

Hurworth Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of Hurworth Parish Council Meeting 3rd September 2026, starting at 7 pm, held at Hurworth Grange Community Centre, 41 Hurworth Road, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2BN

Attendees

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllr Mick Feeney, (Chair), Cllr Janine Foster (Vice Chair)

Cllr Peter Williamson, Cllr Peter Willis, Cllr David Crisp, Cllr Graham Wylie, Cllr Karen Mann & Cllr Dorothy Oughton.

Darlington Borough Council Ward Councillors present: Cllrs Paul Walter & Lorraine Tostevin

Official: Mrs Dianne Rickaby, **Locum Parish Clerk**

19 members of public were also present

52. 26-27

Chairs address

The chair welcomed everyone present and announced the following:

- Housekeeping

53. 26-27

Apologies for absence

Council approved the apologies and reasons for absence for Cllr John Howard and Cllr Andrew Leigh.

54. 26-27

Declarations of interests - To accept any declarations of interest.

No declarations of interest were submitted on this occasion

55. 26-27

Co-option process

The council invited Jill Brewster to the co-option process and to give a review of what she can bring to the council.

Jill Brewster spoke

"I have lived in the village for over 30 years. All my children attended the local school. During their time at school, I helped in the classroom as a classroom assistant and set up an after-school club. I am a freelance visual artist, so that has meant working with communities rather than on my own work. So, over the years, I've worked with schools, colleges, universities, setting up arts projects and helping people make things for their own communities rather than me going in and making work for them. Most recently I've been involved with the woodcarving project in The Grange and that's really spurred me on to get more involved in village activities. The wood carving project has been a success, and we have achieved grant money to bring that forward over the next few years. So that's really my motivation to get involved as a parish councillor and maybe reach out to other groups in the community and make links".

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed that Jill Brewster be co-opted on to the council.

It was resolved

Jill Brewster welcomed onto the council.

56.26-27

Declaration of office

Jill Brewster signed the Declaration of Office in the presence of the Locum Clerk and asked to join discussions at item 57 of the agenda.

57.26-27

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2026

Councillors were asked to approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2026 as a true and accurate record.

It was resolved

Proposed by Cllr Oughton and seconded by Cllr Mann, that the above minutes, a copy of which has previously been circulated to each member, be approved, and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

58.26-27

Matters arising from the minutes (information only)

No matters arising.

59.26-27 Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 30th July 2026

Councillors were asked to approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2026 as a true and accurate record.

It was resolved

That the above minutes, a copy of which has previously been circulated to each member, be approved, and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

60.26-27 Matters arising from the minutes

No matters arising.

61.26-27 Darlington Borough Council Ward Councillor Updates

Cllr Paul Walters gave his update the key areas being:

- Orchard – DBC not responsible for the felling of trees
- Traffic calming – Neasham/Hurworth looking at the option of using traffic pads as an alternative
- Traffic calming – Roundhill Road raised with highways, survey undertaken with residents which received 150 responses.

Cllr Lorraine Tostevin gave her update the key areas being:

- School crossing patrol Hurworth Primary School – difficulty in recruiting to warden post. Looking at alternatives i.e. pelican crossing to help children cross the road safely.
- Planning Applications – planning decision making rules in England are changing, and this will affect how applications are dealt with under delegated authority versus planning committee.
- Hurworth Solar Farm application – will be presented to the planning committee at DBC.

It was resolved

Information duly noted. The ward councillors were thanked for their updates.

62.26-27 Review of roles of Councillors

The Chair confirmed the roles needed to be covered due to the current councillor vacancies.

Councillors agreed and approved the following roles:

Allotments	Cllr D Crisp
Open spaces	Cllr G Wylie
Highways/Traffic	Cllr Oughton
Crime & Security	Cllr Oughton
The Grange	Cllr Mann
Rights of way & parish walks	Cllr Feeney
Parish Plan	Cllr Foster
Trees	Cllr Foster

It was resolved

The above roles allocated to the respective Councillors outlined above.

63.26-27 Staffing and Appeals Committee

The Chair asked Councillors to consider representation on the vacant positions on the staffing and appeals committees.

Councillors agreed that Cllr Willis would become a member of the staffing committee and Cllr Wylie and Cllr Crisp the appeals committee.

It was resolved

Representation on staffing and appeals committee agreed.

64.26-27 Financial matters

- a. List of payments** – July & August 2026 the payments were considered by the council – including the Locum Clerk service and the staff salary payments.

It was resolved

That all payments be approved.

- b. Budget comparison** – comparison for the quarter April to September to be presented at the next meeting.

c. N Power – Cllr Feeney advised Council that a large electricity bill had been received in respect of the Christmas tree lights, which are fixed to the lamppost and checked annually.

The Council had no contract with Npower but had signed a contract with National Grid. It was noted that the Council had not previously been informed of the standing charges applicable to the electricity supply. The bill received amounts to £2,630.55p.

Following discussion, the Chair proposed that the Council pay the bill seconded by Cllr Foster.

A vote was taken, all Councillors unanimously agreed that the bill be paid.

Scout Loan – the Chair advised that a request has been received from the Scouts following the Council's previous loan of £3000 towards the contribution of a new scout hut. The scouts have requested that the funds be reassigned for the purchase of new uniforms, upgrade of tents, and rental costs.

The Chair proposed that the funds be retained by the Scouts and reassigned.

A vote was taken and the majority vote was that the funds be returned to the Council.

It was resolved

The bill of £2,630.55p received from National Grid be paid.

That the scouts return the grant back to the Council.

65-26-27

Local Government Pay award 2026/27

The Locum Clerk advised Council that the 2026/27 Local Government Pay Award has been agreed, providing a 3.3% increase for all staff employed under the relevant terms and conditions of the National Joint Council (NJC). The increase is applicable from 1st April 2026 and requires the Councils approval to be implemented and backdated accordingly,

It was proposed by Cllr Mann and seconded by Cllr Willis that the 2026/27 pay award be implemented for all eligible staff, with the increase backdated to 1st April 2026. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

It was resolved

To implement the 2026/27, pay award of 3.3% for all eligible staff, backdated to 1st April 2026.

66.26-27 Banking arrangements

The Locum Clerk advised Council that the current banking arrangements are proving difficult to manage. The necessary mandate update has been completed and submitted. The Locum Clerk is looking at alternative banking arrangements and will give an update at the next meeting.

It was resolved

Information duly noted.

67.26-27 Update on Website

The Locum Clerk gave an update on the website which is currently being transferred over to Active Council. This is work in progress and further updates will be provided as the transfer progresses.

It was agreed the Councillors provide a short biography about themselves for inclusion on the website, so that members of the public can find out more about the Councillors representing them.

It was resolved

The Locum Clerk to continue working with Active Council on the new website.

66.26-27 MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)

Cllr Wylie provided an update on the MUGA which the next stage could include a five a side football court, basketball and netball facilities, together with a hopscotch area. Potential grant funding opportunities were discussed, including Sport England, Tees Valley Sports and National Lottery.

Two potential operating options were considered a free to use facility or a charge of approximately £30-£40 per hour. It was noted that the MUGA provides a valuable recreational asset to the village.

Some concerns were raised regarding the potential for vandalism and the ongoing management of the facility.

A vote was taken, 6 for, 3 against.

It was resolved

That the project progress to the next stage, including further investigation of funding opportunities, costs and the proposed operating arrangements.

69.26-27 Tree Report – Cllr Janine Foster

Cllr Foster advised that planning permission is required from Darlington Borough Council before the tree can be felled in Fox Close. In respect of the tree at Hurworth Grange Community Centre. The Council noted that two quotations had been received for the proposed works. A third quotation is awaited.

It was resolved

It was agreed that Cllr Foster be given approval to proceed once all three quotations have been received with the work based on the cheapest quotation.

70.26-27 Benches

Cllr Williamson provided an update on the current condition of the benches in the village. Of the forty benches inspected, ten have been identified as unsuitable for sitting and require replacement. The Chair proposed that quotes be obtained to replace the ten benches. Cllr Wylie and Cllr Williamson to lead on this project with the Locum Parish Clerk.

A discussion took place regarding a request received for a bench to be installed in the village in recognition of an individual's contribution and work for organisations within the village. It was proposed that a plaque also be installed on the bench.

A vote was taken 8 for, 1 abstention.

It was resolved

That delegated authority be given to the Locum Parish Clerk to work with the two Councillors on the project, including obtaining quotations and progressing the replacement works.

That £500 be allocated towards the provision of a bench and plaque to honour the individual's contribution and work within the community.

71.26-27 Allotments – Cllr David Crisp

Cllr Crisp advised that concerns have been raised in respect of allotment holders having open fires on the site. The Chair informed Council that an allotment questionnaire on open fires will be circulated to residents. This will allow the Council to gather evidence, to establish the extent of the issue and gather views. The Council to review its current regulations and restrictions on what can and cannot be turned on allotments and permitted burning times.

72.26-27 Grit Bins - Cllr Mann

An overview of the bins sited this year was given. A further bin is required.

It was resolved

Information duly noted.

73.26-27 Planning applications

The Chair advised Councillors that any comments on the Hurworth Solar Farm need to be submitted to Darlington Borough Council. It was agreed that a request should be made for an extension to the deadline for submitting comments, to allow the Council sufficient time to consider the application.

It was resolved

The Locum Clerk to request an extension.

74.26-27 Hurworth Parish Plan

Cllr Foster advised Council that the updated plan has been circulated to Councillors. It was noted that the plan is a live document and will be uploaded onto the website.

It was agreed

Information noted.

75.26-27 Councillor update reports

Open Spaces – Cllr Foster

The flower boxes have been replanted with new flowers, and the planters have been refreshed. The dog waste bag dispensers have been replenished.

Highways/Traffic – Cllr Oughton

Figures for July/August

Metal Bridge

Total no of vehicles	48,486
Fastest	55 mph
Average speed	25.2 mph

The Green

Total no of vehicles	79,832
Fastest	57 mph
Average speed	23.9 mph

Hurworth Road

Total no of vehicles	109, 678
Fastest	48 mph
Average speed	23.0 mph

Linden Court

Total no of vehicles	281.057
Fastest	63 mph
Average speed	27.7 mph

No information available from Roundhill Road as monitor requires a reboot.

Crime – Cllr Oughton

Crime figures for July/August 2026

Anti-Social Behaviour at Rockcliffe Hall reports off road bikes and theft of pressure washer. Suspicious Activity on Gill Beck Lane reports of three males trying doors. Anti Social Behaviour on Butterfield Drive reports off road bikes. Vehicle crime on Strait Lane report of theft of vehicle. Burglary on Butterfield Drive report of garden shed broken into. Anti Social Behaviour at Hurworth Grange report of 2 boys doing wheelies on wrong side of the road.

Criminal damage on Emerson Road report of windows smashed at property. Suspicious Activity as Azalea Drive reports of 4 boys wearing balaclavas walking up drives.

Rights of way and parish walks - Cllr Feeney

Regular walkabouts are undertaken to monitor and review the current condition and status of public rights of way in the area. This provides the opportunity to identify any issues, maintenance requirements and ensure that appropriate actions in respect of strimming are being reported to Darlington Borough Council.

It was resolved

That the reports be accepted.

76.26-27 Public Participation

Members of the public raised the following concerns:

- Christmas Tree – village hall organises lantern parade. Request for £700 towards cost of lanterns, license for mulled wine, piper, small Christmas tree.
- Allotment Fires – concerns over recent fires.
- Playpark – request for play park for younger children

77.26-27 Correspondence

No correspondence received.

78.26-27 Date of next meeting – 2nd October 2026

Meeting was closed at 8.00 pm.

Signed.....

Councillor Michael Feeney – Chair

Date