Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 11th May 2026.

Councillors present:

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

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.

26/64 **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr. Andrew Ayre.

26/65 **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026/27 were sought. Cllr. Dunhill proposed that Cllr. Howe should remain as Chair and Cllr. Howe proposed that Cllr. Armstrong should remain as Vice-Chair. These proposals were seconded by Cllrs. Irwin and Wood respectively and agreed unanimously. Cllr. Howe was duly elected as Chair and Cllr. Armstrong as Vice-Chair. Cllr. Howe signed an Acceptance of Office Form for the position of Chair.

26/66 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Armstrong declared an interest in Item 11 – The Nick, and in Item 15(iii) – Planning (Land North of Old Tavern).

26/67 **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. Dunhill and Ayre
- 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 – Cllrs. Wood and **Howe**
- 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*)
- 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

26/68 **Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Code of Conduct**

The following papers were reviewed and re-adopted without change subject to one amendment to the Financial Regulations as detailed below:

- Standing Orders (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Armstrong)
- Financial Regulations – Amendment – increase to upper limit to follow NALC guidelines: *5.6 – For contracts estimated to exceed **£60,000** including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the Council OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation.* (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)
- Code of Conduct (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)

26/69 **Dates of Future Meetings**

A paper detailing the dates of future meeting was received and accepted.

26/70 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 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. Dunhill).

26/71 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 26/51(i) – Play Park Fundraising*. A paper was received outlining what children at the First School and the Pre-School loved about the play park and what improvements they thought would make it even better. Ideas included a trampoline, easier access to the river and more swings.

It was also reported that a previous resident of Riding Mill had offered a donation to the Parish Council and was happy that it be used for the play park. Councillors recorded their thanks to this individual;

(ii) *Minute 26/58(ii) – Replacement of planters on Marchburn Lane bridge.* The Clerk reported that she was waiting for the residents' association to come back to her with ideas for replacing the planters as they had disliked the idea of low barriers. She had stipulated the budget and awaited a response which she would share with councillors at a future meeting;

(iii) *Minute 26/52(ii) – Outdoor Pre-school*. Cllr. Howe shared an update from the Chair of Pre-school. The Village Hall Trust had been supportive and the Pre-school was about to sign a rental agreement for use of the Millennium Hall. They would like to use the Spinney for the majority of the week although the advice from the County Council's Planning department was that there must be no permanent structures. To safeguard the children locks would be needed for the gates as well as a notice displaying opening times. In addition, the staff were keen to establish a place for a fire circle and somewhere for the children to dig. They were also keen to leave a picnic table in the Spinney that could be used by anyone if required.

Councillors were happy to approve the locks, sign (which they agreed should indicate that no dogs be allowed in the Spinney until further notice) and a picnic table. Councillors felt unable to agree to the children digging and suggested instead that a raised bed for soil should be created that could easily be removed once no longer required. The tree survey had also highlighted that there should be no fires in the Spinney so the request for a fire circle was refused. Councillor Howe would respond to the pre-school accordingly.

ACTION: CH

26/72 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Oliver reported on the following matters:

(i) *Planning* – Cllr. Oliver had shared the scheme of delegation for planning applications to be used under the new planning proposals. He anticipated these changes would come into effect later in the year;

(ii) *Planning Application - site north of the Old Tavern* - There would be a visit tomorrow to view the site of this proposed development before a committee meeting later that day. Currently, the officer had recommended refusal for the development on the grounds of residential amenity, design of house, exit/sightlines

(iii) *Highways matters* - There had been a walkabout in the village to look at potential sites for electronic indicator signs, gateways, and road markings and Cllr. Oliver would work with Cllr. Ayre to formalise these proposals;

(iv) *Sandy Bank Residents' Association* – Cllr. Oliver had attended the recent AGM of the Sandy Bank Residents' Association where they had raised issues with the surface of Sandy Lane and its pavement. He had arranged to meet one of the residents to review the issues and had noted from the Local Transport Plan that the County Council intended to resurface sections of Sandy Lane later this year. The Clerk noted that she had been told that there would be further gas works on Sandy Lane, possibly next year, and hoped that the work could be coordinated. Cllr. Oliver would check with the highways team to make sure that they were aware of this possible work;

