

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 MAY 2025 AT 7.30PM IN GREAT WHITTINGTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Councillor S Gregory, Chairman of the Council together with Councillors M Petrie, W E Robson and Dr W Brittain.

Also present: Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr H Lewins
2. **To receive the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting held on 21st May 2024.**
Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2024, having previously been circulated, were accepted as an accurate record.
3. Matters arising. None
4. **Chairman's Report.** Whittington Parish Council have held our six requisite meetings here in the Village Hall.

Local elections were held on 1st May, Parish Councillors were returned unopposed and may I congratulate Veronica on being re-elected to represent Ponteland West Area.

Sadly, Ed Gillam died on 16th of July last year, Ed had lived in the village for many years, he joined the PC in 2019 and left in 2021. In September, John Sadler resigned from the Parish Council as he was moving out of the area and Helen Lewins was co-opted onto the PC at our November meeting. Helen has also become the Parish Council representative on the Great Whittington Village Hall Committee. We wish John well and we hope that Helen enjoys her time with the PC.

We have not faced any major planning issues, when we started preparing our Neighbourhood Plan in April 2016, 2031 seemed a long time ahead but the clock keeps ticking, 2031 is now on the horizon and soon we should be thinking about updating our Plan. As yet there has not been any progress regarding Badgers End but it remains a major part of our housing allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We have again increased our precept, this time by £500, a small increase which takes our precept to £7000. This increase means that a band C property is now paying 50p per week. Our major expenses are grass cutting and tree management, we will need a tree survey later this year with probable tree works to follow.

The Village Hall has had a successful year, is well supported in the numerous events that are hosted here, monthly coffee mornings are popular and the annual BBQ is scheduled for August 9th, the village hall committee will be holding their AGM on June 10th, that meeting is open to the public and their annual report will be presented then.

In July the Little Free libraries were installed and have been very popular, they have been well used by young and old, I would like to thank Marion for providing them and Ed for helping to install them, I would also like to thank Marion for setting up the PC Facebook page last October and thanks to Mandy who is now responsible for the Admin.

The village now has flashing speed signs, I hope this raises some speed awareness and has a calming effect on the traffic passing through the village. I would like to thank Veronica for providing the funding for them and Bill Brittain for liaising with NCC before their installation.

I mentioned in last year's Chairmans Report that in October 2023 there was a fatality at the Beukley junction onto the A68, this prompted the raising of a petition calling for improved safety measures on the A68 between Stagshaw roundabout and Bingfield Cottages. No improvements have been made, accidents are still occurring, and we are still waiting for information from Northumberland County Council.

Dog fouling is still an issue, it is very unpleasant for operatives cutting the grass around the village, it is a health hazard and anyone guilty of not picking up after their dog should be reported.

I would like to thank our Parish Councillors for volunteering their time and support, Veronica for her input and Mandy for the work you do and the advice you provide.

Meeting closed at 19:40

Signed as an accurate record

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WHITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 20TH MAY 2025 FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT
7.30PM IN GREAT WHITTINGTON VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Cllr S Gregory, Chairman of the Council together with Cllrs M Petrie, W Robson and Dr W Brittain

- 0525.01 **Election of Chair.** It was proposed by Cllr M Petrie, seconded by Cllr W Robson and RESOLVED unanimously to re-elect Cllr S Gregory as Chairman of Whittington Parish Council.
- 0525.02 **Declaration of Acceptance of Office.** Cllr S Gregory gave and signed his declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council.
- 0525.03 **Election of Vice Chair.** It was proposed by Cllr S Gregory, seconded by Cllr W Brittain and RESOLVED unanimously to elect Cllr W Robson as Vice Chairman.
- 0525.04 **To receive Councillors' Declarations of Acceptance of Office.** All councillors present signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council. Absent councillors will sign their declarations at the July meeting.
- 0525.05 **To consider co-option to fill one vacancy.** It was RESOLVED to co-opt Anne Lawson onto Whittington Parish Council. Anne accepted and joined the meeting.
- 0525.06 **Apologies for absence** received and accepted from Cllr H Lewins.
- 0525.07 **Minutes** of the meeting held on **11th March 2025** having been circulated were taken as read and signed as a true record.
- 0525.08 **Items arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025.**
a) Hallington Mill. Minute 0325.04a refers. Cllr S Gregory had spoken to the landowner who has had no communication from Northumberland County Council. It was noted that the road markings are imminent.
- 0525.09 **County Councillors Report.** Cllr Mrs V Jones was unable to attend.
- 0525.10 **Planning Matters**
a) Planning Application No: 25/01079/COU. It was noted that the application for the change of use of land to a caravan park does not mention caravans in the application but states lodges. There are no further details in the application stating that the design will be confirmed as the lodge accommodation is sourced and delivered to site. The application claims there are bus/train connections and rural services and facilities and will have no detrimental effect on the highway. Neighbouring properties are objecting to the application and as the land is in a Dark Skies Area, in particular, light pollution.

