

Chair of the Council:
Cllr Janet Snowball



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

Present: Councillors J Snowball (in the Chair), N Coombs, P Drew, S Metcalfe, P Metcalfe & 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 J Beetham-Yelland, P Crathorne, M Cunningham & V Parnaby.</p> <p><i>Resolved: To receive and accept the apologies.</i></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><i>Cllr P Drew declared an interest in item 12b as a member of the board of the Cornforth Partnership.</i></p> <p><i>Cllr R Vaughan declared an interest in item 12a.</i></p>
3	<p>Members' dispensation</p> <p>None.</p>
4	<p>Public participation</p> <p>A member of the public asked whether the parish council was doing anything as part of Durham County Council's Big Spring Clean. They were advised that it is not.</p> <p>A member of the public drew attention to the fence on Station Road. They were advised that the parish council has been drawing the attention of DCC to this for some time.</p> <p>A representative of the charity Checkmate expressed interest in placing a memorial seat on the village green (which they would fund). They were advised to contact the Clerk.</p> <p>A member of the public reported that there had been horses grazing on Livin land off Station Road, which is not permitted.</p>
5	<p>Minutes</p> <p>Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 9 February 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr S Metcalfe, and it was</p> <p><i>Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9 February 2026 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair at this meeting.</i></p>
6	<p>Chair's Announcements</p> <p>The Chair reported that Helen Gibson had resigned from the parish council due to</p>

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	<p>expanded work commitments. There was a two-week period in which an election could be called if that were to be requested by at least ten electors.</p> <p>The Chair reported on a Livin Housing stakeholder meeting attended along with Cllr R Vaughan and the Clerk. It was hoped that the probation service would assist in clearing Holy Trinity churchyard. It was noted that Livin had offered to fund (at least in part) the parish council's newsletters.</p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that it was her intention to resign from the council following the April 2026 meeting.</p> <p>Resolved: To receive the announcements.</p>
7	<p>County Councillor's report</p> <p>County Councillor Gary Hutchinson reported that there had been complaints about off-road motorbikes on the roads in the village.</p> <p>It was noted that the county councillors would be attending the Thrislington liaison meeting in April.</p> <p>County Councillor Jan Blakey reported that when travellers arrive in the area the site is immediately reported to DCC so that welfare checks can be carried out.</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. Topics included horses on the roads, a burglary in Hawthorn Terrace, illegal quad bike use, an abandoned vehicle on the Mainsforth Road, suspicious activity in Stobb Cross Road and fly tipping by Thrislington Quarry.</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 R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr S Metcalfe, 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 February 2026, the bank reconciliation at 28 February 2026, the expenditure against budget analysis from 1 April 2025 to 28 February 2026 and the list of pending payments. It was noted that the council had £28,081.97 in its current account and £270,796.54 in the reserve account.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr S Metcalfe, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the Receipts and Payments Analysis for February 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr S Metcalfe, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To receive and approve the bank reconciliation at 28 February 2026 and for it to be signed by Cllr P Drew.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr S Metcalfe and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan, 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 28 February 2026.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr P Metcalfe and seconded by Cllr P Drew, and it was</p> <p>Resolved: To approve the pending payments.</p>
12	<p>Grant applications</p> <p>a) West Cornforth Miners FC</p> <p>An application had been received from the club requesting financial assistance with clothing for the players. The charity subsequently completed the parish council's application form. A discussion took place in which it was established that the clothing will belong to the club and must be returned when players leave.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr R Vaughan and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council donate £999 to West Cornforth Miners FC.</p> <p>Cllr P Drew left the room.</p> <p>b) Cornforth Partnership</p> <p>An application had been received for financial assistance with general running costs.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council donate £6000 to the Cornforth Partnership and to request details of which other parish councils the partnership has approached for funding.</p> <p>c) Great North Air Ambulance</p> <p>It was noted that no request had been received from the charity in the current financial year but that there were funds set aside in the budget.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council donate £500 to the Great North Air Ambulance if a request is received before the end of the current financial year.</p>
13	<p>Service level agreement with Durham County Council for the inspection and maintenance of fixed play equipment 2026-27</p> <p>A discussion took place.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor P Drew and seconded by Councillor N Coombs and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council agree to proceed with the service level agreement for 2026-27.</p>
14	<p>Play equipment and surfacing, Bill Wilson Memorial Park</p> <p>Members had been provided with two quotes for replacement of the play equipment and wetpour surface at the play area with identifying information redacted.</p> <p>It was noted that at least two other companies were interested in tendering for the work but had not had time to finalise tenders.</p> <p>Resolved: That the council defer its decision until April 2026 to allow for more quotes to be considered.</p>
15	<p>Co-option of councillors to Cornforth Parish Council</p> <p>The Clerk had circulated the current policy and a draft updated policy (based on best practice recommended by the National Association of Local Councils).</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr P Drew and it was:</p>

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	<p>Resolved: That the council adopt the draft revised policy.</p> <p>It was noted that there are currently four vacancies on the council which can be filled by co-option but that this could increase in the next few weeks.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr P Drew and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council go ahead and immediately implement its new policy to try to fill the vacancies by co-option.</p>
16	<p>Letter of thanks to volunteer litter pickers</p> <p>A discussion took place.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr J Snowball and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was:</p> <p>Resolved: That the council invite nominations via Facebook, noticeboards and its website of people who have contributed to keeping the parish tidy through litter picking. These will then receive a letter of thanks from the Chair (the Clerk to draft the letter).</p>
17	<p>Motions on notice: None.</p>
18	<p>In Private: Terms and conditions of employment for the Clerk</p> <p>Resolved: That the Clerk be employed at scale point 32 for the financial year 2026-27.</p>

Signed

Date