

Otterburn Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 September, 2025

Held at Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

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

In Attendance—Martin Chilvers (Clerk), J. Hartshorne.

- 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** – Cllr Riddle was unable to attend
5. **Opportunity for members of the public to raise matters:**

6. Matters arising

- a) item 6a: Road safety in the Parish: The Clerk reported that he had received an email from Neil Snowdon (NCC) who advised the County Council were waiting for a connection date from Northern Powergrid to make the new average speed cameras operational. Mr Snowdon also advised that the planters as well as the required bollards either end were on order for the work at the A696 / B6320 junction but he was unable to provide a timescale as to when the work would be undertaken. The Clerk reported that the speed indicator device data for August had recorded an 85%ile of 31.8mph down from an average of 40.5mph for the previous 21 months.
- b) item 6b: Access to the Play Area: It was noted that some road surface markings had been made but the Clerk advised he had not received an update from NCC on this matter.
- c) item 6d: Bus stop outside the Memorial Hall: The Clerk reported that he had not received an update from Neil Easton (NCC) on how this matter was progressing.
- d) item 6f: Parish Council vacancies: There was discussion as to how to attract further Councillors to fill the two vacancies on the Parish Council.
- e) item 6h: 682 bus service West Woodburn to Hexham (to include Otterburn): The Clerk's Report was received and agreed. NCC advised it was working towards the extended service possibly being operational from late October. If the extended service were to be introduced this would provide three Monday to Friday and two Saturday journeys to and from Hexham from Otterburn. Details of the timetable would be shared nearer the time.
- f) item 9a: Weeds in the roadside gullies: The Clerk reported that he had requested Glen Harrison (NCC) to attend to the weeds and was waiting a reply.
- g) item 9b: Cornhole at the Memorial Hall: The Clerk reported that the new boards as well as all relevant equipment had been delivered and Cornhole was now available to play at the Memorial Hall. It was hoped to arrange sessions for people to play soon.

7. Finance

- a) Budget update: The Clerk reported that there was presently a balance of £8,752.18.
- b) Clerk's salary and expenses for July & August, 2025: The payments of £649.83 salary plus expenses of £11.98 and £5.00 for replacement lights bulbs for the bus shelter were agreed.
- c) NALC review of Clerk's salary: The Cllrs agreed to introduce the recommendations from NALC to increase the hourly rate of the Clerk to £13.90, backdated to 1 April, 2025.
- d) Repair of slate dog bag dispenser invoice: The Clerk reported that the repair had been delayed as the contractor was on holiday.
- e) Payment of invoice to Otterburn Memorial Hall for room hire: The Clerk reported that he had not received an invoice.
- f) Payment of invoice to J. Harshorne for repiar of play area bench: The invoice of £182.77 was agreed.
- g) Payment of invoice to Playsafety Ltd for play area inspection: The payment of £104.00 + VAT was agreed.
- h) Payment of invoices to Chris Mowatt for grass cutting: The payments of £311.00 + VAT and £312.00 + VAT were agreed.

8. Planning

- a) There were no planning applications to consider this month.

9. New Business

- a) Local Transport Programme 2026-29: Following discussion two potential requests were identified 1) safety features for pedestrians to be introduced along the road from the Willow Green junction to the first entrance to

- Otterburn Hall Estate and b) safety features to assist drivers to negotiate the bridge on B6320 near Otterburn Mill. It was agreed to provide further consideration before requests were submitted by the deadline in October.
- b) Remembrance wreath: There was agreement to purchase two wreaths again as done the previous year, one for the school, for representatives from the school to lay a wreath at the service. The Chair agreed to represent the Parish Council and attend the Remembrance service.
- c) Repair of local road signs: The Clerk reported the NCC had advised the replacement signs were being developed but that there was a long backlog so a date cannot be provided as to when these will be in place.
- d) Dementia training for parish residents and village halls: The Clerk provided details of this session booked for 6.00pm on 27 October at Elsdon Village Hall. The session will help people to understand dementia, how it impacts a person and what people can do to help others affected by dementia. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided.
- e) Play Area inspection recommendations: The recommendations from the recent annual inspection were discussed and it was agreed to ask Mr Hartshorne to assess and quote for the small number of tasks required.
- f) Broken boards at footbridge near weir: The Clerk reported that the broken board had been replaced. NCC have confirmed all boards would be replaced in due course as many others appeared to be in a poor condition.
- g) Proposal to relocate the bottle bank: The Clerk reported that he had been approached by Le Petit Chateau asking whether the bottle bank could be relocated to the RTC where it had been previously suggested three years before. The Clerk advised that whilst the Memorial Hall committee had no objections the RTC Trustees declined the request and as such the bottle bank would remain where it is presently located.
- h) Overnight parking at Percy Cross: The Clerk reported that he was waiting for a reply from Paul Jones (NCC) on the matter of options to stop rubbish being left by a few of the camper vans that have been parking overnight at Percy Cross.
- i) Recycle of blister packs: The Clerk reported that the full box had been sent back to Terracycle. There was discussion whether to possibly obtain a new box. It was agreed to approach Ray Windfunds for funding and if that was not successful then further consideration would be given to the matter.
- j) Mobile library in Redesdale: The Clerk provided an update on the service that would be every three weeks from 4 September until the end of November after which a revised service will be notified.
- k) Community Transport scheme: The Clerk provided an update to advise that there were now six drivers assisting with the scheme and that those residents needing assistance to attend appointments should be call the Church & Community Partnership.
- l) Christmas Eve event in the millennium Green: There was discussion as to whether to reintroduce the Christmas Eve carols in the Millennium Green after a break of a few years. It was agreed it would be a good idea however it would be necessary for assistance from residents to make it happen.

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

- a) Cllr Peto commented on the general appearance of Otterburn and provided a few examples of areas looking bad including the grass within the NCC public toilets and the burnt out house. There was discussion as to how to engage with the village residents to tidy and enhance the appearance of the village.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 4 November, 2025 at Otterburn Memorial Hall. Meeting closed at 9.15pm