

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 21st November 2024 at 7:30pm.
At Wall Village Hall.**

PRESENT	Cllrs: Mark Wood Chair, Elisa Wyrley-Birch Vice-Chair, Steve Blake, John Lamb. Jane Michie Cllr Nick Morphet. Clerk: Alix Pearson
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NUMBER	DESCRIPTION												
2656	1. Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Gina Scott, who had also notified all that she intended to resign her Councillor post. Councillors wished to record their thanks for Cllr Scott's contributions over the years.												
2657	2 Declaration of interests There were no declarations of interest.												
2658	3. Approval of Minutes The minutes were approved as true record of the previous meeting and signed. There were no matters arising.												
2659	<p>4. Clerk's Financial Report</p> <p>The clerk presented to figures for Q2 and Councillors approved the expenditure. At 30th September there was £11113 in the current account. The Clerk reminded Cllrs that the Q3 expenditure would be available at the January meeting. Cash in Bank at 11th November 2024 £12045, which includes £2293 from NCC for maintenance of the conveniences.</p> <p>The Clerk presented an expenditure profile to 31st March 2025 Committed expenditure:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>Clerk</td><td>£1200</td></tr> <tr><td>Office</td><td>£222</td></tr> <tr><td>Mowing</td><td>£760</td></tr> <tr><td>Projects</td><td>£1000</td></tr> </table> <p>Making a total Committed spend of £3682 Planned Expenditure to be approved:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>Charitable Donations.</td><td>£500</td></tr> <tr><td>Additional Strimming.</td><td>£320</td></tr> </table> <p>Making a total of planned and committed spend of £4502</p> <p>Sum remaining in bank account at 31st March 2025 c £7543</p> <p>It was noted that the grant received from NCC for the cleaning of the toilet block had increased year on year, but the sum paid to the person who does the cleaning had not. It was agreed that an additional £50 per quarter should be paid to Alan Dryden from April 2025.</p>	Clerk	£1200	Office	£222	Mowing	£760	Projects	£1000	Charitable Donations.	£500	Additional Strimming.	£320
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2660	<p>5. Consideration of Precept</p> <p>Following on from the expenditure profile presented in minute no 2659, the clerk presented an analysis of annual expenditure.</p> <p>Income</p> <table data-bbox="295 347 901 459"> <tr> <td>Precept</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£8,744</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conveniences Grant</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,293</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total income</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£11,037</td> </tr> </table> <p>Non -Project Expenditure (based on 24/25)</p> <table data-bbox="295 526 901 784"> <tr> <td>Mowing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4,104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clerk</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,229</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grants & Donations - tba</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conveniences</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Miscellaneous</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10,983</td> </tr> </table> <p>All things remaining equal, which is unlikely, the current precept and grant would meet profiled expenditure with £54 remaining. As noted in minute 2659 above, the Parish Council has some cash reserves available to cover shortfalls and pay for any emergency work arising. See also minute 2644 below.</p> <p>The Chair provided an analysis of how Wall Parish compared with all Parishes in West Northumberland, in terms of precept tax base. There are 57 parishes in West Northumberland with property precepts reading from £0 to £172. Wall's current property precept is £41.58, which is in the lower half of all West Northumberland Parishes and falls at no 26 on the list of 57 parishes. The current annual precept of £8744 was set in April 2022 and had been increased by 5% from £8328</p> <p>There was a thoughtful discussion about whether an increase in precept would be appropriate. There remains an ongoing issue of flooding on the back green, the cause of which is yet to be investigated. Although there should be around £7,500 remaining in the parish accounts at the end of the financial year, it is not known whether this will cover the cost of repairs to the green drainage. Cllr Morphet presented a convincing argument for not ignoring opportunities to make slight increases in the precept request.</p> <p>It was agreed that a small increase of 2% should be added to the annual precept request.</p> <p>The request need not be made until the end of January 2025, so if more information is gathered regarding the drainage works, this decision may be reviewed at the January meeting.</p>	Precept	£8,744	Conveniences Grant	£2,293	Total income	£11,037	Mowing	£4,104	Clerk	£2,400	Office	£1,229	Grants & Donations - tba	£500	Conveniences	£2,000	Miscellaneous	£750	Total expenses	£10,983
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2661	<p>6. Review of Planning Applications</p> <p>There had been very few planning applications since the meeting on 19th September and there was little of note to discuss.</p> <p>The actions against the unlawful development at Planetrees continue, see Cllr Morphet's report at appendix 1 for details. The clerk had noticed whilst browsing RightMove that the parcel of land had been sold at Auction on 23rd October, for £7,000. Cllr Morphet will pass this information on to the case officer.</p>																				
2662	<p>7. County Councillor's Report</p> <p>Cllr Morphet's comprehensive report appears at Appendix 1</p> <p>Specifically discussed was the proffered bench which was no longer available.</p>																				

