

**Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting**

Blanchland Village Hall

On Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 7:00pm

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Mr M Kennedy, Mr M Forster, Mr C Horncastle, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.
2. **Apologies:** Mr R O'Connor, Mr D Kelly
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Michael Kennedy, Michael Forster, Tim Bowers, Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 24th September 2024:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance: Birkside, Shildon Road and Clapshaw:** The clerk has reported all issues to Glen Harrison from NCC and copied in Michael Evans from Savills, Councillor Horncastle and Richard Mackenzie from NCC, a meeting has been agreed, but no date has been set. The Clerk will continue to push for a site meeting to discuss the various ongoing issues, Councillors Bowers, Kennedy and Forster are happy to meet as and when. Michael Kennedy mentioned the ford at Pennypie and that no work has been done and the bridge is still underwater, the Clerk has pinpointed this with Glen to make him aware of its location. Also damage to the wall at Clapshaw which needs repairing, which looks like a vehicle has made contact.
 - 5.2 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** Issues still ongoing and no progression has been made. The riverside path continues to deteriorate and the fallen trees are still in-situ in the river. The Clerk will contact Duncan Lovatt again to get an update, Michael Evans continues to maintain that NCC should bear the cost of any works and that the use of the adjacent field is very much a last resort. The woodland path now has a secure farm and pedestrian gate at the Baybridge end. This should prevent unwanted vehicular access and should prevent horses accessing as the large gate is padlocked.
 - 5.3 **Local Transport Plan:** No updates, Clerk to monitor, this links into the Place Making scheme as below.
 - 5.4 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** Michael Evans has suggested that this is still with Highways and he is waiting for updates, Clerk to monitor.
 - 5.5 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** No updates, a gate has been reported as being damaged, location required to find out whose responsibility to repair.
 - 5.6 **Grit and Salt Piles:** Salt bins need checking MF to have a look. The bin at the Village Car park is reported to have been waterlogged and this may mean that the salt contained inside will not be effective. If required, the Clerk will contact NCC to have bins filled as required.
 - 5.7 **Fix my Street :** no issues currently to report
 - 5.8 **Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Donation:** Councillors have agreed to pay for a new sign for the show and agreed on a budget of £300 + Vat. Michael Forster will discuss with Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show Committee at their next meeting.
6. **Finances**
 - 6.1 **Current statement/Balance:** £1113.00 - Precept received in Sept
 - 6.2 **Petty Cash:** Petty cash £10.00 available
 - 6.3 **Clerk Wages:** £123.51 (cheque 79 signed by TB and MF)

7. New Business:

7.1 Precept for 2025: The Councillors agreed that the precept should remain the same as last year £1610 no increase for 2025 - 2026

7.2 Donations: The Great North Air Ambulance have asked for donations this year as they are currently fundraising for a new helicopter, the councillors all agreed that on a £50 donation (chq no 80 was issued and signed by TB and MF)

7.3 Goodwill gesture Cliff Whelpton: As usual Cliff has done a marvellous job keeping the showfield immaculate, as a gesture of their thanks they all agreed on a goodwill gesture of £150. Chq number 81 was issued and signed by TB and MF)

Meeting closed 20:00 pm

Date of next Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall