



Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 9th March 2026 at 7.00 pm,
Community Parish Room, 1 Monteith Close, West Auckland DL14 9UB

Present: Cllr K Guest, Chairperson
Cllr E Farrer, Vice Chairperson
Cllr N Foster
Cllr T Horsman
Cllr J Pattison
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr N Simpson
Cllr H Stott
Cllr D Swainston
DCC Cllr Nick Brown

26.21 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Bolton, Cllr Curl and Cllr Robinson

26.22 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no expressions of interest received.

26.23 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

26.24 TO INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public in attendance.

26.25 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- Concerns were raised about the skip, sited adjacent to the converted properties at the old Queen's Head. Cllr Brown agreed to look into having it removed and the Clerk suggested she follow up with a report on the DCC system.
- Cllr Guest suggested that she hold a monthly 'Coffee with the Chair' drop-in session to encourage public engagement. The Parish Council welcomed the idea.
- Further to a recent meeting with both local schools to request their ideas for an award in memory of Cllr George Smith, Copeland Road school have requested support with tidying an area to create a small garden at the school entrance. Cllr Guest will arrange a meeting to ascertain requirements and Parish Council members were invited to support with this project. Oakley Cross school have been asked for further details on their idea of a community award.

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26.26 CLERK’S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING OF INVOICE CHEQUES

Correspondence received was tabled and payments endorsed as follows:

| | Income | Expenses |
|--|--------|----------|
| ROCH NDT lamp post services | | £540.00 |
| G Smith Electricals HIVE | | £155.99 |
| Eon Next | | £49.86 |
| Eon Next | | £45.44 |
| BT Wifi | | £30.02 |
| Sponsor Board West Auck AFC | | £550.00 |
| Domestic - L Lord | | £88.00 |
| Telephone & broadband | | £30.00 |
| Anglian Water | | £84.81 |
| DCC Pre-Planning Application Open Space Land | | £60.00 |

- i. The Clerk requested that the Parish Council consider providing a short-term loan, if required, to cover the cost of replacing the flat roof at the Memorial Hall. The roof requires urgent replacement following a leak and the discovery of several holes over the kitchen and toilet areas.

The Clerk confirmed that, while the Memorial Hall has sufficient funds to meet the cost of the works, doing so would leave its finances very tight. A grant application has therefore been submitted to assist with the cost. Until the outcome of the grant application is known, the works cannot be paid for directly by the Memorial Hall, as undertaking and paying for the works retrospectively could invalidate the grant application. It was resolved that a short-term loan of £9,000 could be given if required.

- ii. The Clerk provided an update on the football club’s s106 application for containers which will create a community kitchen and potentially a drop-in venue for local youths. Cllr Stephen Gray has been supportive throughout this project and has identified equipment in a closed civic hall that will furnish the community kitchen with oven, stainless steel surfaces, etc.

26.27 TO RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

- i. To receive an update on planning pre-application for land opposite the Memorial Hall

Following careful review and consideration, it was resolved that a pre-application for the open space opposite the Memorial Hall be submitted to the DCC Planning Department to explore the creation of additional car parking. The proposed parking would support the Memorial Hall, football club, allotments, SDR route access, and the wider village.

A request has also been made to the Assets Department to ascertain the value of the land and to suggest parallel processing between the two DCC departments.

- ii. To receive a progress update on development of the A68 bypass

Cllr Brown was asked to provide an update on the refusal of the proposed bypass through Toft Hill. It was confirmed that the funds are no longer available and that since 2016 the A68 through Toft Hill and West Auckland is no longer a trunk road. Cllr Brown suggested

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that DCC be asked to put weight restrictions on traffic passing through the area to prevent the route being a Satnav option for heavy vehicles. Following consideration it was resolved by the majority that West Auckland Parish Council cannot support the proposal without more details and fuller understanding of the impact to local businesses.

iii. To receive an update on progress with the mining sculpture

It was confirmed that a £2,500 deposit has been made for the miner sculpture and, as Cllr Robinson who is leading on the project was absent from this meeting, the Clerk will request confirmation of an installation date.

iv. To consider management of the vermin infestation following SDR landscaping.

It was advised that this issue is now being managed by Environmental Health and a significant amount of rat poison has been distributed.

v. To consider installation of SDR bridge

It was advised that the bridge is being raised by one metre to allow vehicular access for a resident. The area is expected to be cleaned up once the bridge is installed.

26.28 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

i. To receive an update on options for CCTV around the village green

As there was no update this will go to the next agenda and in the meantime Cllr Brown will obtain an accurate quote for the capital and revenue costs; Cllr Brown confirmed he would be willing to share the cost with the Parish Council and the Clerk will ask Cllr Stephen Gray if he is also in a position to contribute.

ii. To consider a replacement oven for Monteith Parish Room

Following consideration of the age of the built in oven, it was resolved that the Clerk would arrange for Fletchers' of Spennymoor to repair/replace it as required.

26.29 TO CONSIDER LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

There were no plans for consideration.

26.30 TO RECEIVE AGENDA ITEMS FOR MONDAY, 13TH APRIL 2026 MEETING

- To review and consider approval of quarter end accounts.
- To consider requesting a school's pedestrian crossing patrol warden at the Darlington Road A68.
- To receive an update on options for CCTV around the village green
- To receive an update on the replacement mining banner
- To receive an update on progress with the mining sculpture

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