

# ROTHBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 commencing at 7pm in the Dovecote Room Jubilee Institute

**Those Present:** Cllr Devlin (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Gordon, Cllr Sutton

**In Attendance:** C Miller (Clerk/RFO), three members of the public

## **RPC/70/25 Apologies for absence**

*Apologies and reason for absence to be given to the Clerk prior to the meeting*

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr Old who had a prior engagement.

The Clerk advised Cllr Bridgett had infringed the six month rule. Having not attended a meeting or sub committee of the Council for six months, he was deemed to no longer be a member of the Council. County Council elections office had advised the Council does not need to advertise the vacancy due to the May 2025 elections. The Clerk to advise Mr Bridgett he is no longer a member of the Council, and remove his details from the records.

## **RPC/71/25 Declaration of Members Interests**

*Members are required to disclose personal and prejudicial interests relating to any matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting if it only becomes apparent to the member during the meeting. If a member who has declared a personal interest then considers the interest to be prejudicial he/she shall declare that, and, after making any representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, the member shall withdraw from the room for the remainder of the item to which the interest relates.*

Cllr Mrs Dawson declared an interest in Agenda Item RPC/85/25 Rothbury W.I. fundraising Summer 2026.

## **RPC/72/25 Approval of minutes of previous meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

### **RESOLVED:**

Members agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were a true record.

## **RPC/73/25 Garden/village maintenance and related issues**

### **RPC/73/25/01 Monthly gardening report. Members are asked to consider report and issues arising**

#### **1.Proposals for repair to white seat, Bridge End**

Members considered proposals from gardeners to repair the wooden seat with plastic type seating.

### **RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to arrange further site meeting with gardener to consider further. Cllr Sutton to attend.

#### **2.Proposals for repair to Jubilee Institute seating**

Members considered proposals from gardeners to replace the wood slats with plastic slats.

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to arrange further site meeting with gardeners to consider further. Cllr Sutton to attend.

**3. Dog muck problems, Armstrong Cross**

Gardeners reported the problems with dog muck at Armstrong Cross continued.

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to speak to Dog Warden regarding the appropriateness of placing temporary laminated notices in the area, suggesting there is a problem with fouling, and dogs could be banned from the area in the future.

**RPC/73/25/02 VE Day. Members to consider options to commemorate VE Day 2025**

**1. Purchase of information lectern**

The Clerk advised planning permission would be required and would clarify costs for a pre-application.

**RPC/74/25 Planning**

*Public comments can be submitted via Northumberland County Council website:*

*Northumberland.gov.uk/Planning.aspx or via post to: Development Control, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF*

Cllr Devlin declared an interest in Planning approvals 24/004421/FUL and 24/004422/ADE.

**RPC/74/25/01 Members to note Approval of Planning Application as follows:**

- 24/04421/FUL: Whitton View Open Spaces – temporary sales cabin for the sale of homes on the land
- 24/03900/FUL: Reivers Well Lodge, Craggside – Installation of sewage treatment plant to replace existing
- 24/04422/ADE: Whitton View Open Spaces – advertisement consent for flags, swing sign, cabin graphics, window vinyls, long and low signs, v-stack sign, strip signs and stack sign
- 25/00196/LBC: Park Cottage Craggside – Listed Building Consent for repairs only to Park Cottage and Garden Cottage

**RPC/74/25/02 Members to note Withdrawal of Planning Application as follows:**

- 24/04428/FUL: Whinbank, Demolition of existing swimming pool building and outbuildings. Proposed two storey extension to rear north of the property and single storey extension to the West.

**RPC/74/25/03 Coquetdale Neighbourhood Plan. Members to receive update.**

Nothing to report.

**RPC/75/25 Finance**

**RPC/75/25/01 Virement of funds. Due to an unforeseen H.R. matter, members are asked to approve transfer of funds of £1750 from Unforeseen (Budget 4290) to Staff expenses (Budget 4055)**

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the virement of funds.

**RPC/75/25/02 Payments. Members are asked to approve the following payments. Chairman is asked to consider and sign the approved schedule against payments to be made.**

<b>PARISH COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT</b>				
<b>PAYABLE TO</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>AMOUNT (GROSS)</b>	<b>NETT</b>	<b>VAT</b>
UCCT	February shoppers bus	£64.00		NIL
M Evens	March Village Maintenance	£1252.28		
Employee/HMRC	Salary	£1140.21		NIL
	Expenses	£1750		
Nest	Pension, 30/4/25	£118.37		NIL
<b>BURIAL BANK ACCOUNT</b>				
<b>PAYABLE TO</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>AMOUNT (GROSS)</b>	<b>NETT</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Employees	Salary	£2113.62		NIL
Nest	Pension, 30/4/25	£185.85		NIL
M Evens	March maintenance, Whitton Bank cemetery	£880.00		NIL

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the payments.

**RPC/75/25/03**

The following payments have been made as per Financial Standing Order 5.6: Continuing Contracts and Obligations. Members to note payments. Chairman is asked to consider and sign the approved schedule against payments made.

<b>BURIAL BANK ACCOUNT</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>AMOUNT (GROSS)</b>	<b>NETT</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Spar, Shell, 10/3/25	Fuel	£50.32	£41.93	£8.39
Spar, Shell, 17/3/25	Fuel	£40.16	£33.47	£6.69
Spar, Shell, 25/3/25	Fuel	£49.90	£41.17	£8.23
<b>PARISH BANK ACCOUNT</b>				
SLCC, 17/3/25	CILCA, Clerk training Course	£450.00		£0.00
Defib Shop, 18/3/25	Defibrillator Battery	£286.20	£238.50	£47.70
Open Spaces Society, 18/3/25	Annual subscription	£45.00		NIL

**RESOLVED:**

Members noted the payments.

**RPC/75/25/04**            **Bank reconciliations. Members are asked to consider the most recent bank reconciliations**  
Members considered the most recent bank reconciliations.

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the bank reconciliations.

**RPC/75/25/05**            **Financial reports. Members are asked to consider the most up to date budget and spend figures**  
Members considered the most recent financial reports.

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the financial reports.

**RPC/75/25/06**            **Room hire rates, Jubilee Institute. Members to note increase in hire rates**  
The Clerk reported Jubilee Institute trustees had had no alternative but to increase room hire charges, due to continuing high running costs and a multitude of maintenance issues.

**RPC/75/25/07**            **Northumberland Blind Association. Members to consider grant application under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, The Free Resource**

Members considered grant application and financial statements. The association held a sum of £37K as at February 2025.

The organisation provides advice, information services and support to people with sight and hearing loss across the county and has an active social group in Rothbury who meet on a monthly basis, reducing social isolation, providing peer and other support and activities.

**RESOLVED:**

Members agreed to grant £500.

**RPC/75/25/08**            **Parish Council Credit Card. Members are asked to consider application for Council Credit Card (s)**  
The Clerk had suggested use of a Council Credit card would be beneficial. As the debit card is linked to the current account, there could potentially be an advantage to having a card with a limited budget. The Burial Committee had considered the proposal, but were not in favour. The internal auditor had made mention of further controls required for the debit card.

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to speak to internal auditor in relation to debit / credit card(s).

**RPC/75/25/09**            **Incom, complimentary full fibre connection to Cemetery Office / Shed. Members to consider proposal**

Alncom were to connect full fibre to the Cemetery Lodge free of charge, with tenant to pay monthly ongoing charges. The company had advised a complementary service was available to connect the cemetery office as it was classed as a community building.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.Members agreed that the cemetery did not require a connection.
- 2.The Clerk to inform Alncom

**RPC/76/25 Borderlands Place Programme. Members to receive update**

The County Council were to match Borderlands funding (although difficult to access) of several £million within the County, and which would be much easier to access, with £200,000 allocated to Rothbury for improved infrastructure in the town. However Rothbury had been allocated the lowest amount in the County, despite the fact it is larger than other settlements included in the project.

The Clerk advised the public W/C's at riverside were to be demolished. The landowner Northumberland Estates had been in discussions with County Council who owned the block and were arranging demolition. Northumberland Estates were in favour of a new purpose built block being sited at the riverside, suggesting Borderlands funding be accessed for this. The Parish Council would need to maintain any new block.

The County Council were actively looking at town centre parking / traffic flow.

**RPC/77/25 Pedestrian Crossing. Members to receive information in relation to road markings, inclement weather concerns**

Zig zag / non slip surface works had now been actioned. However the footpath adjacent Armstrong Cross / Newcastle House would benefit from an anti-slip surface.

**RESOLVED:**

Members agreed the Clerk would request anti-slip footpath surface on footpath at Armstrong Cross / Newcastle Hotel.

**RPC/78/25 Internal Audit**

**RPC/78/25/01 Internal Audit year ending 31.3.24. Members to review Action Plan**

Members considered the up to date Action Plan. The Clerk advised the majority of recommendations, which were relating to internal control, had been actioned. The Clerk advised the report would be forwarded to the external auditor in due course.

**RPC/78/25/02 Internal Audit year ending 31.3.25. Members to receive interim internal audit report.**

Members considered the following matters arising from the interim audit report.

- 1.The Council should consider in the interests of business continuity progress, how it ensures that the new council elected May 2025 can adopt and move forward with progress made on key topics such as internal audit.
2. Council has made progress with risk identification and mitigation, but this needs to be more clearly linked to the budget progress, so that the budget can make provision for any risks that have budgetary implications.
- 3.The management of ad hoc payments remains an issue for internal controls. A further review to be raised at year

end audit.

4. No issues had been identified with regard to management of reserves and banking arrangements, council should consider what principles should guide its future banking arrangements and how these contribute to an effective system of internal controls.

5. New council documents such as Standing Orders and Financial Regulations require better document management such as version numbers and change logs inserted within the documents.

