

Chairman Cllr. Harvey Neve

**Minutes of the Parish Meeting held
Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 7.00pm**

Location: Bishop Middleham Village Hall

Chair: Cllr. H. Neve

Present: Cllr. H. Neve (Chair), Cllr. A. Anderson, Cllr. J Brownlee, Cllr. V. Cooke,
Cllr. E Sparks

Parish Clerk: Mrs. A. Hall

County Councillor: 0

Members of the Public: 0

ITEM	MINUTES	ACTIONS
1	Notice of Meeting – Meeting opened at 7.00pm. Public notice confirmed as issued in accordance with Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972.	
2	Apologies – Received from Cllr. Turner, Cllr. MacCallam and Cllr. Jacobs. Reasons approved.	
3	Declarations of Interest – Members reminded of the need to declare any interests. No new declarations made.	Clerk to record if any arise.
4	Minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2025 reviewed and approved as a true record.	
5	Public Participation – No members of the public present.	
6	<p>County Councillor Report –</p> <p><u>Cllr C Lines</u> Budget Pressure: DCC faces a £72.8m shortfall over four years; £18.5m in 2026/27. Council tax increases likely if government funding doesn't improve. Funding Concerns: Fair Funding Review may favor urban areas over rural counties like Durham. Men's Mental Health: High suicide rates (74% men); need for grassroots initiatives and safe spaces to encourage men to seek help. Local Networks: No update yet from DCC on review. Planning Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Middleham: Awaiting appeal decision on anaerobic digestion plant; 176-home Sedgfield application pending. • Sedgfield: Banks Group proposes 50 homes; concerns about cumulative impact. • Fishburn: 83-home development approved with infrastructure concerns. • Mordon: Broadband delays continue. 	

	<p><u>Cllr I Catchpole</u></p> <p>Planning: Sprucely Farm AD Plant appeal concluded (awaiting ruling); new housing proposals at Butterwick Drive, Fishburn (83 homes), Stockton Road (50 homes).</p> <p>Finance: Audit Committees reviewed council accounts, risks, and set budget precept.</p> <p>Environment: Waste caddies/bin changes; Redcar recycling facility; risks with battery storage systems.</p> <p>Infrastructure: Highways capacity main barrier to housing; stronger Section 106 enforcement needed.</p> <p>Budget (National): NLW rise; Universal Credit two-child limit removed; tax threshold freeze; EV duty; mansion tax.</p> <p>Major Project: £6.4m Sedgfield Sports & Youth Hub (4G pitch, pool, gym, renewable energy).</p>	
7	<p>PCSO Report – No incidents or crimes reported since 1st November. Parking letters issued; liaison with school ongoing. Attendance at Concert Partnership breakfast noted.</p>	Clerk to file report.
8	<p>Community and Outdoor Matters:</p> <p>a) Christmas Event – Preparations ongoing. Clerk in the process of reviewing budgets and will look at provision for new lights in 26/27</p> <p>b) Pavilion Conditions – No further update; to be picked up in the new year.</p> <p>c) Relief in Need Charity – Deferred as Cllr Turner sent apologies. d) Park Gullies – Quote received and approved. Clerk to contact contractor.</p>	Clerk to review budgets for Christmas installations. Clerk to contact contractor re gullies.
9	<p>Finance – Initial budget proposals for 2026/27 reviewed and discussed. Clerk to prepare options reflecting 0%, 2% and 2.5% change to the precept and circulate to councillors. Payments and invoices since 12th November approved.</p>	Clerk to prepare precept options and circulate.
10	<p>Assertion 10 – Members received an introduction. Assertion 10 is a new requirement introduced in the 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP). It focuses on digital and data compliance for parish and town councils and forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).</p>	Clerk to review and report back.
11	<p>Projects and Planning – Report from working group meeting of 16th October received. To be picked up again in the New Year</p>	
12	<p>Health and Safety – No new issues reported. Playground inspections ongoing. Repairs to roundabout completed by Durham County Council.</p>	Clerk to monitor.
13	<p>Planning:</p> <p>a) Anaerobic Digestion Plant – Update received following Inspectorate Hearing. Application refused. Public statement already issued via Facebook.</p> <p>b) Beacon Avenue Housing Development – No further information available.</p> <p>c) Resident Correspondence – Email received regarding planning applications and recording in minutes. Members agreed applications had been considered at the time with no further involvement necessary.</p>	Clerk to review procedures and ensure all planning applications are recorded with decisions.

	Procedures for Clerk to be reviewed to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater notice of surrounding areas where applications may affect Bishop Middleham • All planning applications recorded in minutes with a clear decision noted. 	
14	Councillor Vacancies – Vacancies noted; no applications received.	Clerk to continue advertising.
15	Correspondence: a) CDALC Nominations – Cllr Neve put forward request to apply for a place on the CDALC committee. Members approved. Clerk to submit nomination. b) Consultations – Clerk to forward main consultation site to members and keep councillors updated.	Clerk to submit CDALC nomination. Clerk to circulate consultation updates.
16	Member Sharing – Members discussed tightening procedures for organising large-scale events in line with Martyn’s Law. Agreement to review event planning protocols in the new year.	Clerk to schedule review of event procedures.
17	Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 7.00pm, Bishop Middleham Village Hall.	

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____