

MINUTES OF THE HEXHAMSHIRE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2026 AT 7.30 PM IN THE MALCOLM CAISLEY MEETING ROOM, WHITLEY CHAPEL PARISH HALL

Agenda

1. Councillors present: Marge Rastall (Chair), Nicki Matthews, Lauren Kristensen, Edward Parker , John Austin, David Flatman, Roger Rutherford, Kirsten Johnson (Clerk)
2. Apologies for absence: Gill Whatmough
3. Declarations of Interest: None
4. Approval of Minutes of the Parish Council held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026: The minutes were approved.
5. Matters Arising

**5.1 Update B4RN support in the Parish.** The project has been promoted in the Parish Magazine and Facebook. There are six volunteers to support the initiative in the Parish. The current count is 102 properties so a further 23 are required to make the minimum numbers. We will shortly know which properties have not signed up so can engage those landowners to ensure they are aware of the project. The project is still on track to start in November if the number of properties can be met.

**5.2 Update on moving to a Gov.uk domain.** All agreed to use a firstname.surname email structure. Kirsten to update Northumberland County Council IT Department.

**5.3 Update from the Joint Town and Parish Council Conference.** There are updates to planning with Northumberland County Council being required to build more housing. After discussion, the question of whether to create a Neighbourhood Plan was worth further investigation as a plan may help ensure affordable housing is built. Kirsten to research how other parishes have created statement positions for planning department to take into account. There were updates from the Highways department, including who to contact. Kirsten to scan and share with the minutes.

**5.4 'No Mow' verge signs** Agreed the signs should be returned to Northumberland County Council. Lauren to check whether the school still need to use one sign for their Forest School.

6. Public participation: None
7. Matters for Discussion with the Unitary Councillor – No communication received.
8. Correspondence –
  - 8.1 Library Provision Consultation** – The consultation is now open and closes on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

There is a child friendly version of the consultation which can be completed by younger library users. Marge to share the book mark QR code with Whitley Chapel School, Kirsten to share with Slaley School.
9. Finance –
  - 9.1 Generator Service Invoice** – agree to pay £205 for repair to RJ Henderson. When there is a power cut, the solar batteries will offer power first. When they run out, the generator then provides power.
  - 9.2 Payroll reporting update** – The HMRC account has still not been totally adjusted by HRMC but it was agreed that two correct figures of £87.91 and £169.30 be paid to stop interest from running. The relevant clerk will be contacted by Nicki to discuss reimbursement where appropriate. We are able to chase up HRMC if the account has not been rectified to our satisfaction by 7<sup>th</sup> May.
  - 9.3 Monthly Update** - All agreed £10,000 should be moved from the Main account to the Sportsfield Account as this account generates more income.
  - 9.4 VAT Reclaim** – Nicki reported VAT has not be reclaimed since 4 January 2023 and she volunteered to submit a claim for VAT on invoices since that date. Claims must be made within 4 years of payment. It was agreed that reclamation of VAT should form part of Year End processes in future.
10. Planning Applications
  - 10.1 24/00728/BRCOND Lilswood Caravan Park** – There was work on the site but it is unclear if this was compliance work
  - 10.2 25/01839/FUL (withdrawn) Guards Lane** – Alex Campbell confirmed the caravan must be removed and the shed taken down within 4 weeks of 12<sup>th</sup> March or proceedings will commence.
11. Highways, Footpaths and BOATS
  - 11.1 BOAT track through Slaley Woods (543/039)** – no response yet received.

**11.2 Underground springs at Mill Bank Top** have created further potholes. Agreed to write to Andy Olive to list some of the major ongoing issues. Kirsten to liaise with Gill to draft email.

12. Reports:

**12.1 Wetlands** – advertising of grazing – advert is to be shared in Parish Magazine and facebook. The advert will ask for expressions of interest by 13<sup>th</sup> May. All agreed a basic grazing agreement would be helpful. Nicki to speak to Gill to organise the agreement and advert.

**12.2 Hall** – bookings are currently lower than in previous years. One possibility is to find someone with social media experience to promote the venue.

**12.3 School** – some damage sustained to the cabin in recent winds.

**12.4 Dukesfield Arches**

**12.5 Sportsfield/Play Area** - Sharp bolts have been removed from the bench/seat and bolt covers and strimmer guards fitted. No invoice yet received. Kirsten to chase.

13. A.O.B.

13.1 Agreed we should provide information of some of the key contacts for Northumberland Council (for example environmental health, highways, animal welfare team) on the website. Kirsten to update website.

Meeting closed at 20:53

Next meeting will be Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April.