

Draft Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Mitford

Held on Wednesday 20th May 2026, 7pm

In Mitford Village Hall

Present: Chairman of Mitford Parish Council - Mike Sharp
Cllr Carole Burn
Cllr Ted Rodger
Cllr Eric Dodd

Clerk: Dee Smith

Apologies : Cllr Matt Skillen
Cllr Michael Jeans

Northumberland County Councillor Glen Sanderson, Keith Stephen (Mitford Village Hall) and two members of the public were also present.

The Chairman of Mitford Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Minutes of last Annual Assembly – 7th May 2025**

The minutes of the last annual meeting held on 7th May 2025 were agreed by all and signed by the chairman.

2. **Chairman of Mitford Parish Council Annual Report**

The Chairman gave the following report:

We have continued to work to improve road safety in our villages. Additional speed calming measures for Mitford village have been approved, this will see gateway features installed on both east and west approaches positioned to provide good visibility for approaching traffic, and the 30-mph restriction on church bank extended to include all the lower village. Installation is expected this summer. An interactive speed sign is also being installed in Tranwell Woods funded by the Parish Council.

Riverbank erosion behind the village hall continues to be a major concern, following professional advice, willow and black poplar has been planted behind the playground to help to stabilise the bank, and tree hinging will be undertaken upstream to slow the current. It is recognised that a more permanent solution is needed and we are seeking proposals for the design, permitting and installation of willow spiling scheme. The cost will be significant; an annual provision will need to be made over several years to fund the project and we will also be exploring grant funding options.

The repair of the riverbank and road at Abbey Mill is expected to be completed later this summer. The diversion routes have taken a heavy toll on Mitford Steads Road and St Leonards Lane; we have worked with the

highways team at County Hall to expedite repairs as they become necessary and will be seeking remedial work on both roads once Mitford Road reopens.

Installation of the new bus shelter at the Piramal continues to be delayed to the frustration of many, the funding from the Combined Authority is approved, the design work is done, we await the release of the funds.

We continue to undertake regular grass and hedge trimming in the villages to keep the parish tidy and have worked with the Mitford Historical Society to install two memorial benches along the footpath on Mitford Road, a route that is popular with walkers.

We have worked with the Village Hall Management Committee on a resilience project which has seen solar panels and battery storage installed in the village hall. The scheme will be supplemented with a backup generator to power our warm hub in the event of an extended power outage. The generator has been co-funded by NPG Foundation and County Councillor Glen Sanderson.

The parish website has seen a major update including parish email addresses for all Councillors.

The review of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan continues, Mitford being one of the participating councils. Government funding has been withdrawn for neighbourhood plans and costs will be allocated by electoral roll, Mitford's share will be around 3% of the total.

Financially the Parish Council is in a relatively strong position, we have reserved £6,000 for the warm hub resilience project, set aside £1,500 for contingencies, leaving total unreserved funds of £11,357 at the end of the financial year. The potential expense of the riverbank remediation has necessitated a 3% increase in our budget for 2026.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow councillors for all their hard work during the last year, our Clerk for keeping the show on the road, and our County Councillor for his support despite his heavy workload.

3. Report on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee

Hall use has continued this year in much the same vein as last year. The regular bookings are keeping the income ticking over and there has been quite a few extra one-off bookings for childrens parties, council events etc as is usual.

Current regular bookings include:

Mondays

New 'Wellbeing Café' 12pm to 3.30pm every week, run by Rev Elaine

Brownies 6pm till 7.30pm during school term.

Tuesday

Pilates 10am till 11am.

Dancing 7.30pm till 9.pm during school term.

Wednesday

Mitford Parish Council 1st Wednesday of the month

Mitford Historic Society 2nd Wednesday of the month April to October

Thursday

Table Tennis 7pm till 8.30pm (attendance has picked up in the last year with a number of local residents regularly playing)

Friday

Country Dancing 10am till 12.30pm during school term

Saturday

Mitford Buskers Night 5.30pm till 7.30pm usually 2nd Saturday of the month

Sunday

Cafe Church 9am till 12pm, 4th Sunday of the month

The Mitford Buskers night has gone from strength to strength and is now a well-established music night in the region and is still attracting regular and new people every month. The organisers have started to put on standalone concerts, self-funded by donations. The first was an evening with local musician Jez Lowe, who is very well-known figure on the national folk scene. It was very well attended and has funded the next concert on 25th July with the Terry Gorman Trio.

Hazel Anderson organised our second ceilidh in the village hall which is this Friday the 22nd. Hazel also booked professional touring company NTC who came to the hall and performed Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. This was an excellent evening's entertainment, and the hall was full of many new faces in attendance. The theatre group is returning on December 11th to perform Beauty and the Beast.

We have recently completed the solar panel/battery storage installation and are now in a much better position regarding energy bills and electricity usage. It is early days and a more detailed report will be available once we have more information.

The building of the generator housing has just begun and very shortly we will have the emergency generator installed.

The storeroom has been cleared out and rearranged which has greatly improved access and usability for all hall users.

The Village Fair this year was very successful and well attended again.

The village hall Facebook page is up and running, the aim of which is to collate all the events at the hall and in the village and make them easy to find online.

We are always in need of new members and anyone else would also of course be very welcome to join the team.

4. Questions from the Public

There were no public questions on this occasion.

The meeting concluded at 7.16pm.