

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 14 JULY 2025**

Present: Councillor J Miller (Chair)
Councillors E Carr, N Craggs, J Huntington,
L Johnson, B Miller, L Stewart, C Stogdale

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L White.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 June 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair welcomed M Goyns to the meeting.

M Goyns congratulated J Davies and E Leigh for the work undertaken on the summer bedding displays in the village and the hanging baskets at the Aged Miners bungalows. The Chair agreed that the floral displays in the village were well laid out and colourful and added the Parish Councils appreciation of the work undertaken.

The Clerk advised that the comments and appreciation would be passed on to J Davies and E Leigh.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 POLICE MATTERS

There was no Police report.

Members referred to the on-going problem of youths riding motorbikes through the village at high speed. County Councillor Craggs reported that he had a meeting scheduled with the Police on 18 July 2025 and would raise the issue.

Members queried why “cuppa with a copper” was held at the Community Centre and not Wheatley House as previously advised. In addition, there was no publicity about the event, so residents were unaware it was taking place. Councillor Craggs advised that he would raise this at the meeting with the Police on 18 July 2025.

Councillor Craggs reported that he had previously raised concerns with the Police about better ways for people to report crime safely and confidently. The Police had advised that there were adequate ways in which crime could be reported anonymously to them.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor N Craggs provided a report on the following issues.

- Arriva 58 bus service – A response to issues related to the number 58 bus service was still awaited.
- Issues related to land adjacent to Miners Villas had been referred to Planning Enforcement.
- Durham County Council had advised that their plans to park approximately 15 lorries at the Thornley Crossings depot would have no impact on Wheatley Hill.
- Councillor Craggs provided an update on the Targeted Delivery Plan (TDP) for Wheatley Hill.
- Durham County Council had refused the request to install 30MPH road signs at either end of Cemetery Road to deter motorists from speeding. They had agreed to undertake a speed watch.
- Housing – Front Street and Thornley Road. Councillor Craggs provided an update on issues related to the boarded up and abandoned properties on the Front Street and Thornley Road.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Request for Financial Assistance - Wheatley Hill Disabled Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Wheatley Hill Disabled Club for financial assistance towards a day trip for members.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of thanks from the Greenhills Centre following the Parish Councils donation of £4,034.50 towards school holiday activities and trips.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Shotton Colts

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Shotton Colts Football Club to use the Parish Councils small football pitch for the 2025/2026 football season.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Shotton Colts Football Club to use the small football pitch for the 2025/2026 football season.

(4) Durham County Council Standards Committee

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) advising of two vacancies for parish and town council members on Durham County Council's Standards Committee.

Members were advised that a maximum of two applications per council would be accepted and the deadline for applications was 22 September 2025.

All applications would be assessed by the CDALC Executive Committee and applicants may be asked to attend for an interview, depending on the number and quality of the applications. The appointment would be subject to formal approval by Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Bus Shelter

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident asking about the missing bus

shelter opposite St Godrics school and requesting a new one be installed.

Members were advised that there had been a shelter at this bus stop, but it was unclear what happened to it or why it was removed.

The Clerk had submitted a request to Durham County Council for a new shelter to be provided at this bus stop and the matter was also referred to County Councillor Craggs.

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

8 PLANNING APPLICATION

DM/25/01751/FPA – Single-storey front extension with pergola, ramp and terrace plus internal alterations at The Granary, Old Wingate Farm, Green Lane, Wheatley Hill, Trimdon Station.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 CLERKS REPORT

(1) Changing Rooms

The Clerk reported that Zurich Municipal, the Council's insurers had settled the Parish Council's insurance claim for the burnt-out changing rooms, details of which were outlined to Members.

Members were advised that the burnt-out changing rooms had been removed by a local resident at no cost to the Parish Council. In addition, the old storage container that was no longer used was also removed.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and a letter of thanks be forwarded to the resident who had removed the containers.

(2) Allotment Site Visit

The Clerk reported that an allotment site visit was held on 25 June 2025.

Members were advised that eight letters were issued to tenants advising them that their plots were not being kept to an acceptable standard. They were advised that failure to address the issues could lead to the termination of their tenancy.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Annual Insurance Premium 2025/2026

The Clerk reported that the annual insurance premium for 2025/2026 had been received from Zurich Insurance in the sum of £5,014.93.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Hanging Baskets

The Clerk reported that the hanging baskets for the Aged Miners Bungalows cost £40 each from Horns including VAT. The total cost for the 9 baskets was £360 including VAT.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Heritage Centre Sign

The Clerk reported that the two signs located on the Heritage Centre needed repairing.

Members were advised that three of the letters from the top sign were missing and it was suggested that it be removed.

RESOLVED that the top sign be removed from the Heritage Centre.

(6) Updates

(i) Footpath – Wingate Lane

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was reported that the surface of the footpath at Wingate Lane, from Marley Fields towards Whitehouse Farm, was breaking up and in a poor state of repair.

The matter was reported to Durham County Council. The County Council had advised that following an inspection the footpath was not considered to be hazardous, dangerous or in need of repair. They would continue to monitor the footpath through routine safety inspections and any repairs would be made if deemed necessary.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Youths on Motorbikes

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting concerns were raised regarding the on-going problem of youths riding motorbikes through the village at high speed and wearing face coverings.

The matter was referred to the Police and they had advised that this was an ongoing issue they were aware of in Wheatley Hill. The difficulty for the Police was the face coverings. They were encouraging people to report the bike's description, where they were being stored and who was riding them via Crimestoppers which was anonymous. Once the Police could identify these factors, they could take further action.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 MEMBER ISSUES

(1) Co-Op/Vincents Court

Members reported overgrown grass and weeds at the steps adjacent to the Co-Op and Vincents Court.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(2) Parked Cars

Members reported problems related to vehicles being parked for prolonged periods of time along the Front Street. They were also parked around the entrance to the Community Centre, which caused problems for other motorists entering and leaving the Community Centre.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to the Police.

11 PAYMENTS

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

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 14 July 2025

PAYMENT	PAYABLE TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Gas - Heritage Centre	11.43	0.57	12.00
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	47.39	2.37	49.76
Internet Banking	MKM	Cemetery Supplies	27.75	5.55	33.30
Internet Banking	Madhouse Media	Domain Renewal .co.uk	15.00	3.00	18.00
Internet Banking	Horns Garden Centre	Hanging Baskets/Compost/Seed/Grobags	356.12	71.22	427.34
Internet Banking	ROSPA	Annual Inspection	80.00	16.00	96.00
Internet Banking	CDS Security & Fire	Alarm Callout - Heritage centre	99.00	19.80	118.80
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	52.25	10.45	62.70
Internet Banking	North East Granite Company Ltd	Cemetery Supplies	448.00	89.60	537.60
Debit Card	Jet Retail UK Ltd	Machine Fuel	58.58	11.71	70.29
Debit Card	Toolstation	Security Chain - Football Field Gates	21.65	4.33	25.98
Debit Card	Hydraulic Tech Services Ltd	Cemetery Supplies	77.08	15.42	92.50
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Disabled Club	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance Premium	5,014.93		5,014.93
Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business	Water - Allotments	196.14		196.14
Internet Banking	Funeral Services Ltd	Gravedigging Fee	80.00		80.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - July 2025	5,708.81		5,708.81
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - July 2025	3,872.73		3,872.73
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - July 2025	37.50	7.50	45.00
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	37.02	7.40	44.42
Invoice 98	Co-Op Bank	Charges	12.00		12.00
TOTAL			16,578.38	264.92	16,843.30

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