

Minutes of the Hurworth Parish Council meeting
Held on Thursday 6th June 2025 starting at 7.



Attendees

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllr. Andrew Leigh, Cllr Janine Forster, Cllr. Fiona Lennox, Cllr Angela Allan, Cllr Graham Wylie, Cllr Karen Mann; Cllr. Dave Crisp,

Also, Peter Allan (Parish Clerk), Cllr. Lorraine Tostevin, and 5 members of the public.

1. Chair's Opening Address

The Chairman welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

The Chair informed the meeting that Cllr Bree Stamp has resigned from the Council, due to domestic reasons.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Peter Willis, Cllr John Howard, Cllr Catherine Hartigan, Cllr. Paul Walters.

3. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Wylie – Hurworth Grange CIO

Cllr Leigh – Hurworth Albion

Cllr Crisp - Allotments

4. Minutes from Meeting Held on 1st May 2025

The Draft Minutes for the meeting held on 1st May, were accepted, proposed by Cllr Forster seconded by Cllr. Allan, and passed unanimously.

5. Matters Arising –

- a. **Grange garage roof** - work is scheduled to start on 9th June.
- b. **Section 106** - Cllr Tostevin explained that Rockliffe Cricket Club should make the application for DBC for the £7,000, to be used to extend their pavilion. There are unallocated funds in the Section 106 account, and the club has a good case to be granted their application.

6. Annual Assembly 2025

The Annual Assembly was well attended with over eighty people attending,

The residents raised a number of good suggestions for consideration for inclusion in the Parish Plan, and the event was enjoyed by all who attended. There was an excellent buffet, and the selection of speakers were very appropriate to keeping to the theme of 'The Future of Hurworth'.

7. Hurworth Council Parish Plan 2025-2030

The Chair outlined the process which was being put in place to take the new 2025-30 Plan to conclusion.

The team will include the Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk and Councillors. process will follow the following steps.

1. Data collection

- Facebook
- Suggestion sheets – distributed
- Assembly sheets
- Assembly verbal suggestions

2. Categorisation

- 10 Headings
- Other

3. Initial Invaluation

- Spread sheet

- Discards
- 4. **Categorised Evaluation**
 - Spreadsheet ratings
 - Practicality Decisions
- 5. **Prepare short list**
 - Consider grant opportunities
 - Discuss funding source
 - Elimination
 - Agree upon design and content of the Parish Plan document
 - Calculate total spend
- 6. **Convene special Council Meeting** (This can be private or open to the public).
 - Go through the short list
 - Eliminate or modify
 - Finalise the 2025-30 Project List
- 7. **Preparation of the draft Parish Plan document**
- 8. **Convene Public Meeting**
 - Present the Plan
 - Open for public comments
 - Obtain public support
- 9. **Finalise the Plan and go to print**

8. **Ward Councillors Update**

Ward Councillors report 5th June 2025

Review of the Darlington Local Plan

This review is now underway in preparation for submission and adoption of the revised local plan in 2027. The 'call for sites' for future housing and employment is now closed and the consultation on the for community involvement is now complete. The next stages will be documentation and a large consultation with interested parties, including residents. The consultations will take place via drop-in sessions, website, social media and online forms. We will keep you updated on the timescales for these consultations.

Local Government Boundary Review for Darlington

This is primarily a review of the number of Council Wards and the number of Councillors in Darlington. The review needs to be completed by 2027 and it will look at the current boundaries of the wards and whether these are still reflective of the current requirements; alongside the role of the councillors both within their respective wards and within the town council as a whole. There will be a full consultation of interested parties, including Parish Councils and residents within the wards. Due to extensive housebuilding, we already know the size and shape of Hurworth ward and many other wards has changed since the last review which took place 12 years ago; this change will form an integral part of the consultation discussions. The review will commence in September 2025 and we will keep you updated on progress.

Bellway Homes

A formal meeting is taking place this week to try and achieve a resolution between Bellway and Darlington Borough Council in terms of agreeing a way forward which will allow for the roads and footpaths on the estate to be finished to an agreed standard. Once the work is completed Bellway will be in a position to hand the site over to Darlington Borough Council for adoption. Councillor Lorraine Tostevin and Matt Vickers MP will be attending the meeting.

