

ALNMOUTH PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

13th May 2025

Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Present: Susanne Gair (Outgoing Chair) and Cllrs David Denton, Harriett McHugh (Chair), Lorna Pringle, Richard Sim, George Ternent, John Wilson and Sally Wilson.

In Attendance: Deb Still (Parish Clerk/RFO), County Cllr Wendy Pattison and 2 members of the public.

The Meeting opened at 7pm.

64/25 Election of Chair

- i) It was RESOLVED that Cllr Harriett McHugh be elected as Chair for the forthcoming year.
- ii) Cllr McHugh's Acceptance of Office as Chair was RECEIVED by the Proper Officer.

65/25 Election of Vice Chair

- i) It was RESOLVED that Cllr John Wilson be elected as Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.
- ii) Acceptance of Office of Vice Chair was RECEIVED by the Proper Officer.

66/25 Acceptance of Office of All Councillors

The Proper Officer RECEIVED all Acceptances of Office of all Parish Councillors.

67/25 Apologies

Cllr Simon Rushton.

68/25 Chair's Annual Report 2024-25

This is appended to the copy of the minutes on the website.

69/25 Election of Members of Working Groups

It was AGREED to defer this item until the monthly meeting of 13th May.

70/25 Election of Lead Councillors for Events & Tasks

It was AGREED to defer this item until the monthly meeting of 13th May.

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

71/25 Councillor responsibilities

i) Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest & other Registerable Interests

Councillors were reminded that they are personally responsible for ensuring that these declaration forms are complete and are kept up to date and submitted to the Monitoring Officer at Northumberland County Council. This is a legal requirement.

ii) Election Expenses Forms

Councillors were reminded that they are personally responsible for ensuring that these forms are completed and sent to the elections Department at Northumberland County Council by the deadline. This is a legal requirement.

iii) Email Addresses

Councillors were reminded to designate an email address for their APC business which is used exclusively by them for PC business and to inform the clerk of the address.

72/25 Review of Reserves Policy

Councillors AGREED the Council's Reserves Policy 2025-26.

73/25 Review of Code of Conduct

Councillors NOTED and REVIEWED the Code of Conduct adopted by APC following a decision in March 2021 to adopt the Local Government Association's New Model Code of 2020.

Draft Minutes of Parish Council Monthly Meeting

13th May 2025

Present: Cllrs David Denton, Harriett McHugh (Chair until item 78/25), Lorna Pringle, Richard Sim, George Ternent, John Wilson and Sally Wilson. Cllr Whyte (from cooption at item 78/25 and Chair from item 78a/25)

In Attendance: Deb Still (Parish Clerk/RFO), County Cllr Wendy Pattison and 2 members of the public

The meeting opened at 7.15pm.

74/25 Apologies

Cllr Simon Rushton.

75/25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the APC meeting of 8th April 2025 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

7625 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

77/25 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

78/25 Cooption of new councillor

- i) Shaun Whyte was coopted as councillor.
- ii) Cllr's Whyte's Acceptance of Office was RECEIVED by the Proper Officer.

Cllr McHugh, Chair of APC tendered her written resignation as Chair which was accepted by the Council.

Cllr J Wilson presided as Chair to request nominations for a new Chair and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Whyte be elected as Chair for the forthcoming year. Cllr's Whyte's Acceptance of Office of Chair was RECEIVED by the Proper Officer.

78a/25 (formerly item 69/25) Election of Members of Working Groups

This item had been deferred from the Annual General Meeting and the following councillors were elected:

- i) Christmas Lights – Cllr Denton
- ii) Village Maintenance – Cllrs Denton and Ternent
- iii) Climate Change & Coastal Erosion – Cllr Sim
- iv) Planning Working Group – Cllrs Sim, Whyte & J Wilson
- v) Other Working Groups – none.

