-news;

**ACTION: CH/CLERK**

(ii) Proposal to make a public protection order for the control of dogs. The documents were noted but no response was needed;

(iii) Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It was agreed that the consultation would be shared with residents via the E-news.

**ACTION: CLERK**

25/178 **Reports from meetings which councillors attended**

(i) Cllr. Ayre reported that he and Cllr. Dunhill had met with Malcolm Chainey to discuss the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership, having been unable to attend the recent AGM. Cllr. Dunhill had also shared a problem with a recent train service which had been due to stop and then cancelled at very short notice. Northern Trains had previously given assurances that this should not happen and if it did subsequent trains would stop which had not been the case. Dr Chainey had been asked to raise the issue with Northern.

25/179 **Climate Change**

Cllr. Jones reported that she was currently preparing a proposal for a dry garden by the MUGA court and would share the details in the new year.

25/180 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Northumberland CC – reimbursement of Clerk's September salary | £1,283.03 (inc. VAT £1.75) |
| Neetfleet – removal of large ivy hedge | £290.00 |
| Robson Print – Christmas card | £178.80 (inc. VAT £29.80) |
| RM Methodist Chapel – room hire | £20.00 |
| L&R Storage – archive box storage /yearly fee | £30.66 (inc. VAT £5.11) |
| St James Church – Church Cottage room hire | £275.00 |
| David Ballantyne – tree work identified at sports field / storm damage | £480.00 |
| Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Mail Chimp subs, photocopying, stationery, catering for Christmas event) | £104.84 (inc. VAT £6.61) |
| **Standing Orders/Direct Debits:** | |
| Nest pension – November pension contribution | £45.03 |
| Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears - November) | £310.00 |

Monthly bank charges – November £6.00

The following receipts were noted:
None

(ii) *Budget report*
The budget report was received and approved. There were no new issues to note and spending was in line with the agreed budgets.

(b) *Authorisation of the Clerk to act as a signatory for the Reserve Accounts*
Due to difficulties accessing the reserve accounts online and being able to make operational changes, it was agreed that the Clerk should be added as a signatory for these accounts (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

**ACTION: CLERK**

(c) *S137 Grants*
A paper was received detailing requests for funding from voluntary organisations and local village clubs and groups. Requests were received from three new organisations which councillors were pleased to support this year. It was agreed that priority would be given to the three local groups and the remaining funds distributed evenly between the seven other applicants as detailed below. (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill):

- Drop in Group (£150)
- Parish Hall - Garden Invaders (£150)
- Riding Mill Tennis Club (£150)
- Tynedale Hospice at Home (£80)
- Sport Tynedale (£80)
- Great North Air Ambulance (£80)
- Citizens Advice Northumberland (£80)
- Charlotte Straker (£80)
- Tynedale Talking Newspaper (£80)
- Children North East (£80)

**ACTION: CLERK**

25/181 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman* – The Clerk reported that the handyman had completed the following tasks in November: cleared leaves from various footpaths and cleaned road signs. He had also cut back an ivy hedge near Dene Terrace as it was getting large and could damage the stone wall;

(ii) *Play Park* – Further to discussions relating to next year's budget, councillors agreed that temporary repairs should be undertaken at the play park until funds could be raised for new equipment. This would include the removal of wooden battens from the path that were creating a trip hazard. A discussion was also had about the replacement of a wooden support leg on the junior swing. Unless a fix could be found which the play park inspector could approve, then it was agreed that the swings should be temporarily removed.

It was also agreed that the Riding Mill Play and Regeneration Group would be restarted to begin fundraising. The last chair of the group had agreed to chair a meeting so that new appointees could be made. Cllr. Irwin agreed to look into whether the group should apply

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for charitable status so that Gift Aid could be claimed. Some clarification was needed if the group intended to donate all the funds raised to the Parish Council.

**ACTION: DI/CLERK**

(iii) *Rights of Way* – Noted in Cllr. Oliver's report;

(iv) *Tree work* – The Clerk confirmed that the urgent tree work identified in the recent survey had been completed. She also noted that there were sufficient funds remaining to allow for two more days of tree work and it was agreed that the tree surgeon should set the priorities after considering the work identified in the survey.

**ACTION: CLERK**

25/182 **Planning**

Planning applications received and decisions made by Northumberland County Council:

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

- 25/04109/LBC – 5 Hollin Hill Terrace. Repairs to roof. PC – no objection;
- 25/04024/LBC – The Old Post Office. Internal works. PC – no objection;
- 25/04027/FUL – Mitford House, Main Road. Single storey rear extension. PC – no objection;
- 25/04197/FUL – Kingmead, Sandy Bank. Construction of an orangery. PC – no objection;
- 25/04219/FUL – Kingmead, Sandy Bank. Construction of a garden gazebo. PC – no objection;
- 25/04331/FUL – The Hemmel, Broomhaugh. Detached 2 car garage and home office and storage in roof void PC – no objection although minor comments.

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

- 25/03831/FELTPO – Oaktrees, Whiteside Bank. Tree works;
- 25/02912/LBC – 3 Hollin Hill Terrace. Repairs to roof;
- 25/03142/LBC – 4 Hollin Hill Terrace. Internal works.

(iii) *Solar Panels – Millennium Hall*

Councillors noted that a planning application had been made for solar panels at the Millennium Hall although the Parish Council had not been notified. Councillors were keen to support such initiatives and the Clerk was asked to find out if the Parish Council could comment.

**ACTION: CLERK**

25/183 **Correspondence**

A letter from a resident had been received concerning the proposed development opposite the Old Tavern which was for a small house with undercroft parking. The query related to ownership of the land and whether the applicant had Network Rail agreement. A response had been sent, and further queries raised at the Parish Council meeting could only be dealt with by the planning department rather than the Parish Council, although the resident's concerns were noted. The understanding of the Parish Council was that the applicant's architect had been in contact with all the relevant authorities before submitting the latest application.

25/184 **Minor Matters**

(i) *School Transport* - The County Council had written to parents to advise them that the school buses would no longer pick up the pupils from the Old Playground due to difficulties accessing the site with parked cars. The buses would now collect the children from the bus

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stop opposite The Wellington. When this had last been proposed in 2018 there had been opposition from parents but to date no complaints had been received.

(ii) *Library Services* - Information had been received about the library van which visited the village on a 3-weekly rota basis. There was to be a review of the service in the new year and it was suggested that the Clerk highlighted the review in the next E-news to try and gauge how popular the service was and if residents knew about the library van.

**ACTION: CLERK**

(iii) *Christmas Event* - The Clerk reported that the Christmas tree lights switch-on event had been very popular and Cllr. Armstrong was thanked for getting the Scouts involved and organising a food van. If the event was to attract similar numbers in future years, then consideration needed to be given to managing the traffic in Millfield Road and there was a need for more volunteers on the night to help keep the area safe around the tree and road and to help with catering at the event.

25/185 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Monday 12th January 2026.

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

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