Annual Assembly

The Annual Assembly held on the 30th May was a great success and we would like to thank the Chair Andrew Leigh and Parish Clerk Peter Allan for all their hard work in organising this well attended and informative community event.

9. Public Participation

*A resident raised the condition of the pathway from Friars Pardon to the Wayside, which is in poor condition. Cllr Tostevin said that she had already reported this, but will follow it up. Action **Cllr Tostevin**.

*A resident enquired what progress has been made to completion of the Bellway and Miller estates, for the hand over to DBC.

Cllr Tostevin said that a meeting at DBC is arranged for 6th June, and that she and our MP Matt Vickers would be addressing this matter, which should move the situation forward as it will be a head-to-head meeting with the contractors and the DBC.

- A resident expressed their concern about the state of the Right of Way from Eurojag to Emerson Road. Cllr Janine Forster responded, and undertook to visit the pathway, and take appropriate action if required. Action **Cllr Forster**.
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10. Planning Application

Cllr Angela Allan gave the following Planning Application report, for May 2025.

Hurworth Parish Council Meeting 5th June 2025

Planning Report

Three applications were received in May. The planning applications received were as follows:

25/00418/TF - Works to three trees under Group Tree Preservation Order No 7 2017

Description

(T1) Mature sycamore crown lifting

(T2) Mature Sycamore crown reduction and

(T3) Semi mature Lime crown lifting

The trees are located at Goblin Wood next to 7 Roundhill Road.

The Parish Clerk responded to Darlington Borough Council stating HPC has no objection providing any work is carried out by a professional arborist at no cost to the parish council.

There were two objections from members of the public to this planning application.

HPC requested an extension to the closing date for comments to allow for further clarification of proposed works.

DBC planning department provided an amended description suggested by the DBC Tree Officer on 2nd June.

Works to 2-no. Sycamore (T.1 & T.3) & 1-no. Lime (T.3) Protected under Group Tree Preservation Order no. 7 2017 - Prune back overhang by approximately 1.000 to 3.000-meters, to align with the downpipe of the dwelling house (amended description).

25/00443/FUL - High Rockliffe Grange

Description

Erection of two storey extension to the rear elevation. Alterations to the front elevation including new portico entrance and raised pitched roof, single storey extension to replace

boiler room, alterations to front windows including additional windows and new pitched window to side roof slope. Conversion of attached home office/laundry to garages including installation of garage doors to front, together with the erection of detached triple garage building with home office above, within front boundary.

There have been no objections to this planning application from the public.

25/00415/FUL - Low Rockcliffe Farm

Description

Erection of two storey extension to the north east elevation incorporating single storey entrance hall, and single storey porch extension to the north west elevation of main dwelling. Erection of a garage building for 4 no. cars with habitable room and storage above, external stairs to north elevation and single storey linked extension to south elevation, together with associated works.

There have been no objections to this planning application from the public.

Darlington Borough Council Planning Portal

The DBC planning portal is a useful tool to find out information on planning applications as it follows the process of a planning application from submission to the final decision. This includes:

- being able to view planning applications both current and decided.
- being able to view all of the documents relating to a planning application.
- comments on a planning application either online or in writing. All comments can be viewed.

There is also the facility to register your details if you want to track applications or receive emails about tracked applications and new search results.

The link below is the user guide from the DBC website and gives a step-by-step guide on how to use the site

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/15853/public-access-user-guide.pdf>

11. Tree Report

In her absence, Cllr Catherine Hartigan submitted the following report

Tree Report – Catherine Hartigan – 4th June 25.

2 applications received:

29th of April 25.

10 Linden Drive - sycamore tree had damaged the TV antenna and was touching the roof of 10 linden drive. Tree Surgeon advised prune the tree to give at least a 2-meter clearance to the property and remove the ivy that is growing up the stem of the tree. Quotation to carry out the work - £345.00.

Instruction issued for work to be carried out 15th May 25.

27th of May 25.

Application 20/00418/TF - Trees at Roundhill Road **OBJECTION** – TPO Application.

