

**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 12 MAY 2025**

**Present: Councillors E Carr, N Graggs, J Huntington,
L Johnson, B Miller, J Miller, L Stewart, C Stogdale**

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor J Miller be elected Chair of Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Miller accepted the office of Chair and thanked Members for their confidence in him and continued support.

Councillor Miller paid tribute to M Goyns who was present at the meeting but was no longer a Member of the Parish Council. M Goyns had served as a Parish Councillor for many years and would be sadly missed by all her friends and colleagues at the Parish Council.

Councillor Miller presented M Goyns with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Parish Council and wished her well for the future.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor L Stewart be appointed Vice-Chair of Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L White.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

RESOLVED that G Fletcher be appointed Internal Auditor to Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

6 APPOINTMENT TO SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the following appointments be made:-

Cemetery Sub-Committee
Councillors E Carr, J Huntington, B Miller, C Stogdale

Allotment Sub-Committee
Councillors J Huntington, B Miller, L White

Personnel Sub-Committee
Councillors L Johnson, J Miller, L Stewart, L White

7 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED that the following be appointed to serve as representatives of the Parish Council

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on the external bodies listed for the forthcoming year:-

Durham Rural Community Council
Councillor L Stewart

East Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils
Deferred

East Durham South Local Network
Deferred

Smaller Councils Forum - CDALC
Councillors J Miller and L Stewart

8 DATE AND TIME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED that meetings of Wheatley Hill Parish Council be held on the second Monday of each month commencing at 6pm, except for August where no council meeting would be held due to recess. Meeting dates were subject to change with the consent of the Chair of the Parish Council.

- 9** The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 14 April 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

10 POLICE MATTERS

There was no Police report.

11 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

There was no County Councillors report.

12 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of thanks from Durham City Youth Project following financial assistance from the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Arriva Bus Service 58

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident concerned about the Arriva 58 bus service.

Members were advised that the 58 service had been re-routed and no longer passed Weardale Park. The concerned resident lived at Weardale Park and relied on the 58 service to travel to Wingate. The nearest stop to Weardale Park was now Vincents Corner, which was too far for the resident to walk to.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to County Councillor N Craggs.

(3) Front Street

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident concerned about the state of the Front Street and asking if there were any plans to tidy it up. The resident was concerned at the amount of empty and run down properties which they felt were an eye

sore.

The Clerk reported that the resident had been advised that the Parish Council were aware of the problems associated with the Front Street. However, as the empty and run down properties referred to were in private ownership the Parish Council had no powers to address the concerns.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to County Councillor N Craggs.

13 PLANNING APPLICATION

DM/25/01069/VOC - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) and 16 (landscaping implementation) pursuant to planning approval DM/23/01107/FPA to allow a reduction in the footprint of the sales building, alteration to the design/position of the compound/plant, reduction in the number of domestic fuel pumps and size of the domestic forecourt canopy, a reduction in the number of electric vehicle charging bays/EVC upstands including the reposition of the EVC infrastructure and alterations to car parking bays and landscaping at Wheatley Hill Service Station, Durham Road, DH6 3LJ for Phillips 66.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

14 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Internal Audit 2024/2025

The Clerk reported the receipt of the internal audit report for 2024/2025 undertaken by G Fletcher.

Members were advised that every smaller authority in England that received either gross income or expenditure exceeding £25,000 must complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) at the end of each financial year. The AGAR was made up of 3 sections including an annual internal audit report which was completed by the Parish Council's independent internal auditor.

The internal audit concluded that all the key controls contained within the internal audit section of the AGAR were examined and found to be working satisfactorily.

RESOLVED that the internal audit report for 2024/2025 be accepted.

(2) Effectiveness of Internal Control

Consideration was given to the report of the Clerk which reviewed the effectiveness of the council's internal controls to support the Annual Governance Statement, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted.

(3) Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ending 31 March 2025

The Clerk reported that Wheatley Hill Parish Council were required to complete the appropriate part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) which applied to them. As the Parish Council had gross income and expenditure which exceeded £25,000 it was required to complete Form 3.

The Clerk proceeded to take Members through Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, which was approved and then Section 2, Annual Accounting Statements which was also approved.

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RESOLVED that Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2025, be approved and signed by the Chair.

(4) Allotment 16

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting applicant 1/2025 was offered and accepted the tenancy of allotment 16. Members were advised that the allotment site was now fully occupied.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Changing Rooms

The Clerk reported that over the Easter weekend the changing rooms located on the football field were burnt out. The Parish Council was advised that the fire service attended the site 3 nights running and the Police had been informed.

Members were advised that the changing rooms were damaged beyond repair and safety notices had been erected on site warning to keep out. The Police had provided the Parish Council with a crime number but had stated there was little else they would be doing in terms of an investigation. An insurance claim had been submitted to the Council's insurers.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited.

(6) Summer Hanging Baskets

The Clerk sought approval for the Parish Council to provide 9 summer hanging baskets at the Aged Miners Bungalows.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council provide 9 summer hanging baskets at the Aged Miners Bungalows and a quotation be sought from Horns Garden Centre.

15 MEMBER ISSUES

Road Sign

Members reported that the wording on the road sign located at the chicane on the road between Wheatley Hill and Thornley was unclear and in need of repair. The lack of wording made it unclear to motorists who had the right of way which could lead to an accident.

RESOLVED that the road sign be reported to Durham County Council.

16 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure as at 31 May 2025.

PAYMENT	PAYABLE TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Gas - Heritage Centre	55.01	2.75	57.76
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	54.37	2.72	57.09
Debit Card	Maxwells DIY	Allotments - 2 x new combination locks	20.00	4.00	24.00
Internet Banking	Carrs Billington	Cemetery Supplies	148.03	29.61	177.64
Internet Banking	Shaw & Sons Ltd	Receipts and Payments Book	112.00	22.40	134.40

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Internet Banking	Horns		Cemetery Supplies		14.83	2.97	17.80
Internet Banking	J Davies		Reimbursement - Milage		62.00		62.00
Internet Banking	G Fletcher		Internal Audit		260.00		260.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson		Telephone Allowance		25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	J Miller		Reimbursement - Flowers		15.00		15.00
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited		Payroll Services - May 2025		62.50	12.50	75.00
Internet Banking	Councillors M Goyns & L Stewart		Attendance Allownace		418.76		418.76
Internet Banking	Payroll		Wages - May 2025		5,710.21		5,710.21
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC		PAYE/Pension - May 2025		3,935.33		3,935.33
Direct Debit	British Telecom		Telephone/Internet		38.30	7.66	45.96
Invoice 94	Co-Op Bank		Charges		13.30		13.30
					TOTAL	10,952.89	86.26 11,039.15

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and the payments be approved.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

..... Signed

..... Dated