

**Minutes of the Hurworth Parish Council meeting Held on
5th February 2026 starting at 7.00pm, held at
Hurworth Grange**

Attendees

Parish Councillors Present:

Chair – Mr Andrew Leigh, Cllr Fiona Lennox, Cllr Peter Willis, Cllr Janine Forster, Cllr Angela Allan, Cllr Dorothy Oughton. Cllr Karen Mann, Cllr Peter Williamson, Cllr David Crisp,

Cllr Michael Feeney

Also, Cllr Lorraine Tostevin, Cllr Paul Walters and 12 members of the public, and the Clerk.

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr Graham Wylie, Cllr John Howard

2. Declaration of Interest: Cllr Crisp – Allotments, Cllr Feeney - Allotments

3. Chairman's Address

The Chair welcomed the Councillors and the visitors.

4. Minutes from Meeting Held on 8th January 2025:

The Draft Minutes for the meeting held on 8th January 2026, the draft version having been amended, were accepted, proposed by Cllr Oughton seconded by Cllr Crisp.

5. Matters Arising:

a. Salt bins

Cllr Mann informed the council that the two salt bins are here, and that Cllr Howard is arranging for his company to deliver them and fill them with salt.

b. Hurworth Grange Insurance policy

The Chair confirmed that the insurance premium for 2026 has been invoiced to Hurworth Grange CIO, and payment has been received.

c. Hurworth Place river bank area. Cllr Howard will be instructing the Clerk what notices need to be erected on the river bank area. **Action Cllr Howard.**

6. Ward Councillor's Report February 2026

Recycling of Waste

From March 31st recycling is being simplified and now cardboard, paper, tins and plastic along with cartons and tetra packs can all be put together in one bin. Only glass will need to be separated out into the green box. This means the cardboard and paper caddy will no longer be needed and can be put to other uses around the home.

Information leaflets to remind you of this will be delivered with your new food waste caddy and bin before the changes come into effect.

Normal household waste collections will remain fortnightly. The day for your waste collections may change but this will also be communicated to you directly.

Fleethams Multi Storey Car Park

Work will soon be starting to upgrade this town centre car park with the installation of an automatic number plate recognition system and a 'pay by phone' option. The car park will remain open throughout the upgrade.

Local Government Boundary Commission Review

The 'have your say' on the new ward boundaries consultation has now closed. The next stage of the consultation opens on May 5th at which time the draft new proposals for the Ward boundaries will be available to view and comment on.

Volunteering Fair

The Volunteering fair will take place in the Dolphin Centre, Darlington on Tuesday 10th March between 1.00 pm to 4.00 m. It provides an opportunity to see what difference you could make to your local community.

Jobs Fair

Jobs fair will take place in the covered market on Wednesday 11th Feb from 10.00 am till 2.00 pm. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet local employers and find out about apprenticeships and explore training and career pathways. It's free to attend so just go along; it's usually a very good event.

Neasham Road

There have been a number of reports about the state of part of the traveller site on Neasham Road. The hedgerow was ripped out exposing what appears to be a building site and the ditch in front of the site is once again filled with murky water and a lot of waste. Environmental health and planning enforcement will be visiting the site soon to investigate what action needs to be taken.

Fly tips

There have been a number of fly tips reported and please do continue to report them either directly to the council or via your ward councillors. They will be removed as soon as possible and the Council will search through the contents of any waste bags looking for possible evidence as to who may have dumped the rubbish in order to assist them in making a successful prosecution.

Pot holes

This continues to be a problem despite Darlington Borough Council receiving an accolade for being one of the best local authorities for repairing pot holes. The roads are inspected regularly for potholes and any reports are acted on quickly by the council provided they reach the standards required for repair i.e. at least 40 mm in depth. So please carry on reporting them directly to Darlington Council or via your ward councillors who will investigate further.

Events to note

Chinese New Year on 21st Feb between 11.00 am and 3.00 pm in the Town Centre, Free event. Crazy Creatures Event at the Dolphin Centre on 22nd February between 1.00pm and 4.00pm £8 per child.

4th March there is a free evening consultation on Hip and Knee replacement at the Woodlands Hospital, Morton Park between 6-00 pm -8.00 pm.

7. Public Participation:

Several of the public related their concerns about the lack of progress in resolving the long-outstanding problems on the Bellway estate.

- a. It appears that one section of the estate is now acceptable while another is held up because the residents are not united in the agreeing the work still to be carried out.

The Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Andrew Leigh suggested that the solution may be to get a group of residents to raise a Civil Action.

A resident asked whether Section 38 could be brought in to help settle the problem. Ward Cllr Tostevin agreed to continue her efforts to find a solution through DBC.

