

CARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council website: <https://carhamparish.org>

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th March 2026 In St Cuthbert's Church Carham at 6.30p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman P Feerick, Vice-Chairman M De Fusco,
Parish Councillors J Chubb, J McGregor, V Poland & D Wells
County Councillor M Mather
Clerk I Hunter
3 Members of public
Dan Perry- Constable Neighbourhood Policing (Rural)

Public Question Time: Members of the public asked the following questions:

- 1- There is sometimes a 20-minute wait for a bus, is it possible to have a bench at the bus stop for residents to use. Parish Councillors agreed to consider this question at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.
- 2- How will the bus service operate and what will be the diversion route during the time the road is closed for repairs. County Councillor M Mather agreed to investigate what the diversion would be and how the bus service will operate during the time of the road closure.
- 3- There does not appear to be any official bus stops. County Councillor M Mather advised the meeting that at the present time the bus service operates on a hail & ride system which means a passenger puts their hand out to request the bus to stop. However, if Northumberland County Council considers installing official bus stops the Parish Council will be consulted.
- 4- What about bus shelters. County Councillor M Mather advised the meeting that Parish Councils are responsible for the purchase & maintenance of bus shelters.
- 5- One of the road signs in Wark is facing the wrong way. Parish Councillor J McGregor agreed to resolve this issue.

The members of the public & Parish Councillors gave a vote of thanks to County Councillor M Mather, Northumberland County Council & Scottish Borders Council for all their hard work to ensure there is now an accessible cross-border bus service in place.

Community Police: Dan Perry- Constable Neighbourhood Policing (Rural) provided the following verbal update:

Since the last meeting on the 12th January 2026 there is nothing to report in Carham parish.

There have been thefts of batteries in neighbouring parishes however, this does not have any effect on Carham residents.

There have been no other crime trends

There continues to be poaching & trespassing offences, however, there is none in this area.

If there are any issues relevant to the parish between meetings, I will update the Clerk. The Police vehicle which was based in Wooler is now based in Berwick which means I now travel to Berwick to start and end my shifts.

County Councillor M Mather provided a verbal update on the policing in the Wooler area

In January 2026 the Wooler vehicle was moved to Berwick which means Dan Perry now starts and ends his shifts in Berwick.

I want the best for our community, and I know Dan is committed to his community, therefore the community would be better served if Dan was based within his local community, as a visible police presence helps reduce the level of crime,

The Area Commander was involved & reviewed the decision ahead of agreeing that the police vehicle & officer be removed from Wooler.

I have requested an urgent meeting with the Police and all 10 Parish Councils within the Wooler ward as well as sending a letter to the Chief Constable & the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Over 1-year ago, it was agreed to change the model, and it was suggested that there would be a Police Inspector in each Police Station. However, there is now one Police Inspector to cover Berwick & Alnwick.

Dan Perry- Constable Neighbourhood Policing (Rural) left the meeting at this point.

Min 687- Chairman's Welcome- The Chairman welcomed everyone to the March Parish Council meeting.

Min 688- Apologies for Absence: None

Min 689- Declaration of Interest: Parish Councillors J McGregor & D Wells declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Agenda item No 20- Play Area as Trustees of Wark on Tweed Charity.

Parish Councillor V Poland declared a personal & prejudicial interest in Agenda item No 11 – defibrillators as a member of the Carham Defibs Committee.

Min 690- Request for Dispensation- None

Min 691- Minutes of the Meeting: The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th January 2026 previously circulated were agreed as a true record, The Chairman signed a hard copy.

Matters arising from the minutes if not already on the agenda-

Min 692 (Min 679) -Right of Way- The Chairman advised the meeting that Northumberland County Council had responded to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the appeal for Public Footpath No 37.

Min 693- County Councillor report- County Councillor M Mather provided the following updates:
Budget

The 2026/27 Northumberland County Council budget was approved in February. Central Government had provided Northumberland County Council with a £102m increase over 3-years, however in real terms this is a £12.6-13m increase over 3 years, the rest of the increase will be by Northumberland County Council raising the annual Council Tax & Adult Social Care by £4.99% for each of the next 3 years.

Northumberland County Council requires £30-40m in 2026/27 to standstill.

The Council Tax support scheme had moved to a banded system, the residents in most need will receive the most support, there will be a hardship fund available to any residents who have had their support reduced.

Highways

Northumberland County Council Cabinet had agreed to allocated £4m funding for U&C roads over the next 3 years, which compromises of £1m in 2026/27, £1m in 2027/28 & £2m in 2028/29.

An additional gully tanker & road sweeper had been purchased for the north of the county.

The Local Transport Plan is due to be signed off. There is £350,00 within the Local Transport Plan for the Wark-Carham road.

Northumberland County Council is now working on a 3-year Local Transport Plan. The Highways Department is currently finding it very challenging to keep on top of pothole repairs, as there had been more pothole reports on Fix my street to date in 2026, than for the whole of 2025.

Please keep reporting potholes etc on Fix my street as the reporting system is working.

Recycling

There will be a new additional recycling bin allocated to every property in Northumberland by the end of 2026, the new recycling bin will take cardboard & glass. This new service will come at a cost to Northumberland County Council as Central Government are not providing any new burden funding to help rollout the new provision. Stickers are being placed on some blue bins stating the bin is contaminated, this is because nappies, & dog waste etc are being placed in the blue recycling bin. In 2025, 4000 tonnes of recyclable waste was rejected due to contamination which is approx. 20% and Northumberland County Council are receiving fines of over £1m per year for the contaminated waste.