2663	<p>8. Consideration of Charitable Donations.</p> <p>Councillors were happy to continue to donate to the organisations which have been supported for many years. The food poverty donation which had been shifted to the local charity of West Northumberland Food Bank 2023 was approved to continue to receive the donation.</p> <p>Cllr Blake requested that the annual donation made to the Royal British Legion via purchase of the poppy wreath, be shared with the Blind Veterans Association. All Cllrs agreed to this. The clerk suggested that this donation could made in addition to the RBL donation and all agreed.</p> <p>A request had been received from Sport Tynedale and whilst Cllrs appreciated the work of the charity, it was felt that a donation could not be made at this time.</p> <p>The following donations will be arranged by the clerk:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Great North Air Ambulance Service</td> <td>£150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tynedale Hospice at Home</td> <td>£150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Northumberland Food Bank</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blind Veteran’s Association</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> </table>	Great North Air Ambulance Service	£150	Tynedale Hospice at Home	£150	West Northumberland Food Bank	£100	Blind Veteran’s Association	£50
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2664	<p>9. Chair’s Maintenance Report.</p> <p>Of the maintenance actions identified at September’s meeting, the following had been completed:</p> <p>Strimming around signposts in the species rich grassland area; mowing; clippings raked.</p> <p>Cllrs thanked all who had contributed to this work, particularly Jenny & Robert Wyrley-Birch. The railings (and some grass) at the side of West Farm had been repainted. Cllrs once again thanked Jenny & Robert Wyrley-Birch for their assistance.</p> <p>Still outstanding is strimming required around benches and bus shelter. Fred Wyrley Birch to assist Cllr Wood in achieving this.</p> <p>Cllr Wyrley Birch has set up a WhatsApp group of those with the time and energy to tackle maintenance jobs in the Parish. All those interested to send Elisa their number and to encourage others who may be inclined to join the group.</p> <p>Cllr Blake undertook to once more clear the fell steps after the leaf fall was over.</p> <p>Autumn and winter weather causes recurrent issues on the green and up Old Lane. The Chair was keen that if possible, people should refrain from driving across the green during periods of frost as the crushed grass takes much longer to recover.</p> <p>Cllr Wyrley-Birch had previously pointed out that the drain on Old Lane was already full of leaves and this blockage would cause the usual problem of flooding onto the B6319 which freezes into a dangerous ice rink.</p> <p>It was agreed that the lane be monitored at the weekend when heavy rain is forecast and a party be convened to open up the drain once the leaf fall had ceased.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the planned investigation of the failed cundy under the back green had not taken place as the availability of the digger and the manpower had not coincided. It is hoped that the digger will be available again in the near future and that the ground is not too waterlogged to prevent its use. There is some frustration about this issue, but there are insufficient funds to hire a digger on our own account and we must wait until the equipment is already in the village for other jobs.</p> <p>Chris Mowatt is still to trim the wildflower area and once this has been done, Cllr Lamb & Cllr Wood will remove the overhanging branches</p>								

