



Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 13th April 2026 at 7.00 pm,
Community Parish Room, 1 Monteith Close, West Auckland DL14 9UB

Present: Cllr K Guest, Chairperson
Cllr K Bolton
Cllr J Curl
Cllr E Farrer, Vice Chairperson
Cllr T Horsman
Cllr J Pattison
Cllr W Robinson
Cllr N Simpson
Cllr D Swainston
DCC Cllr Nick Brown

26.31 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Foster, Cllr Roberts & Cllr Stott.

26.32 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no expressions of interest received.

26.33 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

26.34 TO INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- It was suggested that a letter of thanks be sent to Neville Thompson in appreciation for his contribution to the village, in particular litter picking.
- It was reported by DCC Cllr Brown that the owner of a problem garden at the rear of Copeland Road has received Statutory Notice and the matter has been escalated to DCC Legal Department.
- It was highlighted that the builders' skip at the old Queen's Head has been recently reported and is now a greater hazard will several tyres being dumped on the already full skip. Both DCC Cllr Brown and the Clerk have raised system requests with DCC.

26.35 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- It was advised that all picnic tables are now sited back on the village green and the mining sculpture will be sited within the next week. Thanks were given to Cllr Robinson for leading and to Joe Robinson and Cllr Simpson for their assistance with both projects.

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

- It was advised that Civic Pride has been asked to consider painting the bridge across the beck at Oakley Green.
- It was advised that, in objection to recent rising fuel prices, there will be a protest on the A1 road this coming weekend.
- It was advised that there have been several meetings about the disappointing news that Toft Hill bypass will not go-ahead due to lack of funds. It was resolved that West Auckland and Toft Hill residents should be working together. It has been advised that a bypass will not be further considered by DCC until 2032.
- It was reported that funds have been allocated to improve pedestrian access and traffic flow for phase 1 of the Tindale retail park.
- It was confirmed that the missing defibrillator has been returned to Copeland Road and highlighted that a Heartsine battery is required. Cllr Curl to provide details/codes for what is required.
- Further to previous accidents, a request to DCC will be made for a no right turn sign into Broom Mill farm shop, DL14 9PJ. Clerk to submit request to the Department of Transport.
- It was suggested that Bishop Press, who have offered some advertising space, should be used when the Parish Council want to promote events, etc.
- It was advised that The Well will be fund raising for Village in Bloom on Saturday, 9th May 2026 between 10 am – 2 pm. Volunteers are required to assist with replacing compost in village planters at 9 am on Monday, 18th May on the village green. Those present were asked to provide any available assistance to the Village in Bloom volunteers who work throughout the year to provide a splendid display of plants around the village.

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

Correspondence received was tabled and payments endorsed as follows:

Income Expenses

Website annual LJ Media		£186.00
Churches Fire Security Limited		£50.40
Eon Next		£51.25
Eon Next		£80.67
BT wifi		£37.14
Domestic - L Lord		£88.00
WAMCA Flat Roof Brownson & Sons		£10,320.00
Clerk's Wage		£1,200.00
Telephone & broadband		£30.00
Allotment rents	£1,300.00	
DCC Precept	£27,193.00	
Internal Audit - Tom Henniker		£96.00
Tommy Craff Mining Sculpture final payment		£2,000.00
Donation Village in Bloom plants		£200.00
Subscription NALC & CDALC		£772.41
Oakley Cross school award trophy		£65.99
Reimbursed VAT	£5,846.81	

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

- The Clerk advised that the deadline for a reply for the Darlington Road, Open Space pre-application is 21st April and the case officer, Hillary Sperring, has advised that following the pre-application, full planning application will be required.
- A Community Award trophy has been purchased for Oakley Cross school in memory of Cllr George Smith who was previously a governor at the school. Cllr Guest advised that she will be approaching Copeland Road to arrange to provide a small garden also in memory of Cllr George Smith for his time as a governor at that school too.
- The Clerk advised that two local facilities have benefited from grants. The Memorial Hall has received a £20,000 grant to replace a flat roof, guttering and crumbling garden perimeter wall. West Auckland AFC have received £14,950 from s106 for their project to create a community kitchen, shop and disabled access toilet from containers purchased from a folded football club.
- It was confirmed that year-end accounts have completed the internal audit process and will be made available as part of the Annual Report for Parish Council review and approval prior to submission for external audit.

26.37 TO RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

- i. To receive any update on progress with the mining sculpture.

It was reported that the mining sculpture is now complete and will be in place by the end of April 2026. Nationally renowned wood carver, Tommy Craggs was commissioned by the Parish Council to produce the sculpture in dedication to those who served in the local mining industry.

- ii. To consider requesting a school’s pedestrian crossing patrol warden at the Darlington Road A68.

It was resolved that this item could be included as part of the open-spaces planning application.

- iii. To receive an update on the replacement mining banner.

It was reported that Cllr Guest will advertise more dates to seek local input and will have a short video made about local mining history prior to approaching the schools.

26.38 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

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

It was resolved that the cost of approximately £9,000 per annum for 3 cameras is not a feasible option for the Parish Council. Following consideration and a vote, it was resolved that other options should not be explored at this time.

26.39 TO CONSIDER LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

There were no plans for consideration.

26.40 TO PREPARE AGM AGENDA FOR MONDAY, 11TH MAY 2026 MEETING – NO AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....