Community Governance Review

Northumberland County Council are currently undertaking a review into all Town & Parish Councils across Northumberland, which includes looking at parishes where there are dormant Parish Councils. This means holding a parish meeting in each of the areas where there is currently no Parish Council and there happens to be 7 within the Wooler ward.

Winter services

The current winter maintenance services appear to be working well this winter, and Northumberland County Council only got it wrong twice i.e. not gritting on nights when gritting should have been undertaken, this was due to information received on proposed overnight temperatures.

Northumberland County Council are trialling a new way of treating road surfaces on marginal nights where the information from the Met Office suggests the temperature is borderline for treatment. There is equipment on the HGV's which reads the road temperature and only the coldest sections of road will be treated.

If all roads within the agreed gritting routes were treated twice a day the cost to Northumberland County Council would be £15,000 per shift.

There are environmental benefits with the reduction of the use of salt when it is not required.

Library Service

There is currently a consultation on the library service provision, however, the proposal is that the provision in Wooler Library will reduce from 38 hours per week to 28 hours per week. There will also, be a 4-tier provision for library services in Northumberland ranging from a primary library service to a service being run by volunteers.

The mobile library will be moving from a 3-week service to a 6-week service.

If you use the Library Service, please respond to the consultation.

Defibrillators.

The power source for the Wark defibrillator will be installed on 25th-26th March.

Min 694- Wark Telephone box

- The Chairman advised the meeting that the ground's maintenance works around the telephone box had now been completed.
- Parish Councillors ratified the payment of £516.00 to Laing Property Services for undertaking grounds works at Wark Telephone box.
- Parish Councillor J McGregor advised the meeting that Wark-on-Tweed Charity will be donating towards the recent ground's maintenance costs.

Min 695- Financial Statement

- Current Account £1070.66
- Instant Access Savings A/c £3003.09

Min 696- Accounts

Receipt

- Instant Access Savings A/c £ 2.89 Interest

Payments

- Bank of Scotland £ 8.50 Bank charges – 2 months
- E I Hunter £ 81.63 Salary 9.75 hours @ £13.91 per hour
- HMRC £ 54.00 PAYE
- Laing Property Services £ 516.00 Wark Telephone box- ground works
- E I Hunter £ 48.71 Expenses
- ICO £ 47.00 Annual Data Protection fee

Min 697- Defibrillator- Parish Councillor V Poland advised the meeting that the funding application to NEAS for the purchase of additional defibrillators had been successful. The Annual General Meeting for Carham Defibs Committee will take place on 30th April in Cornhill Village Hall; there will be a CPR & defib training session at the event.

Min 698-Bank Signatories- Parish Councillors undertook a review of the current list of bank signatories and agreed to add the Vice-Chairman M De Fusco & Parish Councillor D Wells to the list of bank signatories. The Clerk to organise a bank mandate for signing.

Min 699- Correspondence

- NCC- Email- Notice of making of the Public Spaces Protection Order for the control of dogs.
- NCC- Email – Community Governance Review consultation- closes 30th April.
- NCC- Email Library Consultation 2026- closes 13th April.

Min 700- Parish Council gov.uk website & email addresses-

- The Clerk reported with the help of Parish Councillor V Poland the Carham Community website had now been linked to the new gov.uk website. Parish Councillors agreed to set up their gov.uk email addresses. The Clerk confirmed that all future Parish Council emails would be sent from the gov.uk email address.

- Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council could sign the Northumberland County Council Service Level Agreement for the provision of the gov.uk website & email addresses.
- Parish Councillors considered and agreed to adopt the previously circulated IT Policy. The Chairman signed a hard copy.
- Parish Councillors considered and agreed to adopt the previously circulated Accessibility Statement.
- Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk check if the Parish Council could have a debit card for the Parish Council bank account to allow the annual payment for the Community website to be made.
Parish Councillors agreed to reimburse the Clerk the annual website fees if they are due ahead of the Parish Council obtaining a debit card for the Parish Council bank account.

Min 701- Annual Audit 2025/26

- Parish Councillors agreed that Mr E Rathbone would be the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council 2025/26 Annual Accounts.
Parish Councillors gave a vote of thanks to Mr J Bell who had undertaken previous Internal Audits and had confirmed he would like to relinquish the position of Internal Auditor.
- Parish Councillors undertook the Annual Review of the Asset Register and made amendments. The Clerk to circulate the revised Asset Register.
Parish Councillor D Wells to check the current state of the noticeboard.
- Parish Councillors noted all documents circulated and agreed that the Parish Council is GDPR compliant.
- Parish Councillors agreed that the Parish Council is Assertion 10 compliant.

Min 702- Local trades directory- Parish Councillors agreed to defer this agenda item until the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.

Any Other Business.

Min 703- Bus Shelter- Parish Councillors asked the Clerk & County Councillor M Mather to investigate if there are any funds available for the purchase & installation of a bus shelter now that there is a new bus service.

Min 704- Precept- Parish Councillor J Chubb asked the meeting about the use of precept funding to clear footpaths within the parish, stating that she had undertaken research and could provide details of works required.
Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk contact the Northumberland County Council Footpaths Officer as a starting point.

The Annual Parish & Annual Parish Council Meetings will be held on 11th May 2026 at 6.30p.m. in St Cuthbert's Church Carham.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Parish Councillors passed the following resolution:

The Council may be recommended to pass a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following business

on the basis that public discussion may prejudice the Council's position and/or staffing issues may be discussed.

Chairman _____ Date _____

DRAFT