

Chair of the Council:
Cllr Janet Snowball



Clerk:
Mr Richard Ormerod
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Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held Monday 9 February 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, S Metcalfe, V Parnaby & R Vaughan.

In attendance: Mr R Ormerod (Parish Clerk), County Councillors Jan Blakey and Gary Hutchinson, and six members of the public.

1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors P Crathorne, M Cunningham, P Drew & P Metcalfe.</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>The Chair declared an interest in item 12a as a member of the Thrislington Banner Group.</p>
3	<p>Members' dispensation</p> <p>None.</p>
4	<p>Public participation</p> <p>Representatives of West Cornforth Miners FC were in attendance and gave a brief overview of the club's current position for the benefit of members. It was noted that the club already had the council's grant application form for when it is needed.</p> <p>A member of the public drew to the council's attention to the state of the land opposite the newspaper shop.</p>
5	<p>Minutes</p> <p>Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 19 January 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr S Metcalfe and seconded by Cllr V Parnaby, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 19 January 2026 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 following the resignation of Jean Grafton from the parish council for health reasons no election had been called to fill the vacancy. This means that the council can now co-opt in order to fill the vacancy.</p> <p>It was noted that the Christmas tree had been removed.</p> <p>There had been complaints of waste piling up in the churchyard.</p> <p>The Chair reported on a recent Livin Housing stakeholder meeting attended along with Cllr</p>

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	<p>R Vaughan. They had met with the new Housing Officer for the area and an estate “walkabout” was planned for March.</p> <p>It was noted that the idea of parish council “surgeries” was being trialled by the Clerk, possibly to take place on alternate Monday afternoons. The Clerk urged councillors to be involved, possibly on a rota basis.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk continue to pursue the idea of parish council surgeries for residents to attend with their issues and concerns.</p>
7	<p>County Councillor’s report</p> <p>County Councillor Jan Blakey reported that the quarry had received further planning permission for excavation. There were some concerns about the impact on traffic 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. It was noted that these were now held on Thursdays. There had been no serious concerns but some low-level events.</p> <p>It was reported that illegal quad bike use had reduced recently.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to Durham County Council’s Dementia Safeguarding Scheme.</p> <p>The mess caused by travellers in Oak Terrace had not been cleared up.</p> <p>Two youths carrying shotguns had been intercepted by police near the quarry and warned.</p> <p>There had been a report of a burglary on Hawthorn Terrace.</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 V Parnaby 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 January 2026, the bank reconciliation at 31 January 2026, the expenditure against budget analysis from 1 April 2025 to 31 January 2026 and the list of pending payments. It was noted that the council had £34,418.60 in its current account and £269,925.95 in the reserve account.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the Receipts and Payments Analysis for January 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the bank reconciliation at 31 January 2026 and for it to be signed by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland (in the absence of Cllr P Drew).</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr V Parnaby and seconded by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the expenditure against budget analysis for the</p>

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	<p>period 1 April to 31 January 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr V Parnaby, and it was Resolved: To approve the pending payments.</p>
12	<p>Grant applications</p> <p>a) Durham Hospitals Radio</p> <p>A letter had been received from the charity requesting financial assistance with general running costs. The charity subsequently completed the parish council's application form. It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was: Resolved: That the council donate £200 to Durham Hospitals Radio.</p> <p>Cllr J Snowball left the room. Resolved: That Cllr J Beetham-Yelland take the chair for the next item.</p> <p>b) Thrislington Banner Group</p> <p>An application had been received for financial assistance with their Eve Of Gala event in July 2026. It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was: Resolved: That the council donate £1000 to the Thrislington Banner Group.</p>
13	<p>Asset register</p> <p>The updated asset register had been circulated to members. A discussion took place. It was considered unclear as to whether or not the council no longer had the speedwatch signs as the posts are still there. It was proposed by Councillor R Vaughan and seconded by Councillor N Coombs and it was; Resolved: That the Clerk contact DCC's Public Transport section to find out whether the parish council still owns the posts and any bus shelters. The asset register to be updated accordingly.</p>
14	<p>Play surface replacement, Bill Wilson Memorial Park</p> <p>Members had been provided with two quotes for replacement of the wetpour surface at the play area with identifying information redacted. Members had been shown different options for adding an item of play equipment in the toddler play area using the grant of £6,007 offered by Ashcourt Tees Valley based on quotes received from three companies, with identifying information redacted. A discussion took place. Members were minded to put out a new tender for the full removal of all items from the toddler play area, including the wetpour surface and the brick "compass" surface, and a tender for replacement of all the play equipment, on the basis that it was better to replace everything in one go rather than doing piecemeal improvements. The Clerk advised members that this was possible but might result in the loss of the grant. Resolved: That the Clerk contact Ashcourt Tees Valley to ask if they would instead be prepared to donate the £6,007 as a contribution to the larger project. Resolved: That the Clerk seek quotes from at least three companies for the full stripping out of the toddler play area. Resolved: That the Clerk seek quotes from at least three companies for the replacement of all the equipment in the toddler play area.</p>

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15	<p>Additional play equipment</p> <p>Covered under item 14 above.</p>
16	<p>Goal posts, Stobb Cross play area</p> <p>Members had been provided with several quotes for supply and installation of new goal posts at the Stobb Cross recreation area, with identifying information redacted. A discussion took place.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr V Parnaby and it was:</p> <p><i>Resolved: That the council award the work to company D (supply) and company G (installation).</i></p>
17	<p>Memorials to Dr Drew</p> <p>The Clerk reported on progress towards three items, a memorial plaque in West Cornforth Medical Centre, a memorial planter in the grounds of the medical centre (owned by DCC) and a memorial stone in the woodland area (owned by the Woodland Trust). It was noted that progress was slow on the latter two items, as DCC was asking for a £120 fee for planning advice on siting of the planter. The Clerk would see if this could be rescinded as it seemed unreasonable. It was also noted that the Woodland Trust would not change the name of the woodland.</p> <p><i>Resolved: That the council set up a task group consisting of the Clerk, Cllr J Beetham-Yelland and Cllr V Parnaby to progress the above items. Cllr P Drew to be consulted on details and kept updated.</i></p>
18	<p>From Decline to Renewal: Breathing New Life into Britain's High Streets</p> <p>Cllr J Beetham-Yelland had attended a recent online conference on the topic run by Policy Foresight and had provided a written report.</p> <p><i>Resolved: To receive the report and thank Cllr J Beetham-Yelland for representing the council.</i></p>
19	<p>Motions on notice: None.</p>

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