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

78b/25 (formerly item 70/25) Election of Lead Councillors for Events & Tasks

This item had been deferred from the Annual General Meeting. The following lead councillors were elected:

- i) Volcano Night – Cllr J Wilson
- ii) Bonfire Night – Cllrs Denton & Whyte
- iii) Remembrance Day – Cllr Rushton
- iv) Senior Citizen's Christmas Lunch Cllr Sim
- v) Quarterly Bank Reconciliations pursuant to APC Financial Regulations – Cllr J Wilson
- vi) Annual Bench and Asset Inspections – Cllr McHugh
- vii) Regular Playpark Inspections – Cllr Denton & Ternent
- viii) Posting minutes and agendas into noticeboard – Cllr Whyte
- ix) Other Events/Tasks
 - a) Taking delivery of and distributing newsletter to volunteer deliverers – Cllr Pringle
 - b) Inspecting and signing schedules of invoices at monthly meetings for approval – Cllrs McHugh, Sim & J Wilson.

79/25 AGAR Return & End of Year Accounts 2024-25

- i) The Annual Internal Audit Report was RECEIVED and NOTED and there were no actions arising.
- ii) The Annual Governance Statement (AGAR page 4) was APPROVED.
- iii) The Bank Reconciliation and Explanation of Variances for 2024-25 was APPROVED.
- iv) The AGAR Accounting Statement (AGAR page 5) was APPROVED.

80/25 Planning Matters

a) Applications/Appeals

i) 25/01558/LBC 52 Flat Northumberland Street Alnmouth

Installation of a floor mounted gas meter, associated covered box and vent flue pipe. It was AGREED to make no comment.

ii) 25/01030/FUL Brandling Cottage 19 Northumberland Street Alnmouth

Brandling Cottage 19 Northumberland Street Alnmouth.
It was AGREED to make no comment.

b) Update on Planning Decisions

i) 5/00793/FUL Land South West Of The Farmhouse High Buston

Change of use of parts of farmyard to land ancillary to residential use
approved under class Q

NCC Decision: Permitted

ii) 25/00375/VARYCO Flat 2 Mariners House 6 Marine Road Alnmouth

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on approved application to include proposed additional automatic opening vent on West elevation

NCC Decision: Permitted

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

c) Lack of enforcement action by Planning Authority

NCC has responded to requests for information on the NCC enforcement responses to the following matters (save for the lighting issue at the Schooner Hotel) to the effect that enforcement is progressing. It was AGREED that APC continue to monitor the enforcement action taken by NCC.

i) 24/00316/LISTED (door) & 23/00732/FUL & PP/P2935/W/23/3323621
(decking & installation of new door and lighting) Schooner Hotel.

ii) 22/01187/NOAPLN) & 23/00908/NONMAT & 19/04744/FUL
(unauthorised glazed structure) 6 Riverside Road.

iii) 23/04314/DISCON & 24/00930/BRCOND Estuary Drive land west of Schooner (parking arrangements and inadequate turning area for emergency and delivery vehicles).

81/25 County Council Matters

County Councillor Pattison reported that the Banking Hub in Alnwick is now open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

82/25 Street Lighting for Northumberland Street

APC is waiting for a response from NCC.

83/25 Old School Gallery

The draft application for the Old School Gallery to become an Asset of Community Value was deferred to the next meeting.

84/25 Clerk's resignation and recruitment of new Clerk/RFO

i) It was AGREED that the short-listing and interview panel would comprise Cllrs Whyte and J Wilson with a non-councillor (Susanne Gair) in an advisory role. It was AGREED that the councillors on the interview panel be given delegated powers to offer the post subject to terms and conditions agreed between the councillors and the candidate.

ii) The handover period will be agreed after the new clerk has been appointed.

85/25 APC Benches

i) Two owners/keepers of benches were given until 31st May 2025 to renovate their benches (one has two; the other one) but no response has been received from either party to the letters. Cllr Denton to contact them directly and ask them to agree the renovations or the benches will be removed by the council after 15th June 2025.

ii) One new Memorial Bench request has been agreed and the paperwork is in place. The bench will be installed outside St John's church on the pavement, the bench will be donated to APC and APC will maintain it (payment to be made by applicant). The second person requesting a Memorial Bench opposite the Whittling House has not yet returned the signed agreement.

