

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2026 at Newburgh School, Back Lane commencing at 7.15pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs Roughneen (Chair), Halliwell, Lea, Baker and Clerk Sandra Jones.
13 members of the public were also present.

058/26

WELCOME MEMBERS TO THE NEW COUNCIL AND CONFIRMATION THAT ALL COUNCILLORS HAVE SIGNED THE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND COMPLETED A REGISTER OF INTERESTS/CODE OF CONDUCT FORM

The Chair welcomed everyone to the May Parish Council meeting, especially Councillors who were starting their new term of office following the recent election. It was confirmed that all Councillors have signed the necessary Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Register of Interests/Code of Conduct forms.

059/26

ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2026/27 AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORM

Cllr Roughneen was elected Chair for 2026/27 and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

060/26

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Atty, Borough Cllr Whittington, Borough Cllr Juckes, Borough Cllr Bailey and County Cllr Owens.

061/26

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2026/27

Cllr Halliwell was elected Vice Chair for 2026/27.

062/26

COUNCILLORS TO DECLARE AN INTEREST IN ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Cllr Baker declared an interest in the payments item and Cllr Lea declared an interest in the Tears Lane planning application.

063/26

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 April 2026

It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22 April 2026 should be approved and signed by the Chair.

Due to the level of interest, the Chair moved the Tears Lane planning application up the running order of the agenda. Cllr Lea left the meeting at this point.

064/26

PLANNING

a) Applications to be considered:

2026/0280/FUL – Erection of 96 dwellings and associated works including access on land East of Tears Lane, Newburgh (West of Tabby's Nook).

It was explained that the Parish Council had taken residents' views, received by the Parish Council directly and also during the recent Public Meeting, into account when drafting the proposed response. The Chair read out the proposed response and asked if Councillors wanted to make any amendments, especially in regard to the recent response from Lancashire County Council Highways department.

It was agreed that the response from Highways should be noted in the Parish Council comment. Although the Parish Council agreed with most of the points raised, the Parish Council strongly objected to the suggestion that the one-way section of Tabby's Nook should be made two-way. The Councillors considered that this would result in additional risk to the health and safety of residents and all road users, due to the road being located so close to the mini roundabout and sharp bend on Ash Brow, which is also the main school crossing point. Highways access to the new development remains the most important concern of the Parish Council. Councillors also raised the concern over the loss of current Green Belt land, which is classified as grade 2 highly versatile farming land. Differing views were raised over the design and number of proposed homes.

Following further discussion, it was resolved to submit the following response:

NEWBURGH PARISH COUNCIL

FORMAL OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 2026/0280/FUL Erection of 96 dwellings and associated works including access

Newburgh Parish Council strongly objects to the above application and respectfully requests that West Lancashire Borough Council refuse planning permission. The following paragraphs detail reasons for the objection including inappropriate and unsustainable development which would result in significant harm to highway access and safety, the Green Belt, impact on residential amenity, harm to the character of the village and lack of appropriate local infrastructure to support such a development.

Unsuitable Highway Access and Traffic Impact

Newburgh Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the wholly inadequate access arrangements proposed via Tabby's Nook, Tears Lane and Woodrow Drive. The submitted Planning Statement and Transport Assessment fail to properly address the suitability of all these roads to accommodate the substantial increase in traffic associated with 96 dwellings, the majority of which would access the development via Tabby's Nook, part of which is currently one way.

Tabby's Nook

Vehicles regularly travel down the one way section of road in the wrong direction, which then results in requiring access onto the main A5209 road on Course Lane, just after a mini roundabout on a blind bend. This section of road was made one way in the 1970's by Lancashire County Council due to the high level of risk to the safety of residents, cyclists and car users and the volume of traffic has increased substantially since then. Opposite the junction of Course Lane and Tabby's Nook is the school crossing point for children walking to the local primary school on Back Lane. Lancashire County Council Highways consider this part of the road dangerous enough to require a school crossing person to ensure the safety of Newburgh children. Tabby's Nook has also flooded on many occasions over the years, which has resulted in vehicles being unable to use the road.

Woodrow Drive

Woodrow Drive would also inevitably see additional vehicles experience difficulty in passing safely through, due to the road being narrow with many vehicles parked on both sides. In addition, this road network also serves elderly and vulnerable residents living in nearby bungalows, which require emergency vehicle access at all times, as well as unobstructed access for the local dial a ride service and mobile library.

