

# BRANXTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council website: [www.branxtonparishcouncil.org](http://www.branxtonparishcouncil.org)

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
In Branxton Village Hall at 7pm**

**PRESENT:** Chairman N Wood,  
Parish Councillors J Straughan & I Fiddes  
County Councillor M Mather  
Clerk I Hunter  
5 members of the public

**Public Question Time:** None

**Community Police:** The Clerk read out the following updates:

**Incidents and crimes –**

There are no crimes reported during the past 12 weeks. There have been no reported incidents in Branxton.

**Community Issues –**

**ASB:** There has been no youth ASB reported to Police.

**Community Engagement –**

High Visibility patrols have been conducted in the area

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> December 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 706 (Min 703 Correspondence)- Play Park Committee-** The Chairman advised the meeting that he had met with the Chairman of the Play Park Committee, who has agreed to provide the Chairman with a breakdown of the costs the Play Park Committee incur, once I receive the information I will collate a report for Parish Councillors to consider as to what options could be available.

**Min 707- County Councillor report-** County Councillor M Mather provided the following updates:

- **Police-** The meeting between the Police and Parish Council representatives from the Wooler ward was well attended and it was agreed to improve the communication between the Police & Parish Councils. Inspector Swan was unable to attend, however Sergeant Budge and 3 local Police Officers were in attendance, and it was agreed to continue to meet every 6 months.

The 6-monthly meetings will allow Parish Councils to have confidential open and honest conversations with the Police.

It was agreed at the meeting that collectively the Parish Councils write to the Police Crime Commissioner etc to challenge the decision makers how the area is policed and request additional police officers on the ground.

It was also agreed to agree a format on how the Parish Councils can report back to Parish Councillors etc on the outcomes of the 6-monthly meetings.

Any member of the public can sign up to Northumbria Connected where they can report issues and receive feedback.

A custody suite will be re-opened in North Northumberland.

The Inspector of the rural beat and members of the response team work together to provide the need as and where required.

- **Bus Consultation-** The consultation events were well attended; the 3-4 times a-day 266-bus service is not being well used due to timings. It has been agreed to investigate if the timetables could be adjusted which could include the number of days the service travels to Berwick.
- **Storms-** Northumberland County Council's responses were improved during the recent storm; 56 schools were closed, and the bus services were removed during the storm. Northern Powergrid communications etc was improved however, there is still the requirement for tweaks to the priority user's element, however, Scottish Power communications were poor as they did not appear to understand the area they covered locally. Northumberland County Council will scrutinise Scottish Power's communications etc and look to receiving a response from Scottish Power. During the recent storm the Glendale Gateway Centre as well as all Leisure Centres & Fire Stations were open to members of the public who had lost power.
- **Housing-** There appears to still be problems with the allocation of Bernicia housing, however, Northumberland County Council are changing their Housing Allocation Policy as well as reviewing & investing in Homefinder, which should improve the situation as all Housing Associations and providers will need to sign up to the policy.
- **Bellview-** Bellview advised Northumberland County Council they were going to reduce their day care provision and close the Belford Day Care Centre in January due to the reduction in users. However, Northumberland County Council are working with Bellview to look at a new design to deliver a provision, therefore in the meantime Bellview have agreed to continue with their current provision while a new design is being developed.

**Min 708- Parish Council website-** Parish Councillors agreed to reimburse the Clerk £61 for the annual fees for the Parish Council website.

**Min 709- Financial Statement-**

- Bank Account           £676.98   Includes £147.88 for defibrillator.

**Min 710- Accounts for Payment –** Parish Councillors agreed the following payments:

- E I Hunter                   £ 153.43   Clerk's Salary 12.5 hours @ £15.33 per hour
- HMRC                         £ 38.20   PAYE
- E I Hunter                   £ 61.00   Website- Annual fees
- E I Hunter                   £ 14.75   Expenses

**Min 711- Planning Application-** Parish Councillors ratified the Parish Council's response of No

Objections by a majority vote to the following planning application.

24/03956/FUL- Retrospective: Demolition of the attached garden shed to the rear of the property and replace with construction of a timber framed structure- Mercator Branxton Northumberland TD12 4SN.

