

**Blanchland Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting**

**Blanchland Village Hall**

**On Tuesday 24th September 2024 at 7:00pm**

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Mr M Kennedy, Mr M Forster, Mr D Kelly, Clerk Mrs C Asquith, Cliff Whelpton (member of the public)
2. **Apologies:** Mr R O'Connor, Mr C Horncastle
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Carolyn Asquith, Treasurer Blanchland Village Hall, Blanchland Artisan Markets. Michael Kennedy, Michael Forster, Dave Kelly, Tim Bowers, Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show.
4. **Blanchland Parish Council AGM - Election of Chair and Vice Chair.** Due to continuing ill health Counsellor Bowers has temporarily stepped down as Parish Council Chair, Michael Kennedy was proposed by Counsellor Forster and seconded by Counsellor Kelly, it was agreed that we would revisit this at the May 2025 AGM. Declarations of interest and acceptance of posts were signed, forms will be completed and sent to NCC in due course.
5. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st May 2024:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
6. **Matters Arising:**
  - 6.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Birkside, Shildon Road and Clapshaw:** Michael Kennedy reported that the Birkside and Pennypie issues have been addressed and currently the issues seem to be resolved, however the footbridge is still not resolved and the silting is both sides and needs to be reported again. Cowbyres to Acton is functioning ok currently, however there is a drop off to the roadside which may cause issues if a car or other vehicle were to come off the road it will get stuck. No improvements to the kerbside at the Village Hall, or to the issues further up Clapshaw where the water is running off and into the field, potentially causing issues for bonfire night and parking for Artisan Market if we experience heavy rain between now and November. CA reported that Gary Astley had provided free of charge drain clearance to all the accessible drains in the village, apart from any on 60 mile hour zone. This has helped alleviate some issues and the Parish Council asked the Clerk to write a note of thanks to formally thank Gary and his company for undertaking that task on behalf of the community. Clerk to contact NCC to make aware of unresolved issues.
  - 6.2 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** Issues still ongoing are the cinder path horse usage and the woodland path where motor vehicles and horses are continuing to use it, the Clerk will continue to ask for updates. There is a river down on the south bank across the river near the Play Area, (new business), Dan Matthew and a tree surveyor have looked at it, but both agreed that they felt it did not pose a risk, Tim Bowers has also looked and suggested that we need to minute this as he shared the Clerk's concerns that in full spate it make cause a blockage and the water would then run off into the Show Field and The Play Area, The Clerk will notify Savills and keep them up to date. Broken and missing gates still need to be addressed, Clerk to follow up.
  - 6.3 **Local Transport Plan:** No updates, Clerk to monitor
  - 6.4 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** No updates from Savills, Clerk to monitor.
  - 6.5 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** The volume of traffic has reduced, but work has not yet started. The Police are taking appropriate action and this seems to be having the desired effect. This is an ongoing topic and will remain on the agenda for future meetings to keep up to date about changes and road closures.
  - 6.6 **Grit and Salt Piles:** Grit bins are adequately full as we head into winter, Clerk to monitor and arrange refills as required. We may receive a further donated bin from Phoenix who will drop off in the Village Hall CarPark if it becomes available.

**6.7 Rubbish Bin for Village Hall Car Park:** The VH representative (Carolyn Asquith) has requested the £100 donation towards the purchase of the village hall car park rubbish bin as their funding is now available council agreed the donation and a cheque was given to Mrs Asquith, as agreed the funding would be made available on request when the Village Hall was ready to make their purchase.

**6.8 Fix my Street :** The PC encourages residents to use the app and report any issues which are under NCC remit. Councillor Kelly commented about an ongoing issue with drainage from their property which causes issues on the road at the back of the Square. The clerk suggested that he report it using Fix My Street in the first instance, Savills are aware.

## 7. Finances

**7.1 Current statement/Balance:** £1536.00 - Precept received in Sept

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

**7.3 Clerk Wages:** £123.51 (cheque xx signed by TB and MF)

## 8. New Business:

**8.1 Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Donation:** A request for sponsorship has been received from Show secretary Amy Ralph, which came in just prior to this year's show. The Councillors agreed in principle and discussed the sponsorship donation going towards a sign which could be used each year and would have the Parish Council name and contact details on.

**8.2 Hexham Rowing Club:** The Parish Council donated £200 to Hexham Junior Rowing Club to support local athletes in this year's International competitions, this was agreed via emails and has been paid out.

**8.3 Tree Across the River:** Incorporated into 6:2

**8.4 Bonfire Night Donation:** The issue of the annual bonfire and recent public comments made on Facebook were discussed. The Council felt that as this is an annual event lasting less than 20 minutes and is advertised in plenty of time, giving local residents time to prepare in advance. All necessary risk assessment and SAG's will be in place and as it supports the local community and the community buildings there were no objections to it going ahead as planned. The VH representative (Carolyn Asquith) assured the PC that a thorough clean up has been planned for the following day Sunday 3rd November to ensure that all debris, rubbish etc. is cleaned up and removed, dog walkers and families will be advised to refrain from using the fields until the clean up is completed. The Council Agreed the payment of £100 toward the community firework display and bonfire night. Cheque number xx issued.

**8.5 Blanchland Village Hall Donation:** The Council agreed to make a £100 payment towards the use of the Hall and associated rooms for the PC meetings. Cheque number xx issued.

**8.6 Village Christmas Tree:** This is not the remit of the PC but Councillors Kennedy and Forster who are both on the BCDO committee agreed that it would be possible to have the village tree erected and lit for Saturday 23rd November - Blanchland Christmas Artisan Market weekend.

**8.7 GDPR Compliance - Change to emails and website:** The Clerk made the council aware that new government guidelines recommend that Councillors and Council use a .gov.co.uk email address and website to be compliant The Clerk has taken some initial advice from NALC but will look into this further and report back for the next meeting.

Meeting closed 20:30 pm

**Date of next Parish Council Meeting/ AGM : Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall**