

THE MINUTES OF THE EASINGTON COLLIERY PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillor L. Clarkson (Chair)
Councillors A. J. Cummings, L. Carr, S. Fergus, W. Smith
S. Bishop

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors S. W. Fergus, I. Foster,
D. Fraser, M. Vickers, C. Smith

Also, in attendance: County Councillors L. Penders and H. Brown

Members of the public – Graeme and Angie Hynds

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Graeme and Angie Hynds were in attendance to discuss the council tax increase imposed by the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that as a consequence of Durham County Council removing the Local Council Tax Support Scheme grant the Parish Council had been left with a significant financial deficit to meet its expenditure requirements. This had necessitated the Council Tax increase.

Graeme having enquired whether this would be a year-on-year increase. The Clerk advised that it was hoped that once the capital works schemes had been completed it may be possible to reduce the ask on parishioners, however, in regard to next year it was not possible to say whether any reduction would be seen.

A question-and-answer discussion then ensued.

Graeme and Angie Hynds thanked Members for the ability to raise their concerns/questions and the Clerk for providing responses both prior to and at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the discussion as outlined, be noted.

2. MEMBERS REPORTS FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(i) Potholes

Members expressed concern at the number of potholes that were appearing throughout the parish and asked the County Council what was being done to address the problem.

The County Members advised that any potholes needed to be reported direct to Durham County Council via the online reporting system and these would be inspected and actioned as appropriate. The County Members explained that the highway authority was examining ways this problem could be addressed although it was a national issue.

The Clerk raised concerns regarding the number of potholes that were evident on Crawlaw Road, some of which could be attributed to the volume of minibuses attending the school at the end of the street.

Members noted the reporting procedure and thanked the County Members for looking into the Crawlaw Road concerns.

RESOLVED that the information and action proposed, be noted.

(ii) **Glebe Terrace – Bin Wagons**

A Member reported that residents had expressed concern that the bin men were unable to empty their bins as it was not possible for the wagon to manoeuvre around Glebe Terrace as a consequence of the way vehicles were parking.

County Council Members agreed to take this matter up and see what action could be taken.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(iii) **Speeding Vehicles – Seaside Lane**

Discussion was again given to concerns over the speed at which cars were coming over the brow of the hill at the Waterworks. The County Members advised that they were hopeful a speed survey would be undertaken to see what measures could be taken.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(iv) **A & B Streets – Police Activity**

The County Members updated the Parish Council on recent Police activity in the A & B Streets. Members were then advised of potential amendments to the design of the residential development proposals at the former School Site as a result of County Councillor representations.

Members would be kept informed of any developments in this respect.

The County Members also updated the Parish Council on actions initiated as a result of the last meeting.

The Chair thanked the County Councillors for responding to the reports raised by Members on behalf of residents.

Councillor Brown also updated Members on the Pride in Place government initiative and advised that Councillor Penders was now a Board Member. In addition to this Members were advised of the new arrangements for the Local Area Networks due to start in April 2026.

RESOLVED that the information, be noted.

3. **POLICE MATTERS**

The Crime Statistics and Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents Report for the period 20 January to 16 March 2026 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was considered.

Again, the A & B Streets was referenced, and the Clerk was asked to seek an update on whether any action plan detail could be provided by the police.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Police Report be noted and the Clerk contact the Police regarding the A & B Streets.

4. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 20 January 2026, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

5. **REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER**

The Work Activity Report in respect of the Cemetery, Welfare Park, Allotment and Open Space areas for the period 21 January to 17 March 2026, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member was considered.

The Operations Manager advised of concerns at the number of vehicles that were now entering the Cemetery who were not blue badge holders. It was agreed to give consideration to ways

in which vehicles could be limited from entering and driving around the cemetery. A suggestion was to restrict cars from driving along walkways by installing demountable bollards. This would be looked at by the Operations Manager.

Members thanked the Operations Manager for commissioning a tree survey across Parish Council property.