REFERENCE	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION
24/04186/FUL	Land North East of Sewage Works, Great Whittington	Proposed erection of an agricultural building
25/01079/COU	Land at Bingfield	Change of use of land to caravan park for holiday/visitor accommodation.

0525.11 Finance/Administration

- a) Accounts for payment. Payments were reviewed and it was RESOLVED to approve the items of expenditure on the list, previously circulated.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT					
PAYEE	DETAILS	NET AMOUNT	VAT	GROSS AMOUNT	REF
Mrs A Senior	Clerical services	240.00		240.00	10956
H M Revenue & Customs	PAYE	60.00		60.00	10957
Northumberland Assoc of Local Councils	Subscription 2025	140.27		140.27	10958
Zurich Municipal	Insurance renewal	304.00		304.00	10959
Mrs A Senior	Postages/travel expenses	36.80		36.80	10960
J C Accountants	Internal audit fee	60.00	12.00	72.00	10961
Mrs A Lawson	Defibrillator electricity	30.00		30.00	10962
Bank of Scotland	Bank account charges	7.25		7.25	DD
Bank of Scotland	Bank account charges	4.25		4.25	DD
Income					
Northumberland CC	Precept payment	3500.00		3500.00	06.04.25
HMRC VTR	VAT refund	61.93		61.93	03.04.25
HMRC VTR	VAT refund	126.14		126.14	29.04.25

0525.12 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

- a) To consider and agree any actions arising from the Internal Auditor's Report 2024-25. It was RESOLVED to accept and approve the Internal Auditor's Report which had no items to note.
- b) To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25. It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement.
- c) To approve the draft annual accounts, bank reconciliation and asset register 2024-25. It was RESOLVED to approve the draft annual accounts, bank reconciliation and asset register 2024-25.
- d) To approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances 2024-25. It was RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances 2024-25.
- e) To confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption. It was RESOLVED to confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption 2024-25.

0525.13 Great Whittington Village Hall and the village environment.

- a) **Village Hall.** It has been another successful year for the Village Hall. The AGM will be held on 10 June 2025 and Cllr H Lewins is the Parish Council representative on the Committee.

0525.14 To receive Councillors reports and Highway matters.

- a) A68 Safety Measures. A petition had been submitted to Highways, NCC following the fatality. On 1st April a car went off the road at the bottom of Beukley Bank and snapped the telegraph pole. Cllr S Gregory reported this to Northumberland County Council and contacted Nick Morphet. Cllr Mrs

Jones advised at the last meeting that NCC were waiting for the police report. The report was scheduled to go to the Local Area Committee but has been cancelled twice. The speed survey was completed on 24 June 2024 where the 85th percentile showed the average speed as 66.1mph. Before the police or NCC will take any action, this needs to be 68mph. There was a car recorded travelling at 99mph on this section of road. The recommendation from Northumberland County Council is that no further action is taken. Cllr S Gregory emailed Paul Jones, NCC on 17th April however has not received a response. A FOI request was submitted, and a response should have been received by 20 May 2025 however a response has not been received. Cllr S Gregory will continue to pursue.

- b) Warning Signs. It was noted that the signs warning of toads crossing are still in place and there have been no toads for approx. 2 months. Highways had been informed however this will be chased. These need to be positioned in a slightly different location next year to maximise impact.

0525.15 **Trees.** A resident attended the meeting to express concern surrounding the number of trees that have been felled in recent years. The Parish Council obtains a tree survey every 3 years and any tree identified in the report as needing work, has the work carried out whether that is felling, crown lifting or any other work deemed necessary to keep the trees in good condition. The Parish Council will replant trees to replace any felled, if appropriate.

0525.16 **Date of next meeting** – The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 22 July 2025** at 7.30pm in Great Whittington Village Hall.