

Otterburn Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council held on 5 May, 2026

Held at Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Present – R. Appleby (Chair), J. Nichols, G. Peto & S. Bloomer

In Attendance—Martin Chilvers (Clerk), 14 residents

- 1) **Apologies for absence** – There were no apologies.
- 2) **Declarations of interest** – None were declared
- 3) **Minutes of the last meeting** – The minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.
- 4) **Public Question Time** – a) Cllr Riddle was unable to attend
b) The Chair welcomed Gabe Mata and Nat Summerbell. They provided their background and how they became owners of the Castle Hotel. They advised that they were taking their time to get everything just right before a full opening however the Castle was open most days of the week for coffee as well as the bar. A new Website had been created at Otterburncastle.com and details of their services as well as progress could be found on social media at Instagram [@otterburn.castle](https://www.instagram.com/otterburn.castle) TikTok [@otterburncaste](https://www.tiktok.com/@otterburncaste) and a Facebook page would shortly be opened at [/theotterburncastle](https://www.facebook.com/theotterburncastle)
Weddings would be the core business and with this in mind the marquee at the back of the Castle would be soon taken away for repair and cleaning. Plans were being made to open the Stable Bar and it was hoped this would be complete by the end of the year. Nat and Gabe wanted to be part of the local community and help small businesses and provide services to the Otterburn residents including possible film nights. They would be providing a 20% discount on food and drinks for local residents who wished to become part of the Tower Club. They advised that they would be opening the gate at the side entrance near the burn that had been closed for a number of years. The venue would be dog friendly in many areas including the bars

Jess Farrell highlighted the possible need for a foodbank within Otterburn. She provided details of the research she had undertaken and asked the Parish Council to consider whether it would be able to assist should it be felt that it would be beneficial to some of the parishioners. Jess was asked to provide details of where a foodbank could be located and that whether the absence of power may be a problem. It was highlighted that an approach to Ray Windfarm may be best to seek funding for a possible solution.

5. Opportunity for members of the public to raise matters: None raised

6. Matters arising

- a) item 6c: Bus stop outside the Memorial Hall: The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Richard McKenzie (NCC) advising that he will be issuing the design brief shortly to get it drawn up and sent out for construction but was unable at that time to provide any detail of timescales.
- b) item 6c: Parish Council vacancies: There was discussion about how to recruit parishioners on to the Parish Council to fill the existing two vacancies.
- c) item 9a: Village clean up: Thanks were expressed to those volunteers who assisted with the clean up on 11 April when several bags of rubbish were collected from across the village.
- d) item 9f: NCC consultation of extending 30mph limit at Otterburn Mill bridge: The Clerk reported that NCC had confirmed that whilst a decision was still to be made on this matter other initiatives were also being considered about how to make crossing the bridge safer for drivers. NCC is due to return to the Parish Council with options in the autumn 2026.
- e) item 9f: Request for a litter bin at bridge End: The Clerk reported that it would appear the NCC would service a litter bin at this location however the Parish Council would have to pay for the bin. It was agreed that there did not appear to be a problem of litter being left in this area and as such whilst the situation would be monitored no action would be taken at this time.

7. Finance

- a) Budget update: The Clerk reported that there was presently a bank balance of £11,040.62 following receipt of the first part of the 2026-27 precept for £3,429.00.
- b) Clerk's salary and expenses for March & April, 2026: The net payments of £302.83 and £383.40 for salary plus expenses of £11.98 (telephone & email storage) as well as stamps for £21.60 were agreed.
- c) Reimbursement to Clerk for purchase of blister recycling box: The payment of £151.20 was agreed by all.
- d) Payment of invoice to Otterburn Memorial Hall: The payment of £20.00 was agreed by all.
- e) Payment of invoices to C. Mowatt for grass cutting: The payments of £70.00 + VAT and £103.00 + VAT were both agreed.
- f) Payment of invoice to JRB Enterprise Ltd for dog mess bags: The payment of £135.25 plus VAT was agreed.

- g) Payment of invoice to J. Hartshorne for the repair to play area fence: The payment of £56.40 was agreed.
- h) Payment of invoice to NALC for annual subscription: The payment of £153.16 was agreed
- i) Confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption for 2025-26: This was approved by all
- j) Approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26: This was approved by all.
- k) Approve the Accounting Statement & Explanation of variances 2025-26: This was approved by all.
- l) Approve the draft Annual Accounts fr 2025-26: This was approved by all.

8. Planning

- a) 26/00910/FUL: Retrospective application for new boundary fence: The Follions, Bankfoot, Otterburn, NE191NU: This application was received between meetings. The Councillors reviewed the details and there was agreement to support the application.

9. New Business

- a) Repair to damaged play area fence: The Clerk confirmed that Mr Hartshorne had made the necessary repairs to the fence post at the play area and thanks were expressed to him for the work.
- b) Painting the four wooden planters in the village: The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Denise Corkin who advised she had painted the four wooden planters. Thanks were expressed by the Councillors and it was agreed to leave the matter until later in the year to consider the colour required.
- c) Information board damage: The Clerk reported that NNPA had agreed to repair the board that the information panel had fallen off although a timescale had not been shared for the work.
- d) Parish Council insurance: There was agreement to accept the quote received for the insurance that covered all requirements of the Parish Council.
- e) Ray Windfunds CIC representation from June 2026: The Clerk highlighted that he was finishing his third three year term on the CIC and would need to stand down this summer. It was agreed to seek a new representative who could represent the Parish Council.

10. Any other business / Matters for discussion at the next meeting of the Parish Council

- a) The Clerk highlighted the planning application received that day for Otterburn First School. It was agreed the Cllrs would review and reply by email.
- b) Cllr Nichols suggested that the Parish Council extended an invite to the new owners of Otterburn Mill to attend a Parish Council meeting and share their plans for the business.
- c) Cllr Bloomer asked whether there was an update on the repair of the post box near the Memorial Hall. The Clerk advised he had written to the Post Office but as yet had no reply.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 7 July, 2026 at Otterburn Memorial Hall.
Meeting closed at 8.25pm