

Conserving our Past: Building Our Future

Chairman Cllr. Harvey Neve

**Minutes of the Parish Meeting held
Wednesday 21 January 2026 at 7.00pm
Location: Bishop Middleham Village Hall**

Chair: Cllr. H. Neve

Present: Cllr. H. Neve (Chair), Cllr. A. Anderson (arrived 8.05pm), Cllr. J Brownlee, Cllr. V. Cooke, Cllr. G. Jacobs, Cllr. E Sparks & Cllr. G. Turner

Parish Clerk: Mrs. A. Hall

County Councillor: 0

PCSO: **PCSO J Walbey**

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. MacCallam (prior engagement).
3. **Declarations of Interest** - Members reminded of the need to declare any interests. No new declarations made.
4. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 3 December 2025 reviewed and approved as a true record. **Proposed: Cllr Neve, Seconded: Cllr Cooke**
5. **2026-27 Dates** - members were given a proposed list of dates for all meetings and events. Members discussed the time of meetings and felt a more appropriate time would be to start at 6pm (apart from those indicated).

Full Council Meetings (6m)

15 April 2026

13 May 2026 (Annual Meeting, Annual Assembly, May Meeting - 6pm start)

17 June 2026 (Events Working Group at 6pm, Full Council at 7pm)

8 July 2026

9 September 2026 (Events Working Group at 6pm, Full Council at 7pm)

14 October 2026

11 November 2026

9 December 2026

13 January 2027

10 February 2027

10 March 2027

Events Working Groups

11 February 2026 (6pm, followed by Full Council at 7pm)

Events

Opening of Coronation Garden Saturday Saturday 18 July 2026

Michaelmas Fair Saturday 26 September 2026

Fireworks Display Friday 6 November 2026

Carols Around Christmas Tree Sunday 6 December 2026

Other Meetings (Dates to be confirmed)

Changing Rooms Working Group February, April, June and November

Resolved: To approve the proposed dates. Clerk to circulate as required.

6. **Public Participation** - No members of the public present.
7. **County Councillors Report** - Member had received the most recent reports from Cllr Catchpole and Cllr Lines. No comments or issues to bring up.
8. **PCSO Report** - A number of issues were reported since the last meeting, including the seizure of an abandoned vehicle found in the park. The PCSO noted their new role as Rural SPOC, ongoing Wildlife Crime Officer training, and discussions about holding another Farmers' Forum, with a walkabout to be arranged with councillors. Regular school and village patrols continue, and the Chair thanked the PCSO for the update.
Clerk to liaise with PCSO to look at Farmers Forum, walkabout and another PACT meeting
9. **Finance:**
 - a) The following payments were approved:

Payments from 4 Dec 2025 to 20 Jan 2026		
Company	Purpose	Amount (Inc VAT)
Blamire Printing	Christmas Carol Sheets	£60.00
Amazon	Torch	£14.98
The PI Company	Annual Inspection on Play Area	£186.00
Phoenix	M'soft Package	£10.63
SE Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance Nov 25	£2,937.32
SE Landscaping	Xmas Tree works for Mainsforth	£180.00
Rialtas Business Solutions	Budget Training AH	£180.00
Bishop Middleham Village Hall	Hall Hire - Mtng 10.9.25	£26.88
	Wages	£586.23
	PAYE, Pension, ERS NI	£394.24
Cllr Jacobs	Refreshments - Carols Around Christmas Tree	£151.82
Ferryhill Town Band	Carols Around Christmas Tree	£100.00
Parish Online	Registrar for Gov.uk domain	£120.00
Great North Air Ambulance Service	Donation from Tombola at Michaelmas Fair	£75.00
Unity Trust Bank	BACS Charges	£9.60
Unity Trust Bank	Service Charges	£6.00
Phoenix	M'soft Package	£10.63
SE Landscaping	Grounds Maintenance Dec 2026	£2,937.32
Bishop Middleham Village Hall	Hall Hire - Mtng Oct 2025	£26.88
Bells Plumbing	Repairs - Pavilion	£102.00
Durham County Council	Timer - Xmas Lights	£220.58
	Wages	£586.23
	PAYE, Pension, ERS NI	£394.24
O2	Mobile Phone	£20.64
Unity Trust Bank	BACS Charges	£16.70
Wave	Water Charges 22.8.25-21.11.25	£214.75
Unity Trust Bank	BACS Charges	£16.70
O2	Mobile Phone	£20.64

b) To review and discuss Budget Setting Proposal Report and approve the Precept for 2026/2027. You can incorporate that neatly into the minute like this:

Members considered the options in the Clerk's report and discussed the financial pressures arising from the loss of the LCTRSS grant, rising costs, and the need to maintain reserves at a safe level. Councillors noted that a modest increase in line with inflation at the time of the meeting would provide greater long-term stability than

the modelled options. Members agreed that a 3.4% rise—equivalent to £4.63 per year on a Band D property, on which the precept is calculated—would protect reserves and maintain current service levels without relying on one-off funding.

RESOLVED: A precept increase of 3.4% for 2026-27 was approved. The Clerk will submit the precept request to Durham County Council.

c) **Precept** - see b) above.

d) **To consider a Community Grant Request from the Cornforth Partnership -**

Members considered the grant application from Cornforth Partnership to support the Youth Club. They discussed the breakdown of costs and noted that while the Council is keen to support activities for young people, it is **not appropriate for the Parish Council to fund salaries**. Members also queried whether the Youth Club intended to charge attendees and what other funding sources were in place.

After discussion, members agreed to **fund the hire of the Village Hall for one year**, with payment made **directly to the Village Hall**, as this was an eligible and clearly defined cost that would support delivery of the sessions.

RESOLVED:The Parish Council will fund one year of Village Hall hire for the Youth Club. The Clerk will request clarification from Cornforth Partnership regarding **other funding sources** and whether **attendees will be charged**.

10. Health and Safety - nothing new to report

11. Correspondence:

The Clerk presented four items of correspondence for members' consideration:

- Big Spring Clean - Members noted the information and agreed the parish would participate as in previous years.
- Energy Resilience - Members discussed the update and agreed to monitor developments for any implications for the parish.
- Request to Plant a Memorial Tree - Members noted the request to plant a tree in memory of a grandad and agreed this would be explored further, including identifying a suitable location.
- Woodland Trust - Free Trees - Members welcomed the offer and agreed to review potential planting sites within the parish.

Members noted all correspondence and agreed the appropriate follow-up actions. Clerk to contact resident regarding planting a tree and also to gather more information regarding the offer of free trees.

12. **Member Sharing** - nothing new to report.

13. Date of Next Meeting: **Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 6pm**

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____