- b. A resident raised a complaint about the potholes on The Green and in the Glebe. The pebbles which are used to fill the potholes are soon displaced by the traffic. The Chair explained that these road sections are not the responsibility of either the Parish Council or DBC, and residents are disinclined to have them filled at their expense. He agreed to give this matter further consideration.
- c. A resident complained that the trees on The Green were not being monitored, and work was needed. The Chairman reassured the meeting that comprehensive Tree surveys have been carried out, and the trees which fall under the Parish Council's duty of care are well maintained.
- d. A resident enquired about who owns and who has responsibility for each area of Grange and surrounding land. Specifically, the entrance next to Hurworth Road.
Action Cllr Howard is to respond.

8. Hurworth Parish Plan 2025-30

Hurworth Parish Plan 2025-2030 Review

The Council has agreed that it is required to produce a Parish Plan – the feedback we had from the Survey was poor and presumably not statistically representative of the overall resident population. However, the information must not be ignored.

Is it then realistic to produce a Village Plan from this data?

Could we combine the views of the survey with individual projects proposed by Parish councillors and add these actions/projects to our current monthly reporting via the HPC monthly minutes

This document can be produced in an easily readable format – with some village preamble (as Peter has already written) – and issued for public perusal

Each “project” will have an owner who will co-opt other councillors and accepted third parties. The HPC project owners will be responsible to provide an update at the regular monthly council meeting.

If, as a result of investigation/consultation some proposals are not possible, this will be clearly communicated via HPC meeting minutes/Hurworth Live etc, in order that the Hurworth residents are informed in a

timely manner. A meeting will be held between Peter and myself, and we will produce an objective document for the Council to consider.

9. Planning Report

Cllr Allan reported, 3 planning applications received in January 2026

January

Two planning applications were received in January. The planning applications received were as follows:

Application -25/01376/FUL - 35 Friars Pardon, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2EA

This is an amended application from December

Description

Erection of first floor extension over existing side/rear extension, **single storey extension to front**

elevation and replacement of hanging tiles on front and rear elevations with render

Application - 26/00048/TF - 1 Chase End, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2JH

Description

Works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order (No.1) 2018 G2 - 1 no. Cherry - crown

reduce 1m, crown lift to 3m. 1 no. Cherry - crown lift to 3m, remove epicormic growth &

reduce branches that protrude beyond the canopy. 1 no. Birch - crown reduce 1-1.5m

February

Received 4th February therefore included to allow comments at HPC meeting 5th Feb

Application - 26/00079/FUL - 27 Elmfield Road, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2JJ

Description

Demolition of existing detached garage to side and sun room to front elevation, erection of

single storey extension to side and rear, porch to front elevation, detached garage within front

garden and associated work

There were no objections or comments made regarding these applications.

10. Tree Report –

Cllr Williamson reported two cherry trees have been trimmed back, and a third one, at the side of Strait Lane allotments requires either felling or reducing. The DBC arborist has inspected it and will attend to it.

Four trees on The Green had broken branches, and these have been removed.

The Clerk was asked to report on the situation at Fox Close.

There are two 100-year-old oak trees on the grass area at the mouth of Fox Close. One of the trees has a growth at the foot and the lower trunk has a visible split area. DBC has declared that it is potentially dangerous and should be felled. Several quotations have been requested and some received. The second oak tree is in sound condition, but it has been alleged that the roots have reached a nearby house, and could be causing underground subsidence damage. A substantial cost of cutting down one of these huge trees is the platform equipment required and the road management, which is essential.

It is therefore suggested that both trees are removed at the same time, rather than possibly facing a similar requirement in the short future.

A vote was taken, and the council agreed that both trees are felled, subject to confirmation from Zurich Insurance, that any possible claim by the resident will be eliminated by the removal of the indicated tree.

Quotations to remove both trees will be obtained. Two trees will be planted to replace these removals, in accordance with our Tree Policy.

Open Spaces & Environment Report

Cllr Lennox reported:-

Bench ordered for the Manor Fields top near path, recycled plastic, should last for years and not need repairs and maintenance. Will be in place soon and the old broken bench taken away.

Got a quote for **fountain/trough** opposite Spar shop. Quote of £675 to have it professionally cleaned... will go ahead and organise this to be done as approved by Clerk and Chairman and comes out of Open Spaces budget. The motion to proceed with this was tabled and passed unanimously.

We are going to place “**do not park**” signs behind the fountain/trough on Blind Lane corner with the road to the Green where there is a small grass area. People are parking there and there are spring bulbs coming through. We will place “do not park” signs back there to avoid people parking.

