

Minutes of the Belmont Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th February 2025 in Belmont Community Centre at 6:30pm.

Present: C.A. Fletcher (Chair) and L. Mavin (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M.P. Bennett, P.S. Conway, P.J. Conway, V. Hawes, K. Noble, C.A. Lattin, E.S. Mavin, A.C. Walker, M. Watson and S.C. White.

Also present: Mrs S. Overton (Clerk)

Members of the public (5)

24.99 To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Appleby, J. Knight and A.P. Watkins.

RECEIVED.

24.100 To Receive Declarations of Interest.

Members Please Note: - this is a standard item. If Members are aware of a personal prejudicial interest in relation to any item on the agenda this should be disclosed at this stage or when the interest becomes apparent during the consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members. This item is linked to your Declaration of Members Interest forms please consult these forms when reading these Notes on agenda items to ensure compliance with this item.

RECEIVED.

24.101 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

(a) Police

An email has been received from Kevin Hall, Sergeant, Sherburn Road Police Station giving details of the updated Neighbourhood Policing Team area staffing for Sherburn NPT and contact details to directly contact the officers for the area/village. He also said the team were now at full staffing capacity with 4 x PC's and 4 x PCSO's, which is the first time in a couple of years. The team will continue to be focused on preventing and deterring Crime and anti-social behaviour to reduce the number of victims and pursue those committing crime.

Crime statistics and PACT meetings for your area/s can be found on <https://www.police.uk/>

(b) Community Warden

No report received.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

(c) Members of the Public.

A member of the public raised a concern regarding a lamp on the footpath flickering on Moorfield.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the increasing amount of vape stickers being stuck on litter bins from vape users, making the neighbourhood unsightly and said the situation should be addressed. Councillor Conway to compile a report regarding the redesign of litter bins in the parish.

Hannah Shepherd – Durham University Liaison Manager was invited to the meeting to address ongoing concerns regarding student HMO,s and acknowledged in the past there had been a crisis situation where students/ had been queuing for a house and post graduates looking for accommodation. She will be monitoring population changes which fluctuate and will be happy to produce data for the Neighbourhood Plan and will work with Durham County Council to see how many beds spaces there are in the private rented sector. The exercise will be repeated annually to obtain data for the Durham University Housing Hub. It was suggested that Durham University needed to look at its Students Strategy and its own bed spaces. Hannah Shepherd responded saying now we know where there is a need we are working hard to fixing previous issues which had occurred in 2022.

Hannah Shepherd was thanked for her attendance and helpful input and was invited to attend a further meeting in the future.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

- 24.102 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the meeting of Belmont Parish Council held on 12th December 2024 – Minutes attached*
AGREED.

- 24.103 To Receive matters of information, Clerk’s Report, Correspondence Tabled Items – for information.

A concern raised by a grave owner regarding the amount of water accumulating on her late husband’s grave resulting from the recent spell of heavy rainfall. The grave in question has since been topped up with soil by the cemetery contractor and the issue has now been resolved.

Payments have been made to Madhouse Media regarding domain renewal, bronze level hosting and support package for 2025/2026.

- 24.104 To Consider Risk Management in relation to items on the Agenda.

Members please note: - this is a standard item. Risk Management has been considered when compiling these notes for February and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.

RECEIVED.

- 24.105 To Consider offer from Belmont United to carry out drainage works on Moorfield Football Pitch, free of charge. (A representative from Belmont United will be in attendance to answer questions.)

A representative from Belmont United enquired if councillors would consider an offer from the club who are willing to carry out drainage works on Moorfield football free of charge as the football pitch is currently flooded and unplayable. Councillor Mavin was concerned that the parish council would be liable if the drainage works were done for free. The Chair to contact Durham County Council to clarify if any football pitch improvements had previously been undertaken and if so, what was exactly done. The Chair to also ask for current information on the usage and maintenance of the pitch.

A concern was raised regarding youths doing ‘doughnuts’ on Moorfield causing damage to the ground.

A concern was also raised regarding two local football teams playing a match without seeking permission, consequently causing considerable damage to the wet pitch. Durham County Council to assess the situation when ground conditions improve.

The representative was thanked by the Chair for his attendance and input.