This looks to be a long-standing issue of which you are more aware than myself – I understand that in essence the tree branch overhanging has been nowhere near low enough to damage vehicles (as stated) since the initial cutting back when the homeowner bought the bungalow 7 years ago. There is just one low branch that gets closest to the roof of the house that could be taken off without visual impact, but it's felt that all the other overhanging branches are an important part of the tree group and if removed would be likely to be detrimental to the health of the trees.

We have already raised the point that these trees belong to Hurworth Parish Council, and that the resident has not asked our permission to carry out any work on these trees.

In the past, this same resident has requested that the branches which overhang his driveway are cut back as they could cause damage to his vehicles. When he bought the house, which was several years ago, DBC did cut back the branches for him.

Hurworth Parish Council has never carried out work on these trees.

If and when DBC make a decision (which could be allowing the resident to carry out the cutting back) the resident will need to ask HPC permission. We are to believe that our feeling (at present), is that if the stated work is trimming the overhanging branches, then we would not object, as long as the resident gets a qualified arborist to perform the work. Our arborist has been asked to look and give his opinion on cutting back the overhanging branches and whether this would damage or disfigure the trees.

No other person has raised an objection with HPC.

The narrative of the objection states that HPC (as the trees are protected with a TPO) feel that they are an important and very long-standing part of the landscape of Roundhill Road. During recent years several trees in the group have been felled due to disease. The three trees subject to the application are of similar size and stature to the remaining trees and there is no good reason why these should have any work done to them unless diseased.

The application does not give any details of exactly what work is proposed, there is no information about the extent of the work to each of the three trees. See also this application under Planning Applications, above.

12. Open Spaces & Environment Report

Open Spaces and Environment – Fiona Lennox – 5th June 2025

Tees River Trust

No specific updates; the Trust are continuing to spray areas of the riverbank for giant hogweed and keep us informed. Japanese Knotweed will be treated later in the summer.

Waste Bins

Communication with Street Cleansing Manager at DBC. Asked if these have been done now, awaiting reply: -

- Church lane waste bin replacement requested - CHASE
- Top of Manor Fields damaged dog waste bin replacement requested – CHASE
- Also, added an additional point, the issue with the bin at the Surgery at Rockcliffe Court- 3rd June requested DBC to check

Benches

I have given the go ahead to start the annual check of our benches for any repairs required. I will be kept informed by Martin of necessary repairs and will follow and report on the repair plan over the next few months.

Flower planters

We have a few lovely flower arrangements in the village kindly organised and maintained for the last 14 years by Nigel Goddard, who does this voluntarily. Nigel informed us mid-May that he is unfortunately not going to be able to continue to do this after this year. The planters were filled during May and he reached out on Facebook to ask nearby residents to assist and support with the regular watering of them. This is always going to be an issue; having the planters watered every day, but if it is not done, the plants and flowers will simply die. They are located at: -

- The Village Hall
- The Hurworth Grange
- Community Notice Board near the Comet Inn

- Community Notice Board near La Vita, at start of the village before the bridge
- Community Notice Board on corner of Westfield Drive

The good news is that the planters at the Village Hall and the Grange are looked after, but the others tend to be neglected. Especially the one down from La Vita on the opposite side of the road. It's not the easiest to get to; it's just outside the village, at the side of the busy road. We need to find a way to maintain them all, if we continue to have these displays.

Nigel also notified us that at least two of the planters are in need of repair, so we need to look at that.

I hope to meet with Nigel soon to discuss all of this in more detail, as he has been on holiday, so this is all just for information at this stage.

It would be a pity to not have the flowers at the entrances to the village as it looks so nice, but we need support to look after them and then next year to even plant them. A decision will have to be made once I have all the facts. To be discussed more at the next meeting.

Westfield Drive

Hurworth Live in the last couple of days had a post from a resident about the grass strip on Westfield Drive stating that it needed a cut/tidy up and asking who was responsible. This strip is actually owned by the residents on the opposite side of the road, however, the parish council have historically arranged for the upkeep, to keep it tidy. David, who cuts the grass for us, has not been able to, due to his lawnmower being out of action. It will be cut as soon as possible, possibly today 4th June, as he can borrow a lawnmower from the Strait Lane Allotments if needed.

