



## Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

### Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. Bridget Jones

Cllr. David Irwin

Cllr. Lucie Armstrong

Cllr. Andrew Ayre

Cllr. Andy Dunhill

Cllr. Barbara Wood

### In attendance:

County Councillor Nick Oliver

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

6 members of the public were present (2 for the pre-meeting discussion only).

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.49 pm.

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### 26/48 Apologies for Absence

None.

### 26/49 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Armstrong declared an interest in Item 12(i) and 12(v) – Planning.

### 26/50 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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).

### 26/51 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 26/36(i) – Riding Mill Outdoor Pre-school.* There had been no further developments with regard to submitting a planning application for the new site but Cllr. Howe noted that the Pre-school continued to hold discussions with the Village Hall Trust regarding the use of the Millennium Hall and planned to hold a meeting to assess what safety measures might be required in order to use the Spinney;
- (ii) *Minute 26/36(ii) – Play Park Fundraising.* Cllr. Wood noted that a group of parents had agreed to help form a fundraising group and a first meeting had been held. One of the play equipment companies had visited the site and explained the advantages and disadvantages of various materials and gave a rough estimate of costs. The next step was for one of the parents to talk to the children at the First School about what they would like to see after which a number of play equipment companies would be contacted and quotes sought. The Clerk would begin to explore funding opportunities.

## 26/52 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Oliver reported on the following matters:

- (i) *Parking issues* – The Clerk had shared with Cllr. Oliver a letter from an anonymous resident of Station Close complaining about a number of large vehicles making it difficult for residents to park or manoeuvre from their drives. An earlier complaint had been received regarding residents parking in areas that were meant for turning. Cllr. Oliver offered to discuss the issues with enforcement officers and would report back at a future meeting;  
**ACTION: NO**
- (ii) *Library Consultation* – Cllr. Oliver noted that the Library consultation had now closed and had generated a good response (5,500+). The proposed changes should be known by September;
- (iii) *Litter* – Cllr. Oliver noted that following complaints the County Council had arranged for litter to be picked along a section of the A68;
- (iv) *Planning* – Cllr. Oliver noted that changes in planning law were likely to mean that there would be a significant increase in the number of planning decisions made by officers rather than council committees. Northumberland County Council was therefore reviewing whether to continue with local planning committees and Cllr. Oliver agreed to send the Parish Council details of the criteria for delegated decisions;  
**ACTION: NO**
- (v) *Condition of main road* – In the pre-meeting discussion, a resident had raised issues with the state of the main road in particular the large lorries and the narrow pavements and encroaching vegetation which was causing additional difficulties. The concerns were noted and some of the issues were being investigated by highways officers.

## 26/53 **Riding Mill Tennis Club – updated proposal to provide lighting for the double tennis courts**

Councillors received a copy of the proposal for new floodlights at the double tennis courts together with a lighting report and an environmental impact assessment. It was noted that the Tennis Club would publish these documents on its website within a few days and would be holding an open day for residents to view the proposals on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

In the pre-meeting discussion, residents queried the proposed venue for the open day and felt that it should be held somewhere neutral. They also asked that information about the open day be widely shared so that residents were aware of the plans. Councillors agreed that the Clerk should pass these comments on to the Tennis Club committee and that she should offer to share the information via the Parish Council's email list.

**ACTION: CLERK**

## 26/54 **The Riding Mill Society**

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, one of the community actions had been to gauge the level of village enthusiasm to relaunch the Riding Mill Society which could organise talks, presentations and community events. Very kindly, Penny Hawley had taken this idea and discussed it with various people and groups, including the Village Hall Trustees. She had proposed a number of events to relaunch the society and had suggested that these were combined with celebrations for the Parish Hall's centenary. Whilst some of the events might still be held, it was felt that the Village Hall Trust could not sponsor the Riding Mill Society as it was not within its remit. At this time there was therefore not enough enthusiasm to relaunch the society but it was noted that this was most likely due to the abundance of opportunities for residents to engage with village life through numerous clubs and groups which already meet regularly.

The Clerk was asked to write to thank Penny for her help in addressing this community action.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**26/55 Reports from meetings**

- Northumberland Community Energy Ltd AGM (NCEL).

Cllr. Jones reported on a useful meeting she had attended of the recently formed NCEL which was a community benefit society tasked with bringing renewable energy and energy storage to community buildings across Northumberland. It had currently helped install photovoltaic cells and battery systems to 15 community buildings in the region. The meeting had brought together lots of interested parties. Cllr. Jones had met residents from Humshaugh who were planning on installing a solar farm which would supply about half of the village's electricity needs and currently had 60 residents signed up as shareholders. She noted that they would be happy to attend a meeting in Riding Mill to share ideas and knowledge. She also noted that Northern Powergrid were able to offer funding to help with village resilience initiatives.

**26/56 Climate Change**

*Dry Garden Project* – It was noted that the application for funding had been submitted to Northumbrian Water's Branch Out fund, the outcome of which would be known by the end of May.

