

Present: Cllr Anne Palmer (Chair), Cllr Kevin Fortune (Vice Chair), Cllr Eileen Rogerson, Cllr Nicky Brown, Cllr Phil Lawless, (Cllr Kevin Robson – 19.51)
1 member of the public present.

Meeting commenced 7:30pm

01/07/2025 **To receive, and approve if appropriate, apologies for absence and reasons given**

None received

02/07/2025 **To receive declarations of interests**

Members are reminded to declare any interest in any item on the agenda, now or at any time during the meeting.

None given

03/07/2025 **To approve the minutes of previous meeting held 8 May 2025.**

Approved & signed by Chair.

04/07/2025 **To receive comments/ queries from members of the public with regard to items on the agenda**

Member of public present to talk about community survey (Item 08/07/25 a)

05/07/2025 **Parish Clerk's report**

➤ Update from Highways Improvement Team

➤ The 30mph speed limit for Kirkwhelpington Village is being designed at the moment and will probably be issued for construction around autumn time. Will have a better idea of the likely implementation date at that time.

'Slow' wording for Marycastle has been installed. Awaiting update on the worn markings around the Kirkharle junction.

➤ Update from Police

None received

06/07/2025 **Exclusion of the public**

07/07/2025 **Planning**

To consider planning policies, applications and appeals received and resolve to submit comments where appropriate. [Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Sched. 7, para.8]

Reference	Detail	Status
25/02083/FUL	St Wilfrid's Church Kirkharle <i>Construction of new footpath, erection of new handrails to new and existing footpaths. Construction of new external toilet and trench arch drainage. Repositioning of oil tank (currently immediately outside of site boundary). Trimming lower branches of yew tree. Alteration to existing Chancel door.</i>	Deadline 9 July No comments

08/07/2025 **Items for Consideration and Decision**

a) Community survey update

Completed surveys received so far: 23. Closing date should stay as 31 July, with a final push at the last Saturday coffee morning. Pleased with responses so far with some interesting comments received. Final findings to be circulated to councillors after closing date. Working group

will meet in August to put findings into report with recommendations before the Parish Council September meeting. Some comments are relevant to other groups in the parish, which will be passed on. Thank you to everyone who has brought the survey to this point so far.

b) Bench maintenance plan

Clerk to create an inventory of benches (including memorial seat in play park). Cllrs Fortune & Lawless will assess the state of each bench and advise on remedial work needed at next meeting.

c) Email change to gov.uk

This is a requirement for next year's financial audit. Parish Online offer a free .gov.uk email address for the clerk, alongside a domain name (for a website). Just completing this would make the PC compliant for next year and could still keep existing website. In the future the requirement may change for councillors to have .gov.uk email addresses as well. Clerk to proceed with set up with Parish Online.

Cllr Kevin Robson joined meeting

d) New bank account charges

From 18 July new charges will apply for the bank account. The most notable of these is online banking will cost £30 per month.

Cllrs decided to keep online banking but free only the free version (no online payments) and revert to using cheques for payments. In the future it might be worth exploring other options for bank accounts, e.g. Unity Bank.

e) Complaints policy to adopt

This policy covers how complaints can be made and how the Council will respond, but doesn't include how parishioners/ members of the public can raise concerns with the Council.

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr Rogerson. Adopted. Clerk to add to website.

f) New model standing orders

More detailed than previous standing orders. Formerly National Association of Local Councils (NALC) produced simpler version for smaller councils, but this hasn't been provided this time. Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr Lawless. Adopted. Clerk to update on website.

g) Approval/ appointment of committee/ external group representatives (staffing committee & Education Trust)

The Kirkwhelpington Educational Trust requires the Parish Council to approve those who act as Trustees. The Council approve the appointment of Christopher Thorton to sit on this Trust.

It was suggested a staffing committee should be established to deal with matters relating to staff recruitment and management. The committee would only need to meet when required. Clerk to establish terms of reference for a staffing committee to be approved at the next meeting.

h) Receive clerk resignation & approve recruitment process

Clerk has handed in her resignation due to other work commitments. She has given her final day as 31 October 2025. If a replacement is found before this date, the existing clerk's contract can be terminated by the Council with one months notice given.

Draft job description and recruitment approved to include one week's advertising on SLCC (Society for Local Council Clerks) (£78 + VAT) and NALC (£100 + VAT) forums. Posters to be put up around community, Chair to include in Chimes article, Clerk to include in Redesdale newsletter for first week of August. Clerk to upload information on to website.

Candidates can apply by sending a covering letter and CV to the Chair and any queries about the role can be directed to the Chair. Closing date for applications: 14 August 2025.

i) Request for funding from Parochial Church Council

PCC requested grant to help with costs of grounds maintenance of churchyards, as had been given in the past. Cllr Lawless proposed £350, seconded by Chair. Clerk to arrange payment.

j) Community Champion award arrangements for 2025

New form devised for this year which is simpler and requires less personal information. Chair will include in Chimes article. Clerk will upload on to website and put up posters, plus print nomination forms to go in Post Office.

k) Gilbert Grange update.

Cllr Brown has been in contact with bridging loan company who are able to supply some funds to help with tidying up the site and clearing waste. Clerk to write to company. Suggestion to lobby the new MP – Joe Morris and request a site visit with him.

l) Noticeboard purchase

Current one is adequate most of the year. Only tight for space at election times. A larger board would need new location along side of hall and would cost £800-£1400. Cllrs decided current board was adequate for most needs, no replacement needed.

m) Appointment of internal auditor for 2025/26

Cllrs approved appointment of Robert McFarlane.

n) Maintenance of Albion Terrace

Request was received for the Parish Council to resume maintaining the path from Albion Terrace to the centre of the village. Cllr Fortune has begun some initial work to clear overgrown areas and this area will now be included in the regular grass cutting.

o) Conveyance of land to Memorial Hall

Contact has been made by the solicitors, but have been unable to arrange a suitable time to speak to them. Cllrs Anne Palmer & Eileen Rogerson agreed to be the persons to have their ID's verified. The Memorial Hall Committee will be paying all costs associated with the

conveyance. Work on the extension is progressing very well.

09/07/2025 **Items for Information Only**

a. Correspondence

Email 24/06/25 - Request for donation – Citizens Advice.

No donation given.

b. Items for Information

Ray Wind Fund update

Cllr Lawless mentioned the replacement of St Oswald's Way boards and the board suggested they would approve a request for funding for Kirkwhelpington's board only and would expect an addition of their logo. Clerk to notify the St Oswald's Way Society.

As B4RN project progresses more funding will become available from the fund for other matters. Currently the Ray Wind Fund are succession planning for new directors. Anyone interested should speak to Cllr Phil Lawless in the first instance.

B4RN update – progressing with roll out.

Climate change toolkit – nothing to add

c. Items to be included in next agenda

Community champion award decision

Clerk recruitment updated

Bench maintenance plan

Staffing committee for approval

10/07/2025 Finance

a. Account Balances – *To receive a report detailing account balances*

£15,389.41

b. Accounts for Payment – *To review and approve items of expenditure, including those received before the meeting.*

Date	Description	Amount
May-June	Clerk wages	£365 inc. HMRC £73 (£292)
May-June	Robson & Cowan	£275.71
July	Memorial Hall toilet grant	£350
July	NALC – recruitment advert	£100 + VAT
July	SLCC – recruitment advert	£78 + VAT

All approved for payment.

11/07/2025 **Date & time of next meeting.**

Tues 2 September.

Meeting closed 21.35