

Lesbury Parish Council

**Meeting
Tuesday 27 January 2026**

The Monthly Parish Council Meeting was held this evening at 7.30pm at Lesbury Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs Bendix (Chair) (TB), Hodgson (Vice Chair) (AH), Brunger (JB), Starkey (LS), Wilmshurst (MW) and Wynne (EW).

In attendance: 1 member of the public, County Cllr Wendy Pattison (WP) and Liz Taylor (Clerk) (ET).

Parish Council Meeting Minutes	ACTION
<p>Public Questions: Aln Valley Railway: Ken Middlemist was in attendance and gave an update on progress with Aln Valley Railway. Ownership of Eden Bridge has now been transferred to NCC which means the last 1¼ miles of track and cyclepath can be laid from Eden Bridge to Alnmouth Station. Aln Valley Railway is also organising an event on 20 & 21 June to mark the 60th Anniversary of the End of Steam on the Alnwick to Alnmouth branch line.</p>	
1. Apologies: Cllrs Franklin (KF), Hall (JuH) and Knowles (DK).	
2. Declarations of Interest: EW and JB declared an interest in item 7a).	
3. Minutes: The minutes of 25 November 2025 were signed as a true record.	
<p>4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes High Path: ET reported Graham Bucknall, NCC Highways had repaired the fence that runs alongside the High Path next to the A1068 and thanks sent to NCC. Online Banking: ET confirmed LS was now successfully up and running as the 3rd bank signatory, joining Tim Bendix and Julie Hall. VMS Signs: ET had reported again to Swarco that the sign on Longhoughton Road wasn't working. ET flagged grave concern with Swarco that there's clearly something fundamentally wrong with this sign as it keeps failing, gets fixed and immediately fails again. ET also raised the issue with Swarco that the sign is still currently under installation guarantee and the issue of what will happen when that guarantee expires: will the PC be left with a sign that consistently doesn't work and the associated costs to keep fixing. Swarco were investigating. Steppey Lane Footbridge: It was noted NCC had now installed drains to resolve the flooding issues on the footpath and also re-tarmacked the path. Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan Review: JuH not in attendance with an update and no further update received yet from Sarah Brannigan NCC Neighbourhood Planning Team on the outcome of NCC's Call for Sites. Postponed to the February meeting. Parish Online: Parish Email and Website: ET confirmed all PC had been issued with their new email addresses. The new PC website is now live and populated with information including governance & policies, 1 years' worth of minutes and agendas and 7 years of audit returns. It will take time to back-date the information any further. All PC to ensure they are able to log onto their new email addresses. ET flagged issues using the Parish Online admin panel due to complications of having more than one email account (Lesbury and Longhoughton). The advice from Parish Online was that separate laptops should be used for each account for each PC. It was agreed that the PC should purchase a laptop and Microsoft 365 for clerk use. ET had reviewed new laptop options and suggested the PC purchase a Which? Recommended best buy Lenovo laptop at circa £599 and an annual subscription to Microsoft 365. Proposed AH, 2nd TB, all agreed. It was also agreed to hold off notifying stakeholders (including an article in the Parish Newsletter) until all issues were resolved and both website and email addresses were fully functional. Community Shop Noticeboard: JuH not in attendance. Postponed to February. Graffiti: ET reported this had now been painted over. Hipsburn Bus Stop: ET advised a progress report had been requested from NCC. Richard McKenzie had advised NCC were still waiting for N'land Estates agreement on land but the NCC Estates were chasing and they hoped to have movement soon.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JuH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ALL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ET</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JuH</p>