The Operations Manager also referenced the corner site at the bottom of Seaside Lane, to the front of the Leather Cap, where a circular former floral display bed was left in an untidy condition. It was suggested that a resin mural depicting the Parish Council logo could be installed with a 'Welcome to Easington Colliery' sign. Members asked the Operations Manager to consider how this could be taken forward.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the information given, be noted.
- (ii) the Operations Manager progress the items highlighted.

6. ALLOTMENT MATTERS

(i) Proposed Policy Changes for Allotment Applications

Members considered a report from the Clerk and **RESOLVED** to amend the current application process. Applicants would now need to show proof of ID/address and applications would once again only be considered from residents within the Parish Council boundary.

(ii) Allotments Applications

Members were advised that one application for an allotment had been received for 16 Holmehill Allotment Gardens. Following receipt of a negative Police Report Members **RESOLVED** to refuse the application.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members were advised that no applications had been received relative to the Colliery area by Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

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
342	BACS	Premier Ironcraft	Fabrication work football ground railings	Welfare	£ 280.00	£ 0.00	£ 280.00
343	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 23 January 2026	Admin	£ 14,184.71	£ 0.00	£ 14,184.71
344	BACS	Prudential	AVC Contribution	Admin	£ 25.64	£ 0.00	£ 25.64
345	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions	Admin	£ 83.80	£ 0.00	£ 83.80
346	BACS	JACS Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services	Admin	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
347	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contributions	Admin	£ 3,966.79	£ 0.00	£ 3,966.79
348	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 5,329.86	£ 0.00	£ 5,329.86

349	Card	Toolstation (Peterlee) Ltd	First Aid Kit	Welfare	£ 14.57	£ 2.91	£ 17.48
350	Card	Currys Group Ltd	Office Chair	Parish Hall	£ 24.99	£ 5.00	£ 29.99
351	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone/ Broadband	Welf/P.Hall	£ 158.52	£ 31.70	£ 190.22
352	BACS	NEREO	Advisory Service to 31 March 2026	Admin	£ 295.00	£ 59.00	£ 354.00
353	BACS	Normans of Billingham Ltd	Office Supplies/ Consumables	Parish Hall/ Welf	£ 203.65	£ 40.73	£ 244.38
354	BACS	Mkm B.S. (Peterlee) Ltd	Timber	Allotments	£ 118.20	£ 23.64	£ 141.84
355	BACS	Hydrochem Group	Safewater Checks January 2026	Welf/Cem/ P.Hall	£ 106.66	£ 21.33	£ 127.99
356	BACS	Thomas Sherriff & Co Ltd	John Deere – Large Service/ Repair	Welfare	£ 2,157.27	£ 431.44	£ 2,588.71
357	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Electricity – Football Changing Rooms	Welfare	£ 809.52	£ 40.48	£ 850.00
358	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity - Cemetery Lodge	Cemetery	£ 37.45	£ 1.87	£ 39.32
359	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity - Welfare Bungalow	Welfare	£ 45.52	£ 2.28	£ 47.80
360	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Bollard	Welfare	£ 47.48	£ 2.37	£ 49.85
361	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electricity – Bowls Pavilion	Welfare	£ 397.33	£ 19.87	£ 417.20
362	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges – Bollard	Welfare	£ 19.02	£ 3.80	£ 22.82
363	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas – Parish Hall	Parish Hall	£ 269.79	£ 13.49	£ 283.28
364	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electricity – Parish Hall	Parish Hall	£ 67.48	£ 3.37	£ 70.85
365	Direct Debit	Everflow Water	Water – All sites	Welf/Cem/ P.Hall	£ 447.49	£ 0.00	£ 447.49
366	BACS	Microshade	Software Hosting Fee	Admin	£ 44.95	£ 8.99	£ 53.94
367	BACS	Hydrochem Group	Safewater Checks February 2026	Welf/Cem/ P.Hall	£ 106.66	£ 21.33	£ 127.99
368	BACS	Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd	Fertiliser	Welfare	£ 584.05	£ 116.81	£ 700.86
369	BACS	Turfcare Ltd	Winter Rock Salt	Welf/Cem	£ 441.00	£ 88.20	£ 529.20
370	BACS	Local Authority Technology CIC	Parish Website Service	Admin	£ 551.39	£ 110.28	£ 661.67
371	BACS	Church Commissioners	Allotment Ground Rent	Allotments	£ 735.00	£ 0.00	£ 735.00
372	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 20 February 2026	Admin	£ 14,133.75	£ 0.00	£ 14,133.75
373	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions	Admin	£ 83.80	£ 0.00	£ 83.80

