

BRANXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council website: www.branxtonparishcouncil.org

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 In Branxton Village Hall at 7pm

PRESENT: Chairman N Wood, Vice-Chairman I Ainslie
Parish Councillors J Straughan & I Fiddes (After Min No 696)
County Councillor M Mather
Clerk I Hunter
6 members of the public

Public Question Time: A member of the public raised the following concerns:

- 1- The road up the hill on the approach to Branxton at the North end of village is in a poor state.
- 2- The pavements at the east end of Branxton village are slippery due to moss, which includes the area where there is a crossing for disabled residents.

The Chairman asked the Vice-Chairman to pick up the issues when he is in dialogue with Northumberland County Council Highways Department. He also, stated that the Parish Council had submitted the resurfacing of the road on the northern approach to the village as one of their requests for the 2025/26 Local Transport Plan.

Community Police: The Clerk read out the following updates:

Since the last meeting on 1st October, there has been no recorded crimes and one incident of anti-social behaviour. This was limited in scope and should have no impact on the wider Branxton community. Also there have been no incidents in the surrounding area that I feel represent a potential issue for Branxton.

I wish yourself, the Parish council and Branxton residents a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and peaceful New Year.

Apologies for Absence: None.

Declaration of Interest: None

Request for Dispensation: None

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting: The previously circulated Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1st October 2024 were agreed as a true record. The Chairman signed a hard copy.

Any urgent matters arising from the minutes if not already on the agenda-

Min 695 (Min 683)- Defibrillator

- The Chairman questioned if the Parish Council needed to replace the defibrillator as the warranty is out of date.
County Councillor M Mather as a First Responder stated he had contacted NEAS for advice and had been advised if regular checks are undertaken, no issues are

identified, and replacement pads and batteries can be purchased then the defibrillator will be available for use. He advised the meeting that a replacement defibrillator could cost approx. £1500, stating NEAS use Zoll machines. The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council consider working towards replacing the defibrillator in 2025. County Councillor M Mather agreed to help if required.

Min 696- Parish Council vacancies

- Parish Councillors considered the written request received from I Fiddes to become a Parish Councillor.
- Parish Councillors agreed to co-opt I Fiddes as a Parish Councillor for Branxton Parish Council.
- I Fiddes signed the Declaration of Acceptance and joined the Parish Council at that point.

Min 697- County Councillor report- County Councillor M Mather provided the following updates:

- **Bus Service-** The 266-bus service is being used; however, it would be helpful if more people used it. There is to be a consultation on the timings the bus comes into Branxton village etc, to see if the timings are fitting with the needs of current passengers, or possible passengers.
- **Police-** The police have agreed to hold 2 in-depth meetings per year with Parish Councils in the Wooler ward, each Parish Council will be able to send up to 2 representatives. It is hoped to hold the 1st meeting on 14th January in Wooler, more details to follow.

The changes to the policing in Northumberland are allowing for Police Officers to have an increased presence in the local communities.

The rural Police Officers under Law Dog, now carry DNA recovery kits which can be used on sheep attacks to take DNA from the sheep that has been attacked and if it is thought a specific dog is the culprit the DNA can be taken from the dog too, to see if there is a match or not.

- **Highways-** Fix my street is working better and worked well during the recent spell of bad weather. If you need a road gritted or cleared from snow report it on fix my street.

The Local Transport Plan requests are progressing, all requests which have been submitted are being evaluated and costed. The final list will be collated and approved in time for April 2025. In 2024/25 Northumberland County Council received £21.5 million for highways, bridges etc & £1.7 million for integrated transport. Northumberland County Council is responsible for 3,200 roads, 1,600 footpaths, 3,500 structures 85,000 gullies + streetlights etc.

Northumberland County Council added additional funds to the highway repairs budget to cover works on rural U & C roads.

Northumberland County Council Scrutiny Committee have scrutinised potholes repairs & drainage. It was agreed to use £1m from the 2023/24 winter reserves to purchase additional gully tankers and organise the clearing of the road gullies, which includes the ones on the A697 & A698.