Tears Lane

The proposal also includes access arrangements via Tears Lane to serve part of the development. However, Tears Lane is currently unadopted and the relevant access arrangements do not appear to fall fully within the application's red line boundary. The residents already living on Tears Lane are currently responsible for its maintenance, so more information is required from the developer as to how this arrangement would work in practice. Tears Lane is in poor condition and the only access point to the main road is the mini roundabout at the junction of Sandy Lane and Course Lane. High volumes of traffic use the A5209 road (our speed device records show an average of 8,000 vehicles every day), so this development would also pose a health and safety risk to car users, cyclists and pedestrians.

The Parish Council considers that the existing highways infrastructure is incapable of safely accommodating the additional traffic including deliveries. The resulting dust, noise and disruption would further intensify existing problems.

Newburgh Parish Council notes the recent response from Lancashire County Council Highways and we agree with many of the points raised, with the main exception of the proposal to alter the current one-way section of Tabby's Nook to two way. Newburgh Parish Council considers that this proposal would represent an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of residents, cyclists and road users.

Unsustainable Location

Newburgh Parish Council considers that the application site is not located within a sustainable settlement. The Borough Council's own Sustainable Settlement Survey (2021) identifies Newburgh as having relatively poor accessibility by public transport.

Limited village services

Limited local services and facilities exist within Newburgh itself, with residents generally dependent upon private vehicles to access schools, supermarkets, healthcare, rail services, employment opportunities and other day-to-day facilities mainly located in Parbold.

Transport

Public transport is limited with hourly bus services and no service on Sunday. The bus service is currently subsidised by Lancashire County Council, and was at risk of ceasing completely in 2017 due to budget pressures. There is no guarantee this service will continue.

Walking

The application states that residents could walk to Parbold to access additional services. However, there is no continuous footpath between the two villages and residents walking the route would have to cross the busy A5209 road. The footpath is narrow in places and there are points where the road is so narrow that large HVGs mount the pavement to pass each other. Information gained from a speed device over the past two years shows approximately 8,000 vehicles travel along the A5209 each day. The speed device has also recorded maximum speeds along Course Lane of up to 75mph. The reality is that residents of the development will be heavily car dependent, resulting in additional volumes of traffic.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Community Provision

The application fails to demonstrate that adequate infrastructure exists, or will be provided, to support a development of this scale. No meaningful proposals have been put forward to mitigate the impact on local infrastructure including highways, healthcare provision, schools, public transport, drainage or community facilities. Newburgh Parish Council is particularly concerned about the additional pressure upon already limited local services without any clear evidence of corresponding infrastructure improvements or secured mitigation measures.

Inappropriate Development within the Green Belt

Paragraph 187 in the NPPF states: "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland"*

The proposed development conflicts with the purposes of Green Belt designation as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph above and Policy GN1 of the West Lancashire Local Plan. The site is noted within the application as open grade 2 agricultural land forming part of the rural setting of Newburgh. The proposal would result in significant encroachment into the countryside. As such, the Parish Council does not consider that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the site can properly be categorised as Grey Belt land. The development would fundamentally alter the rural character and setting of this part of the village and would undermine the openness which currently exists.

Design, Layout and Environmental Concerns

The proposed development lacks any meaningful relationship to the character, appearance and historic identity of Newburgh.

Design and Layout

The proposal appears to be driven primarily by maximising site yield rather than delivering a high quality locally distinctive development appropriate to its rural setting. The proposal for the site as detailed in the now abandoned 2018 Local Plan noted approximately 80 homes for the site. The development proposed by Wain Homes increases the number of properties on this site by 20%, while the village overall would also see the number of homes increased by approximately 20%. Newburgh is a village which contains a conservation area and many grade 2 listed properties. Although the application suggests that half the development (48 dwellings) will be affordable, there are no details regarding what this actually means in reality. How much will these dwellings cost and will there be any part share etc? Is the 50% affordable housing allocation guaranteed?

Environmental Concerns

There are also concerns regarding the proposed drainage strategy and balancing ponds. Limited detail is provided regarding long term ownership, maintenance and management responsibilities associated with these features. Concerns also remain regarding their appearance, functionality and potential impact upon neighbouring residential amenity and local wildlife.

Given the existing flooding issues which has affected local nearby roads, including Tabby's Nook and Course Lane, the Parish Council is not satisfied that the application has demonstrated a sustainable drainage solution. These balancing ponds also represent a danger to residents, particularly children, both in periods of wet and dry weather.

Lack of Community Engagement

It is disappointing that the applicant did not undertake any engagement with local residents and the wider community prior to the submission of the application. Given the scale and significance of the proposal, greater consultation and responsiveness to local concerns would have been expected in accordance with the spirit of community engagement encouraged within the NPPF para 132 – Achieving Well Designed Places Chapter, which states

“Developers should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take into account the views of the local community”.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, Newburgh Parish Council considers that planning application 2026/0280/FUL represents inappropriate and unsustainable development, which would result in significant harm to highway safety, local infrastructure, village character and the Green Belt.

