



Blackshaw Parish Council

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Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting Hebden Bridge Town Hall on Monday 19th May 2025 at 7pm.

Present: Cllr Dyter (Chair) Cllrs Tiler-Ansell, Bowen, Bull, Higginson, King. Five members of the public.

1. Welcome

2. The Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council.

It's been a real pleasure to chair Blackshaw Parish Council over the past year having taken the baton from Cllr Chris Greaves. I would like to thank Chris and wish him well for the future as he has since resigned after relocating to another parish. I would like to take this opportunity to remember previous chair, Keith Lomax. Keith was a driving force in the Parish Council and very fondly thought of in the area – he will be missed!

Our Clerk, Catherine Bann resigned her position recently. I'm sure you will join me in wishing Catherine every success in her new venture. The Parish Council would like to thank her for the sterling work she has done for the Parish Council over the last 10+ years. We now have a full complement of councillors (welcome to Dan Tasker who joined us recently) but are currently looking for someone to fill Catherine's shoes. A huge thank you and best wishes for the future to Pat and Roger Munday. After a lifetime of commitment both at the chapel and in the community generally, they are relocating to be with family down south. They will be missed! This is a busy time of the year for our community. Behind the scenes the Fete Mates are gearing up for our annual BSH fete. This was a huge success last year with us acquiring a second field to accommodate more stalls and attractions - Dot's hat sale in particular brought smiles to many! None of this would be possible without the enthusiastic volunteers both before the fete and after. Thank you to everyone who has helped make it happen and we look forward to seeing faces old and new this year.

It was a privilege to spend some time with locals and share stories and a cuppa over the festive period when we delivered the Christmas parcels.

We have recently given grants to the Blackshawhead Toddler Group and the Charlestown Allotments Group, and also give annual grants to the Community Rights of Way Service (CROWS) and to the Heptonstall Exhibitions and Richard Naylor Charities who in turn award grants to students in the ancient parish area. We have also pushed and pushed to get the white lines reinstated on Badger Lane (finally they are done!), have repaired a wall at the allotment site, met with a councillor from Burnley regarding joint working on fly-tipping on Long Causeway, and attended external meetings with such as Calderdale Council, and other town and parish councils.

3. Presentation from Community Rights of Way Service (CROWS).

Paul Degnan from CROWS

CROWS began in 2013 in response to the Rights of Way team in Calderdale having insufficient resource to do what was needed. Organisation became a Registered Charity more recently, and now has 30 volunteers. Has grown in size and is more professional. Main brief is to maintain and repair footpaths and bridleways in the Upper Valley and Ryburn. They go out three times a week, and cut back vegetation, improve drainage, repair stiles, gates, steps and boardwalk. They have a website with a blog, plus a weekly Facebook post. Rely on the public to report problems via the website. This will then

be surveyed, and added to the work list. Funded by donations from public including legacies and JustGiving, annual grants from parish councils, some project funding from Calderdale Council, Natural England, or Pennine Way, walking groups, community associations, and landowners. They manage a depot in Mytholmroyd and a store in Ripponden and Todmorden. Half of expenditure is on materials and half on tools and equipment.

Paul then showed a number of photos demonstrating work done in and around Blackshaw Parish. Question about funding from Calderdale Council – do give some for bits and pieces, but they don't have much available.

Resident said she gave CROWS a legacy, and the work was fantastic, and as it was mentioned on the facebook, it could be shared with the whole family abroad and at home.

4. Update from Friends of Colden Clough – Hazel (campaigns on biodiversity) and Robin (forester).

Lots of skills represented on the new board. They are quite a new group, but have revived a previous more informal group, and made it more formal, constitution etc to be able to do more things. The clough is on the site of an ancient woodland and these are incredibly rare in the country, only 2.5% in the UK. These help to support native species and makes things more resilient for climate change. Internationally rare, it's temperate rainforest, allows for mosses and lichens to thrive. Need to protect this special place and this is the key aim. But also about helping slow the flow, very steep sided, and also to help people connect and engage with nature. Have had site visit with Calderdale Council nature officer Phil Singh and explained what they would do.

