

Chair of the Council:
Cllr Janet Snowball



Clerk:
Mr Richard Ormerod
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Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held Monday 19 January 2026 at 7pm in West Cornforth Community Centre, Station Road, Cornforth, DL17 9LA.

Present: Councillors J Snowball (in the Chair), J Beetham-Yelland, N Coombs, P Crathorne, M Cunningham, P Drew, P Metcalfe, S Metcalfe & R Vaughan.

In attendance: Mr R Ormerod (Parish Clerk) and one member of the public.

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| 1 | <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor V Parnaby.</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and accept the apologies.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>The Chair invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Members' dispensation</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Public participation</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Minutes</p> <p>Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 8 December 2025</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8 December 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair at this meeting.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Chair's Announcements</p> <p>The Chair reported that Jean Grafton had resigned from the parish council for health reasons. She was formally thanked for her contributions.</p> <p>It was noted that the Christmas tree was still in place.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk contact the installers to check when it is due to be removed.</p> <p>It was noted that there was an iron box on the council's land at Middleham Road. The Clerk had contacted Durham County Council (DCC) to ask what it was for but had received no answer. It had been suggested that the box was connected to installation of fibre broadband, but also that it was storing equipment for path resurfacing.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk contact DCC again.</p> |
| 7 | <p>County Councillor's report</p> |

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| | <p>County Councillor Jan Blakey reported that a leaflet had been produced by DCC giving information about special wristbands that can be supplied to people with dementia.</p> <p>There was no further progress in relation to DCC taking over management of the churchyard.</p> <p>There had been a lack of communication with the local quarry over trucks spilling debris onto roads in the village and meetings had stopped. It was thought that, as the local quarrying companies had signed up to the Good Operators' Charter, that they should be prepared to resume meetings with the local community.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk write to Claire Teasdale and Stephen Reed at DCC asking that meetings be set up again.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk contact the Environment Agency asking what action can be taken about the pollution, and if this is not successful, the Clerk to contact the Health & Safety Executive.</p> <p>County Councillor Gary Hutchinson reported that he was looking into having CCTV cameras in the High Street upgraded.</p> <p>Efforts were being made with the Regional Mayor to try to get more bus services in the parish.</p> <p>Resolved: To receive the report.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Police And Communities Together (PACT)</p> <p>Cllr N Coombs had attended a recent meeting. Issues included fly-tipping (various locations), anti-social behaviour in the High Street, illegal poaching of deer on land near the quarry, a confused person in the village, a car fire on Garmondsway Road and illegal use of motorbikes.</p> <p>It was reported that illegal quad bike use had reduced recently.</p> <p>It was noted that the police were looking at setting up a Speedwatch scheme in the village.</p> <p>Resolved: To receive the report.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Clerk's update</p> <p>The Clerk had circulated a written report.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: That the council receive the report.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Planning</p> <p>No issues were raised.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Financial matters</p> <p>Members had received the Receipts and Payments Analysis for December 2025, the bank reconciliation at 31 December 2025, the expenditure against budget analysis from 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025 and the list of pending payments. It was noted that the council had £46,072.71 in its current account and £269,202.64 in the reserve account.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the Receipts and Payments Analysis for December 2025.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the bank reconciliation at 31 December 2025 and</p> |

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| | <p>for it to be signed by Cllr P Drew.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the expenditure against budget analysis for the period 1 April to 31 December 2025.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr M Cunningham and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To approve the pending payments.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Council budget and precept for 2026-27</p> <p>It was noted that the council would lose £18,360 as a result of the likely cessation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grants by Durham County Council.</p> <p>The Chair and Clerk had drawn up a draft budget for 2026-27 in response to the decisions taken in December 2025. A series of possible options had been presented in the Clerk's report.</p> <p>Members wished to reduce the provision for miscellaneous grants from £5,000 to £2,500.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr M Cunningham and seconded by Cllr P Drew, and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council set a budget of 98,644 for 2026-27.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the level at which to set the council's precept for 2026-27.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr P Drew and seconded by Cllr N Coombs that the council set a precept of £70,774 for 2026-27 (a 3.6% increase in line with inflation).</p> <p>A vote took place and there were three votes in favour, five against and one abstention.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe that the council set a precept of £68,316 for 2026-27 (a 0% increase).</p> <p>A vote took place and there were five votes in favour, three against and one abstention.</p> <p>Resolved: That the council request a precept of £68,316 from Durham County Council for 2026-27.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Council reserves</p> <p>A discussion took place on earmarked reserves. It was noted that the amount set aside for budget support needed to change in the light of the earlier decision on the budget.</p> <p>Resolved: That the council's list of earmarked reserves be as follows (£):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,800 Allotment improvements. • 7,365 Rockery/Shrubbery improvements in the Memorial Park. • 3,000 Improvements to seating, planters and bin in Station Road. • 2,000 Elections • 100,000 Purchase of 64 High Street • 35,000 Replacement play equipment and surfacing. • 10,908 Budget support. |
| 14 | <p>Asset register</p> <p>The asset register had been circulated to members.</p> <p>It was noted that a computer desk had been purchased and not added to the register.</p> |

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| | <p>It was noted that the council no longer had the speedwatch signs.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor P Metcalfe and seconded by Councillor M Cunningham and it was;</p> <p>Resolved: That the asset register be updated to include the computer desk and exclude the speedwatch signs.</p> <p>Resolved: That the issue be discussed again in February 2026 after members have had time to check whether the council possesses bus shelters and benches as indicated in the current register.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Annual play equipment inspection</p> <p>Members had been given details of two quotes received for carrying out the annual inspection.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Beetham-Yelland and seconded by Councillor S Metcalfe, and it was;</p> <p>Resolved: That the council commission the providers of Quote 1 (Creative Play) to carry out the annual play equipment inspection.</p> |
| 16 | <p>Schedule of meetings for 2026-27 (including the Annual Parish Meeting)</p> <p>A discussion took place.</p> <p>Resolved: That the council continue to meet on the second Monday of the month with the exceptions of August (when it does not meet) and January (when it shall meet on the third Monday).</p> <p>Resolved: To hold the next meeting of the Allotment Committee on 13 April 2026 (before the meeting of the council).</p> <p>Resolved: To hold the Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 15 May if available or Friday 22 May.</p> |
| 17 | <p>Motions on notice: None.</p> |

Signed

Date