Newburgh Parish Council strongly objects and requests that West Lancashire Borough Council refuse planning permission for this application.

065/26

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting was adjourned for public discussion.

Most of the members of the public attending the meeting raised points about the Tears Lane planning application, including:

- The size of the new development would affect the character of the village as it would result in an increase of 20% on the number of current properties.
- Calculations had revealed that approximately 400 people would be living in the village, which could result in an increase of over 30% to the population. The current infrastructure in the village can't cope with this.
- Properties living close to the development could be affected, especially due to the plans raising concerns over the number of parking spaces and narrow driveways.
- Access out of Tabby's Nook will be difficult, especially if more vehicles are using Smithy Brow.
- Walking to Parbold is not safe.
- Will it still be safe to have a school crossing point so close to Tabby's Nook and where will the proposed new crossing point be?
- Who owns the land to be used for the development?
- Have sufficient surveys been carried out to assess current wildlife?
- Is the deadline for comments still 26 May 2026?
- When will residents be able to view the Parish Council response?

The Chair confirmed that the deadline for comments was 26 May 2026 and the Parish Council response will be able available to view online on the Borough Council website under the specific planning application section. The full response will also be noted in the May minutes on the Parish Council website and posted on the village Facebook page.

The meeting was reconvened and Cllr Lea returned to the meeting at this point. Eight members of the public left the meeting.

066/26

TO AGREE REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE VARIOUS GROUPS/COMMITTEES AND REVIEW CURRENT TERMS OF REFERENCE AS REQUIRED

It was agreed that the Working Groups/Committees should consist of the following members:

Finance Committee - Cllrs Roughneen, Halliwell, Atty and Lea.

Planning Working Group – Cllrs Roughneen, Lea, Baker and Halliwell.

Communications Working Group – Cllrs Roughneen, Halliwell and Lea.

Employment Working Group - Cllrs Roughneen, Halliwell and Atty.

Flooding Working Group – Cllrs Roughneen and Atty.

Footpath and Village Appearance Working Group - Cllrs Roughneen, Atty, Halliwell and Lea.
Play Area Committee representative– Cllrs Atty and Lea.
West Lancashire Area Committee (LALC) representatives- Cllrs Roughneen and Halliwell.
Police Liaison representatives- Cllr Lea.

With regards to terms of reference for the Committee and Working Groups, it was resolved that no changes were required to any of the committee/working groups at this time. A quorum of three exists for the Finance Committee and working groups and other Councillors will act as reserves as and when required.

067/26

WORKPLAN

a) To consider the co-option of Celia Pennington as a Parish Councillor and agree any actions.

The Chair informed the meeting that Celia Pennington did not wish to go ahead with the co-option at this time.

b) To receive a verbal update regarding village roads and the issue of traffic using Spencer's Bridge and agree any actions.

The speed device continues to provide valuable information for the Parish Council to submit evidence to Lancashire County Council Highways department. Cllr Baker gave an update regarding the Spencer's Bridge issues confirming that the Police had visited the area unannounced in recent weeks and were keen to meet with the Parish Council to discuss the issue further.

A meeting of local Parish and Town Councils had been attended by the Chair and Vice Chair recently to discuss road issues in the Borough with a view to collating all the data available in order to co-ordinate a response to the Lancashire County Council Highways department. The aim is to have a meeting with the department to push for action to be taken to make local roads safer for residents. It was agreed that data collected by the Parish Council in recent years regarding the number of HGVs using the roads would be helpful and the Clerk was asked to check to see if the information was still available on file. Suggestions were requested regarding the best option for monitoring the number of larger vehicles using the road, without people having to commit to manually counting the traffic. It was suggested that the Police may have appropriate equipment and another option considered was the strips across the road. Another meeting is due to take place on 11 June.

c) To receive a verbal update on flooding issues in the village and agree any necessary actions.

It was confirmed that there had been no flooding incidents in the centre of the village in recent weeks.

d) To receive a verbal update on the Play Area, including the condition of the boundary wall and agree any actions.

It was confirmed that the tree causing damage to the boundary wall had been felled. Two quotes had been received for work to repair the wall, but the quotes were far apart in price. One quote including rebuilding a section of the wall from the current damage to the gate as it was found to be leaning. The other quote was to make good the current damaged section only. It was resolved that further quotes would be obtained, including a like for like quote (repair the leaning wall) from the builder who had quoted just to repair the current damaged section. Due to the work involved, there is a shortage of builders who can actually carry out the work. It is hoped that it will be possible to obtain three quotes for Parish Councillors to consider and that the required work can be carried out in time for the school holidays.

