

Mitford Parish Council

Draft Meeting Minutes held on Thursday 18th March 2026

At 7.30pm in Mitford Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: M Sharp (Chairman)

Michael Jeans

Matt Skillen

Ted Rodger

Apologies: Eric Dodd

Carole Burn

Clerk: Dee Smith

93/25 Welcome & Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone present.

94/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

95/25 Public Participation Time

There were no public questions on this occasion.

96/25 County Councillor Update

The Clerk gave the following update from Northumberland County Council (NCC) Councillor Glen Sanderson:

- The budget was agreed almost unanimously with cross party agreement. Council tax will go up 4.99%, which breaks down to 2% solely for adult social care and 2.99% for council services.
- Front line services are to be protected.
- Free town centre parking to remain.
- Building new super schools.
- Keeping leisure offer as fresh and well liked as it is.

97/25 Police Update

There was no update on this occasion.

98/25 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2026

Members were asked to approve the above minutes.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of 8th January 2026, a copy of which has been circulated to each member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

99/25 Any matters Arising from Previous Council Meetings

Min91/25 – Memorial Bench

Cllr Sharp advised members that two benches have been purchased by the Historical Society. One bench is to be located adjacent to the obelisk, east of the village. Councillor Sharp has been in discussions with Highways at NCC for approximately a year regarding the installation of a bench at this location but has not received a substantive response to date. Due to the upcoming installation deadline, Councillor Sharp emailed Highways again yesterday to seek formal approval and noted in his email that unless otherwise advised, consent is assumed.

There is some confusion regarding the proposed location of the second bench, possibly to be located at the top of the bank near the village hall, with confirmation awaited from the Historical Society.

RESOLVED

- a. Information duly noted.
- b. G Christie to install the benches.

100/25 Financial Matters

- a. Members were asked to approve the payments below. Members were also provided with a budget report up to 28th February 2026.

DATE	SUPPLIER	AMOUNT
18.01.26	G Christie December 25	£98.00
18.01.26	January 2026 Salary & HMRC - Clerk	£225.00

15.02.26	February 2026 Salary & HMRC - Clerk	275.99
25.02.26	Yorkshire Willow	£133.00

RESOLVED

Members approved the above payments and noted the budget report.

101/25

Parish Issues

(i) Land rear of Mitford allotment

Councillor Sharp advised members that willow stakes have been installed and some black poplar is on order. Tree hingeing work will also be carried out. Concerns were raised about the condition of the bank and how close it is to the play area and the allotment. The Environment Agency has previously advised that this is the responsibility of the landowner. Willow spiling could be installed at a cost of £3000 for a twenty-metre curve however, it would require a permit and professional input and the cost of this would be approximately £10,000 to £15,000. It was suggested that the parish council look at a contingency fund for this work.

Councillor Sharp advised members we have two options: a natural solution or a hard engineering one however, the latter would be too expensive.

RESOLVED

- a. To check the insurance to ascertain if it would cover any slippage from the bank in this area.
- b. Councillor Sharp to seek quotations for the professional fees for the permit work.

(ii) Piramel Bus Shelter

There were no further updates on the installation of the bus shelter. Concerns were raised regarding the slow progress from the North East Combined Authority, even though the funding has been allocated.

RESOLVED

- a. Information duly noted.
- b. To find out who is the chairman of the North East Combined Authority.

102/25 Town & Country Planning Act 1990

There were no planning applications on this occasion.

103/25 Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members were advised that little progress has been made. The government have stopped funding neighbourhood plans and there is uncertainty over green belt, housing numbers and how the new grey belt will work. NCC is currently undertaking a review of the green belt and is expected to report in June. We have been asked to resubmit the review of parish green spaces and heritage assets that Councillor Burn carried out. There is an upcoming meeting with the Town Clerk at Alnwick Town Council who have got a further in their review process than what we have.

RESOLVED

Information duly noted.