Path at Primary School

Again, on Hurworth Live recently, a question about the hedge along the path at the primary school and the fact it's very overgrown and wondering who is responsible. Clerk has informed me that it used to be the school who were responsible, but they relinquished the land. HPC have not adopted it, and DBC ignore it, as it is not on their schedule. We will therefore discuss this with Streetscene at DBC.

Roundhill Road

Finally, on Hurworth Live. The pavement overgrown between Friars Parson going towards The Wayside. Will again discuss with Streetscene if Clerk agrees.

I have requested a meeting with our contacts at Streetscene and am waiting on a date from them.

13. Highways & Traffic Report

In the absence of Cllr Willis, there was no report.

14. Youth Activities Report

Cllr Stamp resigned from the Council during the month, so there was no report.

15. Crime & Security Report

In the absence of Cllr Willis, there was no report.

16. Rights of Way & Parish Walks

Cllr Forster said that she had not taken any walks on the defined pathways during May.

However, she has had a long introductory meeting with Geoffrey McCarthy, the head of Rights of Way at .

There are four ongoing cases where DBC are trying to correct or provide solutions on pathways, which have been identified as not up the standard.

Geoffrey McCarthy also attended the Annual Assemble and gave a very informative presentation of the monitoring and maintenance of all the Rights of Way.

17. Allotments Report

Cllr Crisp reported that there are now two people on the Strait Lane allotments Waiting List.

The repairs to the two gates, one at either end of the strait Lane allotments have been repaired.

The fence at the Grange allotments has been made secure, following the weaking it had received when we had the strong wind storm.

The water usage at Strait Lane has been high this spring, due to the long dry period. Cllr Crisp will be recommending a small increase in the annual rent for 2026.

With the resignation of Cllr Stamp, a second Council representative is required. Cllr Forster offered to take on this role, all agreed.

Cllr Crisp and the Clerk intend to review the Allotment Rules, and update them where appropriate. **Action Cllr Crisp and Clerk**

19. Roads & Pathways Report and Hurworth Contingency Plan.

In the absence of Cllr Howard there was no formal report.

Cllr Allan said that she has prepared an outline of the major functions of the Contingency, and is working with Cllr Howard to prepare the strategy.

20. Correspondence & Matters of Interest

The Chair stated that during a recent appraisal of the Parish Clerk, the salary for the position was reviewed. It is clear that our clerk's salary is considerably lower than the current rates.

A recent advertisement for a Parish Clerk in the Durham area, illustrated the current range. A motion was put forward by Cllr Lennox, Seconded by Cllr Wylie, that the Clerks salary be increased to the pro rata rate, as externally advertised. The vote was unanimous in agreement.

21. Accounts for Payment

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

Accounts for Payment May 2025

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
All Saints Church	104154	Delivering Parish Chronicles	250.00
G Fletcher	104155	Internal audit	250.00
Ross Coperman	104156	Allotmt repairs	50.00
P. Williamson	104157	Allotmt repairs	40.00
Gerrard - Jones	104158	2 trees to replace felled trees	90.00
Nigel Goddard	104159	Plants for planters	95.00
See above (DD) PAYE	104160	Taken in April schedule	0.00
G Wylie	104161	Posters	15.66
Andrew Leigh	104162	Honorarium	250.00
Andrew Leigh	104163	Reception expenses Annual Meeting	33.65
Amazon	104164	Assembly pens	83.99
B T Comms (PDA)	104165	Communications	59.94
Sue Hogg t	104166	Assembly buffet food	600.00
P Williamson	104167	Repairing Grange Allotment fence	151.24

Deleted: 7

The Financial Accounts as at 31st May 2025, having been distributed to all Councillors, were formally accepted by the meeting.

