

THE MINUTES OF THE EASINGTON COLLIERY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor D. Fraser (Chair)
Councillors A. J. Cummings, L. Carr, A. Surtees, S. Fergus,
M. Vickers, S. Bishop, C. Smith

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors L. Clarkson, S. W. Fergus,
I. Foster, W. Smith

Also in attendance were Durham County Councillors H. Brown, L. Taylor

1. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Taylor updated Members on several planning applications that had been received by Durham County Council relative to the Parish. The first related to an HMO application on Bede Street and the others related to battery storage and solar farm applications.

Following Councillor Taylor's address Councillor Brown also updated Members on consultations regarding the Council Tax reduction scheme.

The Chair thanked the County Councillors for presenting their reports.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

2. POLICE REPORT

The Crime Statistics and Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents Report for the period 16 July to 15 September, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was considered.

The Report identified there had been two incidents of burglary, numerous thefts across the Parish with all but two relating to the Co-op Store, where multiple arrests had been made. There had also been sixteen incidents of anti-social behaviour, two environmental incidents, fifteen criminal damage and five vehicle crime incidents.

In regard to environmental issues Ashton and Ascot Street were particularly referenced with the Neighbourhood Policing Team and other services attending on 16 September. This would also be factored into the Community Action Team work that was to commence in October.

The Police report also provided dates of the next PACT Meeting and Cuppa with a Copper.

Members expressed concern that the Oak Road incident where damage had been occasioned to the Parish Council play area was not referenced in the report and it was felt that the Cuppa with a Copper timing was inappropriate given its time of 2.00-3.00 pm, as many people were either at work or collecting children from school.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the information given be noted.
- (ii) Members concerns be raised with the Police.

3. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 15 July 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

Matters Arising

(i) Representatives on Outside Bodies – Welfare Committee

The Clerk reported that the current vacancy on the Welfare Committee need to be filled.

Members, having deliberated the matter, **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Claire Smith to the position.

(ii) **CCTV Funding Enquiry**

The Clerk advised Members that the Crime and Police Commissioner, Joy Allen had once again not responded to the representations made by the Parish Council.

The Clerk and Operations Manager would therefore review requirements for CCTV and report to Members in due course.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(iii) **Cemetery House – Bat Survey**

Following conclusion of the third and final bat survey an application had been made to Durham County Council for consent to demolish the former Superintendents House. Members would be informed of progress in due course.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

4. **THE REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE of their meeting held on 25 July 2025**, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was adopted.

5. **REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER**

The Work Activity Report in respect of the Cemetery, Welfare Park, Allotments and Open Space areas for the period 15 July to 16 September 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member was considered.

Of particular concern to Members was the vehicle damage caused to the Oak Road Neighbourhood Park and Memorial Park bollard in two separate incidents which had caused significant damage. A further incident had occurred at the Pit Wheel Garden at the former Colliery site.

When these issues had been discussed with the Police the Parish Council were issued with a reference number and told to contact insurers. This was considered a disappointing response and Members requested clarity be sought from the Police as to the processes involved so that matters could be better understood. The Clerk agreed to make contact and discuss with the Police.

The Operations Manager also reported on an incident that had occurred at the Parish Hall involving a member of the public. As a result of this incident a review had been undertaken of the safety measures in place to protect staff. It had been agreed that the Operations Manager and Supervisor would look at options including fob access for staff, a public intercom system at the entrance to the Parish Hall to restrict access to authorised personnel only.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the information given, be noted.
- ii) the Clerk raise matters with the Police.
- iii) the Operations Manager and Supervisor look at security measures for the Parish Hall.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the cost to repair the safety surfacing at Oak Road be left in abeyance given the further damage occasioned as a result of the vehicle incident.

6. **ALLOTMENT APPLICATIONS**

Members were advised of four applications for an allotment had been received since the last meeting. The applications were as follows:

AJE of 23RCF for Townfield Hill Allotments 14, 15 & 16
AC & CG of 56DCP for Townfield Hill Allotments 38, 39, 40, 41 & 42
KP of 27HC for Withering Hope Allotment 47
CN of 6SDP for Townfield Hill Allotments 47 & 48

RESOLVED that the applications be approved.

7. PLANNING AND LICENSING MATTERS

Members were advised that one planning application had been received by Durham County Council relative to the Parish area since the last meeting. The application related to 3/4 Bede Street, Easington Colliery and was seeking consent for a change of use from a vacant community centre to a 16-bedroom HMO including an extension to the rear of the property.

Members deliberated this at length and **RESOLVED** to object to the application with a request that the Council call-in this application for consideration by Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk submit an appropriate letter of objection on material planning grounds to the County Council.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Paysheet

RESOLVED that payment in respect of the following accounts be endorsed:

Ref	Payment Method	Amount	Description	Accounts Ledger	Amount (Ex VAT)	VAT	Total Paid
146	Card	Toolstation	LED Tubes	Cemetery	£ 35.34	£ 7.06	£ 42.40
147	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas Parish Hall 3 July 25	Parish Hall	£ 45.73	£ 2.29	£ 48.02
148	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bollard	Welfare	£ 40.29	£ 2.01	£ 42.30
149	Direct Debit	YU Energy	Electric Welfare Bungalow	Welfare	£ 52.04	£ 2.60	£ 54.64
150	BACS	MH Goals	Portable Goals	Welfare	£ 2,420.00	£ 484.00	£ 2,904.00
151	Direct Debit	Everflow Water	Water use all sites 9 July 25	Welf/Cem/ Allots	£ 157.18	£ 0.00	£ 157.18
152	Card	MH Goals	Set of Corner Poles	Welfare	£ 86.40	£ 17.28	£ 103.68
153	Card	Toolstation	Quad Link Security Chain	Welfare	£ 44.60	£ 8.92	£ 53.52
154	BACS	Paul Blackett/ Premier Ironcraft	Trailer Fabrication Works	Cemetery	£ 270.00	£ 0.00	£ 270.00
155	Card	MH Goals	Set of Sockets	Welfare	£ 143.71	£ 28.74	£ 172.45
156	Card	Southside Service Station	Fuel 30 July 25	Cemetery	£ 55.02	£ 11.01	£ 66.03
157	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone/ Broadband	Welf/Cem	£ 146.57	£ 29.31	£ 175.88
158	BACS	Spaldings Ltd	2 stroke oil	Welf/Cem	£ 39.00	£ 7.80	£ 46.80
159	BACS	Durham Miners' Gala Brochure	Quarter Page Advert	S137	£ 200.00	£ 0.00	£ 200.00
160	Card	North East Lock and Key	Padlock and keys	Allotments	£ 180.42	£ 36.08	£ 216.50
161	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 8 August 2025	Admin	£ 15,267.66	£ 0.00	£ 15,267.66
162	BACS	Prudential	AVC Contribution	Admin	£ 25.64	£ 0.00	£ 25.64
163	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions	Admin	£ 82.12	£ 0.00	£ 82.12
164	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contributions	Admin	£ 4,281.34	£ 0.00	£ 4,281.34
165	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 6,100.36	£ 0.00	£ 6,100.36

166	BACS	JACS Accountancy Services	Payroll Admin Services	Admin	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
167	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Electricity Changing Rooms	Welfare	£ 1,404.76	£ 70.24	£ 1,475.00
168	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Cemetery Lodge	Cemetery	£ 37.21	£ 1.86	£ 39.07
169	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Bowls Pavilion	Welfare	£ 117.22	£ 5.86	£ 123.08
170	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Bollard	Welfare	£ 47.66	£ 2.38	£ 50.04
171	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Welfare Bungalow	Welfare	£ 50.08	£ 2.50	£ 52.58
172	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges Bollard	Welfare	£ 15.74	£ 3.15	£ 18.89
173	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas Parish Hall 5 August 25	Parish Hall	£ 28.10	£ 1.40	£ 29.50
174	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electricity – Parish Hall	Parish Hall	£ 48.20	£ 2.41	£ 50.61
175	Direct Debit	Everflow Water	Water use all sites 9 August 25	Welf/Cem/ Allots	£ 622.90	£ 0.00	£ 622.90
176	BACS	Zurich Insurance	Annual Policy Cover Renewal	Admin	£ 14,286.69	£ 0.00	£ 14,286.69
177	BACS	Microshade	Software Hosting Fee July	Admin	£ 33.20	£ 6.64	£ 39.84
178	BACS	Durham County Council	Summer Bedding Plants 2025	Welf/Cem	£ 1,881.20	£ 376.24	£ 2,257.44
179	BACS	Durham County Council	Puncture Repair	Welf/Cem	£ 95.00	£ 19.00	£ 114.00
180	BACS	ORD Office Ltd	Exclusive Rights and Receipts Books	Cemetery	£ 493.00	£ 98.60	£ 591.60
181	BACS	Normans of Billingham	Office Supplies and Consumables	Admin/Welf/ Cem	£ 145.28	£ 29.06	£ 174.34
182	BACS	North East Automation Ltd	Bollard Maintenance	Welfare	£ 280.00	£ 56.00	£ 336.00
183	BACS	Hydrochem Group	Safewater Checks August 25	Welf/Cem	£ 106.66	£ 21.33	£ 127.99
184	BACS	Church Commissioners	Ground Rent Holme Hill Allotments	Allotments	£ 735.00	£ 0.00	£ 735.00
185	BACS	Thomas Sherriff & Co Ltd	John Deere Call Out and Repair	Welfare	£ 261.00	£ 52.20	£ 313.20
186	BACS	Microshade	Software Hosting Fee	Admin	£ 33.20	£ 6.64	£ 39.84
187	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone Broadband 29/08/25	Welf/Cem	£ 158.52	£ 31.70	£ 190.22

188	BACS	MH Goals	Goal Adjustment Parts	Welfare	£ 329.83	£ 65.97	£ 395.80
189	Card	Durham County Council	Planning Fees for Cemetery House	Cemetery	£ 480.00	£ 0.00	£ 480.00
190	Card	Southside Service Station	Fuel – 3 September 25	Cemetery	£ 43.30	£ 8.66	£ 51.96
191	BACS	Hawthorn Tree Services (B Smith)	Removal of Damaged Sycamore Tree limb	Welfare	£ 60.00	£ 0.00	£ 60.00
192	BACS	JACS Accountancy Services	Payroll Admin Services	Admin	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
193	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 5 September 25	Admin	£ 13,995.91	£ 0.00	£ 13,995.91
194	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions	Admin	£ 82.12	£ 0.00	£ 82.12
195	BACS	Prudential	AVC Contribution	Admin	£ 25.64	£ 0.00	£ 25.64
196	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contributions	Admin	£ 3,869.03	£ 0.00	£ 3,869.03
197	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 5,199.97	£ 0.00	£ 5,199.97
198	BACS	Smartest Energy	Electricity Changing Rooms 7 Sept	Welfare	£ 1,404.76	£ 70.24	£ 1,475.00
199	BACS	GNG Waste Management Ltd	Skip Hire Welfare 8403	Welfare	£ 310.00	£ 62.00	£ 372.00
200	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Cemetery Office (1-31 August)	Cemetery	£ 36.93	£ 1.85	£ 38.78
201	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Welfare Bungalow (1-31 August)	Welfare	£ 45.81	£ 2.29	£ 48.10
202	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bollard	Welfare	£ 47.87	£ 2.39	£ 50.26
203	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bowls Pavilion (1-31 August)	Welfare	£ 141.45	£ 7.07	£ 148.52
204	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges Bollard	Welfare	£ 15.74	£ 3.15	£ 18.89
205	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas Parish Hall (1-31 August)	Parish Hall	£ 36.66	£ 1.83	£ 38.49
206	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electricity Parish Hall (1-31 August)	Parish Hall	£ 46.49	£ 2.32	£ 48.81
207	BACS	CS North East Ltd	2 Cobra Mowers	Welf/Cem	£ 844.00	£ 168.80	£ 1,012.80
208	BACS	Durham County Council	Tyre Repairs	Welf/Cem	£ 40.00	£ 8.00	£ 48.00
				Sep-25	£ 77,809.55	£1,868.8	£ 79,678.43

(b) **Requests for Financial and Other Assistance**

Members were advised that no requests for assistance had been received.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(c) **Bank Reconciliations**

Members were provided with bank reconciliations for July and August. The August reconciliation provided a balance as per the cash book of £582,270.20,

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(d) **Investment Strategy - Update**

At the request of the Clerk this matter was deferred to the Finance & General Purpose Committee to allow a more detailed discussion about high interest bank accounts and investment options.

RESOLVED that this be agreed.

(e) **External Audit**

Members were advised that the External Auditor had still not concluded their final report in relation to the Parish Council's accounts for the year ended March 2025. There was a legal requirement for the outcome of the audit to be displayed on the Parish Council's public facing website by 30 September. There would, therefore, be a situation when the External Audit Report was available to the public before Members had sight of this Report.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the information given, be noted.
- (ii) the Clerk post the report to the website, when received.
- (iii) The Clerk submit a copy of the External Auditors Report to the November.