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

iii) Correspondence has been received from a member of the public about a bench installed on the Wynd in 2006/2007 under an agreement with Alnmouth Parish Council. APC are investigating the matter and have contacted the Burgage Holders.

86/25 Small & Large Boathouses

- i) It was AGREED that Cllrs Denton and Whyte will scope the work needed to the small boathouse windows and discuss with the builder whose quote was accepted.
- ii) It was AGREED that Cllrs Denton and Whyte meet with the builder whose quote was accepted to agree total costs for the required pointing of each of the small and large boathouses.

87/25 Northumbria Police Report

In the period March to May 2025, there have been two reports of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Alnmouth area. One of the matters is still under investigation.

88/25 Alnmouth Arts Festival

A request from the Harry Hotspur Primary School Ceilidh Band to perform at this year's Festival on Saturday 15 June in Peases Park to raise money for the Band was approved. The Insurance document and Risk Assessment have been seen by Clerk.

89/25 Northumbria Police Report

Agenda item included in error.

90/25 Finance

- a. APC APPROVED the invoices and expenses claimed below:

Account	Payee	Description	Amount (incl VAT)	VAT
APC				
02 May 2025	Xero UK Ltd	Inv 23735200 Direct Debit (lower this month as part last month)	35.77	5.96
10 May 2025	IONOS	Inv 203048087057 Direct Debit	16.80	2.80
14 May 2025	Hindmarsh Hall	Inv for May APC 2025 HH-2023-288	27.00	0.00
14 May 2025	Starboard Systems Ltd	Inv 9246 for May 2025 for Scribe Accounts (to be set up as direct d	31.00	6.20
14 May 2025	PPD Printgroup Ltd	Inv 21724 PPD for May 2025	113.00	0.00
14 May 2025	Deb Still	Clerk's Expenses May 2025	30.50	0.00
14 May 2025	Deb Still	Net salary May 2025	502.90	0.00

- b. The monthly finance report was deferred pending setting up Scribe.
- c. It was AGREED that the Clerk apply to the Burgage Holders for a grant for the planting on the Wynd and at the War Memorial in June and September.
- d. It was AGREED that the Clerk contact Syd Carr re bench cleaning to discuss options. The decision on power washing the Playpark equipment was deferred.
- e. The Clerk is continuing to set up the Scribe accounting software that replaces Xero.

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

91/25 Reports from Working Groups

a. Christmas Lights

Two lights are still in situ.

b. Village Maintenance

No quotations have been received to replace the Bike Rocker in Pease's Park.

The bench at Peases Cottage has been relocated to the Bus Shelter.

Grass mowing at Dr Joy's Garden – no volunteers have been found and a local contractor already carrying out work in the village will be contacted.

c. Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch

There was no update.

d. Climate Change

There was no update

92/25 Confidential Matters

A motion to exclude the public was RESOLVED due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. The contract of employment for the new Clerk was AGREED. It was AGREED that a meeting be arranged with Alnmouth Community Rowing about pointing works and maintenance to the Large Boathouse.

Date & Time of Next Meeting: 10th June 2025, The Hindmarsh Hall, Northumberland Street, NE66 2RS.

Future Meeting Dates: 8th July 2025, 12th August 2025, 9th September 2025, 14th October 2025, 11th November 2025, 9th December 2025, 13th January 2026, 10th February 2026, 10th March 2026.

Signed Dated 10th June 2025

Parish Council Review of year 2024-25

Once again, we have had a very full and busy year and, as ever, the village owes much to the councillors and other volunteers who have given of their time so generously in so many ways. We have said goodbye to some councillors and have welcomed some new faces. I would like to record my thanks to everyone for all their hard work and support, both in the organisation of various events and in the ongoing task of village maintenance. Many thanks too, to Simon Walford for his excellent monthly newsletters: they are a very much appreciated source of village information. Thanks, too, to our long-suffering clerk, Deb Still, who always goes above and beyond to make sure that all is as it should be. We have been fortunate to have had the support of our two county councillors which has given us a strong voice at County Hall and which has certainly helped to expedite at least two projects over the year.

