

Carham Parish Council Newsletter

No 17 ~ December 2025



In these fast-changing and sometimes challenging times a Parish Council may seem to be an out-of-date and irrelevant institution. But its remit – which is to represent the interests of the community and improve the quality of life and the local environment – is as relevant to our parish as it ever was. Although the Parish Council's activities can only go as far as its resources allow, it has a great level of freedom to choose how to deliver on its remit, which means it can respond directly to a wide range of matters that affect the community at large. And where it does not have the power to effect change itself, it has direct access to the officers and elected members of Northumberland County Council and other decision makers. In this respect, the Parish Council is not only relevant, it is very important. It is a vital part of our democratic system. Without an elected Parish Council, decisions on local matters could be made over our heads, without us knowing about them or having a say. If you are interested in seeing how the Parish Council operates, you are very welcome to attend one of our meetings in the year to come. Until then, we wish you all the best for the festive season.

Carham Parish Council

Christmas Services at St Cuthbert's

This year's carol service at St Cuthbert's church, **Carham**, will be on Sunday 21 December at 11 am. On Christmas day, Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) will be held at the church at 9.30 am. For further information, contact churchwarden Peter Straker-Smith on 07712 584 586.

Bus Service for Carham Parish

County Councillor Mark Mather has been working with Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council on changes to the bus services in the north rural areas. For Carham parish, this will mean a bus service along the B6350, calling at **Carham** and **Wark** and connecting with nearby communities, including Cornhill on Tweed, Wooler, Kelso and Duns. The proposed timetable takes into account residents' comments as far as possible, but not every request can be met as the bus has limited availability around school times, when it is needed for the school service. There are still some points to be ironed out, but it is expected that the new service will begin in early 2026. Bus passes will be valid on both sides of the border.

- ❖ The draft bus timetable is in the News & Events section of our website, www.carhamparish.org. Find the item "Proposed Bus Service" and click on the link in the text.

Precept for 2026-27

In January, Carham Parish Council will have to decide whether to increase the annual precept. This is the money – a very small part of the Council Tax – that we are given by Northumberland County Council as our budget. The greater part of our expenditure is on non-discretionary items such as insurance, bank charges, the Parish Clerk's salary, and play park inspections. The remainder covers ad hoc items such as repairs to Parish Council assets, the purchase of items that we think are needed in the parish, and support for community activities. We keep a certain amount of money in reserve, for any unanticipated expenditure. The precept was last increased in 2016 and since then many of our costs have increased. We also have new costs on the horizon, as we will be required to have a dot-gov website from early next year which we will have to pay for. So it is likely that we will have to ask Northumberland County Council for an increase.



Contact Us

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Carham Parish Council

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Winter Grit

There are a number of grit bins in the northern half of the parish, with grit provided by Northumberland County Council for use when the steep roads are icy and vehicles need grit for traction. If you notice that your local grit bin is empty, please report it using Fix My Street. Go to fix.northumberland.gov.uk or click on the "Report a problem to the County Council" link on the home page of our website, www.carhamparish.org.

- ❖ You can use Fix My Street to report a wide range of problems with roads and other public rights of way, including fly-tipping, potholes, street lighting, abandoned vehicles, overgrown footpaths, worn road markings and damaged road signs.

Ford Bridge Closure

Ford Bridge is due to be closed from 12 January 2026 to 2 May 2026 to enable Northumberland County Council to carry out inspections and refurbishment works. Any updates will be published on the One Network website, which gives details of known road closures, road works and diversions. The link to the Ford Bridge closure is <https://one.network/?tm=GB146618010> or you can follow the link in the News & Events section of www.carhamparish.org.

Carham Parish Defibs

Three public access defibrillators have been installed, in **Carham**, **Wark** and **West Moneylaws**, and another one is in the pipeline for **Mindrum Station**. The defibrillators have been registered with The Circuit, which means they are available to the ambulance services on both sides of the border.

Is Your Area Represented?

We want Carham Parish Council to be as representative as possible of the whole of the parish. We particularly need Parish Councillors from the farms and other small settlements, which are currently under-represented. Please consider joining the Parish Council. You do not need any particular skills or experience; just enthusiasm, diligence, and a willingness to learn the ins and outs of the role. There are just six meetings a year. This is a voluntary role that is interesting and rewarding. Contact the Parish Clerk, if you think you would like to join us.

Carham Parish Council is an elected body in the first tier of local government. It is responsible for representing the interests of the whole community. Among other things, it is concerned with community safety, street lighting, common land, play areas, litter, tourism, traffic calming, seats and shelters, rights of way, and some aspects of planning and highways.

The Parish Council meets six times a year. Meetings are in alternate months beginning in May, on the second Monday of the month, in St Cuthbert's Church, Carham, at 6.30 pm. Anyone living or working in the parish can attend a meeting.

For the minutes of Carham Parish Council meetings, go to www.carhamparish.org