

Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting
Blanchland Village Hall
On Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 7:00pm

Present: Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Chair, Mr M Kennedy, Mr M Forster, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.

- 1. Apologies:** Mr D Kelly, Mr R O'Connor, Mr C Horncastle
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** Councillor Bowers B&H Show. Councillor O'Connor B&H Show and Village Shop. Councillor Kennedy BCDO, Bridal Path Consultation, B&H Show, Councillor Forster BCDO, and B&H Show, Councillor Kelly, B&H Show and Village Hall Committee. Carolyn Asquith, Blanchland Artisan Markets 2023 and B&H Show and Treasurer for Blanchland Village Hall Committee
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd May 2023:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- 4. Matters Arising:**
 - 4.1 Birkside Baybridge Drainage/Flooding at Baybridge/Kerbside at Clapshaw:** No further updates from Glen Harrison, despite emails from the Clerk. Clerk to follow up. Some drainage exploration has begun between Cowbyres and Blanchland, updates required. Drainage issues at Pennypie, with silting under footbridge the making the route hazardous, Clerk to report. Ongoing
 - 4.2 Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** No further updates, but there is speculation that the route may be closed over winter until repairs can be carried out. Update required.
 - 4.3 Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** The Kissing Gate on the Show Field has yet to be replaced (as in previous meeting). No further issues regarding horses along the cinder path – monitor situation. Site meeting took place with Savills to discuss this and other matters, including fallen trees in river, the erosion of the riverside path etc. information was collated and Clerk to liaise with Savills and Duncan Lovatt. Michael Kennedy said that the hedge alongside Hexham Road will be due to be trimmed and top very soon, as per concerns from local residents, the show field hedge will be done at the same time, C Asquith will ensure that the car park is closed off during the day to make access for the tractor and equipment. The containers will prevent the whole hedge being cut, but Guthrie's will work around that.
 - 4.4 Grit and Salt Piles:** Clerk to contact NCC to organise a date for grit to be deposited and MF will arrange for the new Salt Bins to be in-situ in time.
 - 4.5 Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** No updates from Savills as they are still waiting for costings by NCC, no time frame at this point. Letter from local resident Sara Murray, expressing her concerns regarding the proposed changes through the scheme and her worry that this will affect the village adversely, the Committee understood her concerns and the Clerk will ask for permission to forward her letter to Michael Evans at Savills.
 - 4.6 Platinum Jubilee:** The metal plaque was installed by the dry stone wallers at the Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show on August Bank Holiday, it looks fabulous and the seat has already proved popular with visitors and locals. There may be a few details to finish but this will get checked within next month. The question was raised regarding future stone walling at the Show and what could be created in the future, rather than a demo which is removed at the end of show day. Stone would have to be supplied and sourced. Discussions to continue.
 - 4.7 Parish Funds:** Both picnic benches have been installed. This item can now come of the agenda as funds have been spent.
 - 4.8 Warm Hub/Northern Power Grid Foundation.** The generator has been installed; Michael Forster oversaw installation and showed the council where it is located and how to turn it on. It was agreed that it needs some kind of wooden store with an apex roof to stop water collecting on the top. It is also very visible from the next door garden, discussions to be had regarding costings and who is to pay for this. The Parish Council also agreed that they would

like to gift the generator to Village Hall, this will effectively remove it from the Parish Council assets and it will become the responsibility of The VH to maintain and upkeep. C Asquith has the keys, manual and certificates and she will discuss in her role as Treasurer this offer and will liaise with PC accordingly. It was agreed an official handover would be good and that the Clerk will contact the Northern Powergrid Foundation and invite them to join us for a photo opportunity. The Council also discussed the fuel and storage for the generator and the Clerk will discuss this and insurance at the next Village Hall meeting on Monday October 9th 2023. Cheque for final payment made to Tom Christensen £ 4,300 chq no. 62 signed by TB and MF. The Parish Council has made up the difference between the original quote and the final invoice a total of £294.

- 4.9 Blanchland Village Spring and Christmas Fair:** Plans are well under way for the November 25th Event, the Councillors discussed having the main village tree in-situ for the event and will discuss this with BCDO. Promoting the event will start shortly.
- 4.10 Transport:** Frustratingly no more updates, despite emails being sent to Neil Easton, Colin Horncastle and Guy Opperman, Local Resident L Anderson has also chased for updates, but no communication has been received. The Council agreed it was unlikely that anything would change but that it would be reasonable to expect some correspondence.
- 4.11 Litter Pick:** No litter pick has been arranged as yet, the Show field was cleaned after the Show, if required this can be raised again.
- 4.12 Blanchland Community Buildings:** At the September AGM new trustees and committee members were recruited. New role holders: Becci Tuck Chair, Adam Timney, Deputy Chair, Lesley Ogle Secretary, Carolyn Asquith Treasurer and David Asquith Building Supervisor.

5 Finances:

- 5.1 Current statement/Balance:** £5,599.47
- 5.2 Petty Cash:** Balance in credit, Clerk keeps spreadsheet updated and keeps all receipts.
- 5.3 Clerk Wages:** £155.89 cheque 63 signed by TB and MF
- 5.4 Election Charges:** The final payment has been made.
- 5.5 Donations:** It was agreed that the Parish Council would donate £100 to this year's Bonfire Night and Firework Display chq no. 64 signed by TB and MF and they would also make a donation of £100 to the Village Hall for £100 for the use of the Village Hall for meetings, cheque no. 65 signed by TB and MF. Both cheques made payable to Blanchland Village Hall, C Asquith accepted the donations as Treasurer of Blanchland Village Hall and will issue a receipt at the next meeting.

6 New Business:

- 6.1 Register of Interest:** As they have been changes within committees in the Village recently the declarations have been amended to reflect this. MK no longer on Village Hall Committee, MK and TB no longer Felons Committee (as Felons is now closed and will be dissolved). Dave Kelly now Village Hall Committee.
- 6.2 23/03051/FUL – Refurbishment and conversion of existing Byre.** The Council agreed that the building was better put to use than falling into dereliction, the plans were discussed and no issues, concerns or objections were raised. It was identified that North and South were incorrectly marked on one plan. There have been no issues or comment from residents. The Clerk will add comments to the planning application before the 2nd October when it goes to discussion.

Meeting closed 21.02 pm

Date of next Parish Council Meeting: 21st November 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall