

THE MINUTES OF THE EASINGTON COLLIERY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2026

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

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors S. W. Fergus, W. Smith.

Also in attendance:

County Councillors H. Brown, L. Taylor, L. Penders

Members of the Public: G. Conroy and J. Richardson

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members welcomed Gail Conroy and Jill Richardson to the meeting. The attendees explained that since the keypad had been removed from the bollard access system at the Welfare Park entrance this had caused them operational issues. Accordingly, a request was made for the Parish Council to allow them to have telephone access enabling them to drop the bollard to allow deliveries/emergency service access.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to the request and requested telephone numbers be provided so that arrangements could be made.

The attendees also stated they fully agreed with the Parish Council's decision to remove the keypad access given the problems create by youths abusing the system.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the comments be noted.

At this juncture G Conroy and J Richardson withdrew from the meeting.

2. MEMBERS REPORTS/OTHER MATTERS

(i) Parking at Merrick House

A Member reported problems associated with vehicles parking outside of Merrick House. County Councillor Penders advised that double yellow lines were soon to be added at this location.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(ii) Glenhurst Road Street Sign

A Member reported that the street sign which had fallen from a property at Glenhurst Road had not been replaced. A request was made for this to be re-erected. Cllr Penders advised that she would ask for this to be replaced.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(iii) Welfare Park - Youths

A Member reported that it was becoming ever more intimidating to walk through the park late on an afternoon/evening as a result of the number of youths present who were wearing balaclavas etc. Although to date they had been respectful it was nevertheless intimidating. Members **RESOLVED** to keep the situation under review.

(iv) Access to Paradise Farm

Members raised with the County Councillors the issue of how Paradise Farm originally accessed their property. The view was this was via Horden Dene entrance and not the Welfare Park. A request was made to determine if any of the records within Durham County Council affirmed this.

Councillor Penders agreed to raise this and report back to the Clerk.

RESOLVED that further information be awaited.

(v) **Welfare Park – Street Lighting**

A Member enquired when the street lighting would be repaired within the Welfare Park. The Clerk advised the lighting at the entrance had been reported to Durham County Council who undertook repairs on behalf of the Parish Council.

Councillor Penders agreed to follow this up to determine when lighting repairs would be undertaken.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

3. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL – WARD MEMBERS REPORT

The Chair invited the County Ward Members to give their County Update Report. Councillor Taylor spoke first and highlighted the impact of solar farms and battery energy storage systems across East Durham.

Councillor Taylor advised that East Durham Action Group had carried out extensive research into such proposals and their potential impacts and invited the Parish Council Members to receive a presentation that would help inform subsequent discussions on development proposals.

Members supported this and agreed to receive a presentation from the Action Group.

Councillor Penders went on to provide a comprehensive update report on the Community Action Team initiative across Easington Colliery. Significant progress had been made to improve the local environment, and it was pleasing to note that the initiative had been extended until early February.

Councillor Penders then updated Members on the additional litter bin requests that had been made. In conclusion Councillor Penders advised that objections had been raised to the residential scheme on the former Colliery School Site as community requests for amendments to the application had not been incorporated despite assurances from county officers that they would be.

Finally, Councillor Brown provided a report on proposed budget cuts that were being proposed for Parish Councils who were in receipt of the Council Tax Support Grant. The Chair to the Parish Council expressed disappointment that this much needed grant was being withdrawn to the detriment of the neediest residents in the area.

Councillor Brown then went on to provide a report indicating it was likely that £20 million of government funding would be provided to Peterlee, Horden and Easington Colliery over the next ten years and it was hoped the Parish Council would work with County Members to determine priorities. Councillor Brown also advised of proposals to encourage tourism related activities throughout County Durham and advised of intentions to introduce a tourist bus.

In conclusion the Chair thanked Members for attending to provide the Update Report.

4. POLICE MATTERS

The Crime Statistics and Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents Report for the period 16 November 2025 to 19 January 2026 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was considered.