374	BACS	JACS Accountancy Ltd	Payroll Services	Admin	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
375	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contributions	Admin	£ 3,913.24	£ 0.00	£ 3,913.24
376	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 5,289.97	£ 0.00	£ 5,289.97
377	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone/ Broadband 27/02/26	Welf/P.Hall	£ 158.52	£ 31.70	£ 190.22
378	Card	AVG Internet Security	Tune Up	Admin	£ 58.35	£ 11.64	£ 69.99
379	BACS	Durham County Council	Building Regulations Fee – Cemetery House	Cemetery	£ 393.60	£ 0.00	£ 393.60
380	BACS	GNG Waste Management	Skip Hire (order 8465)	Welf/Cem	£ 620.00	£ 124.00	£ 744.00
381	BACS	Mazars LLP	External Audit 24/25	Admin	£ 1,365.00	£ 273.00	£ 1,638.00
382	BACS	Durham County Council	SLA Play Equipment Inspections 25/26	Open Spaces	£ 882.72	£ 176.55	£ 1,059.27
383	BACS	Durham County Council	Lighting Repairs Welfare Park	Welfare	£ 711.78	£ 142.36	£ 854.14
384	BACS	Durham County Council	Parish Van Breakdown Repair	Open Spaces	£ 522.37	£ 104.48	£ 626.85
385	Card	Yorkshire Trading Company	20 ltrs Patio Cleaner	Cemetery	£ 83.33	£ 16.63	£ 99.96
386	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Electric Changing Rooms 09/03/26	Welfare	£ 809.52	£ 40.48	£ 850.00
387	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Cemetery Lodge 09/03/26	Cemetery	£ 34.31	£ 1.72	£ 36.03
388	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Welfare Bungalow 09/03/26	Welfare	£ 40.69	£ 2.03	£ 42.72
389	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Welfare Bollard 09/03/26	Welfare	£ 42.89	£ 2.15	£ 45.04
390	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bowls Pavilion 09/03/26	Welfare	£ 936.13	£ 46.81	£ 982.94
391	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges Bollard 09/03/26	Welfare	£ 20.31	£ 1.02	£ 21.33
392	Direct Debit	AVG Internet Security	Internet Security	Admin	£ 70.82	£ 14.17	£ 84.99
393	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas Parish Hall 15/03/26	Parish Hall	£ 211.52	£ 10.58	£ 222.10
394	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electric Parish Hall 15/03/26	Parish Hall	£ 61.40	£ 3.07	£ 64.47

395	BACS	DGE Electrical & Mechanical Ser.	Heating Repairs Changing Rooms	Welfare	£ 300.00	£ 0.00	£ 300.00
396	BACS	Durham County Council	Repair John Deere	Cemetery	£ 72.57	£ 14.51	£ 87.08
397	BACS	Normans of Billingham Ltd	Computer Ink	Admin	£ 59.99	£ 12.00	£ 71.199
				Mar-26	£ 62,630.37	2,117.79	£ 64,748.16

(b) **Requests for Financial Assistance**

(i) **Durham Hospitals Radio**

Members considered a request from the University Hospital North Durham for financial support to meeting the costs of the ongoing service.

RESOLVED that no support be offered on this occasion.

(ii) **Miners Picnic – Sunday 6 September 2026**

Members gave consideration to a request for assistance for the event that was to be held at the end of Summer 2026.

Members whilst supportive of the event requested the Clerk speak with the organisers to determine how successful fund raising had been. This would allow the council to consider the request again in May with greater clarity on the status and cost of the event as well as how successful fund raising had been.

RESOLVED the Clerk make the necessary enquiries.

(iii) **Friends of North East War Memorials Project**

RESOLVED that the Parish Council support the charity the value of £15.00 and become a member of the Friends of the North East War Memorials Project.