068/26

TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON APPLETON FIELDS AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS.

It was confirmed that a meeting had taken place with a neighbouring landowner and the Trustees to discuss plans by the landowner to put up a fence. This work would stop members of the public being able to access his land in future via a gate at the border with Appleton Fields. The Association requested that the fence be placed a metre back from Bluebell Wood which would allow residents to still be able to use a long standing route. The landowner confirmed that the fence was necessary due to members of the public letting their dogs off the lead and scaring his sheep. The landowner is entitled to fence off his land, so discussions had taken place over placing a sign by the gate warning that access to private land was not allowed and potentially locking the gate. The option of Appleton Fields putting in another footpath to the left of the gate is also currently being considered and the Parish Council will meet with the Trustees to discuss the issue.

069/26

TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF MOORCROFT HOUSE AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS

Louis Casey, the Chair of the Trustees for Moorcroft House had sent his apologies and confirmed that there was nothing new to report at this time.

070/26

TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY EVENTS, SUCH AS NEWBURGH FAIR AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS REQUIRED

Discussions centred around possible activities for the stall at Newburgh Fair and whether to do the same as last year, which was to have lollypops to give out to children and hold a lucky dip where residents would be able to win a voucher to be used at a local business. The main aim of the stall is to promote the Parish Council and its activities and to encourage more residents to apply to join the Parish Council. Other suggestions were to provide updates on current projects, promote the new litter picking station and a short survey to find out what residents want from the Parish Council. It was resolved that an informal meeting would be held nearer the time to make a final decision on the best options.

More volunteer days are planned to keep the village looking its best and it was resolved that the remaining funds of £250 from the Duchy of Lancaster Fund would be used for this purpose.

It was confirmed that there were a couple of new members to the Newburgh Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

071/26

FINANCE

a) To agree Accounts for Payment for May 2026 (Schedule attached).

Cllr Baker left the meeting at this point.

It was resolved to approve the May 2026 accounts for payment. Electronic payments will be made wherever possible.

Cllr Baker returned to the meeting at this point.

b) To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26 – Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) will be approved before Section 2 (Accounting Statements).

The approval of the AGAR had been deferred from the April meeting to allow Councillors more time to review the documentation in order to get a better understanding of the details. Following discussion, it was resolved to approve Section 1 Governing Statements as the internal audit report and internal controls schedule provided by the Clerk provided reassurance that the Parish Council could answer yes to all the statements. It was further resolved to approve Section 2 Accounting Statements following review of the financial documentation and bank statements. The Clerk and Chair signed the appropriate sections for each Statement. The AGAR will now be submitted to the external auditor for review. In addition, the AGAR and supporting information will be posted on the Parish Council website.

d) To approve the proposed breakdown of the Reserves Statement as at 31 March 2026.

It was resolved to approve the proposed breakdown of the Reserves Statement as at 31 March 2026.

072/26

TO NOTE THE CLERK'S REPORT (INFORMATION ONLY)

The Clerk's report was noted.

073/26

COUNCILLORS TO RAISE ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION ONLY (10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME)

A request to add the issue of authorising payments is added to the June agenda.

Cllr Lea asked if the SPID data spread sheet kept by the Parish Council could be made public.

The Clerk was asked how many members of the Parish Council needed to be present to remain quorate and able to make formal decisions. The Clerk confirmed that three members are required for the Parish Council, Finance Committee and working groups to remain quorate.

074/26

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 24 June 2026 at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

Schedule of Accounts for Payment – May 2026

Ref No	Payee	Amount
N/A	1&1 domain charge - .co.uk address	£ 12.00* Direct Debit
N/A	Nest Pension Scheme	£ 68.81* Direct Debit
210526	Mrs S Jones May salary and expenses	£ 1,038.57
210526	HMRC Ni and Income Tax payment may 2026	£ 89.88
210526	NALC – payment for five Planning Reform training courses	£ 210.00
210526	LALC – Annual membership fee	£ 223.88
210526	Mr P Atty – green waste bin subscription for play area bins	£ 95.00
210526	Mr R Baker – planning training fee	£ 16.00
210526	Mr J Horrobin – play area maintenance	£ 35.00
210526	RM Services Ltd – Grounds maintenance weed May 2025 and Sep 2025	£ 141.60
210526	Zurich Insurance – Annual insurance policy	£ 701.97
210526	KC Computers Ltd – ink cartridges	£ 88.33
210526	Altham Parish Council – speed device hire March/April 2026 2026	£ 231.20
TOTAL		<u>£ 2,952.24</u>

Reserves and Balances as at 31 March 2026

Notes

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