

West Auckland Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 6th October 2025 at 7.00 pm,
West Auckland Memorial Hall

Present: Cllr K Guest, Chairperson
Cllr K Bolton
Cllr J Curl
Cllr E Farrer, Vice Chairperson
Cllr T Horsman
Cllr J Pattison
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr W Robinson
Cllr N Simpson
Cllr H Stott

25.81 TO RECEIVE NOMINATION FOR CHAIR AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive nominations for a replacement Chair/vice-Chair.

Cllr Kelly Guest was nominated and agreed to become Chairperson

Apologies were received from Cllr Chris Smith.

25.82 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no expressions of interest received.

25.83 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed accordingly.

25.84 TO INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- Thanks were given to Cllr Billy Robinson and Cllr Neil Simpson for their support with installing the stone trough behind the Pant and reducing the height of the 3-tier planter.
- Concerns were raised about youths throwing water bombs and giving racist verbal abuse to a village visitor who was staying at the Manor House hotel for a spa break. The resident advised that she has personally written to Joy Allen, Police and Crime Commissioner, requesting more police support in West Auckland. The resident requested details for Sam Rushworth, MP to raise concerns. It was agreed by Parish Councillors that the problems with youth anti-social behaviour is becoming worse. It was highlighted that younger children are being influenced by older ring leaders. The Parish Council agreed to also send a letter of concern to Joy Allen, PCC.
- Cllr Nick Brown advised that most of his emails are from residents with concerns about anti-social behaviour in West Auckland and Cllr Stephen Gray has written to Joy Allen. It was agreed that drones, training and CCTV will help provide the police with information that they need.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

- It was highlighted that when the miner sculpture was criminally damaged the police were given information about the one of perpetrators by an eye-witness, the police follow up was slow due to shifts; an update from the police is expected at the next PACT meeting.

25.85 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- It was advised that 2,000 daffodils will be planted alongside the Leech estate wall adjacent to the A68.
- It was reported that the miner sculpture, damaged by 3 youths, has been repaired and will be reinstalled this week. Thanks were given resident Steven Robinson and Cllr Billy Robinson for their efforts in repairing the sculpture.
- Cllr Stephen Gray provided an update on the current progress with the plans for a Toft Hill bypass. It was advised that there are five options being considered and an impact assessment process is currently being carried out. A decision will be made, funding dependent, by the end of this year whether the proposal for a Toft Hill bypass will proceed. It was advised there was no mention of West Auckland being considered for inclusion. It was suggested by Cllr Roberts that a separate meeting could be arranged to provide the new County Councillors with some background. Cllr Brown advised he has always been in support of a West Auckland bypass.

25.86 CLERK'S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING OF INVOICE CHEQUES

Correspondence received was tabled and payments endorsed as follows:

	Income	Expenses
Room use Go Sew	£212.50	
Eon Next		£41.87
Eon Next		£18.23
BT Wifi		£48.17
Subscription Friends SDR		£50.00
Domestic - L Lord		£88.00
Telephone & broadband		£30.00
Clerk's Wage		£1,200.00

- To consider suitable ways to commemorate Cllr George Smith's community dedication.

It was suggested that each school be asked for their thoughts on an annual award for attendance, attainment, community involvement or kindness. The Parish Council will donate £100 per annum until further notice. Clerk to arrange a meeting with Oakley Cross and Copeland Road schools' head teachers to discuss.

A more permanent dedication was also considered and it was resolved that in future a tree could potentially be planted should the Parish Council obtain the green area opposite the Memorial Hall. In the meantime it was resolved that a quote for cost of internal doors for the Memorial Hall be obtained for the Parish Council to consider contributing towards in memory of Chairman, Cllr George Smith who served as a Parish Councillor, County Councillor and local supporter of various local groups and organisations for many years.

- To confirm arrangements for 2025 Remembrance Service.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

The clerk confirmed that all arrangements have been made for this year's Remembrance Service on Sunday, 9th November 2025 at 3.00 pm.

- iii. To review and approve September 2025 Quarter End & 2026 Budget Setting

The quarter end financial report was reviewed and approved by those present. It was resolved that there will be no increase to the 2026 precept and the proposed budget was set during the meeting.

25.87 To RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

- i. To receive an update on a replica of West Auckland miners' banner.

It was advised that Cllr Guest and the clerk will pursue options for a replica West Auckland miner's banner and update.

- ii. To receive an update on additional car parking land

It was advised that there has been little progress with no update from DCC about the cost of the land the Parish Council wish to purchase as a community asset. DCC councillors agreed to support by liaising with relevant DCC departments to speed up the process where possible and it was resolved they are to liaise with the Parish Council's solicitor.

25.88 To RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

- i. To consider financial support for West Auckland Junior football team.

It was proposed and agreed that £1,000 will be donated to West Auckland Junior football team. Clerk to arrange bank transfer.

- ii. To consider one additional new seat at West Auckland cemetery.

It was suggested that relocating one of the two seats from the middle (left-hand side seat) of the walkway to the bottom right hand corner of the cemetery footpath will provide staggered seating for those less able to walk the whole distance. Clerk to request permission from Tony Johnston, DCC.

25.89 To CONSIDER LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

- There were no planning applications for consideration.

25.90 To RECEIVE AGENDA ITEMS FOR MONDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING

- To receive an update on additional car parking land.
- To receive an update on options for CCTV around village green.
- To receive an update on a replica of West Auckland miners' banner.
- To receive an update and consider commemorating Cllr George Smith.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....