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	<p>Hawkhill Bus Stop: ET advised a progress report had been requested from NCC. Chris Curtis had advised the NCC transport and highways teams had reviewed the proposal for new bus stops at Hawkhill Business Park. The location means that any new stops would have to come with laybys, as simply erecting new poles and flags on grass verges wouldn't provide safe places for buses to pick-up and drop-off passengers. The cost of installing laybys, coupled with the complexities of acquiring and owning land, meant that NCC weren't able to take the scheme forward.</p> <p>Christmas: The suggestion to put up more Christmas lights was discussed. AH flagged concern about costs and manpower. It was agreed to postpone to February.</p> <p>Remembrance Sunday: Postposed to February for discussion.</p>	
5.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>a) Budget/Precept 2026/27: ET had re-circulated to the PC the previous years' budget, accounts for current financial year to date, accounts from 2024/25 and current bank balance. It was noted there were no major projects with cost implications planned for the PC and the PC had sufficient funds to draw down on reserves for any unexpected costs. MW flagged the review of the NDP and associated costs but as these were unknown and it was unknown if any review of the plan would take place in 2026/27, and as there were sufficient funds in reserves to cover any such associated costs, it was agreed to keep the precept at £17k with no increase. Proposed AH, 2nd TB, all agreed.</p> <p>b) Onsite Visit with Galdiator Events re Alzheimer's Society Walk – 18/7/26 – TB had met the organisers onsite. Galdiator Events had noted the noise complaints from the previous year and promised that there would be no repeat. A further update would be received about the event in March.</p> <p>c) Speedsign – Longhoughton Road – see item 4 above.</p> <p>d) High Path – Fence (fixed – see item 4 above) and Overgrown Hedges – KF not in attendance. Postponed to the February meeting.</p> <p>e) Request for Grit Bin at the Crossroads at Longhoughton Road/The Wynd/ Lesbury Main Street – LS and JB reported that the crossroads had been very icy and dangerous during the snow conditions which was exacerbated by the damaged drain. This was a busy vehicle route with RAF personnel and the coastal route. ET advised NCC has criteria for allocation of grit bins: steep hills, verges, sharp bends, near steps. This grit can be used to clear snow and ice from roads and pavements but should not be used on private property. It was agreed ET to request a grit bin for this location to see if it met NCC criteria.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ET</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TB</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ET</p>
6.	<p>County Councillor Wendy Pattison – Northumberland County Council Update WP had previously circulated a report.</p> <p>Winter Gritting: NCC schedule gritting when weather forecasts indicate the temp will drop to 0°C or below, when conditions suggest a risk of ice, frost, or other hazardous surfaces forming on the network. It takes 3 hours to cover all of Northumberland. NCC aims to have busy routes gritted by 8am. Routine gritting takes place on a network of 28 main routes. NCC also grinds busy footpaths, car parks and shopping areas during persistent icy conditions. More information on NCC's winter services is available at: https://nland.cc/winter-services</p> <p>Digital Skills in Libraries: NCC will deliver a programme to improve digital skills and boost confidence in AI in all libraries in March 2026 to support digital inclusion.</p> <p>Library Review: NCC will undertake a review of library provision including the mobile libraries. The review will take place 12 February – 13 April and all are encouraged to take part. It was suggested that including provision on the mobile libraries of the delivery of services such as digital upskilling (as above), Citizen Advice Bureau services, help with the digital switchover and provision of NCC</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ALL</p>

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	customer service advice would greatly improve and expand the service and be invaluable to rural communities. It was also suggested the mobile library should visit the local school to promote and encourage use of the mobile library service.	
7.	<p>Planning</p> <p>a) 25/04293/FUL – Demolition of single storey garage and utility room. Replacement two storey side extension with new single storey garage, alterations including new rear window, render to some walls, partial removal of an area of flat roof, replace with pitched roof and replacement of an area of flat roof with a new flat roof - Grey Croft, Steppey Lane, Lesbury, NE66 3PU. Following an onsite meeting, the PC objected to the application as follows: the plot is one of the most extensive on Steppey Lane, however the proposed building will be large in size and density, creating an overbearing appearance. It will change the local character and environment of Steppey Lane, an AONB.</p> <p>b) 25/04681/FUL – Demolition of rear single storey bathroom, entrance, utility extensions, remove existing mineral flat roof section on main pitched roof. Replace with single two storey rear extension, extend main roof to form natural slate roof, add new window opening to south elevation. Raise existing party garden wall between Par 3 and Dingle to 2.25m - Par 3 Cottage, Foxton Hall, Foxton Drive, Alnmouth, NE66 3BE – no objection.</p>	
8.	<p>Correspondence Received</p> <p>a) NCC – N’land Design Code – We want to know about your neighbourhoods – CORRECTION - noted</p> <p>b) NCC - Notice of Consultation – renewal of Public Spaces Protection Orders. Deadline 21/12/25 - noted</p> <p>c) NCC - Thriving Together Newsletter Nov #2, Dec #1 and Jan #1 - noted</p> <p>d) NCC - Community Resilience Forums – noted. ET advised this had been passed to Lesbury Village Hall and Jean Humphrys had advised: the village hall is registered as an NCC centre. Each time there is a storm warning they are asked to confirm willingness to open. Jan McMahon and Jean Humphrys are the main contacts. They have agreed to open the hall to give shelter if needed and to provide a place for people in the community to have a hot drink, somewhere warm to stay and to charge phones etc if there’s power. They are able to ask for a generator if there is no power. The village hall opened for 5 days during Storm Arwen, but have not been called on since. MW advised that he hadn’t been aware the village hall had been open during Storm Arwen. It was therefore suggested that an article be included in the newsletter highlighting this service.</p> <p>e) NCC - 2026-27 Revised Tax Base - noted</p> <p>f) NCC - Town & Parish Council Conference – 5/3/26 - noted</p> <p>g) NALC - December & January Updates - noted</p> <p>h) Hannah Pringle - Flooding Cyclepath Hipsburn/Warkworth - ET advised this had been reported to Sustrans/NCC. NCC advised N’land Estates were looking into the issue as it was affecting their land. Sustrans also advised that they are aware of the issue, have been investigating with Northumbria Water and confirm it appears to be a spring that’s welled up as it isn’t treated water. Sustrans have engineers looking at a solution and they will be doing some excavation investigations in January to determine what can be done going forward.</p> <p>i) Phillipa Jasinek – Hawkhill Bus Stop – see item 4 above.</p> <p>j) Rebecca Noble – River Aln Otters – it was agreed that although distressing seeing otters killed on the roadside, NCC had previously advised they would need evidence of a problem and significant activity by otters, over and above 'normal' activity before considering any installation of a warning sign for otters.</p>	