I am looking at possibly installing **dog poo stations** around the village. This would essentially be a purpose made storage box for rolls of bags with a sign on the front to

remind people to clean up after their dogs (see image). Cllr Forster and I will look after the stocking of these and where they will be located. I have one “box” on order that I have purchased myself and will use for my own business at first, but it gives us a chance to see what it’s like, if it’s good quality and robust enough for our purposes, also how easy it will be to install on a post near current dog poo bins and maybe more around the village. Update again at next meeting.

11. Allotments – Cllr Dave Crisp

Cllr Crisp reported that the annual rents had been collected. Several new tenancies have been allocated, and there is only one person on the Strait Lane waiting List.

12. The Highways & Traffic Report – Cllr Dorothy Oughton

Cllr Oughton gave a detailed report of the traffic volumes and speeds at the five locations being monitored. Full details are available of the HPC web site.

Metal Bridge	Vehicle total	21,425
	Fastest	55mph
	Average speed	25.1mph
The Green	Vehicle total	33,404
	Fastest	51mph
	Average speed	24.3mph
Hurworth Road	Vehicle total	53,229
	Fastest	51mph
	Average speed	23.5mph
Linden Court	Vehicle total	117,929
	Fastest	60mph
	Average speed	27.5mph
Roundhill Road	Vehicle total	55,125
	Fastest	57mph
	Average speed	26mph

In response to a question from the public, Cllr Oughton said that she is considering installing a registration number recognition speed monitor. This will be part of the forthcoming Parish Plan.

13. Crime & Security Report – Cllr Dorothy Oughton

There was no report for January. The next PACT Meeting is at Hurworth Grange on 25th February; residents with any questions or complaints regarding crime or community behaviour are encouraged to attend.

The Hurworth PCSO will be attending the monthly Parish Council meeting in April.

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

Hurworth Parish council public footpath walk report 2026

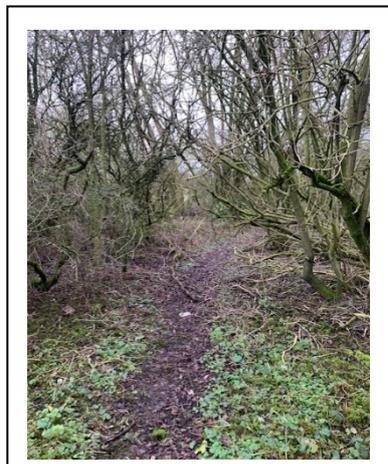
For path 14 and 17 Walked 2nd February 2026.

From Neasham Road walk towards Railway cottages, then taking part of path 14 into Geneva Woods, this has a kissing gate and is well used. Then connecting into Path 17.

This path runs round the back of the new Esh housing estate and is in a very bad way. Some of the path is blocked by over grown blackthorn hedge and small fallen trees.

And all of path 17 is a complete quagmire, and the stiles are in need of attention. As you can see from the pictures below.

Part of path 14 was requested to be changed in 2020 as this now walks through the new estate. This is still to be checked.



As path 17 will start to become a much more walked footpath, by the new residents of the Esh estate, this needs to be cleared and made walkable soonest.

An inspection of pathway 17 and part of pathway 14 proved to be very wet and parts of the pathways were almost unpassable. Further inspection when the paths have dried out will be necessary.

In the meantime, a report has been sent to Geof McArthy at DBC.

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

No report

16. HPC report from Elder Brook Park and Hurworth Meadows Estates

Cllr Mann gave the following report:-

Horse Welfare

Several more incidents regarding escaped horse from nearby fields into residents' gardens during the day and night. Police, RSPCA and Civil Enforcement Officers attended the most recent incident where 2 ponies were nearly killed on the Neasham Road. This was the police Facebook page and attracted many comments, most outraged that this was going on at all! DBC have asked the owner to remove the horses and a foal (kept a horse box), and other debris. The land belongs to DBC. This followed a meeting 2 weeks ago when 3 ponies were in the field. As of Sunday, I witnessed 5 ponies in the field. I said I would keep in touch with DBC over the coming weeks.

Removing them just moves the problem on. Many similar problems have been reported. I have expressed my concerns to DBC.

Following the last Parish Council meeting I followed up the issue with the RSPCA. This was the third time of contacting them and answering the same questions. They were not prepared to come out and inspect.

The Police are also hit and miss re attending.

