

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 10 MARCH 2025**

**Present: Councillor J Miller (Chair)  
Councillors E Carr, M Goyns, J Huntington,  
B Miller, L Stewart, C Stogdale, L White**

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Collingwood.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 February 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.**

**4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There was no public present at the meeting.

**5 POLICE MATTERS**

There was no Police report.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**6 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Councillor J Miller provided a report on the following parish and countywide issues.

- A damaged road sign at St Godric's had been added to the work programme.
- Believe Housing had advised that the missing handrail at Watson Close was a fence and it would not be replaced.
- Graffiti at a bus stop had been reported and removed.
- Concerns regarding the welfare of a horse had been reported.
- Councillor Miller had met with Planning to discuss the proposed developments at Marley Fields Phase 2 and Quilstyle Road.
- Issues related to childcare provision had been raised with Councillor Miller.
- Mud on the road at Meadow View had been reported.
- A damaged fence at Bevan Crescent has been reported to Believe Housing.
- Issues related to the footpath at Bevan Crescent had been reported.
- The County Councils budget had been agreed and there would be a 4.99% increase in the County Tax.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**7 CORRESPONDENCE**

- (1) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from the Wheatley Hill Banner Appeal following a financial donation from the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(2) Royal Garden Party 2025**

The Clerk reported that the County Durham Association of Local Councils had advised that Seaham Town Council had been successful in the draw to attend a Royal Garden Party in 2025.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(3) Wheatley Hill Primary School**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Wheatley Hill Primary School for a Parish Council representative to stand as a School Governor at the primary school.

**RESOLVED** that the request be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**(4) Local Networks**

The Clerk reported that the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) would transition to the new Local Networks (LNs) on 1 April 2025. Wheatley Hill was currently located in the East Durham AAP and would move to the East Durham South Local Network.

Members were advised that the LNs would be governed by new Panels. Between April and September 2025 Panel members would be recruited for LN meetings to start in September 2025. The positions for Town and Parish council members would be considered following the elections in May 2025 when the County Council would provide further information.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**8 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

There were no planning issues.

**9 CLERKS REPORT**

**(1) Internal Audit 2023/2024**

The Clerk reported that the annual internal audit would be undertaken by Mr Fletcher on 21 April 2025.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(2) Policies and Procedures**

The Clerk reported that a review had been undertaken of the following policies and procedures and where necessary minor amendments and/or updates were made.

Child Protection Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Complaints Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Document Retention Policy  
Equal Opportunities Statement  
Financial Regulations

FOI Publication Scheme  
Fraud and Corruption Policy  
Grants and Donations Policy  
Health and Safety Statement  
Internal Audit Policy  
Public Filming, Recording and Reporting at Council Meetings  
Public Participation Policy  
Respect and Dignity at Work Policy  
Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy  
Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy  
Standing Orders

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**(3) Co-op Bank**

The Clerk reported that the Co-op bank had advised that they would no longer be issuing Post Office deposit slips, which was the method currently used by the Parish Council to deposit cash at the Post Office.

The change would take place immediately, but the Parish Council could continue to use deposit slips until the current supply ran out. They were making the change to enhance their Anti Money Laundering due diligence procedures and reduce their carbon footprint.

Members were advised that cash would need to be deposited at the Post Office using a debit card. The Parish Council had 1 debit card which was held by the Clerk. For practical reasons, a further card was needed to allow staff to deposit cash received for Cemetery fees.

RESOLVED that the Clerk apply for a second debit card for the Parish Council.

**(4) Winter Bedding**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council currently purchased 1,160 winter bedding plants from Durham County Council. Due to the harsh winter weather the plants do not thrive and over the last couple of years the plants, and therefore the floral displays have been poor.

It was suggested that the Parish Council only provide winter bedding in the Cemetery and the number of plants purchased be reduced to 200.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council purchase 200 winter bedding plants from Durham County Council.

**(5) Website**

The Clerk reported that Parish Councils website had been moved over to the .gov.uk domain.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**(6) Parish Council Elections - Thursday 1 May 2025.**

The Clerk reported that anyone wishing to stand for the Parish Council elections in May would need to complete and submit nomination papers between 21 March and 2 April 2025.

Members were advised that Nomination papers could be obtained from Durham County Council. All completed nomination forms must be delivered by hand to the Returning Officer at County Hall, Durham.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

## 10 MEMBER ISSUES

### (1) Blocked Drain – Cemetery Road

Members reported that the drain on the road at the front of the Cemetery was blocked.

RESOLVED that the blocked drain be reported to Durham County Council.

## 11 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure at 28 February 2025.

PAYMENT	PAYABLE TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Gas - Heritage Centre	92.27	4.61	96.88
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	55.99	2.80	58.79
Debit Card	Amazon	Cemetery - Air Compressor	27.90	5.58	33.48
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	29.95	4.63	34.58
Internet Banking	MKM	Cemetery Supplies	38.30	7.66	45.96
Internet Banking	Watson Machinery	Tractor Service	259.00	51.80	310.80
Internet Banking	Co-op Funeral Services	Gravedigging Fee	80.00		80.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - March 2025	49.80	9.96	59.76
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - March 2025	5,742.21		5,742.21
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - March 2025	3,625.75		3,625.75
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	34.80	6.96	41.76
Invoice 93	Co-Op Bank	Charges	12.70		12.70
TOTAL			10,073.67	94.00	10,167.67

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

## 12 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

..... Signed

.....Dated