

WARK PARISH COUNCIL

Contact: clerk.wark@gmail.com
Meeting held on 8th September 2025 at Wark Town Hall

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence:** **Present:** Councillor Edward Jeffrey (EJ) (**chair**), Councillor Lisa Lorraine (LL), Councillor Steve Batey (SB), Councillor Sean Miles (SM), Councillor Judith Weir (JW), Councillor Jason Riches (JR) Councillor Brenda Murray (BM). County Councillor Antonia Azocar-Nevin (AAN)
2. **Notification of Other Business** – Payment to NCC for election costs JR has requested further details. Invoice is not being paid until we receive full justification of costs. JR to lead and inform councillors once he has further information. Proposed EJ second JW
3. **Appoint PC to take minutes for meeting-** SM asked to undertake role for the meeting. Proposed EJ seconded BM.
4. **Declarations of Conflicts of Interest-** SM Planning application for trimming of trees. JW RBL bench proposal.
5. **Public and Police participation (10 mins maximum)-** No public in attendance.
6. **Approval of Minutes 23rd June 2025 and 21st July 2025** Proposed SM Seconded JR
7. **Action update from previous meetings (all) –**
-Actions from meeting 21st July 2025
 - 6 Parking-** BM highlighted the issue that the Parish owned track behind Kern Green. **Matter closed no further action.**
 - 7a) Trees on approach to the village.** The trees owned by Northumberland Council need trimming back., AAN to enquire best route and contract to arrange. **Still awaiting NCC feedback carry to next meeting**
 - 7b) Signs for Totem Poles.** SB suggested we need surrounds to the signs at the Totem pole site. SB to find volunteer carver to make sign surrounds. **Volunteer found. SB to update next meeting with progress.**
 - 7c) Tractor parking on road** Limiting access to properties concern will restrict emergency access. SB will enquire with VOSA if vehicle has permission to park as larger than 3.5tonnes.

VOSA will not take any action item closed.

7d) Speed of traffic through village with it being national speed limit. AAN will enquire, if possible, to apply for 30 mph limit and if request could be added to the LTP for 2026/27. ANN also to determine costs from Highways Authority for noticing etc. Parish Council will then review when facts are known. **Still awaiting NCC to respond, carry to next meeting**

7e) Ford at Whygate – Concern over flooding and that the depth marker posts don't show true depth of the water. AAN to investigate with the Highways department if some form of bridge could be constructed and added to LTP for 2026/27. **To be added to LTP requests**

7f) Fur tree in village needs felling. SB has identified contractor who will remove for the timber, agreed will be removed. Awaiting dates for work., **SB to provide update at next meeting.**

7g) Tipper Wagons speeding on Ward Lane (205). Proposed that EJ writes to Forestry to ask them to speak with their contractors to abide by road conditions and speed limits. **EJ to complete.**

8) Pavillion- EJ will inform Liam that the Parish Council will advertise in the Stonehaugh Gazette for volunteers for a working party to move and place the hogging. **EJ to complete.**

9a) BM raised concern about water usage and about making villagers aware that only two tankers a week are sent to the village. No confirmed date when water supply would be restored to the village. AAN will investigate with Northumbria water. NBM to place notice in Gazette. **Still to Action also BM to inform AAN of water company contract details.**

8. County Councillors Report- See attached

9. **Bank account**-EJ to consider changing to internet banking with branch closing EJ to investigate Proposed JR seconded SB
10. **Moving Vehicle sign**-EJ to contact owner about cutting hedge near speed sign. Monday club could undertake if owner agrees. Proposed JW Seconded LL
11. **Wark defib**-EJ reported faulty battery been sent for repairs/ replacement. EJ will contact Karbon Homes about placing a further defib at Westacers. Proposed JR seconded JW
12. **Star gazing centre at Stonehaugh** -EJ to speak with Liam to obtain cost for roof repairs, once know we consider contacting university asking for support to repair. Proposed JR seconded SM
13. **Set Date to review Accounts and Cash Flow Forecast**- Monday 13th October 1800 hrs at JW house. Proposed JW seconded SM
14. **Village Green Tree Condition review recommendations**-SM to make contact with Mattew re