There are no issues identified within the interim review that require changes to the initial assessment of the scope or risks pertaining to the internal audit.

**RESOLVED:**

Members noted the points. The new Council would be fully informed of matters relating to the internal audit y/e 31.3.24. Future risk assessments to be reviewed / considered during the budget setting process. The Clerk to seek further advice from internal auditor in relation to use of debit card. Future banking arrangements to be considered further. The Clerk to review current documents in relation to document management.

**RPC/79/25                      Freemanship Award agreed April 2024. Members to confirm arrangements for publicity / photographs**

The family were in agreement with a photographer being present at the award ceremony.

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to obtain quotation for framing the scroll.

**RPC/80/25                      Proposed bridleway creation and footpath stopping up south-east of Rothbury. Members to consider County Council consultation**

Members considered further information in relation to the proposed bridleway / footpath.

The County Council had advised that it is normal for farm tracks and public rights of way to co-exist. There would not really be any scope to prevent farm vehicles from using the proposed bridleway route, and landowners would likely not agree to the proposals if it meant them allowing their private access rights to be curtailed.

**RESOLVED:**

Members agreed the compromise would not work, and could not therefore support the proposals.

**RPC/81/25                      Village Entrance Signage. Members to discuss developer obligations in relation to signage**

County Council had confirmed they would look into the developer obligations to provide village entrance signage. This may take some time and no update would be available until the process had been completed.

**RPC/82/25                      Road diversions within Coquetdale. Members to discuss problems when several roads closed simultaneously**

The Coquetdale Cluster considered simultaneous road closures at their meeting held 1/4/25, however Hepple representatives had not been present. The Clerk had subsequently contacted Hepple P.C. who had received no concerns

about recent closures in and around the parish.

**RESOLVED**

The Clerk to re-contact County Council.

**RPC/83/25                    Members to consider British Legion proposals for North East England Field of Remembrance, Saltwell Park, Gateshead**

Cllr Gordon declared an interest.

In the absence of firm information the proposal could not be moved forward and would be removed from the agenda.

**RPC/84/25                    Creation and installation of poppy themed display. Members to consider suggestion for display at Armstrong Cross**

The offer to provide items for display had been withdrawn.

Item to be removed from agenda.

**RPC/85/25                    Rothbury W.I. fundraising Summer 2026. Members to consider proposals**

Rothbury W.I. were thinking of running an open-air charity tabletop trail in Rothbury Summer 2026. Participating residents would organise their own individual tabletop sales on their property. Shoppers would be given a map to locate these stalls and encouraged to explore. This would be a fun activity in itself - one that visitors to Rothbury might particularly enjoy - and the stalls would generate income for stallholders as well as the WI's chosen charity.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.Members agreed this would be a project they would broadly support.
- 2.The Clerk to inform W.I.

**RPC/86/25                    Crises Management. Members to consider information available via website Communities Prepared**

The Clerk advised free training is available via website Communities Prepared, and is to attend an electronic event 15/4/25 6 to 7pm – Introduction to Resilience

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to report outcome of training at next meeting.

**RPC/87/25                    Whitton Bank Cemetery**

**RPC/87/25/01                Whitton Bank Cemetery Regulations. Members are asked to review current document**

Members reviewed the Whitton Bank Cemetery Regulations. The Joint Burial Committee had reviewed the regulations at their meeting held 9/4/25 and recommended no revisions.

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the current regulations.

**RPC/88/25 Children North East. Members to receive correspondence.**  
Correspondence had been received with a Q.R. code link to the latest impact report.

**RESOLVED:**

The Clerk to distribute correspondence detailing Q.R. code.

**RPC/89/25 St Oswald's Way Management Group. Cllr's to consider proposals for replacement interpretation panel**

The St Oswald's Way Management Group had begun the process of looking into replacing the six panels along the length of the route. The panels promote the St Oswald's Way route, encouraging visitors to the area and enhancing their experience, and giving relevant information about the area it is in.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.Members agreed they wished to be involved with the replacement board at Cow Haugh car park, which could be financed under Borderlands funding.
- 2.The Clerk to advise Management Group.

**RPC/90/25 Parish Council Elections 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

The Election was uncontested, with seven person's submitting nomination. Two co-option vacancies would therefore be available.

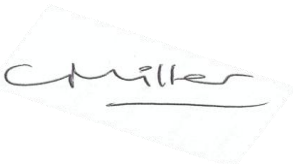
Cllr Gordon thanked all present for their civility, respect and patience over the last 15 months and wished all Cllr's well for their future term of office.

**RPC/91/25 To receive urgent items/items for next Meeting**

Further to the Governance Review, the Clerk advised the Annual meeting agenda would be in a different format to previous years.

**RPC/92/25 Date of next meeting**

The annual meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 commencing 7pm in the Dovecote Room, Jubilee Institute.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Miller". The signature is written on a light blue rectangular stamp that has a faint border and some illegible text underneath.

Claire Miller, Clerk/RFO

The meeting closed at 803pm