

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24 July 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

Cllrs: Pete Ayling (PA), Tony Reeve (TR), Sarah Stuart (SS), Jean Thorburn (JT), Deb Warde (DW)

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

Members of the public: One

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Judith Patrick and County Cllr Matt Burnard

2. Declarations of Interest

None to declare.

3. Public Participation

No issues raised.

4. County Councillor's Report

No report received.

5. PCSO briefing

No report received.

6. Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 26 June 2025

Proposed by TR, seconded by JT.

7. Budget update

Balance as of 24 July 2025:

Income: £7899.03

Expenditure: £2053.24

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Exterior painting of village hall: £1260

The bank reconciliation for June 2025 had been circulated.

8. Parish Council website, gov.uk domain and emails

Due to an increased focus on digital and data compliance for smaller authorities, the 2025/26 audit would require the parish council to own its domain name for the website and

email, with best practice being to use gov.uk. There are additional requirements relating to website accessibility standards and having an IT policy. Discussions took place around whether to replace or update the current website, including the costs involved with ongoing support from an external provider. It was noted that the website does not currently receive many visitors. It was agreed that hedleyhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk was the preferred choice for the domain name and the website would be discussed further at the next meeting.

9. **Matters relating to the village hall, village green and nature reserve**

Upgrading the kitchen

There was no further progress to report.

Display panels and additional lighting for the village hall

This item had been raised at the January meeting and included plans to create a display of photographs relating to the history of the village, together with additional energy-efficient wall or spot lights. It was felt that the lighting was not needed but that some of the old photographs should be put back on display. It was agreed that DW and SS would select suitable photos from those that had been scanned and obtain costs for frames.

Village hall heating control

Geowarmth had fitted a WLAN card and the heating could now also be controlled remotely via an app.

Village hall exterior painting

The painting had been completed.

Play area inspection report

The report had been circulated. The Section 106 funding of £4156, which had been approved by DCC, would cover a number of issues found, including the gate, painting the multi-play unit, making repairs to the surface and cleaning the equipment. Additional items for attention included the elephant rocker, seesaw and swing seats, and it was agreed that further funding would be sought to replace these.

Windfarm Community Fund applications

Two smaller funds of up to £2000 were open for applications until 29 August and the current projects would be split between them, including the external lights and socket for the village hall, the step repair and paving for the new bench. In addition, DW proposed new tables and chairs for the hall and it was agreed that DW and JT would look for suitable replacements to be included in the grant application. SS also suggested getting a piano and it was agreed that a second-hand one could be sourced cheaply or for free online.

Parking on the pavement outside the village hall

TR commented that this issue was becoming a larger problem, particularly at weekends, when vehicles were obstructing the pavement outside the village hall, forcing pedestrians to walk on the grass or the road. The difficulties with parking space on West View were acknowledged but it was noted that the road was wide enough for cars not to need to park on the pavement, and the bus turnaround was suggested for additional space. It was agreed that the Clerk would put a notice in the noticeboard asking residents not to block the pavement and councillors would speak to vehicle owners if possible. The issue would be kept under review.

10. Future Projects

Issues which would involve DCC had been identified, including:

- Maintenance on the nature reserve and meadow
- Clearing footpaths
- Cutting back overhanging trees
- Flooding in Deerness View after heavy rain
- Additional 30 mph signs for the village

Any ideas for future parish council projects could be discussed at the next meeting.

11. Members' reports

CDALC Smaller Councils Forum meeting

JT had attended the meeting on 17 July. There were two presentations from DCC.

Consultation on changes to the council tax reduction scheme

This is a proposal to change the scheme for providing council tax discounts to working-age people on lower incomes. There are a number of suggestions being put forward, including various levels of support depending on income, removal of the second adult rebate and a reduction in the maximum amount of savings over which the support cannot be provided. The online survey can be found at www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk and the closing date for responses is 25 September.

Consultation on the Durham County Council Plan

This consultation is about the County Council's own strategic plan and reflects the priorities of the new administration. The closing date is 18 August so that the plan can be agreed by the County Council at its October meeting. The consultation can also be found at www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk

In addition, CDALC is encouraging individuals and parish councillors to sign a petition to urge the government to U-turn on its decision to axe funding for Neighbourhood Plans. The petition can be found at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/continuing-support-funding-for-community-led-neighbourhood-plans>

12. Clerk's report

Financial

Payments made in June and July 2025:

L Baxter	£ 150.00	Internal audit fees
G Bell	£ 447.63	June salary & IT costs
Play Safety	£ 96.00	Play area inspection
TalkMobile	£ 6.95	Village hall WiFi
Octopus Energy	£ 42.32	Village hall electricity charges – June 2025
Lloyds Bank	£ 4.40	Monthly service charge
ICO	£ 47.00	Data protection fee
Total:	£ 794.30	

Payments received:

Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 20.00	Village hall hire (June)
R Wright	£ 30.00	Village hall hire (June)
Unity Trust Bank	£ 38.27	Interest
Total:	£ 88.27	

Petty cash float: £1.88

- *Insurance* – the metal storage shed had been added to the insurance policy. Zurich had offered a three-year deal which reduced the premium and it was agreed to accept this. The insurance renewal for 2025/26 would be £675.79.
- *Seat repairs* – Richard Curtis had requested that the council pay the invoice for the wood for the repairs, which would be approximately £300. This was agreed.
- *NALC webinar* – NALC was running a webinar on funding sources beyond the precept, costing £35. It was agreed that the Clerk attend.

13. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 25 September 2025 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
25 September 2025