

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in Matfen Village Hall on Tuesday 13th MAY 2025

Present: Mrs S Greaves, Chair of the Council together with Justin Dempsey and Kevin George.

In attendance: Mrs Mandy Senior (Clerk)

0525.01 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.** It was proposed by Cllr J Dempsey, seconded by Cllr K George and RESOLVED to re-elect Sarah Greaves as Chairman of the Council. Cllr Mrs S Greave accepted and took the Chair.

0525.02 **TO RECEIVE CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.** Cllr Mrs S Greaves gave and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk to the Council, Mrs M Senior.

0525.03 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.** The election of Vice Chairman was deferred to the July meeting.

0525.04 **TO CONSIDER CO-OPTION TO FILL ONE VACANCY.** Unfortunately, Mr T Webb had decided not to stand for election so there is currently a vacancy for one councillor. Councillors were encouraged to speak to residents to see if anyone would be interested in joining the Parish Council.

0525.05 **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS IN RELATION TO MATFEN PARISH.**
As there were no members of the public present, the Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled however Cllr Mrs S Greaves gave her annual report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

0525.06 **APOLOGIES** received and accepted from Cllrs F Robson and D Elles.

0525.07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

0525.08 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.** Councillor Mrs V Jones was unable to attend.

0525.09 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th MARCH 2025.** It was proposed by Cllr J Dempsey seconded by Cllr K George and RESOLVED to accept the minutes as an accurate record.

0525.10 **ACTIONS TAKEN FOLLOWING THE MEETINGS HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2025.**

- a) **Emergency Plan.** Minute 0325.06b refers. The Emergency Plan still needs to be updated. Deferred to a later date.

0525.11 **FINANCE**

- a) **Accounts for payment.** It was proposed by Cllr J Dempsey, seconded by Cllr T Webb and RESOLVED to approve the payments on the list attached.
- b) **To review and adopt the Model Code of Conduct, as amended 2020.** After reviewing, it was RESOLVED to adopt the Model Code of Conduct, as amended 2020.
- c) **To review and adopt updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.** After reviewing, it was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- d) **To review and approve the Risk Assessment.** After reviewing, it was RESOLVED to approve the Risk Assessment with actions required in the event of the Clerk being absent for

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a considerable amount of time and there not being enough councillors to be quorate. An update and action plan will be provided at the next meeting.

- e) **To consider requesting a Community Governance Review to remove the wards from Matfen Parish.** Following the recent election, it was RESOLVED to request a Community Governance Review to remove the wards for Matfen Parish. Currently there are 3 seats in Ward 1, which includes Ingoe, Ryal and Fenwick and 3 seats in Ward 2 which covers Matfen. If 4 parishioners apply in either Ward 1 or Ward 2 this would force an election at considerable cost to the Parish Council. If the wards are removed, then councillors would be elected by the parish as a whole.
- f) **East Tynedale Parish Councils Forum.** It was RESOLVED to support the Forum with a financial contribution of £30.

Payee	Detail	Gross payment	VAT	Net of VAT	Payment method
Northumberland ALC	Subscription 2025	159.38		159.38	BACS
Mrs A Senior	Clerical services	607.40		607.40	BACS
H M Revenue & Customs	PAYE	151.80		151.80	BACS
Mrs A Senior	Play area inspections	125.00		125.00	BACS
Matfen Cricket Club	Play area grass cutting	60.00		60.00	BACS
Unity Trust Bank – April	Bank account charges	6.00		6.00	DD
Unity Trust Bank - May	Bank account charges	6.00		6.00	DD
Scrimshaws Cleaning	Public toilets – April 25	86.67		86.67	BACS
Scrimshaws Cleaning	Public toilets – May 25	86.67		86.67	BACS
J C Accountants	Internal audit fee	72.00	12.00	60.00	BACS
East Tynedale C F	Donation	30.00		30.00	BACS
Procut Grounds Main Ltd	Grass cutting – football pitch	144.00	24.00	120.00	BACS
Income					
Northumberland CC	Precept payment	6000.00		6000.00	08.04.25
H M Revenue Customs	VAT refund	174.92		174.92	03.04.25

0525.12 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024-2025

- a) **To consider and agree any actions arising from the Internal Auditor.** As there were no actions arising it was RESOLVED to accept the Internal Auditor's report.
- b) **To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25.** It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25.
- c) **To approve the draft annual accounts, bank reconciliation and asset register for 2024-25.** It was RESOLVED to approve the draft annual accounts, bank reconciliation and asset register for 2024-25.
- d) **To approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances 2024-25.** It was RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances 2024-25.
- e) **To confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption 2024-25.** As the income and expenditure for the financial year 2023-24 were under £25,000, it was RESOLVED to confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption 2024-25.