Zurich Insurance	104168	Annual premium	313.43
David Parker path work	104169	Pathway work	40.00
Hurworth Grange CIO	104170	Church newsletters	60.00
Status Promotions	104171	Plaque	40.00
P Robinson	104172	Salary	598.99
P D Allan	104173	Salary	1208.40
Inland Revenue	104174	PAYE	385.80
P D Allan	104175.00	Administration expenses	71.98
Total Expenditure			£4,688.08
VAT Reclaimed	£1,718.19		

22. Financial Reports

Financial Report 31st May 2025					Ringfenced funds £11,689									
	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	01/12/20 2	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Total	Budget 2025-26
Revenue														
Precept	80000												80000	80000
Litter Picker ref & VAT		1718			4400						4600		10718	10288
Rent & Interest				100	80			70			60	420	730	790
Grants						2000							2000	2000
Allotment rent										1740			1740	1740
Total Revenue	80000	1718	0	100	4480	2000	0	70	0	1740	4660	420	95188	94818
Expenditure														
Salaries & NHI	2110	2193	2650	2450	2450	2650	2450	2450	2650	2450	2450	2650	29603	30200
Gen. Admin														
Expenses	1056	706	300	200	300	210	550	340	310	340	350	300	4962	4800
Trees	247	0	550	510	540	1250	270	500	545	220	800	650	6082	6500
Open Spaces		225	600	650	50	310	250	100	240	650	200	370	3645	3500
Section 137	1000	684	1200	400	7000	500		300	300	500	1000	1500	14384	11000
Projects & Plan				600	1000	500			1500	400			4000	7000
Repairs & Insur		313	300	240		650	120		180			300	2103	1800
Newsletters &														
Posters	799	323	80	80		80	850	230		80	80	850	3452	3400
Youth Activities						1500		500		300		200	2500	3000
Paths/ RoW			130	300		300		400		320		250	1700	2000
Allotments	142	241	300	360	200	60		420			300		2023	1700
Highways			500					850	500		400		2250	2250
Handyman			100	200		100	100	100	200	100	100	100	1100	1200
Hurworth Grange support			5400						200				5600	5000
Capital & Legal														
exs	5356		500		258				2000	259			8373	8517
VAT	59	3												
Total Expenses	10769	4688	12610	5990	11798	8110	4590	6190	8625	5619	5680	7170	91839	91777
													3349	3041

This report is also on the Parish Council web site, where it is easier to read.

23. Association Reports

1. Village Hall

Cllr Crisp said that there is a Rock Choir concert being held in All saints Church on Saturday, 7th June, with the co-operation of the church.

The Armed Forces concert will be held on the Village Green on 29th June

At this stage, it appears that the Scarecrow Festival may not go ahead, due to lack of entries.

The Village Hall is progressing very well and is busy most days of the week.

2. Hurworth Albion Football Club

Cllr Leigh reported that the current committee will be handing over the reigns of the club by September of this year.

The new committee is hoping to be able to arrange to buy or get a long-term lease on their current football grounds. This in turn, would open the way to obtain substantial grants.

3. Hurworth Grange

Cllr Wylie reported:

The Classic Car and Motorcycle Show was, as always, a great success. A huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers and organisers whose efforts made the event run so smoothly.

Christine Grey has now retired, and the Grange Committee and staff extend their sincere thanks to her for the many years of hard work and dedication she has given to the Grange.

Work on the stable block roof is still scheduled to proceed this month.

The Hadwin Lounge is set to be redecorated during the summer holidays.

Don't miss our 80s and 90s Disco Night on Friday, 20th June!

The Spring Fair was another fantastic success, raising between £1,500 and £2,000. The Chairman of the CIO offered special thanks to Lynn Wylie for her exceptional work in organising the event, and gratitude was also extended to the volunteers who supported on the day.

4. Elder Brook Park Report

Cllr Karen Mann reported that she has made arrangements with the contractors on the estate for the Parish Council to install our notice board. She has selected a location, which has a good footfall, and we can go ahead as soon as convenient. The plan is to have it in place before the end of this month.

Action Clerk and Cllr Mann.

There are several large green areas on the estate, and Cllr Mann thinks that we should try to monitor activities, so that they remain good community areas.

There are a few problems on the estate, mainly young persons with bicycles and ebikes, causing disturbances; this will hopefully improve when community facilities are put in place.

Another bin is required, and Cllr Lennox agreed to request one from Streetscene. **Action Cllr Lennox.**

24. Any Other Business

There were no items of Any Other Business.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm.