

**MEETING OF HAYDON PARISH COUNCIL AT 7.30PM ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> OF  
FEBRUARY 2026 AT HAYDON BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE.**

**Present** : Cllrs L. Alderson, B. Howard, S. Jackson, A. Kirsopp, C. Morshead, A. Sharp, T. Simmonds, A. Suddes, D. Thornhill (Chair), and D. Webster; C. McGivern (mins.); A. Watt and N. Fisher; C. Hall (EA) and J. Alder leader of the Flood Group.

**1. Nigel Fisher, Civil Contingencies Officer at NCC, and Angela Watt, Programme Delivery Lead, to discuss developing a local Community Emergency Plan.**

Nigel explained that over the last 2 to 3 years they have been trying to develop community resilience and coming to speak to Parish Councils is part of that exercise. The idea is to encourage communities to make their own plans for how to deal with local emergencies. They are built around the themes of understanding the risks faced and how to deal with them with the support of the County Council. A number of communities have now developed their own plans, including Humshaugh. Everyone is aware of the threat posed by climate change and this is changing what people have to deal with from flood to drought. Northumbrian Water was within one week of a drought order during recent heatwaves. Rural areas and those not on mains water faced severe difficulties. Added to this there are more wildfires, and storms.

Nigel said that he would suggest making plans as to what communities can do for themselves. Emergency services may not be able to get to you immediately. He had circulated a draft plan to Parish Cllrs. He suggested assessing the risks faced, what resources are available in the community and how can they respond. He said that NCC would look at providing table top exercises to see if the plan works and how it can be tweaked to improve it.

Angela said that she could help locate sources of funding. Cllr Thornhill said that during Storm Desmond houses were flooded and roads blocked, and there was no prospect of NCC attending immediately. Out of this experience a Flood Group, with Flood Wardens for each area were created; sand bags made available in the village and a community Flood Plan drawn up. This has just been updated. Cllr Thornhill said that the PC had identified a site for a community hub and had got as far as getting quotes for the work needed, but they had not received funding.

Jon and Colin pointed out that there were three different power sources into the village. The plan would need to consider what was available to help vulnerable people if some of this was lost. Safe spaces and generators should be identified. Colin said that it was best to be dynamic and have alternative locations. He suggested that the community plan for the worst, and hopefully they would not have to deal with it all at once. He agreed that the main risk is from flooding and it made sense to have a standalone flood plan.

The Chair said that 10 years ago it was river flooding and surface water flooding. The cricket pavilion had been looked at as a base, but if the level crossing was under water this would be no help to most of the village. Angela agreed said it was best to look at a number of venues. She said that she and Nigel were happy to come out and walk us through the plan. They also suggested local farmers be consulted as they might have generators and be able to help.

During Storm Arwen it had been agreed that the best thing to do for most people was to stay at home and keep warm. Volunteers had gone out to peoples homes to see what help they needed. Angela said that one community had got funding for containers and flasks so that they could take hot food and drink to people. Cllr Webster reminded everyone that vulnerable people could sign up with their power company for priority assistance.

Colin suggested that the PC talk to other communities to share best practices, and he shared details of the upcoming Community Resilience Forum. There is also a planned table top exercise for the Flood Group on the 18th of March.

The Chair proposed that the best way forward might be for 2 or 3 members of the Flood Group and 2 or 3 Cllrs to meet and look at the template. He then suggested that they look at possible rest centres and then invite Angela and Nigel along to see how to take things forward. Angela said there had been a massive learning curve since Storm Arwen as to how strategic partners could work together. She promised to provide details of funding sources. The Chair thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting. Cllrs Thornhill and Jackson agreed to take part in the working group.

**2. Public participation** – none.

**3. Apologies** – were received from Cllrs Kendall and Richardson.

**4. Declarations of interest** – none were received.

**5. Minutes of previous meeting** – the Clerk had mistakenly reported 1 member of the public at the previous meeting, when none had attended.

**6. Report from Northumberland County Council** –

Cllr Sharp had received a lot of complaints about the drains at Lipwood. Often the drains were buried under grass, making them useless. Hill House to Lipwood and New Alston toward Newbrough were particularly bad. Two of the drains on Ratcliffe Road have still not been attended to. He said that he had given his full list to NCC to deal with.

The bins at Wharmley were overflowing and Cllr Sharp said that he had been told that they were emptied twice a week. Roadlink have had the contract for the A69, but have now lost it. Highways England will replace them and they have said that they don't want bins in laybys. It was unclear whether they will put in and empty their own bins. Cllr Sharp said that at the March meeting he should be able to tell the PC how Highways England plan to deal with litter.

Cllr Sharp said that half of the work on the Spa footpath will be done in 2026-27 and the rest the following year. He hoped that work might start this summer.

The planning application for West View has now been dismissed and the caravan should be removed. The application for Langley Brickworks would go to committee later, possibly April. At the most recent round of Community Chest funding only one application had been received from Haydon Bridge. The Nurture Project had been given £1000.

Regarding the yellow lines for John Martin Street the scheme orders have been issued and the work should be done in the next month.

As will the white lines from Innerhaugh Mews to Hordley Acres. The sweeper had been around the village a couple of weeks ago and would be asked to come out again shortly.

Cllr Sharp said that the work on the green lane near Castle Farm had not yet been completed, and Cllr Morshead said that it was a much bigger job than Cllr Sharp had realised.

There had been a meeting to discuss council tax recently and Cllr Sharp said that there were a lot of councils that could not continue with council tax increases below 5%.

An issue had been raised about a pile of leaves dumped at the turning area at the end of Belmont Gardens, but Cllr Sharp was unsure who this land belonged to. Cllr Jackson reported that the drain near the picnic tables at the Anchor had recently flooded. Cllr Thornhill said that the road surface on the Lowgate road was crumbling; this was from the Elrington junction to the bridge near Lowgate.

## **7. Highways –**

a) The Footpaths Officer had provided an update on the broken handrail at Geeswood, he said “It’s likely to be the end of February or early March as the contractor is undertaking other jobs for us elsewhere until around that time.”

b) James Brown (Handyman) had completed the repairs to the footpath near the Anchor. This work included installing replacement posts and fence rails, reinstating a step.

## **8. Lighting –**

a) The Clerk said that the Christmas lights team had contacted NCC to ask whether it was possible to create a lighting supply linked to the streetlights on the old bridge for the Christmas lights. They had received no response. The Clerk had also contacted the Lighting Department and she had not had a reply. She asked Cllr Sharp to take this up on their behalf.

## **9. Planning applications -**

**25/04653/FUL** single storey rear extension at Rocksprings crescent – **No objections.**

**26/00020/FUL** Sun room outbuilding at Hindshield House – **No objections however, councillors have found it very difficult to consider the application properly due to the lack of detail in the way in which it was presented to us. We shouldn't have to go to such lengths to understand an application.**

**26/00471/VARYCO** Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) on approved application 23/02856 to allow relocation of first floor window of new bedroom from rear to east with obscure glass and no opening leaves. Relocation of ground floor external door of new bedroom from east to rear elevation and omission of ground floor window of new bedroom on east elevation. Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) on approved application 23/02856 to allow relocation of first floor window of new bedroom from rear to east with obscure glass and no opening leaves. Relocation of ground floor external door of new bedroom from east to rear elevation and omission of ground floor window of new bedroom on east elevation at 1 Strother Close- **No objections.**

## **10. Accounts – As in the budget.**

### **I Review of grasscutting contract –**

The grasscutting contract was discussed. Cllr Thornhill said that the PC was challenged by NCC a few years ago to declare a Climate Emergency and it had decided that when they were considering a policy they would consider the environment. On this basis he suggested that they should only cut the grass for 1 metre at the roadside. Cllrs praised the work of Mr Batey in past years, and said that the only issue was the width of the grass cut.

It was agreed that the PC would need to consider the grass cutting policy for the wildflower area at the cemetery shortly. The central playing field at Shaftoe Green was discussed and it was noted that the school is no longer willing to care for this, however it is not part of the area that the PC is responsible for. It was agreed that the Chair would advertise for tenders for grasscutting on Haydon Bridge Matters.

(Cllr Alderson left the meeting.)

## 11. Correspondence –

- a) John Rookes at Hexham Ramblers emailed to say “Hexham Ramblers have been surveying Rights of Way, doing some basic maintenance and reporting problems such as broken stiles. ... We are planning to add Haydon to the parishes we cover. This was agreed.
- b) Angela, Section 106 Officer at NCC emailed to say that there were still funds for play available in Haydon Bridge. This was discussed and the Clerk will ask if 2 small spinners would be appropriate.
- c) Langley Village Hall Committee emailed to request that the grant for 2026-27 is increased to £2,500. Cllr Morshead will talk to them about alternative sources of funding.
- d) John Robertson had contacted the PC to ask about a memorial plaque for his Mother in the village, perhaps on the bench at the East end of the village. This will be installed by the handyman.

## 12. Parish projects –

- a) **Development Trust** – Cllr Simmonds said that the DT had asked whether the John Martin exhibition might be displayed at St Cuthbert’s Church rather than the Community Centre. Other locations were discussed. The Haydon Hundred will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> June. The DT is hoping for more entries, with a possible child friendly short bike ride. Repairs have been done on the Bridge. A literacy charity, Read Easy, has selected the Bridge as one of its hubs.
- b) **Meeting with the DT and Head of the High School** – The Chair said that the Head of the High School had been very welcoming. The main problem at the school was pupil numbers. Community access to the multi-use games area will be looked at. Cllr Howard confirmed that the school was willing to engage with the local community.
- c) **Footpath from estate to bus shelter** – Cllr Jackson provided photographs of a desire path from both gates into the estate to the shelter. She wondered if this could be turned into a properly surfaced footpath. This will be considered.