

Minutes of Neasham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 1 July 2025, 6:30PM, in Neasham Reading Room

PRESENT

C Bayes, J Chapple, B Crossen, G Crute, K Sandick, L Tostevin, Clerk J Walker,

ABSENT

E Miller, M Hannaford, P Dunn

25/033 - WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillors to the meeting. Apologies for absence were accepted from E Miller (ill), P Dunn (ill), M Hannaford (Work), P Walters (prior appointment).

25/034 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

25/035 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the of the Annual and Ordinary meeting both held on 6 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

25/036 – APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEERS TO SUPPORT THE CHAIR

The appointment of Asset, Business and Risk Managers had been deferred from the last meeting. The question raised at the Annual Meeting was clarification on the role overseers play in the support of the Chair. This was addressed in a briefing paper circulated by G Crute and was extended to embrace a better understanding on the use of the "all Risks Checklist". The new members raised concern on the issue and felt that further discussion was needed, it was accepted that they would not be aware of the structure and content of the constitutional documents that we put in place in recent years. G Crute accepted their concerns but it had been planned to review some policy and procedure documents (including some displayed on the website) in the near future which would assist them in familiarise themselves with the documents. The Annual All Risks Checklist is an efficient tool in the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Report (A.G.A.R.) which is required annually by the external auditor to sign off compliance. B Crossen was appointed as Asset Overseer.

25/37 VACANCY FOR CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER INCLUDING MATTERS RESOLVED AT THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 27 MAY 2025

1. A recruitment committee had been formed, comprising Councillors C Bayes, M Hannaford and K Sandick, with G Crute acting as Secretariat for the Committee as well as a deputising member in the event that one of the three appointees was unavailable to attend a meeting. C Bayes will lead the interview panel.
2. It was resolved to delegate, to the Recruitment Committee, full power to execute any agreed actions which are within the remit of the Council's Recruitment Procedure. Although the committee is not empowered to independently make an offer to the selected candidate, an offer can be made by the Chair subject to prior consultation with all Councillors.
3. Following a general report on progress by G Crute, including the proposed program for recruitment, the issues of references was raised and it was agreed that two references would be requested. One of which would be a "character" reference.

25/38- PACT MEETING

A PACT meeting had been held at Hurworth on 21 May. Although representatives from Neasham were in attendance, the meeting was very poorly attended and lasted for a short period of time. There were no major issues raised at the meeting.

25/039 – ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

1. There is still concern by residents at Dinsdale Park regarding egress from the access road onto the main highway. It was suggested that the real issue was the speed of vehicles on the highway. L Tostevin reported that Highways are adamant that they will not agree to a traffic mirror, but they had the informed her that they would be returning to site to look at signage to see if any improvements could be made. As there is little else Neasham PC can do, it was agreed remove the item from the next agenda.
2. Request was made by a member for consideration of installation of small "No Parking" signs in the grass verges on the north side of Teesway. G Crute advised that this was not possible as Neasham PC did not own the land, but would forward a map showing ownership of these verges. It was agreed to monitor the situation.

25/40 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

1. Damage to safety fence running along to top of the east bank to Kent Beck had been previously reported to the Agency. B Crossen reported that there was now a gap in the fence and a plastic netting fence had been installed at the bottom of the bank. It is uncertain as to the agency's intentions, but the top fence had been installed for reasons of safety and it should not be left like this. The clerk to inform the Agency of concerns.
2. No letter has been received from the Agency regarding overgrown vegetation to the rear of some properties on Teesway, however a person named Jamie from "flood resilience" had been knocking on various doors in the village and who intimated that she would like to meet the Chair.