Nature restoration including clearing Himalayan Balsam, Rhodedendron removal and thinning of Beech trees that out-compete the Sessile Oak and Downy Birch – having a healthy understory of Whinberry and Heather slows the flow and contributes to biodiversity. Nothing grows under Beech, so floodwater flows freely. Once a month on first Sunday of month. Meeting at 10am Eve's playground (bottom of clough) – advertising it locally, and are starting to put together a website and will also create a flyer. Have had 2 events so far. A woodland walk and some thinning of secondary beech. Owl boxes, and bat boxes, hope to populate with Pipistrel Bats. Have funding from Heptonstall PC, grant for tools and publicity. In future want to grow this and get more people involved different ages and skills. Want to plant a community orchard in one of the clearings. Want to get trained first aiders on site. Can do things with children and power tools.

Q – suggested they have a stall at Fete – agreed.

Q – suggested a Blackshaw PC representative at their meetings – agreed.

Q - Beech trees planted for bobbins? Yes, but do need to restrict them. The millowners would probably have chopped the original trees down.

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- Relatively new organisation. Created informally initially to discuss concerns about traffic, and then created a constitution etc. Aim is to Make Blackshaw Safe. Did a survey to see if other residents felt the same about the traffic. Qualitative and quantitative had 113 responses, which showed it resonated with people. 95% said they were concerned about speeds. 67% said they'd been involved in a potentially dangerous situation due to excessive speeds. Cycling, horses, family pets, incidents of road rage. Engaged the community wardens and did some resident speed checks. Data sent to council, and it came back as red – i.e. people driving too fast. Did a Freedom Of Information request for the Vehicle Activated sign data – captures speed, not the reg. All incidents reported to Neighbourhood Police Team and asked them to come to do speed checks more. Looked at what others in country were doing – couldn't rely on council as no money. Found out about Autospeedwatch – community speed cameras to capture registrations, and then group works with NPT and council to write to persistent speeders. Found that there was a trial of this in Norwood Green and they came to Blackshawhead to talk about it. Progress is painfully slow. Communication with highways was challenging, weren't seen as a priority. Finally got approval for the cameras and the poles now in. Bought first camera and will buy another shortly. Meeting with NPT last Wednesday – they'll write to offenders over speed limit. Police can also gather intelligence on vehicles without tax and insurance. They can also see when the hotspots are for speeding to target their speed enforcement sessions. Group also wanted people to realise this was a village, with a community residential feel, to encourage

slowing down. Made some planters, wishing wells for the entry points to the village. Somebody nicked two of them :(Local stables donated compost. Residents have planted these up. This has made a positive impact on appearance of village. Supporting the chapel, also have a noticeboard. Linking to other associations and events. Working with residents on Steeps, putting together list of vehicles getting stuck on the Steeps. Can add weight to the work the Parish Council do. Have pushed on the white lines. BHCA is for everyone, now meet in the chapel – have board and publish agendas and minutes. Meetings quite informal. Thanks to the volunteers who've given time and skills. Thanks to Pennine Components, CMBC Ward Forum grant, and PC – some individual residents who have made one-off donations. How to get more diversity in the group – if you have ideas/times/skills/money, do get in touch. makeblackshawsafe@gmail.com

6. To report the Chair's donations. £50 to Keith Lomax Memorial Fund, Blackshaw Community Award, the vulnerable persons Christmas parcels, £328, £150 to Overgate Hospice. Money from Dot's Hats also went to Mill Reed Care Home
7. Open forum to discuss other matters of public concern
Lindsay said wanted to ask for a welcome leaflet or something for new residents. Clerk explained. Wind Farm. Non statutory consultation last Tuesday. Want to put in a BPC response as a statutory organisation. Majority of councillors oppose the wind farm development in general, one needs more information. Cllr Higginson to draft a response.
8. Date of next Annual Parish Meeting – May 2026.

Signed *Jake Dyter*

19th May 2025

Councillor Jake Dyter

(Chair of Blackshaw Parish Council)