

**Blanchland Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting**

**Blanchland Village Hall**

**On Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7:00pm**

- 1. Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Mr M Kennedy, Mr M Forster, Mr C Horncastle, Clerk Mrs C Asquith. Gary Astley, Resident representing Aimrange
- 2. Apologies:** Mr R O'Connor
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** Michael Kennedy, Michael Forster, Tim Bowers, Dave Kelly, Carolyn Asquith Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee. Carolyn Asquith Blanchland Artisan Markets
- 4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 10th December 2024:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- 5. Matters Arising:**

**5.1 Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Birkside, Shildon Road and Clapshaw:** Work commenced at Clapshaw at the entrance to the Village Hall last week, the job has taken longer than anticipated and bad weather has not helped, the work continues this week to address the drainage issues. A camera has been put down further up Clapshaw and NCC have asked Savills/Trust if they manage the land to the left of the road, which runs to the show field, as this area needs investigating as part of the works that need to take place. Glen has advised that the work at Clapshaw may require a road closure as there is a collapsed gully which needs work. The Clerk will continue to liaise with all parties. As a result work on Shildon Road near the Tea Rooms has been delayed and is yet to be started, however the digger has been up to Pennypie and the silting has been cleared. Gary Astley, a local resident attended the meeting, he explained his role at Aim Range and offered the wagons, cameras and labour should the Parish Council feel the NCC works are not addressing the key issues. His team clear the drains in the village each year as a goodwill gesture and the company has many years experience working with drainage issues in Northumberland. Michael Kennedy thanked Gary for his generous offer and suggested that we see what NCC's next steps are and that should we need Aim Range services we would certainly be in touch. The Parish Clerk is to write a note of thanks to Gary Astley for his offer and for his ongoing support. The holes in the stone wall running along Clapshaw were also noted and the Clerk will communicate with Savills/Trust to see who is responsible for repair.

**5.2 Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** The Clerk has been back in touch with Duncan Lovatt and is waiting to hear back from him. No further progress with any paths and the Clerk and other residents have noted that there is a lot of dog mess particularly around the circular path to the river, The Clerk will post a gentle reminder on Facebook and remind everyone where the bins are and that it is an offence to not clean up after your dog. Michael Kennedy suggested that the Village Hall committee apply for grant funding to replace the missing gates themselves; the Clerk, who is also the VH Treasurer, will look into this. The Clerk has received a Public Rights of Way definitive Map Modification Order (no2) 2024 - Ref ADB DMMO 2 (2024) Path number 29, Bywell to Pennypie, the PC looked at the information and the documents will be kept with Definitive Map, there is a receipt to be returned by The Clerk, she will send this to Alex Bell this week.

**5.3 Local Transport Plan:** the Clerk has not had any direct communication from Savills or Highways. Colin Horncastle shared the LTP for 2025-26 and this has a budget of £145,000 for Blanchland. which is a positive step forward, although the Parish Council what work would be undertaken as part of this budget. The Clerk will email Micahel Evans for an update. It does not look like the riverside path is covered on the LTP for the next financial year.

**5.4 Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** As Above

**5.5 Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** Michael Kennedy observed that since the closure more bikes, horses and walkers are using the path. He believes a budget has been allocated for

repair work to be completed and it will remain closed until 2027.

**5.6 Grit and Salt Piles:** The Grt bins were filled by NCC, they filled 2 as part of their planned refill so the PC only has to pay for the other 2 to be filled, all are now full again. Total cost of £234.inc VAT (Chq no. 83 signed by TB and MF). the clerk will claim VAT back at an appropriate time this financial year.

**5.7 Fix my Street:** No issues currently to report, but the Clerk raised an issue that the app doesn't always recognise that some of the locations are in Northumberland, which means they can't be reported directly.

**5.8 Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Donation:** Michael Forster will speak again at the next B&H Show to ascertain the wording for the signage £300 + VAT. The Clerk will keep a note of the VAT and will claim VAT back when appropriate to do so.

**5.9 Cliff Whelpton Donation:** Cliff was unable to process the first cheque that was issued as the name was incorrect. The Clerk has rectified that and TB and MF signed a new cheque which has now been issued (Chq no. 82 £150)

## 6. Finances

**6.1 Current statement/Balance:** £939.82

**6.2 Petty Cash:** Petty cash £5.00 available

**6.3 Clerk Wages:** £82.54 (chq no. 84 signed by TB and MF)

## 7. New Business:

**7.1 Donations:** No Donation request for this quarter

**7.2 Elections:** May Elections are approaching, NCC has organised training for Clerks with regard to nominations, this is to take place on Monday 3rd March at 6pm and will last 60 - 90 mins, the Clerk has agreed to do this, but asked if she could be remunerated at the normal hourly rate for the duration of the session, the Parish Council members all agreed.

**7.3 Bridge and debris in the river:** The Clerk has reported the build up of debris against the bridge, she asked if one of the Councillors could take a look and report if they feel it needs further investigation.

**7.4 Artisan Market:** The clerk also runs Blanchland Artisan Markets, she explained to the PC that this year the organisers are hoping to hold the outdoor part of the market on the Square on the Lord Crewe side of the road. She has asked local residents who do not have any issue, and she has communicated with Michael Evans who is giving it his consideration, Michael Kennedy asked about insurance as he believes that the Landowner must also have insurance to cover such usage, Carolyn and David Asquit that taken out PLI insurance for the event and will continue to liaise with Micaheal Evans regarding usage.

**7.5 Village Hall Car Park:** The Car Park is still in a poor state of repair, due to the volume of water that has run through it due to the drainage issues at Clapshaw, Carolyn Asquith asked the council about materials and cost of repairs, it was agreed that until the car park has dried out very little can be done, but once it has, if they work has been successful then consideration could be given to repairing it.

Meeting closed 20:00 pm

**Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 20th May 2025 - AGM and Parish Meeting at 7pm in the Village Hall**