25/041 – VILLAGE GREEN

1. It was reported that the work to the existing garden areas was going well and really taking shape. Many thanks to Paul and the other volunteers for their efforts.
2. The plants and manure had been purchased and the planting up the flower tubs is due to begin shortly.
3. C Bayes gave a short report on the arrangements for the "Duck Derby" event on the village green 21 June which are progressing well and 1400 Ducks had been delivered. The Chair stated that the derby was important for the Reading Room finances. The members approved the release of a cheque in the sum of £750 as a contribution towards the event which includes payment of the band costs, all as previously agreed.
4. The unveiling of the J Weighell memorial stone on 20 May was very well attended and an excellent tribute to his memory. It was much appreciated by the family and far exceeded their expectations. Many thanks to G Crute and a villager for their work in installing the stone at such short notice enabling the ceremony to take place. Plants donated by a local nursery have been planted around it, adding to the effect.
5. A meeting, suggested by the Rev Anthony Smith (Priest in Charge of Darlington Riverside Parishes) between a parish councillor and a church warden to discuss concerns on the noticeboard at Low Dinsdale has not happened yet because of commitments.
6. The Vice Chair has taken over the inspection of the defibrillator and collected documentation from the previous volunteer.
7. There are currently 5 regular wheelchair users residing in the village, some of whom are having to travel long distances to cross the road. At the Parish Assembly held on 20 May, it was agreed to investigate the possibility of the installation of dropped kerbs to improve wheelchair access though the

village. C Bayes agreed to mark up a map with their desired locations in order approach Highways. This map currently shows Highways adoptions and ownership of land adjoining the highway together with kerb lines.

25/042 - PLANNING

1. Applications received since last meeting:-
None
2. Decisions posted since last meeting: -
None.
3. There were no comments on the Consultation by North Yorkshire Council on their Local Plan and Sustainability Scoping Report as circulated to the members.

25/043 – RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Scheduled Inspections due in April/May:- Trees (April) completion previously delayed due to illness, Planters (April/May), Duck Derby electrics pre-use (May/June), General Inspection of Electrics (May/June) will be carried out by the Chair who will also follow up on the Pat Testing.
2. Two defects raised in April have been referred to Highways and Environment Agency for repair, both have been acknowledged and now closed on Neasham PC books.
3. Testing of power supply to village green junction box and PAT testing with certificates required. The Chair agreed to resolve with water company. The Chair also agreed to provide a lock for the green junction box, with a spare key for a volunteer (unless a combination lock is purchased).

25/044 – FINANCE

1. Previously approved payments made in May:- Tees Rivers Trust (£100.00) Donation in recognition of spraying work on village green, a cheque has been issued and receipt received.
2. The Certificate of Exemption has been submitted to the External Auditor Mazars who has accepted that Neasham Parish Council are exempt from an external audit.
3. The notices for the dates for the 30 day period of accounts being available for inspection that commences on 9 June and ends 18 July has been prepared for posting, which must be on 8 June.

4. As agreed at the May meeting a letter has been sent to NS&I requesting closure of that account.
5. It was agreed that G Crute should be named as a signatory on the Barclays bank account replacing the clerk

25/045 REACHING OUT, COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

The Chair reported that he would like to see a newsletter published for delivery in November and had started working on it already. It was planned to be a professionally printed A5 booklet containing current and historic photos together with other articles of interest including events around the Christmas period. A page would be available for the Reading Room if they wished. Print UK were recommended for consideration of the publishing.

25/046 – WARD COUNCILLOR MATTERS

1. L Tostevin reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England were carrying out a review of the boundaries (the last was in 2014) but parish councils are not affected.
2. The Darlington BC Local Plan Review would be completed by 2027 and no further major developments were expected to be included.
3. The Teesflex bus contract ends in August 2027, but TVCA hope to extend it.

25/047- CORRESPONDENCE

1. Various emails from NALC regarding Chief Executive's Bulletin (06/05, 08/05, 22/05,29/05), Events Newsletter (07/05, 20/05), Membership services (06/05).
2. Email from RECCC (15/05) – Cyber Threat February Updates.

25/048- OTHER VILLAGE MATTERS

1. Response by NALC to a DESNZ enquiry into Solar panels and electric cars had been circulated for information only, as the consultation was now closed.
2. J Chapple raised a concern over aeroplane noise which had increased dramatically recently with military aircraft operations and the training flights circulating the area. He had contacted the airport on the matter but the response had been "it complies with regulations" and he wished see there if was an alternative way to complain. There used to be local representation on

the airport committee and it was suggested he contacted P Allen (Hurworth PC) to enquire if this was still an option.

25/049 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of the next ordinary Parish Meeting is Tuesday 1 July 2025. The meeting concluded at 8.00pm.

Minutes signed on 1 July 2025 by K Sandick