ACTION: CLERK/ NO

(v) *Resurfacing of the A 695* – Cllr. Oliver reported that a section of the A695 towards Farnley would hopefully be resurfaced in June. He was also aware that the County Council intended to resurface the whole of the A695 through the village in 2028;

(vi) *Parking issues* – Cllr. Oliver had visited the village accompanied by an officer to look at various parking problems. Unfortunately, the officer had advised that there was nothing that the County Council could do to address these matters on Station Close and that it would be for the police to deal with should someone be unable to exit their property due to badly parked cars. They had also looked at the lane in Broomhaugh where a resident had requested road markings to prevent parking but as it was a private lane they would not take any action. It was suggested that the resident should display signs stating "No Parking – Access needed at all times";

(vii) *Car parked on Whiteside Bank* - The Clerk noted that she was receiving reports from residents that a car was being left for long periods (several days) parked at the top of Whiteside Bank. The car was taxed and MOT'd but it was quite an unusual place to leave a car and it was causing concern to some residents. Cllr. Oliver offered to send details to the Public Protection Team.

ACTION: CLERK/NO

(viii) *Street name signs at Broomhaugh* - The Clerk reported that the resident had been in contact again about the possibility of street signs. The officer who had been dealing with this had been on long term sick leave and she asked if there was any progress with the matter. Cllr. Oliver offered to raise the issue again with the new area manager.

ACTION: NO

26/73 **Speed Reduction Measures**

As Cllr. Oliver had outlined, a proposal had been made to install red road markings on the approaches to the village in an attempt to slow traffic. Councillors were happy to support this initiative and looked forward to the work being completed. They also received a paper prepared by Cllr. Ayre which outlined what actions the Parish Council had taken to try and reduce the speed of traffic through the village. This document would be shared in a forthcoming newsletter and made available on the website. Cllr. Armstrong suggested that a map be included with the briefing so that residents could see the planned road markings.

ACTION: CLERK

26/74 **The Nick**

A response had been received from the Sandy Bank Residents' Association following their AGM where they had discussed the decision of the Parish Council not to make a contribution to the yearly insurance for The Nick. The association had decided to fund the public liability insurance fully and they were currently renegotiating the insurance premium for the coming year although they noted that the Parish Council would now be removed as an interested party on the insurance policy.

At the AGM, the residents had discussed formalising the legal basis for use of The Nick and felt that it would be in everyone's interest to put this on a more secure footing. They would therefore like the Parish Council to consider entering into a deed of easement which would set out the rights of motor vehicle access and clearly define the maintenance responsibilities of both parties. They had contacted a local solicitor and were willing to fund this and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with the Parish Council. Councillors were happy to support the idea of an easement and the Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting with the association.

ACTION: CLERK/LA

26/75 **Climate Change**

Grass cutting - Cllr. Jones suggested that certain areas of the parish should be left for wildflowers rather than cut. It was noted that the Parish Council had only two large areas of grassland – by the double tennis courts on Millfield Road and in Marchburn Lane. The majority of the verges were maintained by the County Council. Councillors agreed that they would have no objection to leaving certain areas for wildflowers although there would need to be liaison with the residents' associations to get their support. As the grass contract was up for renewal next year, the Clerk suggested that consideration was given to this in the next few months and that any changes were included in next year's schedule.

ACTION: CLERK

26/76 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26**

(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. However, because of the changes to the AGAR, specifically to the new Assertion 10 clause, Mrs Weatherley was unsure whether she would be able to continue to audit the accounts. It was noted that the external auditors were likely to make some recommendations on this which the Parish Council would need to action and it was thought likely that a new internal auditor would need to be appointed before next year;

ACTION: CLERK

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

(ii) the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

(iii) the draft annual accounts for 2025/26

(iv) the Accounting Statement for 2025/26

(v) the Explanation of Variances / Reserve account movements

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

ACTION: CLERK

26/77 **Finance**

(a) *Insurance*

(i) Yearly Insurance – The Clerk reported that the three-year long term insurance contract had ended and a new quote had been received. The broker had only supplied one quote whereas Standing Orders would normally require two. She therefore proposed to obtain a second quote before the renewal date of 1st June 2026. Councillors were happy to accept whichever quote was lowest.

ACTION: CLERK

(b) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

Tyne & Wear Play Ltd – handyman training course	£300.00
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership – yearly subscription	£10.00
NALC – yearly subscription	£251.71
NCC – reimbursement of Clerk's salary	£1,283.33 (inc. VAT £1.80)
Neetfleet – quarterly play park inspection / materials	£165.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (postage, community award, Mailchimp subscription)	£54.56 (inc. VAT £7.89)
RM Sports Club – 1st instalment of yearly grant	£750.00
M Weatherley – internal auditor fee	£100.00

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Nest pension – April pension contribution	£45.03
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment	£350.00
Monthly bank charges – April	£7.00

The following receipt was noted:

Stocksfield PC – contribution to handyman training course	£150.00

(ii) *Budget report*

A copy of the monthly budget spending was received and noted. No issues were identified.

26/78 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman* – The Clerk reported that the handyman had undertaken the following tasks in April: treated moss and algae on the bridges and play area, strimmed, weeded and treated areas around seats, stained various seats, undertaken the quarterly playground inspection and completed minor repairs. He had also attended a playground inspection course;

(ii) *Tree work* -The Clerk reported that the tree surgeon had undertaken the work in the Spinney identified in the tree survey which included cutting back trees adjacent to the vicarage.

26/79 **Planning**

Planning applications received and decisions made by Northumberland County Council:

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

- 26/01216/FUL- Land SE of High Shilford. Change of land use for equine and manége. PC – no objection;

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

- 26/00902/FUL - 42 Station Close. 1st floor side extension;
- 26/00911/LBC – Hollin Hill Cottage. Replacement windows, render and repointing;

(iii) It was noted that a site visit would be held to consider the application for a new dwelling (25/03877/FUL – Land north of Old Tavern) and the application would be determined at a meeting of the West Area planning committee on Tuesday 12th May. Cllr. Howe would attend the meeting and would speak in support of the development.

26/80 **Correspondence**

A number of items of correspondence were considered:

(i) *Issue with parked vans at Broomhaugh / request for solid white line across entrance*. Referred to Cllr. Oliver – see item 26/72(vi);

(ii) *Play Park operating hours* – Councillors noted the resident's concerns and agreed that a poster should be displayed advising users to be considerate to nearby neighbours;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Tennis Club – parking issues*. The correspondence was noted;

(iv) *Street name signs at Broomhaugh.* Referred to Cllr. Oliver – see item 26/72(viii);

(v) *Complaint regarding number of power cuts*. The correspondence was noted and would be shared with residents in the June e-newsletter;

(vi) *Abandoned car.* Referred to Cllr. Oliver – see Minute 26/72(vii).

26/81 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Annual Parish Meeting* – The Clerk confirmed that the annual Parish Meeting would be held on Thursday 14th May. The speaker, Dr Gordon Port, was speaking on behalf of the Natural History Society of Northumbria and it was suggested that a donation be made to the Society in lieu of a fee. Councillors agreed a donation of £75.

ACTION: CLERK

It had been hoped to present the Community Champion Award at the meeting but this year's winner could not be present and it would be necessary to find an alternative date to present the award.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Balsam Bashing* – the Clerk agreed to contact the Tyne Rivers Trust to see if they had scheduled a Balsam Bashing event in Riding Mill this year. She would then share the details with residents in the next newsletter.

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Village Shop* – Councillors noted with interest that the village shop, "Bobby's Shop", was for sale by auction which was to end on Friday 22nd May. There had been some suggestion that the Parish Council should encourage/facilitate a community shop. Councillors were keen to wait for the outcome of the auction before considering this further as some believed that the site could be popular and any intervention by the Parish Council may be unnecessary.

26/82 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Monday 8th June 2026.

26/83 **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 items:

1. Legal issues relating to the Tennis Club lease;
2. A possible renewable energy project.

Public meeting closed at 8.50 pm.