(c) **Bank Reconciliations**

Members were provided with the bank reconciliation statements for January and February 2026 which showed that the balance as per the cash book to be £655,537.82 and £628,728.31 respectively

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(d) **CCTV/Door Entry System**

Consideration was given to the report of the Clerk which provided details of quotations received for the provision of CCTV/door access control systems for the Parish Hall.

Members having considered the report **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from JCS Limited in the sum of £2,622.00.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the acquisition of a new Parish entrance door that could facilitate the intercom etc. be delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chair in consultation with the Clerk.

(e) **Investment Policy**

Members were advised that as a result of an increased workload over the last few months in preparing funding bids for the bowling green, football club and preparation for the 75th Anniversary of the Pit Disaster no progress had been made in determining an appropriate route to invest Parish Council funds .

RESOLVED that this be noted.

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) **Service Level Agreement – Fixed Play Equipment – Inspection and Maintenance**

Members considered a new service level agreement from Durham County Council for the provision of the above services in 26/27.

RESOLVED that the contract be renewed at a cost of £927.36 excluding VAT.

(b) **Service Level Agreement for the Provision of Grounds Maintenance**

The Clerk provided details of the proposed service level agreement from Durham County Council for grass cutting services in 2026. The Chair requested that the Clerk and Operations Manager review the value for money associated with the grass cutting contract to determine whether this could be something that could be done in-house.

RESOLVED that determination on whether to accept the revised service level agreement be dependent on further work to be undertaken by the Clerk and Operations Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council.

10. **REPORTS**

(i) **Bowling Green Funding Bid**

The Clerk advised Members that the bowling green funding bid had now been submitted to the Lottery Awards for All Programme. Applications were taking 12 weeks and at this current point in time 8 weeks had passed since the submission was made with no further comment from the Lottery. A further report would be given to the next meeting. This would inevitably impact on the bowls season and discussions would need to be held with the Bowls Club as it may not be possible for any bowls to be played this year on the Welfare Park bowling green.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(ii) **Football Stadium Improvement – Funding Bid**

Members were advised that the funding bid to the Premier League Football Stadia Improvement Grant Initiative was still to be completed. The bid was nearing completion, but further information was awaited from the Football Club to finalise the submission.

RESOLVED that this be noted and a further report be tabled to the May meeting.

(iii) **75th Anniversary of Pit Disaster – Commemorative Event**

Members were advised that the arrangements were being progressed for the 75th Anniversary Event on the 31 May 2026. A temporary road closure application had been made to the County Council and the Safety Advisory Group notified of the event. The Vicar and Organising Committee had met, and necessary arrangements were being progressed for the event itself.

Notification had been placed on the Parish Council's website of the intended event and posters would be distributed across the Parish nearer the time of the event.

RESOLVED that the action taken, be endorsed and the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Parish Council Establishment – Tree Survey**

The work of the Operations Manager in commissioning the survey of all trees was referenced and Members were advised of progress to date.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(v) **Agar Assertion 10**

Members were provided with a report of the Clerk which demonstrated how compliance with Assertion 10 was considered met.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(vi) **Memorial Seats – Cricket Ground**

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the Cricket Club who were seeking to install memorial benches following the loss of two serving members: Peter Booth and Alan Stephenson.

RESOLVED that the request be acceded to and that the Operations Manager liaise with the Cricket Club.

(vii) **Welfare Park – Speeding Sign**

A Member requested that the speed restriction signs be reinstalled at the entrance to the Welfare Park.

RESOLVED that this be actioned by the Operations Manager.

(viii) **Rabbits – Welfare Park**

Concern was voiced at the ongoing problem of rabbits on the various sports pitches at the Welfare Park. The Operation Manager was asked to consider ways in which pest control could be initiated.

RESOLVED that a further report be awaited.

(ix) **War Memorial – Request for Name to be Added**

An enquiry had been received as to whether it would be possible for an additional inscription to be added to the War Memorial. Arrangements were being made for a letter seeking consent for this to come to the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that subject to the letter being received the request be agreed.

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

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

12. **STAFFING MATTERS**

(a) **Sickness**

The Report of the Clerk in respect of the above was considered by the meeting.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

CHAIRMAN

Date