0525.13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

- a) **Northumberland Local Plan, and in particular Policy ECN15 and leisure accommodation.** It was noted that no response had been received to the letter sent to Rob Murfin on 28th November 2024 regarding clarification on various points within the Northumberland Local Plan. A chaser will be sent.

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Reference Number	Address	Description
25/01178/LBC 25/01177/FUL	Blackett House and Temperance Cottage, Matfen	Holistic approach for sustainable retro fit to Blackett House, new rear extension, low level wall to front of dwelling and schedule of works to repair external fabric.
25/01393/FUL	Locksley Cottage, East Wallhouses	Erection of 1no granny annexe

0525.14 VILLAGE ISSUES AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS.

- a) **Village Green Litter bin.** The old litter bin has still not been removed by Northumberland County Council. Cllr J Dempsey is to see if the old bin can be salvaged and used at the Cricket Club.
- b) **Jubilee Sign.** A piece of metalwork, displaying letters Jubilee EiiR 1952 - 1977 had been found under the hedge at the Cricket Club. The Cricket Club will move the sign to the Jubilee Garden and it will be made into a feature.

0525.15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday 29th July 2025 at 7.00pm in Matfen Village Hall.

Report of Matfen Parish Council Chair – May 2024 - May 2025

Community Developments

The main issue and concern of the village discussed in Parish Council meetings, has been that the temporary closure of the Black Bull pub for refurbishment would be permanent.

Discussions were held about the possibility of registering the Black Bull as an Asset of Community Value, but it would have needed considerable investment from the community, and it became clear that there was not enough practical financial support available to make this a realistic proposition. (The Parish Council had applied in the past but been rejected because of the lack of such support).

However, much to the relief of the village, the Black Bull has now been bought by different owners and their intention to reopen it as a pub is evident.

Matfen Village Hall now has a generator installed, thanks to the work of Rachael Dempsey and Keith Mavin, our former chair. This means it can act as a Community Hub during emergencies, offering warmth and a place to connect with others, charge mobile phones and to find out what is happening when communications are affected by storm or other damage. This is a particularly important resource in an area where many live in outlying village which may be the worst affected.

Another sign of a vibrant community was the Matfen Village Fete in July last year, held by Matfen Church. This was a great success and another is planned for this year.

Planning Issues

One planning matter of particular concern to the Parish Council was the possibility that the owners of Tongues Farm would have to demolish their highly regarded glamping hut because of what was essentially a planning technicality. The development is entirely in keeping with NCC policies on farm diversification, and tourist development in Northumberland, and the decision not to enforce the proposed demolition was greatly welcomed. Thanks to Justin Dempsey for his hard work on this issue.

Another significant piece of news for the area is that it is likely that Mootlaw Quarry will be shut down permanently.

Local Transport Plan

It was resolved to put forward the extension of the footpath opposite Matfen Hall to join up with the permissive path just past the Quarry Road heading towards Standing Stone, for the Local Transport Plan. This is because this road is a 60mph limit, there is a section of footpath missing, and it is a safety issue for walkers.

It was also resolved to ask that the Council work closely with the residents of Ingoe community on the matter of road safety, now that planning permission has been granted for two new dwellings at the end of a single track road in the village.

The 30mph speed limit for Fenwick has been implemented.

Finally, due to moving away from Ingoe in the near future, I have to offer my resignation from Matfen Parish Council and from my position as Chair.

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I thank my fellow councillors for their kindness and tolerance of my inexperience as Chair. I have really enjoyed my time on the Parish Council and learnt a lot. I've been very impressed by how well the councillors work together, each contributing in their own way to taking care of the community they live in.

Most of all, I'd like to thank Mandy Senior for her support: she is an outstandingly efficient and knowledgeable Clerk and Matfen Parish Council are very fortunate to have her guidance and management.

Sarah Greaves