17. Correspondence & Matters of Interest

- a. **Update on the change of Domain** and email addresses to .gov.uk - Cllr Allan
Cllr Allan reported that a contractor, Active Council, has been appointed and the installation of the new domain and the migration of the data will take place during February.
- b. **What's app internal network** – Chair
The Chair said that the new internal network is now established, and he encourages all councillors to use it.
- c. **Web site update** – Cllr Wylie and Cllr Allan (Cllr Wylie was not in attendance).
Cllr Allan has sent a number of items and changes to the web site they are required, to Cllr Wylie.
Cllr Wylie has informed Cllr Allan that these are being instigated.
- d. **Policy Review Plan** – Cllr Allan
Cllr Allan stated that the HPC Procedures and Governance Policies should be reviewed, to ensure that the council remains compliant.

e. DBC has requested has identified accessibility issues at the existing tactile crossing on Roundhill Rd: the footway is too narrow for wheelchair users, mobility scooters, and prams/buggies to navigate safely. To address this, DBC propose widening the footway outside the shop and relocate the crossing to a more visible, accessible position that aligns with the pedestrian desire line along The West End/The Green.

This change would also discourage the persistent overhanging parking into Roundhill Road.

The project is in the early design stage.

In order for DBC to carry out this plan, DBC require allowing HPC to adopt the section of land that falls within the parking area (see attached plan) so it can become a council-maintained footway?

The full details and design had been sent to all the councillors, several days before the meeting.

The Chairman requested a vote, and the Council voted to agree to the DBC suggestion and grant them permission to go ahead with their project. **Action Clerk**

18. Accounts for Payment

The schedule of payments made in the month of January 2026, having been distributed to all Councillors, were formally accepted by the meeting.

Accounts for Payment January 2026

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Paddock Farm	104271	Planter plants	326.21
P Robinson	104272	Litter Picker boots	12.99
G Wylie	104273	Poster	17.34
Jewson	104274	3 salt bins	709.02
	104275	Training	20.00
BT Comms	DD	Communications	64.32
P Robinson	104276	Salary	360.20
P D Allan	104277	Salary	1390.20
Inland Revenue	104278	PAYE	678.99
Public Loans Board	DD	Loan payment	258.62
Total for month			£3,837.89

19. Financial Report

The Financial Report as at 31st January 2026, having been distributed to all Councillors, were formally accepted by the meeting

Financial Report 31st January 2026							Ringfenced funds £11,689		
	<u>Apr-25</u>	<u>May-25</u>	<u>Jun-25</u>	<u>Jul-25</u>	#####	<u>Sep-25</u>	<u>Oct-25</u>	<u>Nov-25</u>	
Revenue									
Precept	80000								
Litter Picker ref & VAT		1718				4505			
Rent & Interest			273	1410		272			
Grants - Other				6363					
Allotment rent									
Total Revenue	80000	1718	273	7773	0	4777	0	0	
Expenditure									
Salaries & NHI	2110	2193	2591	3614	2429	2594	2429	2494	
Gen. Admin									
Expenses	1056	706	175	129	209	134	1042	288	
Trees	247	0	347	1545		2779	167	675	
Open Spaces		225	1040	216				580	
Section 137	1000	684	1037	1200			11062	900	
Projects & Plan									
Repairs &									
Insur		313							
Newsletters &									
Posters	799	323	74	29		15	62		
Youth									
Activities									
Paths/ RoW									
Allotments	142	241	141		100	443		350	
Highways/									
Defib						451	808		
Handyman									
Hurworth Grange support			2000	10112					
Capital &									
Legal exs	5356			259					
VAT	59	3	258	503	18	32	190	123	
Total Expenses	10769	4688	7663	17607	2756	6448	15760	5410	
Funds in Hand less ringed									
Revenue less									
expenses	53915	123146	120176	112786	#####	100196	98525	82765	
Funds in Hand	123,146	120,176	112,786	102,952	#####	98,525	82,765	77,355	

20. Association Reports

1. Village Hall report

Cllr Crisp reported the recent movie, called 'Little Fist' was well supported. Nothing more to report.

2. Hurworth Grange CIO

Cllr Wylie had submitted the following report:-

The Bagshaw Suite has recently undergone a fantastic makeover. A great deal of time and effort was put into refreshing the room, making it a more welcoming and suitable space for meetings and conferences. Many thanks to Mike and Hazel, who generously volunteered their time — it's always great to see people being so proactive.

The CIO has now transferred the insurance cover to the Parish Council.

Beer Pig tickets are selling fast and the event is expected to sell out. They will be playing on 28th February. Tickets are £15, and the evening will also include bingo and a raffle.

Thanks go to Jake, who kindly stepped in to run the Coffee Pot while Gillian has been recovering from an operation and unable to work for the past couple of weeks.

I will be meeting with a representative from Darlington 24th February to discuss the play park, and exercise equipment, with a view to further improving the area.

I am awaiting a price to build a MUGA next to the skate park.

21. Any Other Business

No formal business came forward.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.25pm.