

Minutes of the Belmont Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 6:00pm in Belmont Community Centre.

Present: Councillor E.S. Mavin (Chair) Councillor L. Mavin (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors: T. Coll, G. Chissell, J. Fletcher, D. Hodgson, C.A. Lattin, P. Finley,  
A.C. Walker M. Watson, S.C. White.  
Mrs S. Overton (Clerk)

Members of the public  
(5)

25.48 To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor M. Corrigan  
Received.

25.49 To Receive update from Belmont Community Association.

Councillor L. Mavin provided an update, during which the following was noted:

(a) Belmont Community Association Finance Update

Thanks to Mick Bennett for his continued oversight and support with Belmont Association finances.

No major issues raised; all financial matters are currently on track.

Online banking is now fully operational, streamlining future transactions and oversight.

Cleaning services to be arranged on an as-and-when basis, depending on need and availability.

Project Accounts

The Council considered a partial payment from the Belmont Community Association reserves relating to the Belmont War Memorials Project.

Proposed Councillor T. Coll

Seconded Councillor S. White

Agreed: That a payment of £1,800.00 be approved.

Declarations of Interest: Councillors D. Hodgson, R. Hornby, E. Mavin, L. Mavin and M. Watson each declared an interest and took no part in the decision.

(b) Belmont Community Association Managers report

Sports Hall – Alarm Call-Outs

The Council noted that alarm activations occurred on eight separate occasions, both during the day and night, due to faults with the sensor on the single door and the double fire doors in the sports hall.

Agreed: That the matter requires attention and appropriate remedial action be taken.

Sports Hall – Electrical Cables

The Council noted that the cables in the boiler house may not be suitable.

Agreed: A survey might be needed to check the electrics.

Fire Alarm System – Cabling Issues

The Council noted that the fire alarm system cables have not been installed correctly.

Agreed: A quote should be obtained to fix the issue.

#### Front Door Shutter – Access Concern

The Council noted that in the event of a power failure, there is currently no manual override to open the front door shutter.

Agreed: That options for manual access should be explored to ensure emergency entry is possible.

#### Roof Condition

The Council noted that there are currently no issues with the roof.

#### Grange Room – Internal Doors

The Council noted that the doors between the Grange Room and the adjoining area require attention.

Agreed: That the issue be investigated and appropriate repairs or adjustments arranged.

#### (c) Legacy Recognition

The Council noted that the late Dave Drinkwater has left a legacy in support of community work.

Agreed: That the donor's contribution be recognised either by installing a commemorative plaque or by establishing an annual award in his honour.

#### 25.50 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.

Received.

### **The Chairman suspended Standing Orders**

#### 25.51 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

##### (a) Members of the Public

##### Kirkstone Drive – Community Garden

The Council noted that no representative was present to provide an update on the community garden project.

##### Moorfield – Drainage Works

The Council noted that the grass has successfully regrown following the drainage works at Moorfield.

Agreed: A sincere thank you is extended to Wyn Construction and Belmont United for their hard work and valued contribution to the project. Their commitment and professionalism have been greatly appreciated.

##### Fencing - Belmont United.

##### E-Bike and Quad Bike Safety Concerns

Concerns have been raised regarding the safety risks posed by e-bike and quad bike users in the area. The Police have been informed, and the Chairman will arrange a meeting with representatives from Durham County Council, the Police, and the Neighbourhood Warden to explore preventative measures and community safety improvements.

### Belmont United Fencing Proposal

Belmont United Football Club has requested permission from the Parish Council to erect fencing around the playing area to enhance child safety. The club indicated that 75% of the funding would be provided by the Football Association.

The Chair advised that no decision will be made at this stage, pending further information and quotations. The matter will be added to the October agenda for continued discussion.

### Minster Court

Residents expressed serious concerns about a privately rented flat believed to be attracting drug users and frequent disruptive visitors. The situation has caused distress, particularly elderly residents, who feel vulnerable and unsure how to escalate the issue. The landlord is thought to live outside the area. The Chairman confirmed he had contacted the Police, Warden, and Durham County Council. A member of the public noted that similar problems are occurring elsewhere.

Councillor Hornby reported that fifteen houses had moved from Class 4 to Class 3. He will work with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to clarify whether this resets the Class 4 count and if affected landlords may be eligible to buy homes in other areas.

### b) Police

PACT Meeting Report – see attached \*

Councillor E. Mavin reported on issues raised at the recent PACT meeting, including ASBO concerns, firework safety, off-road biking, BMX track damage, squatters in the cemetery, and dog fouling. It was agreed to request stencils from the Neighbourhood Warden to support enforcement.

### c) Neighbourhood Warden

There was no Neighbourhood Warden present.