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	<p>NCC needs evidence of frequent on-road sightings/near misses/collisions, otherwise they advise the signs will be ineffective as drivers will see the signs, but no otters. NCC requested reports of regular sightings, dead and alive, on a section of road where a warning sign was requested and would also need to discuss any report with the ecologist before taking action. NCC also flagged there isn't a specific sign for otters in England (there is in Scotland) so if anything was agreed, it would have to be a 'wildlife' sign (deer) or 'small mammal' sign (hedgehog). The PC agreed to post a link on the PC's Facebook to Rebecca's Facebook post to log sightings to assist with the report requested by NCC. The PC wasn't sure that erecting signage was a suitable or viable solution.</p> <p>k) Alnwick Medical Group – PPG Patient Newsletter – noted l) NCC – Town and Parish Council Meeting 22/1/26 Presentation & Links - noted m) Healthwatch News - February 2026 – noted n) NCC Public Space Protection Order – Control of Dogs - noted</p>	
9.	<p>Parish Financial Matters</p> <p>a) Penny Royale (Lesbury works) - £187.30 - PAID b) Sportsworld (Lesbury Christmas Tree) - £180 – PAID c) Playdale (50% deposit invoice maintenance works to Pond Field play equipment) - £867.95 – PAID d) Parish Online (Website and Email Addresses) - £410.40 - PAID e) Lloyds Bank (Monthly Banking Charges October and November) - £8.50 f) Clerk (Jan Wages) - £476.19 - agreed g) HMRC (Nov £112.40 PAYE and £21.84 Employers NI) - £134.24 - agreed h) Northumberland Accountants (Payroll) – £69 - agreed i) Shiel & Morrison (Newsletter) - £79 - agreed j) Grant Applications: Aln Valley Railway (£300), Citizens Advice Northumberland (£100) and GNAA (£100) – proposed AH, 2nd EW, all agreed.</p>	
10.	<p>Pond Field Play Area:</p> <p>ET reported that Playdale had carried out an operational inspection in January (this was conducted early and wasn't scheduled to take place until February). ET had flagged with Playdale it was disappointing this inspection hadn't been delayed until after the repairs scheduled for w/c 2 February had been carried out. Playdale confirmed the engineer that attended in January had a copy of the inspection report from October and all items apart from one that were flagged on both reports are being covered in the repairs in February. The January report had also identified suggested repairs to the wet pour surface at a cost of £400. It was agreed that these works should be carried out at the same time. Proposed AH, 2nd TB, all agreed. Further operational inspections are scheduled for 20 April and 20 July 2026. ET confirmed the RoSPA annual inspection had now been cancelled.</p>	ET
11.	<p>Any Other Matters for Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speedwatch: KF had advised that with the nights becoming lighter, Speedwatch would again be out and about monitoring traffic speeds. • Bilton Hedges: AH reported the hedges were again overgrown and obstructing the footpaths. ET confirmed this had been reported many times to NCC who had previously agreed to inspect the issue and then take any action if required. WP to report again to NCC using Members Reporting system. • Highway Damage: TB reported the road was breaking up on Lesbury Main Street near the roundabout. TB to report on NCC FixMyStreet. 	WP TB
12.	<p>NEXT MEETING: 7.30pm – Tuesday 24 February 2026 – Lesbury Village Hall</p>	ALL

The meeting concluded at 8.36pm

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