

Minutes of the meeting of Belmont Parish Council held on Thursday 12th June 2025 at 6:00pm
in Belmont Community Centre.

Present: Chair E.S. Mavin, Vice-Chair L. Mavin,

Councillors: G. Chissell, T. Coll, J. Fletcher, D. Hodgson, M.E. Corrigan, P. T. Finley,
R.J.L. Hornby and M. Watson

Also present: Mrs S. Overton (Clerk)

Members of the Public (5)

John Adamson (Ramside Estates)

J. Doyle and S. Ellison (Belmont United)

25.24 To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.C. Walker and C.A. Lattin.
RECEIVED.

25.25 To Receive update from Belmont Community Association

Jacque Miller (Belmont Community Centre Manager) enquired if any councillors would be willing to sit in the school office or Community Centre office as both venues were busy on Sunday 22nd and there was a lack of staff available that weekend. Councillor Hornby offered to do a few hours at Belmont Community Centre and Councillor L. Mavin offered to do the same at Belmont School. Councillor L. Mavin suggested making a small subcommittee group with contact details of who to contact if any future issues arise regarding locking up.

25.26 To Receive Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda.

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.
There were no Declarations of Interest received.

25.27 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

a) Police – see attached*

The latest PACT Report was circulated to councillors.

Councillor E. Mavin advised councillors that, when on duty, the police will make every effort to attend council meetings.

b) Warden

There was no report received.

The Chair suspended standings orders.

c) Members of the Public

A representative from Belmont United informed councillors that significant drainage issues on Moorfield had resulted in the cancellation of several matches. A qualified groundsman from the club has since offered to undertake the drainage work himself.

Upon completion, the project will require no maintenance, and a written guarantee will be provided. Appropriate signage and fencing will be installed during the works.

The Chair sought members' approval to proceed with the proposed works.

AGREED

UNANIMOUS.

Following recent incidents of motorbikes and e-bikes causing damage on Moorfield, a member of the public spoke to the police. The police acknowledged awareness of the issue but stated that their ability to intervene is limited unless they are alerted at the time of occurrence, at which point drones could be deployed.

For information the next PACT meeting will take place on Friday 27th June 2025 at 1:00pm at Daisy Rose Cafe.

A concern was raised regarding traffic on Dragon Lane approaching the traffic lights at the top to turn left, as well as traffic travelling out of Durham and turning left at the same junction. The current layout presents manoeuvring challenges for larger vehicles, such as lorries. To address this issue, a suggestion was made to move the stop line back. It was agreed to contact Durham County Council regarding the matter.

Three members of the public raised concerns about a proposal from Ramside Estates to develop an NHS drop-in centre. Key issues highlighted included traffic congestion, parking difficulties, and loss of privacy due to potential overlooking. One attendee suggested that a small development of bungalows might be more suitable. The Chair proposed holding a public meeting to explore further options.

Councillor L. Mavin informed the Council that she had sent flowers to Councillor Walker on behalf of members, following his wife's recent hospitalisation.

The Chair re-imposed standing orders.

- 25.28 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th May 2025 – see attached*

AGREED with one amendment Councillor Walker was not present at the May meeting and gave his apologies.

- 25.29 To Receive Matters of Information, Clerk's Report, Correspondence Tabled Items – for Information.

The Council received two quotes from local builders regarding the repair work to the cemetery robing room. Following discussion, it was agreed to proceed with the quote that included both the shutter and building repairs. The Clerk confirmed that VAT on the works is reclaimable.

25.30 To Consider Risk Management in Relations to Items on the Agenda.

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

RECEIVED.

25.31 To Receive Committee Reports:

a) Finance

1. To Receive Receipts and Payments during the month of May 2025 – see attached*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

2. To Receive bank reconciliation during the month of May 2025

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

Terms of reference.

AGREED.

Financial Regulations.

AGREED.

Pavilion Project Update

The Council is awaiting the second allocation of funding for the pavilion. In the meantime, councillors have been emailed a selection of paint colours for the interior. Feedback and comments are welcomed to help guide the final decision.

Play Park Inspections

Each member on the Finance and Assets Committee will now take responsibility for monitoring a designated play park. Their role includes reviewing Durham County Council's inspection reports and addressing any issues flagged—whether that's safety concerns, maintenance needs, or equipment repairs.

AGREED

Bird's mouth fencing will be installed on land at Broomside Lane to deter parking, in response to a resident's concern. The project will be funded from the councillors Neighbourhood Budget at a cost of £1,004.00.

AGREED

Consideration of match funding for Belmont Allotments car park conversion.

A Section 106 application has been submitted by Councillor L. Mavin for the conversion of car parking spaces at Belmont Allotments. The area will be secured and feature a rising barrier and padlock for controlled access.

b) Planning

Councillor Hornby gave an update on Planning Applications and outstanding decisions for the month of May.

Planning Meetings

Planning meetings to be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at Councillor Lattin's residence. Any planning matters arising in the interim are to be circulated to all councillors via email.
AGREED.

Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Hornby sought representatives for each of the three wards involved in the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. The following appointments were made:

Belmont: Councillor White

Carrville: Councillor L. Mavin

Gilesgate Moor: Councillor Hornby

The Chair suspended Standing Orders

John Adamson of Ramside Estates attended the meeting to discuss the previously mentioned proposal for an NHS Drop-in Centre on a designated piece of land. He expressed his willingness to engage further on the matter and indicated he would be happy to attend a public meeting to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Ramside Estates – Net Height Update

John Adamson provided an update regarding concerns raised by local residents about the height of the netting at Ramside Estates. He confirmed that he had contacted the planning officer handling the application and had proposed a compromise to lower the net. However, the planning officer advised that a new planning application would be required for any changes to be considered.

The Chair requested that John Adamson forward copies of any correspondence he had sent to Durham County Council regarding the netting issue at Ramside Estates.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

c) Communications

To Discuss use of AI technology to record minutes.

It was agreed that AI technology would be used to record and produce the minutes for the next planning meeting, with Microsoft Copilot selected for this purpose.
AGREED.

Use of Microsoft Teams and Document Sharing

Councillor Finley proposed that the Council begin using Microsoft Teams for communication and explore options for shared document access starting in September. He also offered to provide training to office staff to support the transition.

Document Sharing on Microsoft Teams

Councillor Finley suggested exploring document sharing capabilities via Microsoft Teams to improve collaboration and accessibility for council members. AGREED

Parish Newsletter

Councillor L. Mavin reported that the draft version of the parish newsletter has been sent to the printers. Councillor Mavin also requested volunteers to assist with the distribution once printed.

d) Environment

Grass Verge Trial – Eden Terrace

There has been no increase in related maintenance costs to date. Durham County Council will allow the grass verge at Eden Terrace to grow naturally as part of a trial initiative. The outcome of this trial will inform future decisions regarding verge management and biodiversity efforts.

Anti-Social Behaviour Signage

Councillor Watson reported that he would be meeting with Ruth Dickenson to discuss the installation of signage aimed at deterring anti-social behaviour (ASBO). Two signs are planned for Moorfield and one for the Daisy Rose Café wall at Cheveley Park Shops, all to be installed free of charge. The signage will support immediate police enforcement. Councillors E. Mavin, L. Mavin, and Claire Hubbard will also attend the meeting. Additional signs can be ordered if needed, depending on the effectiveness and community response following the initial installation.

Litter Pick – Belmont Parish Council

The next community litter pick will be held on Sunday, 15th June, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

Northumbria in Bloom summer judging

Councillor L. Mavin will send an email to all councillors regarding the upcoming summer judging event. The message will include key information and any actions required in preparation.

Gardeners Contract 2025-2026

There has been no increase in related maintenance costs to date.

Eden Terrace

Durham County Council will allow the grass verge at Eden Terrace to grow naturally as part of a trial initiative. The outcome of this trial will inform future decisions regarding verge management and biodiversity efforts.

Garages – Ashdown Avenue

Concerns were raised about the deteriorating condition of the garages located behind the flats at Ashdown Avenue. It was noted that the structures are in a poor state of repair, and clarification of ownership is needed in order to determine responsibility for maintenance and potential remedial action.

Tree planting around Moorfield Park

Councillor Watson reported that tree saplings are to be planted in three areas around Moorfield Park. These include the lower sections of the park, which are typically waterlogged, as well as an unused area near the tennis courts. The project is intended to support ecological improvement and better use of underutilised space.

Friends of Kepier Woods

Councillor Watson provided a written report noting two upcoming *Horrid History* walk-and-talk events with the Belmont Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts. The report also detailed an arson attack at Kepier Woods car park, which caused damage to the ground, destroyed one picnic table, damaged another, and impacted the newly installed bird's mouth fencing.

Friends of Belmont Scrambles

Councillor White reported a visit to the Scrambles with a fire officer, in response to concerns raised by residents of Coniston Close. The residents have requested a reduction in tree cover to improve visibility of anti-social behaviour, following a recent series of tree fires.

Councillor White noted that several trees on the bank of Coniston Close may need to be removed, and a significant amount of Hawthorn hedging requires cutting back. He estimated the cost at approximately £1,250–£1,500, pending a formal quote from the approved arborist. The expense would be covered by the Scrambles budget.

25.32 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

Gilesgate Moor

Councillor Hornby reported the footpath adjacent to Ramside Hall belongs to Durham County Council and will be getting cleared and tidied up.

It was reported Sherburn Road Estate is becoming HMO developed.

Belmont Cemetery

A concern was raised regarding the presence of a possible stalker in Belmont Cemetery. The matter was noted for further investigation and appropriate action. Councillors agreed to monitor the situation closely and liaise with local authorities as necessary to ensure public safety.

Temporary Road Closure – Sherburn Road

It was noted that Sherburn Road will be temporarily closed over the weekend to facilitate the removal of a crane. The closure will be managed to ensure public safety and minimise disruption to local traffic.

Sherburn Road Estate

It was reported that Sherburn Road Estate is experiencing an increase in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) developments. Councillors noted the trend and may monitor future implications for housing density, community cohesion, and local services.

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

25.34 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 10th July 2025 at 6:00pm.

The meeting closed at 8:30pm