

**Chairman Cllr. Harvey Neve**  
**Minutes of the Parish Meeting held**  
**Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7.00pm**  
**Location:** Bishop Middleham Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr. H. Neve (Chair), Cllr. J Brownlee, Cllr. V. Cooke, Cllr. G. Jacobs, Cllr. E Sparks & Cllr. G. Turner

**Parish Clerk:** Mrs. A. Hall

**County Councillor:** Cllr C. Lines

**Members of the Public:** 0

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** - Cllr. A. Anderson, Cllr. MacCallam
3. **Declarations of Interest** - Members reminded of the need to declare any interests. No new declarations made.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 January 2026**

Members confirmed they had reviewed the minutes.

**RESOLVED:** Minutes approved and signed as a correct record.

The Clerk noted:

- Payments are now included within the minutes for transparency.
- All council meeting dates have been added to the parish calendar.
- Precept submission has been completed and confirmed by Durham County Council.
- Community grant for Cornforth Partnership: payments will be made **directly to the Village Hall** for youth club room hire. Payment frequency to be managed at the Clerk's discretion.

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**5. Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

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**6. County Councillor's Report - Cllr Chris Lines**

Cllr Lines provided a brief update, noting:

- Durham County Council has revised its proposed council tax increase to **1.99%** following additional government funding.
- Changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and removal of the parish LCTRS grant remain concerns.
- A recent council motion promoting fossil fuel extraction was discussed; Cllr Lines confirmed he opposed it.
- No further update is available on the new Local Networks model.
- The **National Cross Country Championships** will take place in Sedgfield on **21 February**, with significant visitor numbers expected.

Cllr Lines left the meeting after delivering his report.

## 7. PCSO Report

No written report received. The Clerk had spoken with the PCSO informally; nothing significant to report.

## 8. Community & Outdoor Events

### a) Events Working Group

Events working group took place prior to this meeting, notes will be circulated to all councillors..

### b) Park Security

- Automated gate previously costed at approx. **£8,000**.
- Discussion covered:
  - Whether to act proactively before issues arise.
  - Alternative options (e.g., one-way plates, manual barriers).

**ACTION:** Clerk to obtain specification from Gary and seek **three quotes**.

### c) Dog Fouling in the Village and Park

A complaint was received regarding significant dog fouling during a recent football match.

Council discussed:

- Persistent issues despite PSPO requirements.
- Options including:
  - Awareness campaign (signage, social media, leaflets).
  - Hidden cameras with appropriate signage.
  - Increased visibility of wardens.
  - Engagement with responsible dog walkers.
  - Potential fencing of children's play area.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- Clerk to liaise with Neighbourhood Warden.
- Clerk to purchase two covert cameras and appropriate signage.
- Clerk to progress new PSPO-compliant signage for the park.
- Council to coordinate a multi-strand awareness campaign.

### d) Coronation Garden

With the proposed opening being 18 July, this project needs to be progressed.

**ACTION:** Clerk to obtain multiple quotes based on the plan put together.

### e) Changing Rooms Renovation Group

Representatives from each football team to be invited.

Meeting date agreed: **Tuesday 4 March, Village Hall about 6pm**.

- Issues raised:
  - Water meter readings significantly increased due to recent leak.
  - Changing rooms require inspection after matches; teams must notify Clerk of fixtures.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact team managers and arrange meeting.

## 9. Finance

### a) Payments

The following payments were approved

<b>Bishop Middleham Parish Council - 21.1.26 to 10.2.26</b>		
<b>Company</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount (inc VAT)</b>
Forvis Mazars	External Audit of AGAR	£378.00
BMVH	Room hire 12.11.25	£26.88
Rainbow Fireworks	Deposit - Fireworks Display 2026	£996.75
Medics UK	First Aiders Michaelmas Fair	£130.00
BMVH	Rm Hire - 3 Dec 2025	£26.88
Phoenix	M'soft Dec 25 to Jan 26	£10.63

Medics UK	First Aiders Firework Display	£170.00
Amazon	Stationery (Folders & Envelopes)	£26.27
O2	Mobile Phone	£20.64
DGS Ltd	Tanker to jet clean drains at the park	£342.00
EON	Elec - Dec 2025	£3.75
Unity Trust Bank	BACS Charges	£16.70
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges	£6.00

## b) Assertion 10 - Presentation by the Clerk

The Clerk delivered a presentation on new AGAR requirements relating to digital and data security.

Key points:

- Council must demonstrate compliance with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act, and digital security standards.
- Evidence required includes:
  - Data protection policies
  - Privacy notices
  - Records retention schedule
  - Data breach procedure
  - IT policy
  - Publication scheme
  - FOI policy
  - Risk register
- Clerk confirmed:
  - All council data is stored securely on OneDrive.
  - Website accessibility exceeds WCAG minimum standards.
  - Councillor IT guidance issued.

**RESOLVED:** Policies and procedures adopted in principle, with final ratification at next meeting to allow further review.

## 10. Health & Safety

### a) Drains at Changing Rooms

- Significant blockage identified approx. 1m from drain.
- Likely caused by roots; may require excavation.

**ACTION:** Clerk to continue liaising with contractor and DCC; Chair to thank contractor for ongoing assistance.

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### b) Christmas Lights

- DCC confirmed **no additional lighting may be powered from lamppost columns.**
- Options being explored:
  - Independent power supply for Mainsforth tree.
  - Review of stress-testing requirements for motifs and hanging basket poles.

**ACTION:** Clerk to obtain costs and await new DCC policy.

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## 11. Correspondence

### Quarry - Road Debris & Dust

Reports received of vehicle damage caused by debris on road and dust from new quarry area near motorway bridge.

Chair met with quarry manager. Manager to remind drivers and suppliers to check wheels and loads. He confirmed there was Increased traffic volume likely cause of increased debris. Dust issue to be monitored.

**ACTION:** Chair to follow up with quarry.

## 12. Member Sharing

Cllr Turner reported back from meeting with police and DCC officers.

Key points:

- No current funding for traffic calming unless accident data justifies it.
- Police require evidence of >15% of vehicles exceeding 35mph before enforcement.
- DCC will:
  - Refresh road markings and clean signage within one month.
  - Consider rumble strips (avoiding residential areas).
- Village gateways:
  - Cost approx. £800 each.
  - DCC supportive if parish funds them.
  - Online request still required; Clerk to resubmit and reference previous submission.
- Speedwatch:
  - PCSO exploring joint sessions with Cornforth volunteers.
  - Mini Police may support future campaigns.

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Cllr Green = DCC has confirmed permitted fencing options: similar style to previous but lower and painted green.

- Cllr Catchpole intends to contact each resident individually.
- Parish Council noted significant improvement to ground levels and appearance.

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Cllr Jacobs - Hedgehog Signs

- Signs purchased; locations required.

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Cllr Jacobs - Parish Garage

- Garage doors require repair or replacement.
- Options discussed: up-and-over door vs. refurbishing existing wooden doors.

**ACTION:** Site visit to be arranged (Sunday morning or Monday).

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Other mentions

- Badger sightings noted near quarry.
- Salt bin in car park damaged by vehicle; Clerk to source replacement.
- Hedge-laying at park underway and progressing well.

## 13. Date of Next Meeting

**Wednesday 11 March 2026 at 6pm**, Bishop Middleham Village Hall.