

DRAFT

Norham Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th November 2025

Bill White (Chair) (BW), Louise Cockburn (Vice) (LC), Moira Graham (MG), Paul Thompson (PT), Catherine Lorigan (CL) and Victoria Mann (VM)

Councillor Patrick Lambert

Invited Speakers: Rev. Rob Kelsey (Vicar of St Cuthbert's) and Lucy Carroll (Church Warden)

Parish Clerk – Alison Petrie

1. **Apologies for absence** - John Grahamslaw (JG) and PC. Curtis Richie from Northumbria Police
2. **Declarations of interest** - BW has an ongoing dispute with Northumbrian Water on a personal matter.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** – The Committee voted that they are an accurate representation of the meeting.
4. **County Councillor's Report** – Cllr. Lambert - The main issue at the County Council is the forthcoming NCC Budget, which they hope to get voted through in January. The main issue that NCC has is the overspend on Special Educations Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which is running at about £7.5 million over at the Year to Date. Cllr. Lambert suspects that money will come out of front-line services.

Roads – The closure of Ford Bridge (B6354). It will be closed from the 12th of January until the beginning of May 2026. There will be no access over Ford Bridge, the diversion is via Cornhill.

Norham Castle. English Heritage has appointed a new officer for this area, whose remit covers Norham Castle. The bridges into the Castle have been condemned due to rot at the end of the timbers., so Cllr. Lambert is trying to get hold of some outside funding to get the bridges repaired. It is a Health and Safety issue. The aim is to get it open as it is part of the Tweed Trail. They have already funded equipment at Grinham Wood at Horncliffe. Norham should be

able to access this source of funding. Cllr. Lambert is determined to get it sorted, funded and open

LNER trains stopping at Berwick

The new timetable comes into effect at the beginning of December. There will be fewer LNER Trains to Edinburgh and London. Trans-Pennine, Lumo, Cross Country necessitate changes. – Cllr. Lambert has spoken to David Smith MP (MP for North Northumberland), and John Lamont MP (MP for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk).

5. **Community Police Report** – PC. Curtis Ritchie has nothing to report locally. He raises the issue of quadbikes being stolen. Reminds owners to lock them away when not in use.
6. **Mobile Phone Signal** – Janet Young (Village Hall Committee) is the point of contact with Vodafone/3. Surveys to be carried out, in early December to establish the position of equipment. Planning permission may be needed., NCC is on side because they are keen on improving internet and mobile phone coverage in the village. LC advised that the village hall committee has approved it in principle.
7. **Traffic Calming** – nothing to report on the suggested white lines opposite the bus stop.
8. **Sewage and water issues** – no feedback from Northumberland Water. BW will continue to push this matter forward.
9. **Public Toilets** – The committee have agreed to give Sheila Broadbent additional money. She had resigned from the post because of having to clear up the excrement and Nutella Chocolate Spread. There is a new cleaner, she has a local job here and has experience with cleaning the WC's in Bamburgh.
10. **Parish Council Website** – The new Norham Life website is now live. However, NPC has decided that it will have basic information on the Norham Life website (Councillors and contact details) and a link to the NALC website.
11. **Village Board Map** – There are options to put information on the left- and right-hand sides of the board and the reverse. BW supplied a list of suggested additions to the board, asked for further suggestions.

12. **Play areas** – The signs at the playgrounds have wrong contact details – BW to investigate. The swing has been done.

13. **Jubilee Field** – JG has cleared away the collapsed tree. Philip Bradley (NCC's Footpaths Officer) attended at NPC request and examined the Wooden Bridge which shows signs of deterioration. It has been put on a monitoring list and is safe to use.

14. **War Memorial** – BW has been in contact with the company regarding the bronze plaque for the rear of the Memorial. (To preserve the names and to correct the errors on the front). The cost of the plaque is more than £3500 plus VAT and carriage. A War Memorial fund will be opened and a fund-raising campaign started. Cllr. Lambert has a Councillor Fund he can access. He will enquire about the possibility of donating £3000.00 towards it and let us know.

15. **Fisher's Walk** – BW arranged for Philip Bradley (PB) (NCC's Footpaths Officer) to attend and advise on the current state of the narrow footpath. PB observed that underneath the overgrown vegetation there is a stone path. NPC's suggestion of scraping back would be classed as an improvement which he would be happy with. He also advised that the hedgerows are the responsibilities of the landowners on either side. The Footpath is owned by Simon Orpwood, who has no objections to us doing any improvement, as long as, we remember that he is part of an environmental programme.

BW will contact the Diocese who are on the west side of the path and apprise them of NCP's plans and seek their advice.