Perhaps the most significant project, and certainly the most long-awaited, was the refurbishment of the public lavatories which, although it might be a little hyperbolic to describe them as the jewel in Alnmouth's crown, are no longer the disgrace of the village. They will be open all through the year and will be serviced by NCC cleaners. Another important project was the tidying of the small car park at High Buston together with updated signage and the placing of wooden bollards to preserve the grass verge at the junction of the main road and the turning to the village. This should help to avoid traffic problems, particularly when large farm vehicles use the road.

We were very fortunate to have been the recipients of the expertise of the National Landscape Interpretation Plan which carried out a lot of work in Dr Joy's Garden assisted by the newly formed village volunteer team. The compass has been replaced in a more suitable position and the new surfacing together with the updated information board has attracted many favourable comments. Further planting will take place at the appropriate time. The garden is a lovely place to sit and enjoy the sun whilst looking at the ever-changing seascape and is much appreciated by both residents and visitors. The spring and autumn displays of planting on the Wynd provided by Hobberlaw provide a lovely entrance to the village and would not be possible without the kind financial contribution of the Burgage Holders.

The winter storms have brought the problem of coastal erosion very much to the fore once again and a working party of councillors has been attending meetings to hear what options there are to protect our coastline. The village golf course and the beach car park are particularly vulnerable but, needless to say, there is no easy solution. As you may have seen, work on some of the groynes by the Burgage Holders? has been carried out which will help to mitigate the forces of nature but global warming means that it is likely that we will experience more frequent severe storms during the winters to come.

All the usual village events were well-supported. Alnmouth Boat Club, who organise the very popular Volcano Night in September joined forces with the Parish Council in order to keep the event on the Alnmouth calendar. It was a great success with all the available tickets sold out well in advance. There were some truly splendid fiery castles to be seen defying the approaching tide. As ever, the fireworks on Bonfire Night were spectacular and the weather was as

good as could be hoped for in early November. The hot dogs and soup, kindly donated by The Whittling House, proved as popular as ever with only crumbs left by the end. The Burgage Holders financial contribution together with the excellent firework team and other volunteers guaranteed a successful event. Only days later there was another excellent village turnout for a very different occasion: the Remembrance Service. It was good to see the very young taking part (on behalf of the Scouting Association) as well as representatives of the armed services and an excellent bugler.

The darkest days of December were once again lit up by the Christmas lights. The switch on was great fun with carol singing and mulled wine before the traditional visit from Santa and his helpers after the countdown which, as ever, ended with all the lights coming on at once. The volunteer team who work so hard to get everything ready and organised are truly miracle workers and really do make a huge contribution to the Christmas festivities. This year they were ably assisted with the use of Andrew Carr's cherry picker for the first time. There cannot be many villages the size of Alnmouth that can boast such a magnificent display.

Christmas and the New Year passed without incident and the village settled into the late winter period. We were unfortunately unable to hold the Senior Citizens' Christmas lunch this year. I know that many people were disappointed, particularly after the huge success of the one held last year but we hope that it will return in January 2026.

The Council has also successfully recruited more volunteers for delivering the Parish newsletter and two volunteers who have become Playpark Guardians and carry out regular inspections of the playpark to complement Cllr Denton's work.

Finally, I am happy to report that the parish council finances are in good order. The decision of Northumberland County Council to increase council tax on second homes by 100% meant that we were able to raise the parish precept, which had remained the same for some years, without residents incurring an increase in their bills. This will be very useful as maintenance costs have risen substantially over the last few years and, inevitably, equipment needs to be replaced over time.

Susanne Gair, April 2025