24.106 To Discuss Anti-Social Behaviour in the vicinity of Lime Cragg Avenue.

Following a concern raised by a resident regarding a shopping trolley which had been put on the roof of his property allegedly from antisocial behaviour, the Neighbourhood Warden is undertaking regular checks in the area to monitor any future problems. A suggestion was made whether the lane could be blocked off at either end with gates to deter antisocial behaviour however ownership of the land would need confirming which may prove difficult. If ownership is confirmed it may be possible to do this.

AGREED: to look at placing bollards at both ends of the back lane following the May elections if ownership is not confirmed by the Land Registry.

24.107 To Receive Committee Reports:

(a) Finance – to consider financial matters – see attached*

A report was given by Councillor Bennett (Chair) which included the following: -

1. To Receive Finance and Asset Committee Minutes – see attached*

AGREED.

2. To Receive Receipts and Payments during the month of January 2025 – see attached*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

3. To Receive bank reconciliation during the month of January 2025

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

The Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee was thanked for his diligent work on Financial matters.

(b) Planning

Councillor P.S. Conway (Chair) gave an update on planning matters.

1. Weekly Planning Applications for January 2025– see attached*

RECEIVED.

2. Countywide Delegated for January 2025 - see attached*

RECEIVED.

3. Planning Report January 2025 – see attached*

RECEIVED.

4. Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – see attached*

Councillor Conway put to council the following two recommendations.

- The Council progresses, in accordance with previous decisions, the appointment of a planning consultant to prepare the draft NP for external review.

AGREED.

- In procuring the services of a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner, financial regulations 5.12 and 5.14 are employed, given the nature of those specialist professional services.

AGREED.

The Chair of the Planning Committee was thanked for his diligent work on planning matters and the Neighbourhood Plan.

(c) Communications – to consider communication matters.

1. Update on domain

Payments have been made to Madhouse Media regarding domain renewal, bronze level hosting and support package for 2025/2026. It was agreed to wait until after the May elections to add new councillors' names to contact list.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders

2. Xmas hampers

A member of the public thanked Councillor L. Mavin for organising the Xmas hampers to people in the parish who are lonely at this time and said he had been very moved by the gift he had received.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

The Chair of the Communications Committee was thanked for her diligent work on the Communications Committee.

(d) Environment – to consider environment matters – see attached*

1. Friends of Belmont Scrambles

Trees

Councillor White reported he had had a site meeting with the local tree surgeon to provide a quote for two trees that need attention on the Scrambles. A quote has been received for £380.00 to make the two trees safe

AGREED: Payment to come out of the Scrambles budget.

Councillor White was thanked for his work with the Friends of Belmont Scrambles.

Councillor White looked for approval to obtain a quote from a local tradesman for two gates to be put back up which have been taken out on the Scrambles.

AGREED: Payment to come out of the Scrambles budget

2. Friends of Keping Woods – see attached*

Councillor Watson provided a report of the activities and projects which the group have been involved in over the past three months.

Councillor Watson was thanked for his report and his work with the Friends of Keping Woods.

3. Moorfield.

Councillor Watson reported he had had a site meeting with the local tree surgeon to provide a quote for the crowning of two large trees on Moorfield Park and the removal of

a large overhanging branch into a resident's garden. The quote is for £510.00, to come from the Moorfield Park budget as discussed at the recent Environment Committee.
AGREED.

4. Renny's Lane underpass

Councillor Mavin to arrange a meeting with Durham County Council to discuss suitable shrubs as a preventive measure to discourage access to the embankment onto the motorway and anti-social behaviour issues. Councillor Lattin reported the litter issues in Renny's lane are appalling.

5. Litter

The next Community litter pick is scheduled for Sunday 23rd March.

A concern was raised regarding the increasing amount of litter from a nearby fast-food chain.

A concern was raised regarding the rear of Bannatyne's Health Club having major litter issues. A concern was also raised regarding the tree on the corner as you turn into Bannatyne's seemingly dead.

AGREED: the Clerk to send a letter to Bannatyne's Health Club to request a clean-up at the rear of the building.

The Chair of the Environment Committee was thanked for her diligent work on the Environment Committee.

24.108 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.
Carrville

Councillor Mavin reported that the recently damaged metal fence near Poplar Play Park could be a Highways issue.

24.109 Council business (any Item which has been brought to the attention of the Chairman for discussion during the meeting for approval or otherwise).

24.110 Date of next meeting is Thursday 13th March 2025.