#### **Min 712- Planning Approval**

24/03956/FUL- Retrospective: Demolition of the attached garden shed to the rear of the property and replace with construction of a timber framed structure- Mercator Branxton Northumberland TD12 4SN.

#### **Min 713- Annual Audit 2024/25**

- Parish Councillors agreed the appointment of Mr E Rathbone as the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council accounts for year end 2024/25.
- Parish Councillors undertook the Annual review of the Asset Register, and agreed it was up to date.

#### **Min 714- Correspondence**

- **Resident-** Emails- Condition of trees in Branxton village.  
County Councillor M Mather advised the meeting that Northumberland County Council had agreed to undertake works to the trees in question even though they are not responsible for the trees.  
The Chairman questioned the ownership of the trees as Northumberland County Council cut the grass in that area, also, the tree roots cause issues to the drains in this part of the village.  
Parish Councillors agreed the Clerk ascertain who owns the land the trees are on. The Chairman stated there is a tree close to the powerlines in the same area. Parish Councillors agreed the Clerk update Scottish Power asking for their engineers to check the situation.
- **Citizens Advice Northumberland-** Email- Northumberland Impact report 2023/24.
- **Resident-** Email- Mobile coverage in Branxton village.
- **Royal British Legion-** Email- Invite to make a local contribution to the North-East England Field of Remembrance in Gateshead.
- **Healthwatch Northumberland-** Email- Invite to respond to Annual survey by 16<sup>th</sup> March.
- **NCC-** Email- Information on Digital Switchover BT Roadshows.  
Parish Councillors agreed a copy of the poster for the Wooler drop-in to be placed on the noticeboard.
- **Bank of Scotland-** Bank charges- The Clerk advised the meeting that notification had been received that as of 13<sup>th</sup> May the Parish Council will receive a minimum of £4.25 per month bank charges for the Parish Council bank account. Parish Councillors agreed the Clerk contact NALC to see if other Parish councils have a similar issue.

**Min 715- Consultation-** Parish Councillors agreed not to respond to the current Northumberland County Council consultation on the draft Northumberland Open Space Assessment document.

### **Min 716- Updates**

- The Chairman provided the following verbal update from the Bus consultation meeting which was held in Wooler:
  - 1- The timings of the 266 service were raised, and it was agreed to see if adjustments to the timetables could be made.
  - 2- There is a need for proper signage for the timetables at the bus stops.
  - 3- The Branxton bus shelter is about 40 yards east of the bus stop, which I am advised from local information that the bus shelter was placed where there was sufficient room for a bus shelter. Northumberland County Council have agreed to investigate if a bus stop sign & timetable could be placed next to the bus shelter.

County Councillor M Mather reported that a grant application for bus related issues in the Wooler ward had been submitted, and it is hoped the Parish Council will be consulted ahead of any possible local changes.

### **Min 717- Parish Council website & email addresses**

- The Clerk advised the meeting that Northumberland County Council IT Department had agreed to investigate if they could provide a gov.uk website & email addresses for Parish Councils, however, this will be after the May elections due to the current workload.
- Parish Councillors agreed to consider any updates at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

**Min 718- Parish Council Elections-** The Clerk reminded the meeting that the 4-yearly Parish Council elections to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025, stating information will be placed on the Parish Council website etc, when instructions are received from Northumberland County Council. However, all information relating to the Parish Council elections can be viewed on the Northumberland County Council website:

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/elections.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/elections.aspx)

Completed nomination forms need to be submitted between 24<sup>th</sup> March & 1<sup>st</sup> April, there is a drop off point in Berwick.

She concluded by saying there needs to be a minimum of 3 Parish Councillors for a quorum, and if there are more than 5 completed and submitted nomination forms there will be an election.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Min 719- VE Day celebrations-** A member of the public advised the meeting the Village Hall Committee will be organising a musical afternoon tea in the village hall on 11<sup>th</sup> May to mark the celebrations.

The Annual Parish & Annual Parish Councils will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.00 p.m. in Branxton Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 19.45 p.m.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_