**26/57 Finance**

(a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

|                                                                 |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's salary | £1,283.03 (inc. VAT £1.75) |
| GeoXphere Ltd – Parish Online subscription                      | £60.00 (inc. VAT £10.00)   |
| Neetfleet – installation of dog bin including materials         | £75.00                     |
| Catherine Harrison (reimbursement of expenses – Mailchimp subs) | £11.89 (inc. VAT £1.98)    |

**Standing Orders/Direct Debits:**

|                                           |         |
|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nest pension – March pension contribution | £45.03  |
| Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment      | £310.00 |
| Monthly bank charges – March              | £7.00   |

The following receipts were noted:

|                                                         |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| HMRC -VAT refund                                        | £2,772.36  |
| NCC – 1 <sup>st</sup> instalment of Precept             | £27,327.50 |
| Triodos – quarterly interest payment                    | £2.53      |
| Unity Trust (Bridge fund) – quarterly interest payments | £56.74     |

(ii) *Budget report*

An overall review of budget spending for 25/26 was received and noted. The accounts for 25/26 would be formally considered at the next meeting after the internal auditor had reviewed them. Budget spending had been in line with expectations. The project to install dropped kerbs on the main road had been abandoned as the final quote for the work had been much higher and deemed unaffordable by the Parish Council. It was agreed that initial funds set aside for this project should be reallocated to the Play Park fund. Any other unallocated funds would be held in the general reserves. Following this decision, it was agreed that the Clerk would update the Financial Reserves Policy with the new figures and councillors readopted the document.

**ACTION: CLERK**

(b) *Requests for funding*

Two requests for funding were considered but refused. The first request was to help stage a weekend of events at St James Church to help raise funds for improvements to the facilities. Councillors noted that an award of £980 had already been made to the church in the coming financial year to help pay for upkeep of the cemeteries and therefore a second award was not deemed appropriate. A request was also received from the Village Hall Trust asking if the Parish Council would pay for a new picnic bench at the Parish Hall. It was noted that requests for capital expenditure projects should have been received by December so that they could be incorporated into the Parish Council's yearly budget. It was therefore agreed that this request would be held on file and considered again when setting next year's budget.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**26/58 General Village Maintenance**

- (i) *Handyman* – The Clerk reported that the handyman had completed the following tasks in March: cut various hedges, cleaned road signs and re-installed the dog waste bin on Sandy Bank;
- (ii) *Replacement of planters on Marchburn Lane bridge* – The Clerk reported that she had informed the Marchburn Lane Residents' Association that the Parish Council intended to remove the planters on the bridge as they were starting to rot. They had also been difficult to maintain and plants had been regularly removed. She had shared the suggestion of low barriers. The association had responded to ask for other options to be considered as they didn't feel that barriers were suitable although Cllr. Howe noted that residents had previously been consulted and had failed to respond. It was agreed that costs for other suggestions could be explored but, if these options were more expensive, then the association should be asked to make a contribution.

**ACTION: CLERK**

- (iii) *Tree across The Nick* – A report had been received that a tree had been uprooted following the recent strong winds and it was being supported by trees on the opposite side of the Nick. The Clerk had written to the land agent to alert the owners to the problem. If no response was received, the issue would be reported to the County Council.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**26/59 Planning**

Planning applications received and decisions made by Northumberland County Council:

- (i) It was reported that the following new planning applications were under consideration:
  - 26/00911/LBC – Hollin Hill Cottage. Listed Building Consent for a proposed garage, replacement windows, replacement render and repointing of stone work. PC – no objection;
  - 26/00902/FUL – 42 Station Close. First floor side extension PC – no objection;
- (ii) It was reported that no planning applications had been granted permission;
- (iii) It was reported that the following variation of condition had been received:  
26/01107/VARYCO – Osbit, Broomhaugh House. Variation of condition relating to hard landscaping and drainage proposals. PC – no comment;
- (iv) It was noted that the application for a new dwelling (25/03877/FUL – Land north of Old Tavern) would be decided at the West Area planning committee on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. Howe intended to attend the meeting and would speak in support of the development.

**26/60 Correspondence**

- Anonymous letter complaining of parking issues on Station Close – referred to Cllr. Oliver – see Minute 26/52(i)

- Speeding issues at Beauclerc – referred to Cllr. Oliver.

It was agreed that following the speed survey conducted by the County Council and the outcome of the LTP submission, Cllr. Ayre should draft a statement for the website explaining the actions the Parish Council had taken to try to reduce speeding in the village and what further options could be explored. The statement would also be shared with residents who had recently contacted the Parish Council about speeding issues.

**ACTION: AA/CLERK**

#### 26/61 **Minor Matters**

- (i) *Memorial Plaque* - A suggestion had been made that a memorial plaque should be installed somewhere within the Parish Hall grounds or building to honour Val Thompson who died last year. Councillors were happy to support the suggestion but agreed that they would like the input of the Village Hall Trustees and approval from Val's family.

**ACTION: CLERK**

- (ii) *Community Resilience Plan* – The Clerk reported that there was very little interest in forming a community resilience group and completing the suggested plan. Councillors too were unsure about the need for a plan and agreed that it might be best to simply maintain a list of useful contact numbers and keep a summary of resources and how to access them in an emergency. This document could be shared with relevant groups and updated yearly but no responsibilities or tasks would be assigned to named individuals.

**ACTION: CLERK**

#### 26/62 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

26/63 **Confidential Matters:** Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item:

1. To agree: on the recipient of this year's Community Champion Award.

Following discussions which can now be made public, it was agreed that this year's recipient of the Community Champion Award should be Christine Andersen.

*Christine had been an editor of the Parish News for over 25 years. She had helped organise the weekly lunch club and still continued to arrange the monthly Pot Luck lunches. She had previously worked as the parish clerk and had been involved in Riding Mill Drama Club for many years. Christine had shown herself to be an integral part of the community and was a very deserving winner.*

In total, 10 residents were nominated for the award, some multiple times. Councillors recognised that each person would have been a worthy winner and hopefully could be honoured at a later date. They recorded their thanks to residents who took the time to submit a nomination.

**ACTION: CLERK**

Public meeting closed at 8.42 pm.