MG mentioned the state of the steps at the river end of Fisher's Walk. Purely down to wear and tear.

16. **Planning Applications** –

Cllr. Lambert - Boathouse Lane, there is an application for 2 x 9m additional telegraph poles. He queried why they could not use the existing BT telegraph poles.

Solar Panels for Galagate Barns and village hall. The solar panels for the Village Hall were originally going to be on the back, but the providers advocate they will be more efficient the front. Matters will be raised when a planning application is forwarded to NPC for input/approval.

A previous planning application on Boathouse Lane for the site just past Larchside. It has been agreed in principle for one dwelling. No drawings submitted. There is currently a very big mobile home on it. PT thinks it might be a permanent dwelling as it resembles a park home/chalet. VM to investigate.

The vegetation on 4 Cross view was discussed. The Council say it is a work in progress but has been left very untidy and not completed.

The application for extending the Caravan park at the Salutation has been removed.

17. Finances -

Parish Council Account

Opening Balance	£9,011.57
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Payments

Northumberland Citizen Advice	£100.00
NN Hospice Care	£50.00
G Straughen – Unblocking Public Loos	£52.20
Sheila Broadbent – Goodwill Bonus	£100.00
Village Hall (donation towards NPC Hire)	£300.00
	£602.20

24.9.25 Closing balance	£8,409.37
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Payments awaiting approval

L Cockburn – Public loo supplies	£20.56
B White – replacement swing seat	£56.40
L Cockburn – urinal crystals	£30.99
Sheila Broadbent – discretionary payment	
(dealing with excrement in public loos)	£100.00

Total awaiting approval	£207.95
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<u>Business account Balance</u>	£622.30
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Some donations have been sent out, but it has taken as while because we are trying to pay by BACS not cheques.

CL, LC and BW have done an on-line Finance course with NALC. One of the issues that came up was that PC's should ideally hold a contingency fund over-and-above the Precept payment for one off payments, such as elections etc. The sum held should be no more than the precept figure. It was agreed that a contingency account would be opened

The NPC Business Account has approx. £600 in it, which came from the Castle Lighting some time ago. It could be used as a starter for the war memorial.

It was agreed that payments for cleaning of the toilets and toilet supplies could be made without prior approval of the committee, they would be noted on the next financial statement. In addition, where necessary, purchases up to £100 could be made with retrospective approval

18. **Donations** – have been covered in Finance – CL reminded them that they were going to carry on with recipients of donations for now, but that at some point we are going to review them

The only donation that is outstanding that has been previously agreed is to NDT for the website, LC has not been given any details / bank account details for NDT.

19. **General Correspondence**

Salt / grit bins – there are 5, LC has checked 3. These were all currently full. There is a machine for spreading grit. Hoping to find a couple of people willing to take on the gritting of pavements. Call 'Fix my street' to refill. Bad areas are the Square and North Lane and pavement on Castle St. Seeking volunteers. Cllr. Lambert suggested speaking to the Humes down Boathouse Lane.

Email from Isabel Hunter asking if anyone wanted to be a Norham and Islandshires representative on the NALC County Committee. AP will find out what is involved and pass it round.

The car opposite Galagate farm was removed after contacting the DVLA.

St Cuthbert's Church Project

Rev. Rob Kelsley and Lucy Carroll made a presentation on behalf of the Village Church – The Church is about 860 years old. It has an active community of worshipers and users. It is popular with tourists and is proving to be a good venue for concerts. It should be as integral a part of the village as possible, and would like people to make good use of the building and learn about its history through interpretation panels. The dream is a comfortable, accessible venue for religious worship and secular events.

However, it is cold and dark in winter which makes its usage limiting to some groups. The heating and lighting need to be improved to get the church put to better use. Rev. Kelsey and the Church Wardens have been looking at options for improving the venue. They also need to improve the interpretation of the history of the church and the building.

There is now a need for significant funding – **St Cuthbert's Project** – need to expand it for all year use.

The total project costs come to £350,000 approx. There is a lottery heritage fund application has been done for £240,000 approx. which they are hoping to hear from imminently. Applications have been made to other funding bodies and trusts. £10,000 has been received from the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust. Fundraising will continue until they get there. Mrs Carroll offered to show NPC members what is proposed.

Mrs Carol mentioned that restoration is needed on the two pillars at Bride's Pathway and the path leading to the church entrance needs upgrading.
PT - the pillars at the Brides Gate are on the Council's list from a few years ago.

BW closed the meeting at 8.20pm

Date of the next meeting is 26th January at 7pm

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