2665	<p>10. Village Hall Report</p> <p>Cllr Blake made the following VH Report to Parish Council: Installation of the projector and screen is complete. It is very smart, unobtrusive when not in use, and excellent when it is. Some usage protocols have to be thought through, but they are an outstanding addition to the hall's facilities.</p> <p>The equipment was successfully christened during the Village Society's second event of the season 'Rocks at the Edge of the Empire'. (Four more Village Society events are scheduled; 28th Nov, 30th Jan, 27th Feb and 27th Mar).</p> <p>The remaining works; the kitchen and electrics the former will be begin early in the New Year. The latter in early December.</p> <p>A fridge and pie warmer have been purchased and used during a recent private event.</p> <p>'Village Hall' sign, now on the North wall, has kindly been made by David Pentney who is Chair of Trustees at Rochester Village Hall. The connection was made by Delia Faran from Northumberland Communities Together who arrived to photograph the handover ceremony. David was presented with the hall's spare Soup Kettle as a thank you. .</p> <p>The Cornhole equipment has arrived and has been stored under the stage, the bean bags are located in the storage bins on the south wall.</p> <p>Usage is 'normal' with a Christmas 'uptick' anticipated.</p> <p>Old Year's night will take place as it does on the 30th of December.</p> <p>Mice have made an appearance....traps have been procured.....</p> <p>The hall has had no further contact from B4RN about the location of the Fibre Cabinet...</p> <p>Curiosity was expressed over the contents of the shed.</p>
2666	<p>11. B4RN Update</p> <p>There has been no recent communication from B4RN. Cllr Wyrley-Birch and requested an update 10 days ago, with no response. The clerk will drop Martin Dickson-Green a note requesting an update..</p>
2700	<p>Other Business</p> <p>It was noted that a tree on the verge opposite The Hadrian had been felled, with much debris remaining on the highway.. Cllr Morphet agreed to speak to the Tree Officer to find out if it was known whether the County Council had felled the tree.</p>
	<p>11. Date of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 16th January 2025 at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 9.10pm</p>

COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE FOR WALL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 21/11/24

6) REVIEW OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Enforcement Officer was considering prosecuting the landowner for the illegal site entrance at the glamping site on Brunton Bank, and told me that she'd let me know when she'd submitted the paperwork to the legal team. I haven't heard from her since, so it might be that she hasn't done that yet. I have, however, been provided with a screenshot showing that the land has recently been sold – which I've passed on to the Enforcement Officer. It seems that someone's just acquired responsibility for the illegal entrance by buying the land.

7) MY REPORT

a) We were presented with an early iteration of the Local Transport Plan programme for 2025/26 at an LTP workshop on Friday. The dropped kerbs at the end of The Chare and Warden View have made the draft programme, as has making New Lane access only. They're also planning carriageway repairs on the U8176, which is the road down from Codlaw Hill to Silver Hill via Codlaw Dene (Silver Hill is just up from Salmons Well Farm). They haven't ruled out carriageway repairs to the A6079 through the village, and they haven't made a decision on the improvements to the footway between the lay-by and Low Brunton. I reminded the officers that it should be prioritised because it's Hadrian's Wall National Trail and we already have a quote and a funding application placed, and I'll let you know what they decide.

Traffic calming on the A68 at Beukley had been ruled out on the basis that there hadn't been any serious collisions, but I reminded them about the two fatal collisions last year and they've since agreed to reconsider their decision. The traffic calming measures were requested via a petition to Tynedale Local Area Committee, and we're expecting to receive a full update at the January meeting (which I think will be on Tuesday 14th, starting at either 4p or 6pm). The resurfacing of Chapel Lane has been ruled out again I'm afraid, and so has the resurfacing of Old Lane. Most disappointing, perhaps, is that traffic calming measures on the A6079 through the village have also been ruled out. I pointed out that the last traffic speed survey showed that speeds had increased since the centre line was removed, and I was told that the physical speed survey data had been superseded by digital data showing that average speeds at six points within the village were between 23.3 and 30.0mph. I think we've hit a bit of a dead end with the traffic calming, but don't forget that you can still do Community Speedwatch – and that it reopens to applications on Jan 2nd.