Northumberland County Council had agreed to work with landowners/managers to understand who is responsible for what near the edge of the highway.

Northumberland County Council are grading gullies to ensure the ones which are in danger of causing flooding will be checked ahead of any known storms.

- **Northumberland County Council-** There are still free trees available if anybody is interested.

If any resident is struggling with heating their home or financially, please contact Communities Together on 01670 620 015 for help, the phone lines are open 7-days a week. Lesley Robson who is based in Glendale Gateway Centre has had her contract extended for another year, however, it is hoped to extend the contract for a further 2 years.

Min 698- Clerk's Salary Annual review

- Parish Councillors noted the previously circulated Local government services pay agreement 2024/25 for Clerks which came into effect as of 1st April 2024. The Clerk is on SPC 16.
- Parish Councillors agreed the additional payment of 27 hours @ 0.63p per hr to cover the hours already paid since 1st April 2024.
- Parish Councillors agreed the underpayment of £15.25 gross to the Clerk at the October meeting.

Min 699- Financial Statement-

- Bank Account £603.21 Includes £147.88 for defibrillator.

Min 700- Receipts

- Northumberland CC £ 800.00 Loan in lieu of precept

Min 701- Accounts for Payment –

- E I Hunter £ 133.00 Clerk's Salary 8.75 hours @ £15.33 per hour + back pay
- HMRC £ 33.40 PAYE
- NALC £ 59.83 Annual subscription
- Northumberland CC £ 450.00 By-Election costs
- Branxton Village Hall £ 50.00 Annual rent

Min 702- Parish Council loan.

- Parish Councillors ratified the signing of the letter to Northumberland County Council by the Chairman and Clerk on behalf of Branxton Parish Council to draw down a £800 loan.

Min 703- Correspondence

- **NCC-** Email- Who's who & election documents
- **A Deptford-** Email receipt for defibrillator pads.
- **Wag & Co North-East Friendship dogs-** Request for a donation. Parish Councillors agreed not to donate.
- **NCC-** Email- Free tree giveaway
- **Resident-**Emails- overhanging tree branch. The Chairman agreed to contact the resident for an update. County Councillor M Mather agreed to ask for an update if the situation had not been resolved.
- **NCC-** Email- Introduction to the preparation of strategic document focusing on wheeled action sports in Northumberland.
- **Resident-** Email- Request signed by residents' request for a donation to Branxton Play Park group towards insurance. Parish Councillors considered the signed

request and agreed the 1st step would be for the Chairman of Branxton Parish Council meet with the Chairman of the Branxton Recreation Club to discuss the situation. Parish Councillors agreed that the 2 organisations could consider a joint funding raising event to raise funds for the Branxton Recreation Club.

- NCC- Email- Community Resilience Forum event- 6/2

Min 704- Parish Council website & email addresses

- The Clerk advised the meeting that she is still undertaking research on the Parish Council having have a gov.uk website and gov.uk email address for each Parish Councillor. She concluded that she is asking Northumberland County Council if they can provide the facilities.
- Parish Councillors agreed to receive further updates when they are available.

Min 705- Budget & Precept 2025/26

- Parish Councillors received an in-year update.
- Parish Councillors considered and debated the previously circulated draft budget for 2025/26. Parish Councillors noted that no costs were included within the draft budget if there were to be an election at the 4-yearly election in May 2025. Parish Councillors agreed not to include a donation to the Branxton Recreation Club. Parish Councillors agreed the £800 loan + interest needed to be repaid in 2025. The Vice-Chairman proposed & Parish Councillor I Fiddes seconded that the budget for 2025/26 to be £2500. This was agreed
- The Vice-Chairman proposed & Parish Councillor I Fiddes seconded that the precept for 2025/26 to be £2500. This was agreed

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: None

The next Parish Council will be held on 11th March 2025 at 7.00 p.m. in Branxton Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 20.00 p.m.

Chairman_____

Date_____

Ch's Initials_____