

# BRANXTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 In Branxton Village Hall at 7.16pm

**PRESENT:** Chairman N Wood, Vice-Chairman I Ainslie  
Parish Councillors A Darbyshire, A Miller & J Straughan  
County Councillor M Mather  
Clerk I Hunter  
11 members of the public

**Min 665 -Election of Chairman for 2024/25-** Parish Councillor I Ainslie proposed & Parish Councillor A Darbyshire seconded Parish Councillor N Wood as Chairman for 2024/25 Parish Councillor N Wood accepted the position and signed a Declaration of Acceptance.

**Min 666 -Election of Vice-Chairman for 2024/25-** Parish Councillor A Darbyshire proposed & Parish Councillor A Miller seconded Parish Councillor I Ainslie as Vice-Chairman for 2024/25. Parish Councillor I Ainslie accepted the position and signed a Declaration of Acceptance.

**Min 667- Chairman's Annual Report 2024/25-** A copy of the report that was read out at the Annual Parish meeting is attached to these minutes.

**Apologies for Absence:** None.

**Declaration of Interest:** None

**Request for Dispensation:** None

**Minutes of the Meeting:** The previously circulated Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 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-** None

### **Min 668- Parish Council Policies**

- Parish Councillors agreed to adopt the previously circulated Code of Conduct.
- Parish Councillors undertook the annual review of the Standing Orders and agreed to adopt them.
- Parish Councillors undertook the annual review of the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure and agreed to adopt it.

**Min 669- Community Police-** The Clerk read out the following report:

Since the last meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April there have not been any calls to service related to the Branxton community. Therefore, there has been no reports of anti-social behaviour or crime. There are no specific crime trends that I feel would impact on the Branxton community that I need to make you aware of. I would ask everyone to

remain vigilant as we approach the summer months and traditionally welcome a large number of visitors to our area.

Members of the public raised the following points:

- There had been vandalism to the signs of the Flodden trail.
- The state of the car park at the Church. The car park is under the ownership of Ford & Etal Estates. The Vice-Chairman agreed to contact Ford & Etal Estates.
- The bus is having issues in Branxton village due to vehicles parking opposite the fountain. The Chairman asked the resident to provide him with details and he would investigate the issue.

**Min 670- County Councillor report-** County Councillor M Mather gave the following verbal update:

I have been your County Councillor for 3 years, and as we are entering the last year before the next County Council elections, please give me your priorities.

The Northumberland County Council Director for Planning will deliver planning training which will include enforcement for Parish Councillors on 19<sup>th</sup> June at 6pm in Wooler Middle School, all Parish Councillors are welcome to attend.

The next North Northumberland Local Area Committee will be held in The Cheviot Centre Wooler on 30<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm, the Police have been invited to attend.

Northumberland County Council are behind with grass cutting and weed control due to the weather, therefore if you have any issues about weeds, please report the issue on Northumberland County Council fix my street.

There have been changes in the Northumberland County Council Highways Department both in the staffing structure and the way repairs are to be undertaken, therefore we should see a difference in the way potholes are filled.

The local Dr Surgeries are not delivering the spring covid vaccinations which means Wooler ward residents will receive their vaccination via the roving bus and there is only a 1x 2-hour session in Wooler car park for all eligible residents to receive their vaccination, and it is only a drop-in session first come first served. I have raised concerns and Northumberland Healthwatch are looking into this.

There will be an increase in the bus service going through Branxton village by the September meeting as we are trying to improve the links for residents. The direct bus service to Newcastle should be starting very shortly.

1 member of the public left the meeting at that point.

**Min 671- Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023/24**

- Parish Councillors noted that no actions were raised from the report of the Internal Auditor
- Parish Councillors completed and approved the Annual Governance Statement
- Parish Councillors approved the draft Annual Accounts for 2023/24
- Parish Councillors approved the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances
- Parish Councillors approved the completion of the Certification of Exemption.
- Parish Councillors agreed to pay the Internal Auditor £20 for undertaking the Internal Audit.

**Min 672- Financial Statement- As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

- Bank of Scotland Account £1056.42 Includes £291.88 for defibrillator.

### **Min 673- Receipts**

- |             |          |                              |
|-------------|----------|------------------------------|
| • HMRC      | £ 33.74  | VAT Refund                   |
| • Residents | £ 401.04 | Donations in lieu of precept |

### **Min 674- Accounts for Payment –**

- |              |          |   |
|--------------|----------|---|
| • E I Hunter | £ 373.53 | Clerk's Salary 31.75 hours @ £14.70 per hour<br>November- April |
| • HMRC       | £ 93.20  | PAYE  |
| • NALC       | £ 59.83  | Annual subscription   |
| • ICO        | £ 35.00  | Annual Data Protection fee D/D                                  |
| • E Rathbone | £ 20.00  | Internal Auditor  |
| • E I Hunter | £ 5.64   | Expenses  |

Parish Councillors agreed the above payments, however, members agreed to defer the annual payment to NALC until the Parish Council funds increase.

### **Min 675- Financial position for 2024/25**

- Parish Councillors noted the £401.04 donations received as of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in lieu of precept.
- Parish Councillors gave a vote of thanks to residents who had donated.
- Parish Councillors considered accessing a £1K loan from Northumberland County Council to cover the nil precept request for 2024/25, to be repaid in 2025/26. The rate of interest on the loan will be 6.56%.
- Parish Councillors agreed the following actions:
  - 1- The Clerk draft a flyer to be delivered to every household in the Parish thanking residents for their donation, stating if you have not already donated, you can still donate, as well as advising residents they can also, donate via cheque or cash. The Chairman and Clerk to be the Parish Council contacts.
  - 2- The Clerk to place a thank you and update in The Fourum.
  - 3- Parish Councillors agreed to enter into a loan agreement with Northumberland County Council in principle.
  - 4- Parish Councillors to agree at the September Parish Council meeting if the Parish Council will proceed with the loan and the level of loan to be drawn down.
  - 5- Parish Councillors agreed the Chairman and Clerk sign the loan agreement.

**Min 676- Consultation-** Parish Councillors agreed not to respond to the following the consultation from Northumberland County Council Planning Department: Planning application requirements - local list consultation 2024.

**Min 677- Annual Insurance Premium-** Parish Councillors agreed to agree the 2024/25 Parish Council Insurance premium via e-mail and ratify the decision at the September meeting.

**Min 678- Parish Council meeting dates for 2024/25-** Parish Councillors agreed the following dates for Parish Council meetings in 2024/25:

10<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2025

13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Min 679- Highways-** Parish Councillors considered the email received from a resident re highways issues and possible solutions. The Vice-Chairman agreed to take the lead by collating a list of local issues including the speeding through Branxton village especially at the south end of the village and the possibly of moving the 30mph sign as the village is extending at the south end.

Parish Councillors agreed to invite Northumberland County Council Highways Officers to attend a site meeting at the appropriate time.

County Councillor M Mather advised the meeting that Northumberland County Council are preparing a document about landownership and responsibilities i.e. hedge maintenance etc, which will be shared with Parish Councils.

Parish Councillors agreed in answer to a question from a member of the public if a speed awareness sign was to be erected the Parish Council would need to fund the purchase and installation of the post & sign.

The next Parish Council will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in Branxton Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 20.03 p.m.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_