

**Minutes of the Hurworth Parish Council meeting Held on
Thursday 4th December 2025 starting at 7.00pm, held in
Hurworth Village Hall**



Attendees

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllr. Fiona Lennox, Cllr Peter Willis Cllr Janine Forster, , Cllr Angela Allan, Cllr. Dorothy Oughton. Cllr John Howard. Cllr Graham Wylie, Cllr Karen Mann, Cllr Peter Williamson,

Also, Cllr. Lorraine Tostevin, Cllr. Paul Walters, and 5 members of the public, and the Clerk.

In the absence of Cllr Leigh, Cllr Fiona Lennox chaired this meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the attendees, and said that the agenda sequence was being altered to allow Cllr Howard to address his agenda items first, as he has another appointment at 8.00pm.

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr. Andrew Leigh, Cllr David Crisp.

2. Declaration of Interest: Cllr Wylie – Hurworth Grange CIO.

3. Chairman's Address

The Chair informed the meeting that we have received one application to join the council, but after the Clerk making three approaches to the candidate, it appears that the application may have been withdrawn. This leaves one vacancy.

The Finance Committee met on 27th November to discuss the Precept for 2026. The meeting agreed on the figure, and the Clerk will inform DBC accordingly.

Action Clerk

4. Minutes from Meeting Held on 6th November 2025:

The Draft Minutes for the meeting held on 6th November, having made one modification, were accepted, proposed by Cllr Oughton seconded by Cllr .Forster, and passed unanimously.

5. Matters Arising:

Cllr Howard addressed the Council: -

- a. Salt bins.** Cllr Walters reported that he had talked to the department that handles salt bins at DBC and found that Hurworth has 14 bins, all of which are filled by DBC. Furthermore, he had inspected two salt bins and found that the salt / grit was quite solid and difficult to use.

Cllr Howard reported that he had identified between 6 and 10 locations which he believes should have salt bins on site. There are several different models and he has obtained a quotation. Based on an order for ten bins it would be £1966.50 plus VAT. However, he was surprised to learn that there are already 14 bins in Hurworth, and he arranged to get the list of locations from Cllr Walters, and he will visit them. Cllr Howard will report back at the next meeting.

Cllr Mann requested that the Elder Brook Park and Hurworth Meadows estate should be allocated two salt bins, as there are slippery areas. The Clerk said that HPC should be aware that this meant installing bins on land that is not under our jurisdiction and would not be covered by our insurance. Cllr Mann said she would seek permission from Esh to locate salt bins on the estate. Please note, they will need to be filled too, and providing permissions are positive, I wouldn't expect DBC to object to providing the salt. The pavements at this stage, and for the foreseeable future remain the property of Esh Homes.

The Chair asked the council to agree to purchase and install two salt bins on the two estates. The decision in favour was unanimous. **Action Clerk to order two salt bins.**

- b. **Insurance** Cllr Howard reported that he has spoken to an insurance broker, but doubted whether they will be able to provide a quotation in time for the renewal of the policy on 1st January.
- c. **Riverbank area at Hurworth Place.** Cllr Howard reported that he has had a dialogue with the Environment Agency regarding the new flood measuring system

The old system, which required equipment in the riverbed and attachment to the riverbank has been replaced by a radar unit, which stands beside the river, rather than in the river. It provides more accurate information, and the flow speed and depth can be viewed from a pc or mobile phone, at any time.

The issue now is whether HPC wants the Environmental Agency to remove the old pipes and equipment, most of which is under the river bed. Removing the equipment will damage the river bank, and parts of the bank are already eroding. However, if the equipment is left, with our agreement, the Agency will have no further liability, as they will have terminated. The dotted markings on the below picture indicate where the pipes exist.



A decision needs to be made by the Council, once Cllr Howard has completed his discussions. **Action Cllr Howard**

6. Ward Councillors Report December 2025

Food Waste recycling

By April 2026 all local authorities in England must operate a weekly collection of food waste from all households. This is part of the Governments simpler recycling reforms which aim to make it easier for everyone to maximise the amount they recycle. Separate collections of food waste will prevent contamination of other recycling, as well as ensuring that food waste can be sent to a treatment plant and recycled. All households will receive further details of the new collection service due to start in Darlington on March 31st 2026.

Bellway and Miller Sites

The remedial works to the roads and footpaths is now almost complete on the Miller Site and therefore in due course the site will be able to progress to adoption by DBC.

The Bellway site still has some difficulties to resolve in certain areas. Hence , it has been decided that the required work will be split into a number of stages. The roads and footpaths in the first section of Blackthorn drive down to and including Yew Tree Close will be completed first. Bellway are seeking a contractor who they hope will start early in the New Year and once that work is completed then that part of the site will progress to adoption by DBC. Thereafter, it is hoped that the negotiations can be completed on the remainder of the site which will then hopefully lead to the necessary works being carried out so that it can also be adopted by DBC. However, there is no timescale for the works on the second part of the site at the current time.

Local Government Boundary Review

The local government boundary commission for England has launched a public consultation on the review of local election boundaries in Darlington.

It is important that residents and organisations and particularly parish councils express their views. It has been proposed that the number of Councillors in Darlington is reduced from 50 to 41. This means that the ward boundaries will need to be redrawn so that Councillors each represent the same number of electors. These boundaries need to reflect local communities.

The consultation is open now and closes on the 2nd February; Thereafter the information submitted will be reviewed and a draft proposal of the new Ward boundaries will be made available for comment via a 2nd consultation which will start on May 5th 2026. The final proposal will be completed towards the end of 2026 with view to implementation of the new Ward boundaries at the next Council elections in May 2027.

Traffic Calming measure

Work is ongoing with the Council in trying to replace the traffic calming measure coming into the village from Neasham . The structure is continually being hit and repaired but it needs some more serious attention now.

Revised bin collection dates for Christmas and New Year

These can be viewed on Facebook (Hurworth Live) and Darlington Borough Councils website

Events in Darlington

Ice Sculpture Trail in the town centre on the 13th December 11.00 am to 4.00 pm (free)

Santa's Grotto at Hopetown from the 4th to 23rd Dec which is a £20 fee entry but includes a visit with Santa, elves, gifts, photos etc.

There is also a Mrs Santa experience on 13th and 14th Dec between 10.00 am and 3.45 pm

Along with Yuletide storytelling, decorating biscuits and theatrical activities at Hopetown.

Speed monitoring

We have been working with the Parish Council and local police team and our MP Matt Vickers on speed monitoring in Hurworth particularly in West End , around the Mustard Tree and Spar shop, an area which has been highlighted by residents as a problem. Darlington Borough Council have also undertaken some speed monitoring in this area and ascertained that the speed averages 32/33 mph but the 85 percentile is 37 mph which overall is all too high. This work will continue to seek acceptable solutions for speeding, signage and other measures

7. Public Participation:

There were no topics raised by the public.

8. Hurworth Parish Plan 2025-30

The Chair reported all the councillors now had a copy of the draft Plan (Version 3). This is open to all Councillors to send their suggested changes or additions to the Clerk.

There are two tables to be added,

1. A sectional response table
2. A Project Schedule

It is hope that the Plan can be completed and put before the council at the council meeting on 8th January 2026.

A Public Meeting could then be scheduled before the end of January 2026.

9. Planning Report

Cllr Allan reported, two applications in November: -

Application:-25/01268/FUL

Description:-

Construction of a boundary wall with piers to replace existing timber fence to the east and south boundary

Location:- 6 Blind Lane, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2JB

Application received 3 December

Application:-25/01064/FUL

**Location:- Land North East of Brickyard Farm, Neasham Road,
Hurworth Moor, Darlington**

Description:- Conversion of existing stables to provide 2 No. three bed dwellings and 1 No. six bed dwelling with associated car parking and private amenity space

The meeting discussed this application, and after a vote, decided that a formal objection should be registered on behalf of the HPC. **Action – Cllr Allan will register the objection on the DBC portal.**

10. Tree Report –

Cllr Williamson said there was nothing to reported in November.

11. Open Spaces & Environment Report

Cllr Lennox reported:-

Open Spaces and Environment – Fiona Lennox – 4th December 2025

Benches

A bench at top of Manor Fields, at footpath, needs to be replaced as it is badly damaged and beyond repair.

The Robinson/Frost family from Hurworth requested permission to place a plaque on the bench overlooking the Green in commemoration of their son, who sadly passed away. The Parish Council agreed they could go ahead, and the plaque is now in place. We hope this brings some comfort to the family at this sad time.

Flower planters

Cllrs Lennox and Forster are in touch with Nigel Goddard about the Winter planting. Thank you to Nigel for removing the geraniums that were still in the planters since summer. Once Janine, Lynn at the Grange and I get the winter planting carried out at the below locations then we will be reaching out to the residents once again to support the maintenance of them, especially the community notice boards ones. Everyone who helped during the summer made a huge difference as they looked lovely all summer: -

- Hurworth Grange x 4 – Lynn Wylie to support
- Community Notice Board near the Comet Inn
- Community Notice Board near La Vita
- Community Notice Board on corner of Westfield Drive

The Council agreed that the bench on the Manorfield will be replaced. Cllr Lennox can select the bench, possibly of recycled material, and the Clerk will make the arrangements **Action Cllr Lennox and Clerk.**

12. Allotments – Cllr Dave Crisp

In the absence of Cllr Crisp there was no report.

The Allotment AGM will be held at Hurworth Grange on 11th December starting at 6.30pm. All allotment tenants and those on the Waiting List are invited to attend.

13. The Highways & Traffic Report – Cllr Dorothy Oughton

Cllr Oughton reported

Metal Bridge	Total No. of vehicles	23,112
	Fastest	60 mph
	Average speed	25.4 mph
The Green	Total No. of vehicles	49,266
	Fastest	48 mph
	Average speed	25 mph
Hurworth Rd.	Total No. of vehicles	53,016
	Fastest	48 mph
	Average speed	23.3 mph
Linden Court	Total No of vehicles	137,069
	Fastest	60 mph
	Average speed	27.3 mph
Roundhill Rd.	Total No. of vehicles	104,364
	Fastest	54 mph
	Average speed	25.6 mph

The monitor which has been faulty located on the Village Green has been moved to Roundhill Road, awaiting a decision about its replacement. The monitor at Roundhill Road has been moved to the Green.

It was agreed that there will be a reappraisal of the locations of the monitors, and more useful locations may provide alternative statistics. **Action Cllr Oughton**

14. Crime & Security Report – Cllr Dorothy Oughton

The following crime incidents were reported.

5 Anti-Social Behaviour

1 Road related

1 Animal (wildlife) related

There was a scheduled PACT Meeting on 3rd December at Hurworth Grange. The meeting was well supported, but unfortunately the police did not attend.

15. Rights of Way & Parish Walks – Cllr Janine Forster

Cllr Forster said there was nothing to report as the weather had made it difficult to walk many of the Rights of Way pathways.

16. Roads & Pathways Report and Hurworth Contingency Plan – Cllr John Howard

Cllr Howard had made his reports, and had left the meeting earlier.

A new bus stop has been implanted on the opposite side of the road to the Emerson Arms.

17. HPC report from Elderbrook Park and Hurworth Meadows Estates

Cllr Mann gave the following report:-

HPC - Elderbrook Park and Hurworth Meadows Estates, December 2025

- Received a response from Trustgreen regarding the maintenance of the open spaces at both Hurworth Meadows and Elderbrook Park. Whilst it attempted to answer some of my questions most remain unanswered. Will follow up.
- Now we have had some cold icy weather, there is a requirement for salt bins for some areas. For them to be of real use they need to be near to the pavements that are prone to ice. I think 2 or 3 would do for now; to review next Winter. **It has been agreed at this meeting, that two salt bins will be provided.**
- An additional public litter bin would be very useful . The existing new bin is well used to the point of it almost overflowing at times. No schedule of collections is available from DBC.

18. Correspondence & Matters of Interest

- a. Hurworth Grange annual insurance. The Clerk reported that he has arranged a meeting with the Grange insurance broker for 11th December to ensure that the insurance policy is in the name of Hurworth Parish Council. He has also requested a quotation from Zurich Insurance Co.
- b. Cllr Allan said she is having discussions with Neasham Parish Council about their web site and thinks that the HPC web site can be improved.
Cllr Wylie said that HPC use WIX and that it will be easier, and lower cost, to produce a different format for the HPC web site, and if required, the current site could be changed to another format, such as the Neasham site. However, the WIX licence is due in January, and a decision is required if we are not going to renew the licence. It was agreed that Cllr Wylie would produce a sample and meet with Cllr Allan, to move this forward. Action Cllr Wylie and Cllr Allan

- c. The DBC survey of the borough boundaries, and the reduction of the number of DBC Ward Councillors. Cllr Tostevin had covered this in her report, but agreed that further discussion will be required and a council submission lodged in February. Individuals can submit their views in addition to the Parish Council as a body.

19. Accounts for Payment

The schedule of payments made in the month of November 2025, having been distributed to all Councillors, were formally accepted by the meeting.

