

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 13 APRIL 2026**

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Johnson, J Miller and L White.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors E Carr and C Stogdale declared an interest in minute number 7(1)(ii)

3 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 March 2026, 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

The Police reported that a multi-agency walkabout was held in Wheatley Hill and included County Councillor N Craggs and representatives from the Police, regeneration community team, fire service, empty homes team, wardens, and the anti-social behaviour team. A follow up meeting was scheduled to be held and action plans from the walkabout would be forthcoming. Issues covered by the walkabout included open access properties and ensuring these were secured; youths accessing empty properties; fly tipping and dog fouling.

The Police were working with the RSPCA to rescue a Hedgehog which was being kept as a pet at a property in Wheatley Hill. Members of the public had reported this via Facebook. The Police were working with the RSPCA to seek prosecution.

The Police were working with the fire service to present at primary school level on the misuse of calling 999, dangers associated with aerosols, entering empty buildings, criminal damage by fire and how anti-social behaviour impacted others.

A lot of work had gone into the parking issues at Wheatley Hill Primary School with joint parking enforcement working together with Police to provide patrols. A strong message had been issued to a wide range of offenders including parents, guardians, staff, building site workers and school transport contractors.

The Police were encouraging people to sign up to Keep in the Know, which was a way for residents to raise concerns and the Police to share news with the local community.

The Police acknowledged that off road bikes were a huge problem which was difficult to tackle. In addition to trained drone pilots the Police were looking to undertake stinger training for PCSO's. They were encouraging everyone to report bike related incidents.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor Craggs provided an update on the parking issues at Wheatley Hill Primary School and the multi-agency walkabout he had attended in Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Durham City Youth Project

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Durham City Youth Project for funding of £6,500 for youth sessions in Wheatley Hill during the 2026/2027 financial year.

The funding requested was a contribution to the running costs of a juniors and seniors weekly youth club in Wheatley Hill. The Parish Council had allocated £6,500 in the 2026/2027 budget for youth provision.

RESOLVED that the request from Durham City Youth Project for funding of £6,500 be approved.

(ii) Wheatley Hill Mothers Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Wheatley Hill Mothers Club for financial assistance with the cost of hiring a brass band at the annual Remembrance concert.

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

(iii) East Durham Community Cancer Support Group

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from the East Durham Community Cancer Support Group for financial assistance.

County Councillor Craggs advised that the East Durham Community Cancer Support Group had previously approached him for financial assistance. Councillor Craggs had arranged for the group to meet with W Gibson, Community Development Project Officer, to advise them on the application process. However, to date Councillor Craggs had not received their application for funding.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the East Durham Community Cancer Support Group and advise them to contact County Councillor Craggs to discuss funding.

(2) Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of thanks from Friends of the North East War Memorials Project following a donation from the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Durham City Youth Project

The Clerk reported the receipt of the Annual Report from Durham City Youth Project, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Youth Ambassadors - World Heritage Site

The Clerk reported the receipt of an update from M Hedley following the visit to the Heritage Centre by the Youth Ambassadors from the World Heritage Site.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 PLANNING

There were no planning matters.

9 CLERKS REPORT

(1) Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ending 31 March 2026

The Clerk reported that the external audit date had been set for 30 June 2026.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) VAT Claim 2025/2026

The Clerk reported that a VAT claim for £1,757.44 for the 2025/2026 financial year had been submitted.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) 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.

(4) Allotments

(i) Application for an Allotment

The Clerk reported the receipt of an application for an allotment.

RESOLVED that applicant number 2/2026 be accepted onto the waiting list.

(ii) Plot 23

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting it was agreed that communal plot 23, which was a large plot, could be divided into individual plots to provide additional allotments.

Members were advised that there were 4 applicants on the waiting list who would accept a communal plot. In addition, the tenant on plot 22 had requested an additional plot.

RESOLVED that plot 23 be divided into 5 individual plots.

(5) Non Domestic Rates – Heritage Centre

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence advising of an alteration to the 2023 rating list entry for the Heritage Centre.

Members were advised that the previous assessment of the rateable value had been incorrect and the Parish Council had been refunded the previous 3 years' payments for non domestic rates. Under Section 55(7) of the Local Government Act 1988 Durham County Council were obliged to pay the Parish Council interest on the overpayments.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had received a total refund of £1,577.43.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Cuppa with a Copper

The Clerk reported that the next meeting would be held on 23 April 2026 at 1.30pm in Wheatley House.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Updates

(I) Potholes

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting the potholes at the top of Moore and Byron Street were reported to Durham County Council along with a request that the area be cleaned.

The County Council had advised that the work had been added to the ongoing work programme and would be processed in line with the repairs policy.

(II) Rubbish

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting the increase in the amount of rubbish around Pizza Nova was reported to Durham County Council.

The County Council had advised that they were unable to remove the rubbish.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 MEMBER ISSUES

Land at East View/Wingate Lane Junction

Members reported that the grassed area at the junction of East View and Wingate Lane, where the Parish Council flower tub was located was a mess. Following the recent works in the village the grassed area was now a bare patch of soil that needed reinstating to grass.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

11 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure at 31 March 2026.

PAYMENT	TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Gas - Heritage Centre	103.54	5.18	108.72
Direct Debit	E-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	54.90	2.74	57.64
Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business Ltd	Water - Allotments	204.42		204.42

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Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business Ltd	Cemetery Bungalow/Heritage Centre/ Cemetery	2,099.26		2,099.26
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Non-Domestic Rates - Heritage Centre	0.44		0.44
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Cemetery Bungalow - Council Tax	2,389.21		2,389.21
Internet Banking	Durham City Youth Project	Funding for Youth Sessions	6,500.00		6,500.00
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Mothers Club	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Machine Service/Repairs	810.73	162.13	972.86
Internet Banking	Madhouse Media	Microsoft Email Accounts	55.20	11.04	66.24
Internet Banking	Carrs Billington	Machine Parts	64.51	12.89	77.40
Internet Banking	R Maddison Fuels Ltd	Removal of Soil	220.00	44.00	264.00
Internet Banking	North East Regional Employers Organisation	Advisory Services	295.00	59.00	354.00
Debit Card	Jet Retail Uk Ltd	Machine Fuel	181.81	36.36	218.17
Debit Card	Amazon	Ink	28.62	5.73	34.35
Internet Banking	J Davies	Heating Allowance - 1st Instalment	100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursement - Mobile	58.50		58.50
Internet Banking	County Durham Association of Local Councils	Annual Subscription	467.78		467.78
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - April 2026	5,782.34		5,782.34
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - April 2026	3,797.05		3,797.05
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - April 2026	71.75	14.35	86.10
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	28.83	5.77	34.60
Invoice 106	Co-Op Bank	Charges	12.60		12.60
			TOTAL	23,651.49	359.19 24,010.68

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