

MINUTES OF THE HEXHAMSHIRE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD THURSDAY 9th APRIL 2026
AT 7.30 PM IN THE MALCOLM CAISLEY MEETING ROOM, WHITLEY CHAPEL PARISH HALL

Minutes

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

5.1 Update B4RN support in the Parish – The meeting on Thursday 26th March included training to support volunteers in explaining the fibre laying to landowners. Feedback from B4RN is they prefer to cross land if possible as utility infrastructure often follows the road, making it more complicated to install along roadsides. All felt it was important the contractors chosen by B4RN for the work closely with landowners for the best delivery. The Parish has almost reached the required number of sign ups, which is encouraging at this early stage.

5.2 Update on moving to a Gov.uk domain. The email addresses are progressing and we are trying to ensure that the new website will provide a platform that allows us to upload documents in a compliant format. We will continue to have our current website as a source of historic information as it provides so much information about Hexhamshire.

5.3 Young Farmers Club Bonfire Marge has written to Anna regarding the debris found after the November bonfire. The Young Farmers have responded that nails from the pallet had been cleared prior to the bonfire being constructed and they are unclear how glass was incorporated. All agreed a written response was needed to make it clear we cannot have hazardous material left after the bonfire. Lauren to speak Anna.

6. Public participation: None
7. Matters for Discussion with the Unitary Councillor – none received
8. Correspondence –

8.1 Whitley Chapel Young Farmers Club – Donation request The Young Farmers Club have made a request for support for the travel costs to attend the National Final of the Entertainments Competition which will be held in Wales. All approved a donation of £100.

8.2 Parish Garden Trail – Donation request – request for garden trail which is the last that the vicar Andrew will organise. All approved a donation of £100.

8.3 Tynedale Hospice – Donation Request – All agreed this the request be turned down this year because it is less of a local cause compared to the other two requests, and sadly parish council funds are limited.

8.4 Hexham Rotary – Jasmine Harrison talk – Wednesday 13th May, Jasmine Harrison will be speaking at Tynedale Mart. This has already been shared in the magazine so no Parish Council action is required.

9. Finance –

9.1 Monthly Update - The AGAR forms have been received on 31.03.26. An internal auditor will be appointed.

9.2 Reclamation of VAT – Nicki reported this claim has been submitted.

10. Planning Applications

10.1 26/01018/COU – Land West of Salmonfield – The Parish Council supports this land use change.

10.2 25/01839/FUL (withdrawn) Guards Lane – A retrospective planning application is to be submitted for the timber shed which is being used for the storage of bee equipment

11. Highways, Footpaths and BOATS

11.1 BOAT track through Slaley Woods (543/039) – The Countryside and Green spaces team of Northumberland County Council have undertaken this work on the Ginglehaugh Road. The BOAT has been repaired and there is no formal process to request traffic regulation along a BOAT.

11.2 U8076 Foggat Farm Junction To Newbiggin Junction Hexham - Northern Gas Networks road closure for new cathodic protection works. Expected work dates: 26/05/2026 - 05/06/2026. No access maintained.

11.3 Gate on the footpath adjacent to the western bank of the Devil's Water, opposite Red Lead Mill – Gill reported this on FixMyStreets. Rights of Way Officer, Duncan Lovett, has advised Northumberland County Council can supply a gate in lieu of their

contribution to the works but do not undertake the work directly unless there is a safety concern. Gill to follow up with Duncan to clarify that gate is unsafe.

11.4 Footpath adjacent to Willowfields – this has dried. Gill to follow up with Duncan.

11.5 Road between Shield Green Nursery and Dipton Mill Inn – Residents have reported the road is in such poor condition it is becoming unpassable and they raised FixMyStreets tickets on 12th February to report the blocked drain, 26th March to report the road condition and 1st April to report the blocked drain is causing the road surface to lift. Kirsten to write to Andy Olive and Glen Harrison in the Northumberland County Council Highways department.

12. Reports:

12.1 Wetlands – one application has been received. All agreed Juliet Rodgers could receive the grazing rights. Gill will obtain a signature on the Grazing Licence from Juliet.

12.2 Hall – The back door lock is sticking. Nicki to report this.

12.3 School – The school is currently closed for Easter holidays but the 20mph sign lights have been turning on.

12.4 Dukesfield Arches – David reported the website update is progressing but it is going to take longer than anticipated.

12.5 Sportsfield/Play Area – Matthew is undertaking some rabbit control. Rik is finishing the steps by the slide, one of which needed additional repairs. He is currently power washing the equipment and lifting the rubber matting. Gill to check whether Rik is intending to repair the plastic coping on the tennis courts. All agreed to ask Rik to remove the goalposts and maintain the holes. There was a further discussion after the meeting and Rik is now to be asked if the goalposts could be painted instead, as they are still sound

13. A.O.B.

13.1 NALC Invoice for Finance for Councillors Training (£35) All agreed to pay.

13.2 Rural Crime Group – similar groups exist in other rural areas in Northumberland. All agreed this could be useful to alert landowners to any thefts. Marge to contact Sam and Cllr Bridgett to establish how the group operates and how they verify members.

13.3 Update on 24/00728/BRCOND - Lilswood Caravan Park – Alex Campbell reported everything has been done except the required cladding and colour of the vans. Agreed the Parish Council expected action to be complete based on the published timeline and work is now outside of that timeline. Kirsten to follow up with Alex Campbell.

Meeting closed at 20:54
Next meeting will be Thursday 14th May