

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

Cllrs: Pete Ayling (PA), Judith Patrick (JP), Tony Reeve (TR), Sarah Stuart (SS), Deb Warde (DW)

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Jean Thorburn, County Cllr Matt Burnard, PC Matthew Thompson

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.

- A farm quad bike was stolen from East Hedleyhope on 3 November – crime number CRI00643226.
- A horse which was assumed to have died of natural causes at Hedley Hill was subsequently found to have been shot by a crossbow – crime number CRI00646949.
- Multiple dead sheep have been found in a field at Cornsay Colliery with injuries consistent with dog bites and being chased. Poachers are suspected to be responsible – crime number CRI00649495.

Anyone who has seen anything or has any information regarding these incidents is asked to contact Durham Police on 101, quoting the crime number.

6. **Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 23 October 2025**

Proposed by DW, seconded by JP.

7. **Budget update**

Balance as of 25 November 2025:

Income: £10076.19

Expenditure: £10892.96

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Windfarm Community Fund (seating project): £1803.00

Windfarm Community Fund (lighting project): £695.76

The bank reconciliation for October 2025 had been circulated.

8. **2026/27 Precept**

The budget calculations for 2026/27 had been circulated. Most of the council's expenditure continues to relate to running costs for the village hall. Income sources include hall hire, an annual wayleave payment of £110.07 and interest from Unity Trust Bank, but these were limited and it would be a priority to increase hire of the hall in the coming year. It was noted that it was unlikely that DCC would be paying the LCTRS grant in the coming financial year and it was proposed to increase the precept by 5% to £6215.23. All agreed.

9. **New Parish Council website**

The link to the new website had been shared. DW suggested making it clear to users what the parish council was responsible for and also adding new photos on the home page, including ones showing the interior of the village hall. TR agreed to take some photos for the website and the Clerk would add text relating to the council's responsibilities. SW noted that there was no obvious way to return the home page from other pages on the site and the Clerk would pass this on to Sean. The following were also agreed: the domain name (hedleyhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk), the email name format, that only two years of meeting minutes would be added to the website and that councillors would provide a photo for the contact page but individual bios would not be included.

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

Upgrading the kitchen

DW had spoken to the owner of the local handyman service but he was not interested in taking on the work. She agreed to approach DCBS for a quote and JP would check if JT had been able to obtain details of another kitchen fitter.

New tables and chairs for the village hall

DW had provided a quote for the new tables, chairs and seat pads, which had a total cost of £2639, with an additional delivery charge of £12.99.

Windfarm Community Fund applications - update

The funding for both projects had now been received. The picture frames and exterior lights had been purchased and the Clerk had contacted the electrician regarding fitting the lights. DW and SS would choose the photos for the picture frames.

S106 play area project - update

Wicksteed had installed the self-closing gate on the play area. DCC had agreed to increase the grant by £324.40 to cover the additional cost of the materials for the play area surface repairs and the Clerk would discuss this with Richard Curtis.

Christmas tree, lights and decorations (JT)

JT had suggested a living Christmas tree for the village but there was an issue about where to plant it, as the soil quality around the village hall was poor and the area was

boggy. As an alternative, it was proposed to put lights on the tree on the bus turnaround. DW offered to look for suitable lights and batteries, and a budget of £50 – 100 was agreed.

11. Future Projects

Maintenance of the paths around the meadow and the path from West View to the meadow was discussed, including purchasing equipment, although it was recognised that this would rely on volunteers being willing to carry out the work involved. This could be considered further as part of a larger bid to the Windfarm Community Fund.

12. 20 mph speed limit past the play area (TR)

TR suggested requesting 20 mph signs for the road between the Old Chapel Garage and the bus turnaround, which went past the play area. It was also a way to have a reminder sign that the speed limit through the rest of the village was 30 mph, given that drivers frequently ignored this. SW indicated that having additional 30 mph signs in the village had been discussed with former councillor Marion Wilson, but they had not been installed. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact DCC to look into a community speed watch to establish a need for the new signs. If this was ultimately unsuccessful, traffic calming measures could be another option.

Planning applications received

DM/25/02669/FPA *Temporary erection of a meteorological monitoring mast up to 100m in height, with guy wires and associated anemometry measuring equipment. Wind Farm At High Hedleyhope Farm, High Hedleyhope Farm Road, East Hedleyhope DL13 4PR*

DM/25/03128/VOC *Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) pursuant to DM/24/00493/FPA including first floor rear extension, internal reconfiguration, and 2no windows to east elevation - School House Hedley Hill Durham DH7 9EU*

No objections were raised to either application.

13. Members' reports

None to report.

14. Clerk's report

Financial

Payments made in October and November 2025:

Wave	£ 81.39	Village hall water charges: July – Oct 2025
G Bell	£ 461.28	October salary & IT costs
TalkMobile	£ 6.95	Village hall WiFi – October 2025
Octopus Energy	£ 74.42	Village hall electricity charges: Oct 2025
Lloyds Bank	£ 4.40	Monthly service charge – Oct 2025
Wicksteed	£ 3522.00	Play area self-closing gate
Amazon	£ 66.84	Picture frames for village hall
CEF	£ 287.52	Village hall exterior festoon lights
Total:	£ 4504.80	

Payments received:

Art Group	£ 50.00	Village hall hire
Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 20.00	Village hall hire

Point North	£ 1803.00	Windfarm Community Fund (seating project)
Point North	£ 994.00	Windfarm Community Fund (lighting project)
Total:	£ 2867.00	

Petty cash float: £1.88

- The Art Group wished to return to the village hall in 2026 and had asked if they could continue with the £5/hour hire rate. Following discussion it was agreed that the cost would have to be increased to the standard rate of £10/hour. The Clerk will let Chris Ruskin know.
- Information provided by JT regarding elections for the CDALC executive committee was shared.
- Heating service – the Clerk had contacted Geowarmth but they were not arranging any servicing until March/April 2026.
- The Clerk had arranged the village hall PAT/fire extinguisher testing for January 2026.
- The Clerk was asked to report to DCC the damaged tree near the Old Chapel Garage and barbed wire from the meadow fencing replacement which had been left at the side of the pavement.

Proposed dates for 2026 meetings

The Clerk would circulate a list of proposed meeting dates for 2026.

15. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 27 January 2026 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
27 January 2026