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Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held Monday 21 September 2026 at 7pm in West Cornforth Community Centre, Station Road, Cornforth, DL17 9LA.

Present: Councillors Joanne Beetham-Yelland (in the Chair), Nick Coombs, Pauline Crathorne, Carole Hesp (from 7:45pm), Paul Metcalfe, Susan Metcalfe, Rasheed Vaughan & Malcolm Williams.

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

1	Apologies Apologies were received from Councillors Pat Drew, Linden Parkins & Michaela Thompson. <i>Resolved: To receive and accept the apologies.</i>
2	Declarations of interest The Chair invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting. <i>Cllrs J Beetham-Yelland, P Metcalfe and S Metcalfe declared an interest in item 13.</i> <i>Cllr R Vaughan declared an interest in item 19.</i>
3	Members' dispensation None.
4	Public participation A member of the public drew the council's attention to the state of the notice board on the High Street. It was noted that the Clerk had made several unsuccessful attempts to contact the manufacturer about repairs. The Clerk also clarified the policy on use of parish council notice boards by other organisations. <i>Resolved: That the Clerk raise the issue again with the manufacturer.</i>
5	Minutes Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20 July 2026. It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was <i>Resolved: That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20 July 2026 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair at this meeting, subject to the addition of the name of the councillor seconding the proposal on item 9 (Cllr Coombs).</i>
6	Chair's Announcements The Chair had attended Scribefest, a day-long training session and had won a prize during the event.

Signed

Date

	The Chair reported that the Probation Service would be able to paint the fences in the Memorial Park in October if the parish council provided the paint. It was noted that the Village Show had been a success.
7	County Councillor's report County Councillors Blakey and Hutchinson informed the meeting that information on the cost of CCTV cameras from DCC was still awaited. The county councillors had attended the most recent PACT meeting. It was noted that a village "walkabout" was due soon. A discussion took place on Moneys Buildings. It was noted that prices had been received for replacing the frontage at Cornforth House but due to the high cost this was not seen as a priority.
8	Police And Communities Together (PACT) Cllr N Coombs had attended a recent meeting. It was noted that the number of reported incidents was significantly lower. It was noted that the police had attended the village fun day. It was noted that the village's PCSO had been nominated for a national award. It was noted that an information pack for vulnerable residents was available. Topics included: • A firearms incident on the bridge (for which nobody was apprehended). • Cables stolen from quarries. • Criminal damage to vehicles in Elvet Close. <i>Resolved: To receive the report.</i>
9	Clerk's update The Clerk had circulated a written report. It was noted that there were still issues with Tarmac lorries coming through the village early in the morning. Members were encouraged to contact Mr Gary Stokoe to set up council email addresses, if they had not done so already. It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was <i>Resolved: That the council receive the report.</i> <i>Resolved: That the Clerk set up a meeting between the Chair and Tarmac to discuss vehicular issues in the village.</i>
10	Planning No issues were raised.
11	Financial matters Members had received the Receipts and Payments Analysis for July and August 2026, the bank reconciliation at 31 August 2026, the expenditure against budget analysis from 1 April 2026 to 31 August 2026 and the list of pending payments. It was noted that the council had £22,001.54 in its current account and £275,921.78 in the reserve account. It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was

Signed

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	<i>Resolved: To receive and approve the Receipts and Payments Analysis for July and August 2026.</i> It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan, and it was <i>Resolved: To receive and approve the bank reconciliation at 31 August 2026 and for it to be signed by Cllr P Crathorne.</i> It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan, and it was <i>Resolved: To receive and approve the expenditure against budget analysis for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 August 2026.</i> It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was <i>Resolved: To approve the pending payments.</i>
12	In Private: Co-option of a councillor An application for co-option to Cornforth Parish Council had been received from Carole Hesp. The applicant gave a short presentation to members and a question-and-answer session followed. It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan that Carole Hesp be co-opted to the council. This was unanimously supported by members. <i>Resolved: That Carole Hesp be co-opted to Cornforth Parish Council with immediate effect.</i> <i>The new member signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.</i>
13	Allotments The Chair gave a report. It was noted that the Probation Service would be able to provide workers to flatten the existing paving slabs and add new ones. It was noted that the grant received from the National Lottery could be used to provide nature cameras. <i>Resolved: To receive the report.</i>
14	Parish Council Newsletter A draft version was circulated to members which left space for a possible article on the Christmas pantomime. A discussion took place. <i>Resolved: To approve content of the newsletter with the addition of stories on the Halloween Party and Christmas pantomime.</i> A draft policy on advertising in the newsletter had been drawn up by the Clerk with AI assistance and had been circulated to members. It was proposed by Cllr P Metcalfe and seconded by Cllr R and it was <i>Resolved: That the council adopt the policy on advertising in its newsletters.</i>
15	North East Bus Franchising Consultation Members felt strongly that the parish had been neglected for many years when it came to public transport provision and this had resulted in a deterioration in opportunities for residents, leading to “transport poverty”, social isolation and younger people deciding to leave the parish. It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr M Williams and it was

	Resolved: That the council make representations to the consultation calling for: • More frequent and more reliable services to Durham City and Bishop Auckland. • Services into Spennymoor. • Diversion of the route of the X12 service (Newcastle to Middlesbrough) so that at least some services serve the parish of Cornforth.
16	Local Networks Funding A discussion took place. Cllr P Crathorne expressed concern that there was no parish council representation on the Local Network. Various ideas were put forward for possible funding bids, including a dog park on Laburnum Road, CCTV at the top of the village, a speed indicator on Garmondsway Road and allotments It was proposed by Cllr P Drew and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was: Resolved: That the Clerk find out how the parish council can be fairly represented on the Local Network. Resolved: That the council apply for funding for CCTV at the top of the village (the Clerk to liaise with Cllr N Coombs and County Councillor Gary Hutchinson on making the bid) and report back to the October meeting of the council. If this is not possible then funding for a dog park be sought instead.
17	Road surface repairs, The Green, Cornforth A discussion took place on the three quotes received from contractors, all of whom had met on site with the Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr N Coombs and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was Resolved: That the council accept quote 1, option 1, for repair of the road surface on The Green, at a cost of £14,475.
18	The Green, Cornforth (benches) One quote for the provision of two benches had been received, outlining different options. A discussion took place. It was proposed by Cllr P Crathorne and seconded by Cllr P Metcalfe and it was Resolved: That the council provide two 4-foot long benches on The Green, subject to receiving payment in advance from the residents wishing to have them dedicated to friends/relations.
19	Christmas pantomime, West Cornforth Community Centre A discussion took place. It was proposed by Cllr J Beetham-Yelland and seconded by Cllr P Crathorne and it was Resolved: That the council supports in principle the funding of a Christmas pantomime in West Cornforth Community Centre this year, with a contribution of up to £1,500 to be made available.
20	Motions on notice: None.
	Resolved: To hold the next meetings at 6pm, reverting to 7pm in April 2027.