Whilst Members expressed concern at the number of crimes it was noted that this covered a two-month period. The report also identified the next PACT Meeting was to be held on 11 March 2026 and the next Cuppa with a Copper would take place on 12 February 2026.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Report be noted.

5. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 18 November 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were both confirmed.

Matters Arising

(i) **Cemetery House**

Members were advised that the building control plans had now been finalised for submission to Durham County Council. Once approved the Parish Council could commence the process of securing quotations for the new build and demolition of the old Superintendents House.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

6. **REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER**

The Work Activity Report in respect of the Cemetery, Welfare Park, Allotment and Open Space areas for the period 18 November 2025 to 20 January 2026, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member was considered.

The Operations Manager highlighted ongoing issues associated with Townfield Hill. In particular, fly tipping and burning of rubbish. An incident had also occurred at the Withering Hope allotments where a vehicle had crashed into the allotment fencing.

Members were advised that the fly tipping had been removed and necessary reports made about the burning of rubbish. Similarly, the Withering Hope Allotment fencing had been repaired. Members thanked the Operations Manager for this report and endorsed the action taken.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

7. **ALLOTMENT MATTERS**

(i) **Allotment Applications**

Members were advised no applications had been received since the last meeting.

(ii) **Complaints**

As outlined by the Operations Manager the Clerk commented on complaints that had been received in relation to a tenant on the Townfield Hill allotments.

The tenant had been receiving a number of flat bed/other trucks carrying waste which was being deposited at the garden and then set alight by the tenant. This had been reported to the Police, Durham County Council's Environmental Health and logged as a concern with the Environment Agency who confirmed this was now under investigation.

Members were also advised that the tenant had been advised to stop this practice as it was in contravention of the tenancy agreement.

Members in noting the complaints and action taken **RESOLVED** to terminate the tenancy agreement.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk make the necessary representations terminating the tenancy agreement.

8. **PLANNING AND LICENSING MATTERS**

Members were advised that the following planning applications had been received from Durham County Council: -

Application DM25/02608/FPA – Proposed dropped kerb and driveway at 5 Weir Terrace

RESOLVED that no comment or objection be made.

Application DM25/03426/FPA – Proposed 25 Dwellings inside the former Colliery School Site

RESOLVED that no objection or comment be offered. It being noted that the Parish Council's representations regarding housing mix had been considered but disregarded by the County Council.

9. 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
277	Card	ATM Withdrawal 19/11/25	Petty Cash	Petty Cash	£ 250.00	£ 0.00	£ 250.00
278	BACS	CLR Law	Settlement Agreement – Legal Services	Admin	£ 358.00	£ 71.60	£ 429.60
278	Card	ATM Withdrawal 20/11/25	Petty Cash	Petty Cash	£ 200.00	£ 0.00	£ 200.00
279	Card	Maxwells DIY Peterlee	Bolts	Welfare	£ 5.00	£ 1.00	£ 6.00
280	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 28/11/25	Admin	£ 17,997.73	£ 0.00	£ 17,997.73
281	BACS	JACS Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services	Admin	£ 250.00	£ 50.00	£ 250.00
282	BACS	Prudential	AVC Contribution	Admin	£ 25.64	£ 0.00	£ 25.64
283	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions	Admin	£ 83.80	£ 0.00	£ 83.80
284	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contribution	Admin	£ 3,871.62	£ 0.00	£ 3,871.62
285	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 5,202.67	£ 0.00	£ 5,202.67
286	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone/ Broadband 28/11	Welf/P.Hall	£ 171.44	£ 33.99	£ 205.43
287	BACS	Normans of Billingham Ltd	A4 Copier Paper	Admin	£ 29.98	£ 6.00	£ 35.98
288	BACS	Easington Social Welfare Centre	ECPC Xmas Party	S137	£ 1,500.00	£ 0.00	£ 1,500.00
289	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Electric Changing Rooms	Welfare	£ 809.52	£ 40.48	£ 850.00
290	BACS	Hydrochem Group	Safewater Check November 2025	Welf/Cem	£ 106.66	£ 21.33	£ 127.99

291	BACS	North of England Brass Champs	Financial Assistance	S137	£ 50.00	£ 0.00	£ 50.00
202	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Cemetery Lodge	Cemetery	£ 36.33	£ 1.82	£ 38.15
203	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric - Welfare Bungalow	Welfare	£ 42.74	£ 2.14	£ 44.88
204	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric – Bowls Pavilion	Welfare	£ 602.06	£ 30.10	£ 632.16
205	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges Bollard 10/12/25	Welfare	£ 15.74	£ 3.15	£ 18.89
206	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bollard	Welfare	£ 36.69	£ 3.93	£ 40.62
207	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas – Parish Hall	Parish Hall	£ 187.68	£ 9.38	£ 197.06
208	Direct Debit	Everflow Water	Water Consumption All Sites	Cem, Welf, Allots	£ 431.92	£ 0.00	£ 431.92
209	CARD	Par Petroleum	Diesel	Welf/Cem	£ 1,429.22	£ 285.84	£ 1,715.06
210	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electric Parish Hall	Parish Hall	£ 80.14	£ 4.01	£ 84.15
211	BACS	ECPC Employees	Wages 26/12/25	Admin	£ 13,757.63	£ 0.00	£ 13,757.63
212	BACS	Prudential	AVC Contribution	Admin	£ 25.64	£ 0.00	£ 25.64
213	BACS	JACS Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services	Admin	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
214	BACS	DCC Pension Fund	Pension Fund Contributions	Admin	£ 3,780.68	£ 0.00	£ 3,780.68
215	BACS	HMRC	Tax & NI	Admin	£ 5,858.15	£ 0.00	£ 5,858.00
216	Direct Debit	OneCom Ltd	Telephone/ Broadband 31/12	Welf/P.Hall	£ 158.52	£ 31.70	£ 190.22
217	Bank	Coop Bank	Sweep Fee	Admin	£ 30.00	£ 0.00	£ 30.00
218	BACS	TMJ Legal Services	Settlement Agreement	Admin	£ 500.00	£ 100.00	£ 600.00
219	BACS	Lavelec Electrical Services	Lighting Repairs Football Club	Welfare	£ 505.00	£ 101.00	£ 606.00
220	BACS	Microshade Ltd	Software Hosting Fee	Admin	£ 33.20	£ 6.64	£ 39.84
221	BACS	North East Automation	New Bollard	Welfare	£ 4,940.00	£ 988.00	£ 5,928.00
222	BACS	Hydrochem Group	Safewater Check December 2025	Welf/Cem	£ 106.66	£ 21.33	£ 127.99
223	CARD	ATM Withdrawal 8/12	Petty Cash	Petty Cash	£ 200.00	£ 0.00	£ 200.00
224	BACS	GMB Union	Union Subscriptions 26/12/25	Admin	£ 83.80	£ 0.00	£ 83.80
225	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Changing Rooms 09/01/26	Welfare	£ 809.52	£ 40.48	£ 850.00

226	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Cemetery Lodge	Cemetery	£ 37.16	£ 1.86	£ 39.02
227	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Welfare Bungalow	Welfare	£ 44.62	£ 2.23	£ 46.85
228	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bollard	Welfare	£ 44.71	£ 2.24	£ 46.95
229	Direct Debit	Yu Energy	Electric Bowls Pavilion	Welfare	£ 604.35	£ 30.22	£ 634.57
230	Direct Debit	EE Ltd	Sim Card Charges Bollard 11/01/26	Welfare	£ 15.74	£ 3.15	£ 18.89
231	BACS	Thomas Sherrif & Co Ltd	Full Service and fix Ger Box issue SL20 LR	Welf/Cem	£ 712.36	£ 142.47	£ 854.83
232	BACS	Normans of Billingham Ltd	Consumable Goods	Welf/Cem	£ 179.88	£ 35.98	£ 215.86
233	BACS	Normans of Billingham Ltd	Printer Ink	Admin	£ 63.60	£ 12.72	£ 76.32
234	Direct Debit	Corona Energy	Electric – Parish Hall 16/01/26	Parish Hall	£ 60.82	£ 3.04	£ 63.86
235	Direct Debit	Smartest Energy	Gas Parish Hall 18/01/26	Parish Hall	£ 212.47	£ 10.62	£ 223.09
236	Direct Debit	Everflow Water	Water Consumption All Sites	Welf/Cem/ Allots	£ 418.52	£ 0.00	£ 418.52
237	BACS	Horns Garden Centre	Christmas Tree	Open Spaces	£ 483.33	£ 96.67	£ 580.00
238	BACS	GNG Waste Management	Skip Hir Order 8450	Welfare	£ 310.00	£ 62.00	£ 372.00
239	BACS	GMRS	Annual Gas Safety Check	Parish Hall	£ 70.00	£ 0.00	£ 70.00
240	BACS	Microshade Ltd	Software Hosting Fee (inv 01/01/26)	Admin	£ 44.95	£ 8.99	£ 53.94
241	BACS	Fleet (Line Markers) Ltd	10 x 10 ltr Pitchmarker	Welfare	£ 307.00	£ 61.52	£ 369.12
				Jan-26	£ 68,273.49	£2,347.63	£ 70,621.12

(b) **Requests for Financial Assistance**

(i) **North of England Brass Band Championships**

Members were advised that an application had been received from the North of England Brass Band Championships seeking donations towards the cost of hosting the championships in the area in 2026.

RESOLVED that a £50.00 donation be endorsed.

(c) **Bank Reconciliations**

Members were provided with the bank reconciliation reports for the period November and December 2025 which showed the balance at the end of the respective months as £716,321.28 and £691,796.23 respectively.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(d) **Budget Requirement/Precept Determination 2026/27**

Members gave consideration to the spending requirements of the Parish Council for the forthcoming year. Members also considered the current spend to date and anticipated year end out-turn position.

Having considered the position Members **RESOLVED** that the 2026/27 budget requirement/Precept be set at £456,660.00 and the County Council be advised accordingly.

FURTHER RESOLVED that it be noted that the 17.85% increase on precept was largely due the loss of LCTSS Grant from the County Council (£50,053.00).

10. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) **Letters of Thanks**

Members were advised that letters of thanks had been received in response to donations made by the Parish Council on behalf of Rutherford House, Donnini House and The Golden Years Group.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

(b) **Requests for Dispensation in respect of Non-attendance at Meetings**

The Clerk advised that two requests had been received seeking dispensations for non-attendance of meetings by Councillors S. W. Fergus and W. Smith.

Accordingly, the Clerk had prepared reports for consideration by the Parish Council Meeting which advised that non-attendance was due to work commitments.

Members having considered the reports **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 dispensations be granted to July 2026 in respect of both Councillors S. W Fergus and W. Smith.

11. **COMPLAINTS/REPORTS/OTHER MATTERS**

Clerk

(a) **Bowling Green Works Requirement**

Members were provided with a report back from recent meetings with the Bowls Club. It was explained that the meetings had helped determine the way forward and longer-term aspirations for the facility.

It was felt the optimum way forward, although not guaranteed that funding would be secured, would be to seek funding support from the Lottery advocating the community benefits derived from this facility.

RESOLVED that the Clerk make a formal application to the Awards for All Grant funding programme of the National Lottery.

(b) **Football Stadium Improvement Grant**

Members were advised that final quotations had been sought in respect of the works requirement to the football ground at the Welfare. The funding bid to the Premier League Stadia Improvement Fund would therefore be submitted in the near future. A progress report would be given at the March meeting.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

12. **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.

At this juncture the County Councillors withdrew from the meeting.

13. **STAFFING MATTERS**

(a) **Sickness Monitoring**

Members considered the Sickness Absence Report submitted by the Clerk.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(b) **Minutes of the Staffing Committee** of their meeting held on 15 December 2025, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were adopted.

RESOLVED that this be noted.

(c) **Staff Suggestion for Working Hours Change**

Members considered a Report of the Clerk in regard to operating hours.

RESOLVED that the report be approved and the new hours be introduced in due course.

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

CHAIRMAN

Date