

**Blanchland Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting**

**Blanchland Village Hall**

**On Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 8:30pm**

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr M Kennedy, Mr R O'Connor, Mr M Forster, Mr D Kelly, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.
2. **Apologies:** Mr T Bowers, Mr D Kelly, Mr C Horncastle,
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Committee, Carolyn Asquith, Treasurer Blanchland Village Hall, Blanchland Artisan Markets 2023
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th February 2024:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
5. **Matters Arising:**
  - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Birkside, Shildon Road and Clapshaw** The issues at these locations continue as nothing has been done by the County Council. Colin Horncastle has said he will speak to GH about the drainage issues from the road onto the show field as the PC have had no further information regarding the CCTV.  
Work has been done on the potholes in the village centre and also at Cowbyres and the approach to B6306 after leaving the village.  
The kerb to the village hall car park has still not been raised which causes issues in the car park each time it rains heavily.
  - 5.2 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** MK believes there is a meeting in Whitley Chapel, updates to follow. There is a reduced number of vehicles using the route, which means they are following the road closures.
  - 5.3 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** The cinder path is still affected by water on the show field (see above). Horses are still using the cinder path which is a "Permissive Footpath", but road safety is also an issue, no easy fix and one that is ongoing.  
The riverside route had started to dry up and was being used as an alternative path to the south path where harvesting has taken place and the path is currently unusable. Work should start on the harvested area in the next fortnight with planting happening later in the year. Luke Hemmings is keen to get involved with the river path and the Clerk has provided him with Duncan Lovatt's email and has discussed possible funding from Kat Kilner, who the Clerk needs to re-engage with. The Clerk will also check that the riverside path is part of the LTP for 2024-5 as discussed at the previous site meeting.
  - 5.4 **Grit and Salt Piles:** Grit bins will remain in situ as they weren't used last year, due to the mild winter and they are too heavy to lift. The PC is responsible for the cost to refill these each year. This item can come off the agenda for the next meeting.
  - 5.5 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** No updates from Savills, they are waiting for Highways to get in touch.
  - 5.6 **Blanchland Village Spring and Christmas Fair:** The Spring Fair went ahead as planned and with good feedback. The next event is Sunday 11th August.
  - 5.7 **Litter Pick:** The Litter Pick was very successful with over 20 volunteers who met at the Lord Crewe Gatehouse and finished there for refreshments after. Over 20 bags of rubbish were collected within 1 mile of the village.
  - 5.8 **Blanchland Community Buildings:** Rubbish Bin for Village Hall Car Park. The funding is available on request when the Village Hall is ready to make their purchase.
  - 5.9 **PC Laptop and Email:** Ongoing, the Clerk is transferring over to Google. NCC have been given new email to forward to relevant departments as have NALC
  - 5.10 **Fix my Street** app is being used more frequently but the Council would like to urge residents to report issues directly to the NCC as this seems very effective, they can also advise PCs who can follow up if work is not forthcoming.

## **6. Finances**

**6.1 Current statement/Balance:** £1350.86 - Precept received in April

**6.2 Petty Cash:** Petty cash £10.00 available

**6.3 Clerk Wages:** £115.95 (cheque 73 signed by TB and MF). National Living Wage increased in April 2024. Councillors agreed the new hourly rate of £11.44 backdated to the beginning of April. Printer charges have now gone up, the councillors agreed to remunerate £3.00 toward printer costs each month from June 2024 (increase from £1.50)

**6.4 Donations and Payments:** No charitable donation request. NALC subscription is now due £135.63 (cheque number 71 signed by TB & MF) . Zurich Insurance now due £167.44 (cheque number 72 signed by TB & MF)

## **7. New Business:**

**none**

Meeting closed 21:00 pm

**Date of next Parish Council Meeting/ AGM : Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall**