

HENSHAW PARISH COUNCIL



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Minutes of Meeting 27 May 2025 held in Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

Present: Cllrs J. Oliver (Chair), A. Saunders, S. Armstrong, D. Finlayson, K. Baron, County Cllr A. Sharp, M. A. Smith (Clerk).

1. Introduction and Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Katie Baron was co-opted onto the Council and signed the required declaration.

2. Apologies for Absence Cllrs V. Gibson and L. Welsh.

3. Declarations of Interest Cllrs Oliver and Finlayson for Item 12 (Village Hall).

4. Public Questions None received. However, 4 representatives from Wark Parish Council had been given permission by the Chair to attend to speak about issues regarding rights of access for vehicles through a section of Wark Forest. It was outlined that a short section, which was within Henshaw's area, was going to be downgraded to byway only. Whilst the unmade road through the forest from Scotchcoulthard to Whygate was not suitable for general use, it was accessible for 4x4's, tractors etc and was a valuable link which shortened the route from 5 miles through the forest or 20 miles via Fourstones/Newbrough. It was discussed that if Wark Parish Council email further details then Henshaw Members would look to support and assist to make application to the County Council for this section to remain as for use by vehicles.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 April, and the Annual Meeting on 6 May 2025 These were read and approved.

6. General Amenities

6.1 Footpaths. The footpath from Falcon Grange to the A69 has been reported to the County Council to see if it can be resurfaced as there is an unmade section which is usually muddy or waterlogged.

6.2 Seating. A request is to be made to the County Council to see if a seat can be installed at the Towhouse bus stop (opposite the shelter).

6.3 Street Lighting. Nothing to report

6.4 Verge Maintenance. Nothing to report.

6.5 Litter bins. The County Council have still not repaired the bin at Henshaw School. Clerk and Chair to look at undertaking this work ourselves.

6.6 Dog Bag Dispensers. These have been refilled and Clerk to order additional supply. There is an additional dispenser which is to be placed near to Bardon Mill Village Green.

7. Miscellaneous

7.1 Grazing Site. Clerk has issued an invoice for this year's rent.

8. Village Greens

8.1 Henshaw Village Green. The tarmacked section of the access road across the green has deteriorated rapidly over the past few months with numerous potholes. Chair and Clerk to meet on site to look at required repairs.

8.2 General matters. Nothing to report.

9. Planning Applications and Issues

9.1 There were no general planning matters raised.

9.2 Planning Application 25/01034/FUL. An application to extend the delivery area and provide additional storage at the Errington Reay Pottery has been received. Members, whilst supportive of this local business, raised concerns over the scale of this development and the impact on the adjacent houses. Clerk to draft a response to the consultation and issue to Members for further consideration.

10. Transport and Highway Matters

10.1 A69. The Clerk has contacted Roadlink to chase up repairs to the junction on the side road out of Henshaw which is deteriorating quickly and for an update on the crossing points and additional footpaths. Members asked if an email could also be sent following the recent incident at the Brockalee crossing to see if anything could be done to improve safety for pedestrians.

10.2 Bardon Mill Station Road Access. The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership are seeking match funding from Network/Northern Rail to undertake a resurfacing scheme and Coulsons are to provide a revised cost estimate as soon as possible.

10.3 Additional road markings at Bardon Mill. This has been agreed and work should start soon.

10.4 Road Maintenance and Potholes. Cllr Sharp has raised concerns over the quality of the repair work and why potholes very close to the repaired ones are left untouched. It was also raised that although sections of Park Lane have been resurfaced there remained potholes and poor sections which appear to have been marked out for repair but not included. Clerk to write to the County Council to see if further work was planned.

10.5 Wellbank, Henshaw. An update is awaited from the County Council on proposed works.

11. Redburn Park

11.1 General Maintenance. Work completed in May includes comprehensive repairs to the access steps from the main road, the steps to the children's slide, reshaping of the access road next to the hall, and repairs to the children's play roundabout. Clerk was asked to check to ensure the repaired steps to the slide would be safe as the wooden treads may become slippery when wet.

11.2 Monthly Inspections. The latest report had noted a few minor issues and these have been attended to.

12. Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

12.1 There are a number of works planned such as repair/replacement of the hall floor, heating system, and solar panels. Funding has been applied for with donations from the Community Shop Fund, WI, and Bardon Mill Parish Council. A request for funding has been made to the Henshaw Parish Council but it was agreed that this be deferred to the June meeting once the Parish Year End accounts are complete, and that the other Members were in attendance (Cllrs Oliver and Finlayson had declared an interest and would not be part of any decision).

13. Northumberland National Park

13.1 Clerk has asked a number of times for a meeting at the Sill to review the interactive signboard, and ask why dogs are not allowed in the building which means a high number of visitors are turned away. An invite has also been made to Tony Gates (Chief Executive) to attend a Council meeting but again a response has not been received. Cllr Saunders, who is one of the Parish representatives on the NNPA was asked to assist in chasing this up. Members expressed disappointment at the lack of responses from the NNPA considering the issue about dogs been allowed in the building has been raised numerous times over a number of years, and about the difficulty in getting the NNPA to engage with the local community. Clerk was also asked to contact the local MP, Joe Morris, to see if he could assist in resolving these issues.

13.2 Following the recent Town and Parish elections, applications have been submitted from the local Councils for the role as representatives on the NNPA. Clerk to advise on next steps once further information has been received.

14. Henshaw School

14.1 All was reported to be going well at the School with no issues to report.

15. Report by Clerk on Financial Matters

15.1 Funds held as at 25 May (estimated awaiting bank statement) is £30,477.27

15.2 Expenditure and Income to approve/note:

- Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Broker Ltd (Annual Insurance) £1,411.79
- Peter Dodd Contracting (Tree Surveys and Recommended Works) £2,430.00
- Great North Air Ambulance (Pre-approved standing order) £10.00

- HSBC (Estimated Bank Charges) £10.00

Estimated balance following above transactions is **£26,615.48**, of which £9,115.48 is operating funds and £17,500 is ringfenced for the Capital Programme.

15.3 Capital Programme. This programme is reviewed each year and is to ensure funding originally acquired from the granting of easements is used on physical projects rather than general spend. The current projects identified are to resurface the access road across Henshaw Village Green, improve and extend the Pitman's Trail, and to provide soft surfacing around the children's play equipment at Redburn Park.

15.4 Annual Governance and Accountability Review 2024/25. Work is ongoing to finalise all the year end accounts and the Clerk would issue paperwork within the next week, and pass the accounts to the Internal Auditor. Final accounts to be presented to the June meeting. The Clerk reported that this years accounts did not need an External Audit and could be self-certified and then published.

16. Northumberland County Council Update

16.1 Cllr Sharp provided updates at the start of the meeting which were noted.

17. General Matters and Correspondence since last meeting

17.1 Update by Clerk. Nothing other than earlier updates.

17.2 Post Elections. All Election expenses returns have now been submitted. Members reviewed and signed the updated Register of Members Interest and the Clerk to collate and send these to the County Council.

17.3 Standing Orders. These have now been reviewed by the Clerk and would be issued to Members prior to the next meeting for consideration and approval. An update was also to be completed on the Financial Regulations and Procedures.

18. Items to be included on the next Agenda. Nothing additional raised other than the actions referred to in the earlier items. .

19. Date and time of next meeting. This will be on Monday 23 June. Clerk to issue dates for the remainder of the year in due course.

The meeting finished at 8.41pm.

Signed and Approved at the Meeting held on 23 June 2025.....