104/25 Highways

(i) Speed Strips – Mitford Village

There was no update on this occasion.

RESOLVED

Information duly noted.

(ii) Land Slippage B6343 (Abbey Mills)

Members were advised that the work is on schedule.

RESOLVED

Information duly noted.

(iii) Gateway Features

Members were presented with plans and locations of the new gateway features which includes extension of the 30mph zone and the relocation of the Mitford signs. Councillor Sharp advised members that 3-4 months ago he had a site meeting with NCC. To the east of the village, currently the 30mph limit is about 30 metres beyond the sign for the village, this will be brought forward to the same position of the sign on the right-hand side. On the west approach now, the 30mph limit and the signage for the village is behind bushes all the way around the

bend, so this cannot be seen as you approach. The 30mph limit will move forward in front of the telegrams post with the gateway feature. This means all the visibility the speed camera has, will be within the 30mph zone.

On the route from Molesden/Meldon, on the church side, currently the 30pmh limit is two-thirds of the way up the bank. That is going to go back along the road with the new gateway feature. All that road, which includes the houses and the church will be a 30mph limit.

The gateway features will look like those on Spital Hill with strips on the road as you approach the 30mph limit.

This work is expected to be completed by mid-summer.

Members asked why Mitford could not have a 20mph limit.

Members also discussed installing a speed indicator device at Tranwell Woods where it would work in both directions.

RESOLVED

- a. Information duly noted and members approved the plans.
- b. The Clerk to establish the criteria for a 20mph zone.
- c. To install a speed indicator device at Tranwell Woods and arrange a site meeting with Councillor Dodds and a NCC officer.

105/25

Village Hall

Councillor Rodger advised members that the solar panels on the roof of the village hall and the battery storage have been installed and are working well. A fireproof door has also been installed. The village hall committee have access to an app to monitor the usage. The hall is using very little electric from the grid.

The number of panels on the roof have been reduced, there are 18 instead of 22.

A shelter is to be build next to the emergency doors for a generator which will power the heating in the hall, if there is an outage. £6,000 was set aside from the grant funding that the village hall received for the purchase of a generator. The estimated cost of the generator is £3,500. The quotation for the shelter is £5,400.

Whilst the work on the solar panels has been carried out, it was identified that the consumer units are mixed up and need sorting and striping. The cost of this work is £2,800 including VAT. More quotes are being sought.

Also, the felting on the roof at one end of the hall needs replacing and the flat roof needs some repairs. Quotes are being sought.

Different events are continuing to take place in the hall including a ceillidh and a Sherlock Holmes performance in the next few months.

RESOLVED

- a. Information duly noted.
- b. It was agreed to pay £2,800 for the consumer unit and an EICR from the Warm Hub Resilience EMR.

106/25 The Village Warden & Other Environmental Matters

Members were advised that general tidying up has been taking place, and the warden will be getting on top of the grass cutting. The trees next to the carpark, overhanging from a resident's garden need cutting back, this has been done previously by the parish council.

RESOLVED

- a. Information duly noted.
- b. To contact NCC regarding the trees.

107/25 The Parish Council Website

There was no update on the website.

Members were advised to activate their specific parish council email addresses as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

Information duly noted.

108/25 Year End Procedures

Members were asked to approve the following procedures:

- Internal Audit Policy
- Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Financial Risk Assessment

RESOLVED

Members approved the above procedures.

109/25 Draft Policies

Members were asked to approve the following draft policies:

- IT & Cybersecurity Policy
- Data Protection & Retention Policy

RESOLVED

Members approved the above policies.

110/25 Any Other Urgent Business

Members considered developing an emergency plan for the village. To be discussed at a separate meeting.

111/25 Time and Date of Next Meeting

The Annual Assembly of Mitford will take place on Wednesday 6th May 2026, 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

The Annual Meeting of Mitford Parish Council will take place on the same date, commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.07pm.