(f) **Review of Fees and Charges**

The Parish Council were presented with a revised schedule of charges for bowls, cricket, football, allotments/garages as well as hire of the Parish Hallburial. In addition the Clerk circulated a schedule of proposed burial fees. All fees and charges were for the period 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised fees which represented an inflationary increase of 2.5%.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) **Community Action Initiative – Easington Colliery**

Members were advised that the next Community Action Initiative was to take place in Easington Colliery from 6 October to 19 December - an 11-week project to tackle local housing, environmental and anti-social behaviour issues.

Members referenced the fact that this was a recurring initiative but that improvements secured during the project failed to continue post-initiative. It was important that the Exit Strategy Report produced was owned by an appropriate body and it was felt that this needed to be raised as part of the process.

Of concern to Members were the condition of Ashton and Ascot Street and this area would hopefully be targeted as part of the initiative.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and Members, as part of other forums, advocate the initiative and put forward areas for improvement/action.

10. **COMPLAINTS/REPORTS/OTHER MATTERS**

(a) **Parish Council Members**

(i) **Vehicle Issues near Whickham Street**

Members deliberated the ongoing problems of parking/vehicle issues around Whickham Street. These issues mainly centred around school open/closing times. Whilst it was noted there was little that could really be done to address the situation it was a concern none the less.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(ii) **Highway Issues**

A Member reported that the seating on Glebe Terrace needed remedial attention due to its poor condition. The steps leading from the top car park on Seaside Lane also needed attention as they were overgrown with weeds etc.

RESOLVED that these matters be referred to Durham County Council.

(iii) **Back Seaside Lane**

Members again commented on the untidy condition of the rear of commercial properties on Seaside Lane. Some properties had no gates, and rubbish had been dumped causing various concerns. This was an enforcement matter and one for landlords/owners to address. The Parish Council had little ability to influence matters. It was agreed to discuss concerns with the Community Action Team.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(iv) **Flying of Union and St George's Flags**

A general discussion was given to the current increase in the number of Union Jacks/St George's Cross flags that were prevalent across much of the Colliery, County and beyond.

RESOLVED that the comments of Members be noted.

(v) **Ashwood and Redwood Care Homes**

Members expressed concern at the increase in the number of cars parked on the public highway blocking footpaths to the front of the Care Homes.

RESOLVED that this be referred to Durham County Council/Police.

(b) **Clerk**

(i) **Local Government Pay Award**

Members were advised that agreement had been reached on this year's Local Government Pay Award. A pay increase of 3.2% had been agreed and applied to Parish Council staff from the 1 April.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(ii) **Bowling Club – Request for Works**

Members were advised that since the last meeting a request had been received from the Bowls Club for improvement works to be undertaken to the green and its surround. The Bowls Club had referenced the fact investment was much

needed to address decaying ditch boards and the uneven surface of the green. The current condition of the bowling green meant it was not compliant with league requirements.

The Clerk advised that contractor quotations had been received to fully address the situation. Quotations received for works were circa. £20,000.

The Clerk requested a Sub-Committee be appointed to assess and review both the bowling green works requirements and the works to be included in the football funding bid submission to enable appropriate conversations to be held by the Finance & General Purposes Committee/Parish Council.

RESOLVED that a Sub-Committee be formed of the Football Club representatives to look at both the funding bid and the bowling green improvement works required.

(iii) **Halloween & Christmas Parties**

Members were advised that the Welfare Hall had proposed dates of 27 October and 15 December 2025 to accommodate the Parish Council's Halloween and Christmas party activities.

RESOLVED that these dates be accepted and as many Parish Council Members as possible attend to volunteer for the event.

(iv) **Remembrance Sunday – Event Organisation**

Members were advised that the Clerk had submitted a temporary road closure order request to Durham County Council as well as providing details of the proposed event to their Safety Advisory Committee. In addition, Premier Traffic Management had been approached and had agreed to staff the event to ensure the procession could proceed safely.

Members noted the report of the Clerk and the Organising Committee Members had confirmed that necessary arrangements would be made for the Parish Council's Chair to make a reading and ensure all other church related activities were in place.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds personal and/or confidential information would be disclosed.

12. **STAFFING MATTERS**

(a) **Sickness Monitoring**

The Clerk provided a report to Members on sickness monitoring.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

13. **WELFARE PARK BOLLARD INCIDENT**

The Clerk advised Members of a potential legal claim against the Council following an incident on 14 September. Details of the incident was provided for Members information. It was reported that appropriate evidence was being gathered and would be provided to the Council's insurers to determine next steps.

RESOLVED that this be noted.