Accounts for Payment November 2025

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
TreeBoy Co	104245	Treework	675.00
DBC	104246	Fairy light switch on	50.00
BT Comms	DD	Communications	64.32
Village Hall	104247	Xmas Tree event	400.00
Hurworth Bees Wassail	104248	Section 137	150.00
Cancelled	104249	Cancelled	0.00
Tony Jones	104250	Christmas lights	300.00
David Parker	104251	Gardening and maint 12 months	580.00
A C Metals	104252	Allotment skip hire	420.00
Paul Robinson	104253	Salary	598.99
P D Allan	104254	Salary	1390.20
Inland Revenue	104255	PAYE	440.20
Rymans (PDA)	104256	Printer cartridges & folders	129.85
P D Allan	104257	Namesco licences	210.63
Total for Month			<u>£5,409.19</u>

20. Financial Report

The Financial Report as at 30th November 2025, having been distributed to all Councillors, were formally accepted by the meeting.

Financial Report 30th November 2025

Ringfenced funds £11,689

	<u>Apr-25</u>	<u>May-25</u>	<u>Jun-25</u>	<u>Jul-25</u>	<u>Aug-25</u>	<u>Sep-25</u>	<u>Oct-25</u>	<u>Nov-25</u>	<u>01/12/202</u>	<u>#####</u>	<u>Feb-26</u>	<u>Mar-26</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Budget 2025-26</u>
Revenue														
Precept	80000								7000				87000	94000
Litter Picker ref & VAT		1718				4505					4600		10823	10288
Rent & Interest			273	1410		272			70	7400	60	420	9905	790
Grants – Other				6363							2000		8363	2000
Allotment rent										1740			1740	1740
Total Revenue	80000	1718	273	7773	0	4777	0	0	7070	9140	6660	420	117831	108818
Expenditure														
Salaries & NHI	2110	2193	2591	3614	2429	2594	2429	2494	2850	2650	2650	2850	31454	30200
Gen. Admin														
Expenses	1056	706	175	129	209	134	1042	288	740	340	850	300	5969	4800
Trees	247	0	347	1545			167	675	545	220	800	650	7975	6500
Open Spaces		225	1040	216				580	240	650	200	370	3521	3500
Section 137	1000	684	1037	1200			11062	900	500	500	1000	1500	19383	11000
Projects & Plan									1500	400	2000	2000	5900	7000
Repairs & Insur		313							180	1150		300	1943	1800
Newsletters &														
Posters	799	323	74	29		15	62					750	2052	3400
Youth Activities										300		200	500	3000
Paths/ RoW										320	400	250	970	2000
Allotments	142	241	141		100	443		350			300		1717	1700
Highways/ Defib						451	808		500	7400	400		9559	2250
Handyman									200	200	200	100	700	1200

Hurworth Grange support			2000	10112									12112	5000
Capital & Legal exs	5356			259					2000	259			7874	8517
VAT	59	3	258	503	18	32	190	123						
Total Expenses	10769	4688	7663	17607	2756	6448	15760	5410	9255	14389	8800	9270	112815	111629
													5016	-2811
Funds in Hand less ringed														
Revenue less														
expenses	53915	123146	120176	112786	102952	100196	98525	82765	77355	75170	69921	67781	11689	
Funds in Hand	123,146	120,176	112,786	102,952	100,196	98,525	82,765	77,355	75,170	#####	67,781	58,931	Ringed	

21. Association Reports

1. Village Hall

Cllr Crisp submitted the following Village Hall report:-

Sunday 30th November, we had the official switch on of the Christmas tree lights.

Thanks go to John and Judith Redfearn for doing the honours this year.

A fantastic turnout for the lantern parade from All Saints Church with over 80 lanterns given to children.

Mulled wine, hotdogs and Tony's colourful festive display. added to the sense of occasion.

Sunday Cinema 7th December is 'Conclave' starring Ralph Fiennes. Hot soup and bread from 2.00pm with the film starting at 3.00pm, sharp.

2. Hurworth Grange CIO

Cllr Wylie submitted the following report:-

The Hurworth Grange Christmas Fair was a tremendous success, with an excellent turnout and favourable weather. Our thanks go to Lynn Wylie for her outstanding organisation of the event, and to all the volunteers who supported on the day.

New Year's Eve is shaping up to be a sell-out celebration. *Revolver*, an exceptional duo, will be performing popular hits to welcome in the New Year.

Room rental rates for tenants have been increased by 10%, and a new pricing structure for all other room bookings will take effect from 1 January.

The CIO will be reviewing costings in January for the repainting of Fletcher Hall.

22 Any Other Business

No items raised.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.15pm.