

Otterburn Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday, 5 May, 2026 Between 7.30pm and 7.45pm

At Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllrs Ruth Appleby, George Peto, Joanne Nichols, Steve Bloomer

In Attendance

Martin Chilvers – Clerk plus 18 Parishioners

Apologies for absence – There were no apologies.

1. Election of Officers

Ruth Appleby was proposed as Chair by George Peto and seconded by Steve Bloomer.

Steve Bloomer was proposed as Vice Chair by George Peto and seconded by Ruth Appleby.

2. Summary of the year's activity

Report on the activity from May 2025 – April 2026 – This report outlines the significant matters of business covered by the Parish Council during the past year.

Working with NCC average speed cameras have been installed along the main road after years of the Parish Council seeking solutions to the problem of speeding traffic in Otterburn. Whilst the Parish Council wait for camera data from Northumbria Police, the Parish Council own camera data records show the 85%ile has dropped from an average of over 39mph down to 31mph since installation of the average speed cameras.

The Parish Council has upgraded the website and moved to a new org.uk domain. The new email address of the Parish Council is clerk@otterburnpc.org.uk and the website at <https://www.otterburnpc.org.uk/>

After many years seeking NCC to introduce safety features at the junction of the A696 / B6320, the County Council has installed five planters to prevent vehicles parking on the footpath. Thomas Tuyaerts and Caroline Hey have kindly provided bulbs and plants for the planters and agreed to maintain the planters. As spring has progressed the first daffodils have bloomed and the area is looking splendid.

The Parish Council are working with NCC to introduce safety features for drivers to negotiate the bridge on B6320. NCC Design team should be sharing ideas later in 2026 for introduction.

The Parish Council is working with NCC for the extension of the 682 bus service to Hexham. It has been promised by NCC that from the 2026 summer holidays the service will start and finish at Otterburn meaning further options for local residents to travel using public transport.

Working with NCC repairs have been made to the footbridge near the weir and thanks are expressed to the County Council for an excellent job on the work.

Thanks are also expressed to local resident Helen Craig who has volunteered to manage to the dog bags in the dispenser at Bridge End.

The Parish Council working with other local communities and the Church & Community Partnership (CCP) has introduced a local car scheme initiative to assist local residents to travel to make appointments where local transport is unavailable and taxi cost would be too high. Anyone

wishing to join the scheme or be a volunteer driver (paid mileage for the journeys made) can contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@otterburnpc.org.uk

Following a number of occasions where rubbish has been left by a few people parking overnight at the Percy Cross a decision was made to attempt to stop the practice. A new sign has been attached at the entrance advising of no overnight parking and that visitors must take away their rubbish with them.

The Parish Council has been successful in receiving two grant from Ray Windfunds for two blister recycling boxes that have been located at the Memorial Hall.

The Parish Council still has two vacancies and anyone wishing to become a Parish Councillor and assist to improve the standard of living and introduction of new projects across the village should contact the Clerk at clerk@otterburnpc.org.uk

Cllr Bloomer and the Clerk have continued to represent the Parish Council at the Otterburn Memorial Hall committee meetings during the year. Starlink (thanks to funding from Ray Windfunds) and the game Cornhole equipment (thanks to NCC Community Trust funding) have been purchased during the past 12 months.

Additionally working with CCP the Parish Council has provided dementia training for residents and been able to provide equipment for visitors to the Memorial Hall who have dementia to use.

The Parish Council submitted two requests as part of the Local Transport Programme. This is for NCC to install pedestrian safety features along the road from the Willow Green junction, past the RTC to the junction of Otterburn Hall Estate. The road between these two locations is outside the 30mph, there is no pavement for pedestrians and no street lighting. However the road is increasingly becoming busier with pedestrians including dog walkers, visitors to the RTC as well as guests at the lodges in Otterburn Hall Estate. The second request is for the introduction of safety features for drivers negotiating the Mill bridge on the B6320.

It has been a frustrating 12 months as the Parish Council attempt to have NCC install a post with a bus timetable for the route towards Jedburgh as well as road surface markings to indicate where the bus stops are located. What has been promised on several occasions has still, two years later, to be delivered by NCC but the Parish Council will continue to chase for delivery of the project.

A donation has been made to the Memorial Hall poppy knitting group as well as the RTC Sports & Leisure Centre.

The Parish Clerk has continued to represent the Parish Council and community at the Ray Windfunds Community Interest Company (CIC).

A litter pick event was run in April and thanks go to the volunteers who helped make the village tidier by collecting many bags of rubbish.

The Cllr Peto has managed the Parish Council Facebook page that has a large following and provides vital community information.

Two children from Otterburn School represented the school and together with the Chair attended the Remembrance Service and laid a wreath provided by the Parish Council.

The Parish Councillors assessed four planning applications during the past 12 months.

After careful consideration the Councillors decided to increase the precept slightly to £6,858 for the 2026-27 financial year.

Thanks go to my fellow Councillors who all given up free time to volunteer and assist in work to improve the quality of life within the Parish of Otterburn and neighbouring communities.

3. Finance update

The Clerk advised the opening balance on 1 April 2025 had been £9,392.88 closing balance at 31 March, 2026 £8,121.35. Income included precept of £6,582 (the same as the previous year), grants from Ray Windfunds for £324 (for Terracycle blister pack recycling boxes). Additionally £66.29 credit interest was received.

The major items of expenditure during the 2025-26 financial year included £1,666 + VAT for grass & hedge cutting, £475.20 for three Terracycle blister recycling boxes, £539.63 Parish Council insurance, £112.98 for a sign at Percy Cross, £117.96 for website and domain costs and £51.50 for bank service charges as well as £3,653 for the Clerk's salary.

The Parish Council assets remained at the same figure as last year of £49,535.

4. Frequency and number of Parish Council meetings each year – It was agreed to maintain the meeting frequency to six a year. These would be scheduled to be held on the first Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Each would be held at the Otterburn Memorial unless otherwise stated and begin at 7.30pm

5. Review and agree Standing Orders, Risk Register, Code of Conduct & Safe Guarding policy – The documents were reviewed and adopted.

6. Reports from County Councillor and questions

Cllr Riddle had been unable to attend the meeting.

7. Matters for further discussion

There were no other matters raised.

Meeting closed at 7.44pm