## **The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.**

- 25.52 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – see attached\*

Agreed with one amendment Page 1 – Present: Paul Finlay **to** Paul Finley

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

1. Repairs to the robing room wall are complete, with a new green shutter installed and the structure now secure.
2. Letter sent to grave owner to request removal of wooden surround and ornamental gravel by end of October in accordance with the cemetery rules and regulations.
3. Claim form has been sent off to Durham County Council, Public Rights of Way for the sum of £2,200
4. The bollards at Rennys Lane have been removed and the base plate, the matter has been reported.

- 25.54 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 September and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.

Agreed.

- 25.55 To Approve Grievance, Data Protection and Disciplinary Policies.  
Approved and Agreed.
- 25.56 To Discuss CO-OPTED members of the Parish Council.  
Councillor L. Mavin reported that a local young resident has expressed interest in joining the parish council.  
It was agreed that he be invited to attend the next parish council meeting, where councillors will have the opportunity to speak with him prior to a vote on his potential co-option.
- 25.57 Conclusion of Annual Governance Audit Return 2024 – 2025.  
The conclusion of the Annual Governance Audit Return for 2024–2025 will be reported at the October meeting.
- 25.58 To Receive Committee Reports:
- a) Finance
1. To Receive Receipts and Payments during the month of July/August – see attached\*  
RECEIVED AND AGREED.
2. To Receive bank reconciliation during the month of July/August – see attached\*  
RECEIVED AND AGREED.
3. 106 monies  
It was reported that a small amount of Section 106 monies remains available.
4. Cemetery fencing  
Councillor L. Mavin is seeking three quotes for the cemetery fencing following negative comments from residents about the current condition of the fence. The matter is being looked into to ensure appropriate improvements are made.
5. Tree issue  
It was noted that one tree on parish council-owned land is due for removal. Councillor White has spoken to an approved tree surgeon regarding a large Hawthorn located next door, which has raised concerns among residents. The situation will be monitored.
- b) Planning – see attached\*  
Planning applications were reported during the months of July and August.
- Neighbourhood Plan.  
Councillor Hornby reported that the next Neighbourhood Plan Working Party meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of September. Further details will be confirmed in due course.
- c) Communications – see attached notes  
Councillor Lesley Mavin (Chair) gave a report which included the following items:-
- Newsletter  
Members discussed the potential to reduce newsletter circulation to twice yearly, with printing and delivery managed by local providers. Councillor Hornby proposed extending the delivery route to include small businesses, supporting wider community engagement and visibility.  
Agreed: to contact Durham City Parish Council for advice on who they use for deliveries.

### Christmas Tree

The Christmas Tree light-up ceremony will take place on Friday 5th December at 7.00 pm, followed by refreshments in the parish hall. Helpers are needed to assist with the event. It was suggested that funds could be raised through donations from local businesses, with thank-you notices displayed in shop windows as recognition.

### Christmas gift bags

An article will be included in the parish newsletter inviting nominations for individuals who may appreciate receiving a Christmas gift bag, especially those feeling lonely during the festive season. It was agreed to purchase items for delivery to the community centre committee room, where the Christmas bags will be assembled and distributed.

### Environment

Councillor Watson (Chair) praised Durham County Council Gardening Contract for their planting schemes throughout the parish.

Cemetery contractor to maintain the bed and tub planting in the cemetery.

Councillor Finley reported that updating the skate bowl would be very expensive due to the need for specialist equipment, and suggested that it may be more practical to consider filling it in.

Following a decision not to plant plants from the bed at the Links at High Grange Estate entrance possible location was suggested outside Belmont Community Centre.

### Friends of Belmont Scrambles

Councillor White reported that the farmer advised it was not worth cutting the small meadow this year, as no bales could be collected due to the serious drought over the summer. A site meeting is to be arranged to clarify which areas of the scrambles are maintained in relation to the Public Rights of Way (PROW).

### Friends of Kepier Woods

Councillor Watson gave a report regarding the Friends of Kepier Wood following an arson-related fire in June, Durham County Council has completed all works at the Kepier Woods car park area. This includes:

Replacement of the picnic table

Repair of fire-damaged fence timbers

Tarmac resurfacing

Repainting of the fire-damaged bin.

## 25.59 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

### Belmont

Councillor Walker raised concerns regarding cars and wagons speeding along Rennys Lane, particularly on the main thoroughfare leading to Gilesgate Road, Damson Way, and towards the Gilesgate Moor pub.

Councillor Walker also raised concerns regarding graffiti in Rennys Lane.

### Gilesgate Moor.

A concern was raised regarding the junction at Tesco having no dwell making pedestrian crossing difficult.

The Highways Department is to be chased up regarding an ongoing concern at the top of Dragon Lane, where large vehicles are experiencing difficulty when turning right

Councillor Lattin reported that one of the bollards was missing at Rennys Lane and was informed that this had already been reported. Councillor Walker reported e bikes and quad bikes were able to gain access.

Cabins and construction to be removed prior to Mill Lane reopening on Monday 29th September 2025

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

25.61 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 6:00pm.