

## **HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25 September 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope**

#### **Present**

**Chair:** Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

**Cllrs:** Tony Reeve (TR), Sarah Stuart (SS), Deb Warde (DW)

**Officer:** Gillian Bell (Clerk)

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Pete Ayling, Judith Patrick and Jean Thorburn, County Cllr Sean Healy, PCSO Paige Hart

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None to declare.

#### **3. Public Participation**

No members of the public present.

#### **4. County Councillor's Report**

No report received.

#### **5. PCSO briefing**

A written report had been circulated. There had been one report of off-road bikes in the local area and a Honda quad bike had been stolen from a farm near Tow Law. Police had also received reports of a suspicious male taking images of a farm in Cornsay.

#### **6. Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 24 July 2025**

Proposed by DW, seconded by SS.

#### **7. Budget update**

*Balance as of 25 September 2025:*

Income: £7969.03

Expenditure: £5339.29

*Earmarked project expenditure:*

Seat repair and installation: £1000

The bank reconciliations for July and August 2025 had been circulated.

#### **8. Document Retention Policy**

There is an increased focus on digital and data compliance for smaller authorities and this policy is one of three aimed at meeting the Council's responsibilities in relation to data

protection and GDPR. The draft policy had been circulated and following discussion, it was agreed to adopt the Document Retention Policy.

9. **Northern Powergrid proposal for new pole and low voltage line and wayleave agreement**

Northern Powergrid were proposing to erect a new wooden pole at the top of West View to carry a low voltage line and details had been circulated. In addition, a new wayleave agreement for the poles, stays and cables currently in place on the village green had been drafted. No objections were raised but it was agreed that the Clerk would consult the residents of 24 West View before confirming the Council's agreement.

TR also reported that Northern Powergrid had sought permission to cut back tree branches at the top of the village green that were overhanging the power lines and he had agreed to them going ahead with this work.

10. **Parish Council website, gov.uk domain and emails**

There were further discussions around whether to keep the current website or to purchase a new site. Parish Online were offering a free email for the parish clerk (for up to 5 years) and would obtain the gov.uk domain, but remained an expensive option for follow-up support for the website. DW offered to obtain a quote for a new website, domain and emails from a family member who ran an IT business and this would be discussed at the next meeting.

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

*Upgrading the kitchen*

SW had obtained a verbal quote of £1850 to fit the kitchen and £350 for skip hire; however, there would be extra charges for the flooring, plumbing and electrical work. She would try to obtain a written quote for the work and would continue to contract fitters from the list supplied by Howdens.

*Windfarm Community Fund applications - update*

Applications had been made to the two smaller funds but a decision would take up to 12 weeks. DW and JT had considered some options for new tables and chairs for the hall. It was agreed that DW would determine the number of tables needed, along with the cost, and would provide an update at the next meeting.

*S106 play area project - update*

The Clerk had contacted Wicksteed to order the self-closing gate and had also spoken to Richard Curtis regarding pressure washing the equipment and repairing the surface. DCC had been informed that the multi-play unit could not be painted until spring/summer 2026.

12. **Future Projects**

The issue of maintenance of the nature reserve and meadow was raised and, in particular, that the seat in the middle of the meadow needed repairing. There was discussion about commissioning a new seat but as DCC owned the site, it was difficult for the Parish Council to take action. Leasing the site from DCC had been previously suggested but the problem remained of individuals needing to be named on the lease. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Tammy Morris-Hale, Senior Ecologist, regarding plans for the meadow.

13. **Members' reports**

None to report.

14. **Clerk's report**

**Financial**

*Payments made in July, August and September 2025:*

Wave	£ 150.00	Village hall water charges: April – July 2025
NALC	£ 42.00	Webinar booking
Decorating by Design	£ 1260.00	Village hall exterior painting
Zurich Municipal	£ 675.79	Insurance
G Bell	£ 447.63	July salary & IT costs
MedUK Group	£ 66.00	Defibrillator pads
TalkMobile	£ 6.95	Village hall WiFi – August
Octopus Energy	£ 44.30	Village hall electricity charges: July 2025
Lloyds Bank	£ 4.40	Monthly service charge
G Bell	£ 515.88	August salary, backpay & IT costs
WordPress	£ 88.05	Website renewal
Octopus Energy	£ 43.13	Village hall electricity charges: August 2025
TalkMobile	£ 6.95	Village hall WiFi - September
Lloyds Bank	£ 4.40	Monthly service charge
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 3286.05</b>	

*Payments received:*

Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 20.00	Village hall hire (July)
R Wright	£ 30.00	Village hall hire (July)
Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 20.00	Village hall hire (September)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 70.00</b>	

*Petty cash float: £1.88*

- *NALC webinar* – the Clerk had attended this webinar on funding sources beyond the precept. There was a focus on seeking and applying for grants, as well as money available from principal authorities through schemes such as the Section 106 funding. Other suggestions included seeking sponsorship, crowdfunding, local fund raising and investments.
- *DCC consultations* – Two new public consultations have been launched: Budget Proposals for 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/7-2029/30, and Exceptions to the Empty and Unfurnished Properties and Second Homes Council Tax Premium. Further information is available on the [letstalkcountydurham.co.uk](http://letstalkcountydurham.co.uk) website, which gives details on how to respond.

15. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 23 October 2025 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe  
Chair  
23 October 2025