proposal to protect tree and obtain costs. Proposed SB seconded JR

15. **Trees on riverside footpath** – Ash Die back ANN to ask NCC about changing one of the bollards at School Lane for a collapsible bollard to enable maintenance vehicles to access the area. Proposed -SM seconded JR
16. **Composting Toilet** – EJ to contract SM JR and SB for dates to make a site visit to understand operations. Proposed BM seconded LL
17. **MOP request for memorial seating at Stonehaugh**-SM Draft email for new clerk to respond to MOP (note land requested is Forestry not PC land. BM proposed location near or around start gazing area. Proposed BM seconded SB
18. **RBL request for memorial Seating at Wark village green** – Agreed RBL could install bench at their maintenance costs on green location to be Northeast corner of the green. Proposed SM seconded EJ
19. **Recruitment of Clerk**- EJ has meeting with applicant on Tuesday 9th September 2025. If suitable will offer employment. Proposed SM seconded JR
20. **Date of Next meeting** 11th November at 1900 hrs in Wark Town Hall.

Meeting closed 2020hrs

1. **Appoint Anne Hutchinson as RFO until New Clerk is appointed.** Agreed Annie Hutchinson (AH) appointed. Proposed by SB seconded by JR.
2. **Appoint PC to take minutes for the meeting.** SM agreed to undertake for meeting. Suggestion to consider support offered by Phil for next meeting. **SB** to investigate availability. Proposed SB Seconded JW.
3. **Declarations of Conflicts of Interest** - None
4. **Welcome and Report from County Councillor** –None, no County Councillor present or report provided.
5. **To consider and agree any actions from the Internal Auditor.** AH presented the report. It was agreed

that after the close of the next public meeting the PC would hold a confidential meeting to discuss actions required from the internal audit report. Proposed SB Seconded BM

6. **To approve the Annual Governance Report (AGAR)** AH presented the report which was discussed and agreed in the meeting. Proposed SM Seconded JR
7. **To Approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances** AH presented the report only one variant item 6 (All other payments) above 15% variant, which is believed to be due to the cost of speed signs and material for Stonehaugh observatory. It was agreed to review the details of the variant at the next meeting as part of the confidential section of the meeting, **AH** to provide further detail. Proposed BM Seconded JR.
8. **To confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption.** AH presented, the exemption certificate was approved. Proposed JW seconded SB
9. **To confirm dates for Public Rights to include 02/07/2025.** AH presented, this was agreed to be posted on notice boards on 24th June. Actions by **BM** for Stonehaugh and **SM** for Wark. (Wark as no key available so will be attached to the glass). Proposed BM seconded SM.
10. **To approve appointment of Internal Auditor for 2025-2026** Agreed for Susan Sanders to undertake after her excellent review for 2024/2025. Proposed BM seconded SB
11. **Trees on riverside footpath – Ash Die Back**, AH had discussed with Forestry, they suggested that we leave to die back naturally and only undertake work on the trees if become dangerous. SM questioned if the trees were our responsibility as we believe the land is County Council not PC. Further investigation required on ownership, agreed to wait till Clerk appointed so we can set up an account with the Land Registry to formalise ownership. Proposed SM seconded SB
12. **Composting Toilet – arrange a date for councillors to attend instruction meeting.** Needs roof repaired. EJ and JR will attend instruction, awaiting **EJ** to confirm date.
13. **Recruitment of Clerk- Chairman & 4 Councillors to attend date to be agreed.** Agreed that Chair plus two PC to interview. Interviewers will be EJ, SB and SM with JR as reserve. Interviews are week commencing 6th July. **AH** to send advert to NALC and SLCC and Job centre in Hexham. **SM** to ask if we can place advert in Wark shop. Proposed BM seconded LL
14. **Close Public Meeting/ Agree Date for Next Meeting.** Meeting closed at 1852 hours. Next Meeting 21st July 2025 – AGM 6pm. Followed by a closed confidential meeting. Location -Stonehaugh village Hall BM to book Hall.

Clerk to Wark Parish Council