b) The Advanced Stop Lines haven't been installed on Chollerford bridge yet, which is because work hasn't started on the traffic calming measures on the Military Road at New Houses yet. That's because the Traffic Regulation Order hasn't come through yet, so the construction team hasn't been able to set a start date.

c) Alix, Mark and I accompanied the World Heritage Site Management Plan Coordinator and the Rural Growth Manager on a walk along Hadrian's Wall National Trail between the lay-by and Low Brunton, on the rainiest day in October. We showed them how narrow and rough the footway is,

how the footway's crumbling into the bottom of the hedge in places and how the vegetation encroaches on the footway and narrows it even more. I explained how we're trying to get these problems addressed and the barriers we've encountered along the way.

We also discussed the possibility of promoting the whole of the section between Walwick and Wall as one of very few accessible sections of Hadrian's Wall National Trail. It's not as accessible as we'd like it to be, but if we could get more people wheeling it we might find that it gets easier to find the money for accessibility improvements. I'm thinking about making a video highlighting this potential, along with some of the barriers that would need to be overcome, in order to raise awareness and get a feel for how much interest there is in the idea. I've also been asked to do a piece to camera about this section of trail for the Hadrian's Wall Country website.

d) Mark very kindly strimmed the species rich grassland site in October, and Elisa and I helped him to rake the clippings. We're not 100% sure that we got it short enough, so I asked an ecologist friend of mine to have a look when she's next passing and give me her opinion. I haven't heard from her yet, but will let you know what she says when I do.

e) The new NCC Climate Change Team Leader has started and seems to have hit the ground running. When I told her that I thought the new Climate Change Action Plan was too "report-like", too long and poorly written she told me that a shorter and more attractive public-facing version would be created. I'll share a link to it with you as soon as it's published.

f) The Warmer Homes scheme is still open for applications but will be closing as soon as the funding runs out. You need to live in a house with an EPC rating of D or below and have a combined household income of less than £36,000 (and up to £44,000 for households of four people or more) to be eligible. Anyone who is eligible would be absolutely crazy to miss out.

g) The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub has just launched round three of its Energy Project Enabling Fund. Grants of up to £245,000 are available to community organisations (including parish councils) and to farmers for renewable energy, energy efficiency, carbon sequestration and resource use efficiency projects. The deadline is 8th December. Go to <https://www.neynetzerohub.com/projects-and-events/delivering-programmes/energy-project-enabling-fund/> for more information.

h) Jack Moffat from the Thomas Pocklington Trust presented to councillors at Tynedale Local Area Committee on Tuesday. The TPT is a charitable organisation that strives for equality for blind and partially sighted people in every aspect of society. Jack told us about the difficulty he has navigating urban environments (due largely to unsympathetic street furniture) and about the TPT's Streets For All campaign, which aims to make our public spaces easier and safer for blind and partially sighted people to navigate. The TPT puts on "Sim Specs" walks, in which non-visually impaired people navigate a built environment wearing glasses designed to simulate various visual afflictions. Jack would be delighted to organise a Sim Specs walk for parish councillors and residents in a village in the Humshaugh ward – so please let me know if you're interested. The walk will take place in the village which shows the most interest.

Confirmed as a true record of Meeting: Original Signed

i) I'm afraid that I don't have a spare bench to donate to the parish council after all. Wark and Simonburn parish councils have just installed theirs, and Newbrough and Warden parish councils still intend to do so.

j) The St Oswald's Way Management Group is recruiting new members. If you have an interest in countryside access and/or long-distance walking and would like to express an interest, contact martin.paminter@stoswaldsway.com.

k) And finally, there's a vacancy on the Northumberland Association of Local Council's County Committee for the Mid Tyne area (which is the Humshaugh ward plus Whittington parish). NALC's AGM will take place at County Hall on Saturday 23rd November, and would be a good place to find out more about what being a County Committee member involves.