

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 in Belmont Community Centre  
at 6.00 pm.

Present: Chair Councillor E, S. Mavin, Vice-Chair L.Mavin,  
Councillors: G. Chissell, T. Coll, M. Corrigan, J. Fletcher, D. Hodgson, R. Hornby, C.A. Lattin, S.C. White  
and M. Watson.

Members of the public (2)

25.90 To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from P. Finley and A.C. Walker.  
RECEIVED.

25.91 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.

Councillor E. Mavin and L. Mavin declared an interest.

25.92 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

a) Members of the Public

b) Police

A PACT (Police and Communities Together) report was circulated to councillors. It highlighted attempted break-ins, incidents of anti-social behaviour, Durham University students experiencing racial abuse, and issues relating to e-bike users.

c) Neighbourhood Warden

There was no Neighbourhood Warden present.

25.93 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 – see attached\*

AGREED.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

BMX Track

Durham County Council reported that a piece of metal which had been protruding from the BMX track has now been removed.

Christmas Lighting Event

It was noted that the Christmas Lighting Event was a great success and well attended by residents. Thanks were expressed to Councillors D. Hodgson, R. Hornby, E. Mavin, L. Mavin, C. Lattin, and J. Fletcher for their contributions and support.

Rennys Lane Gate

Following ongoing issues with keys, locks, access, and antisocial behaviour at the gate on Rennys Lane, Durham County Council will be erecting signage and installing a fabricated lock and chains to resolve the problems. It was noted that funding for these measures will be provided from Councillor E. Mavin's Neighbourhood Budget.

- 25.94 To Receive Matters of Information, Clerk's Report, Correspondence Tabled Items – for Information.  
 A request was submitted to the Council by Councillors E. Mavin and L. Mavin, seeking permission to place a plaque on a bench within the parish in memory of their late father and father-in-law, ex-Councillor Ken Holroyd.  
 Ken Holroyd served for several years as both a Parish Councillor and a County Councillor for Belmont, and was recognised as a well-loved and respected member of the parish. Members expressed their full support for the proposal.  
 PROPOSED: COUNCILLOR WATSON.  
 SECONDED: COUNCILLOR HODGSON.  
 AGREED.
- 25.95 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 December and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.  
 AGREED.
- 25.96 To Approve Parish Precept 2026/27  
 A discussion took place on whether to raise the parish precept for 2026/27. Members considered the current financial position and noted that keeping the precept at its present level would provide stability for residents, with reserves available if required. It was agreed that the matter would be revisited in the following year.
- Before approval, councillors' allowances were discussed. Councillors considered whether they should receive an annual allowance. Some felt this was not appropriate given the current economic climate and that residents might be unhappy. It was also noted that co-opted councillors would not be eligible, which could cause division.
- Councillor L. Mavin proposed a vote, seconded by Councillor Hodgson. The result was three in favour and eight against. It was therefore agreed that councillors will not receive an allowance.
- 25.97 To Receive the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan from Councillor Hornby and consider next steps for review and consultation.  
Neighbourhood Plan  
 Councillor Hornby gave an update stating that the draft Neighbourhood Plan is to be deferred until the February 2026 full Council meeting, as small local businesses need to be contacted regarding the plan and given the opportunity to make comment.
- 25.98 To Receive Pavilion Update  
 Councillor L. Mavin reported that the pavilion roof has lining issues which are rotten. As modernisation work is currently underway, it was considered sensible to address the roof repairs at this stage, since scaffolding and procurement are already in place.
- The cost of the roof work is £24,642.57. Councillor Mavin requested permission to proceed, noting that the roof repairs would form an extension of the current works.  
 AGREED.  
 UNANIMOUS.

- 25.99 To Discuss the Cemetery Contractors Retirement  
The cemetery contractor is due to retire in March. Durham County Council may assume responsibility for the groundworks, but daily management will still require a private contractor or local person. A Finance & Assets meeting is scheduled for 12 January 2026 at Councillor Mavin's house, and a copy of the Cemetery Contract will be sent to Durham County Council and the Finance & Assets Committee for their perusal.  
AGREED.

- 25.100 To Consider Durham County Council Consultations.  
Open Space Assessment  
The council reviewed the Open Space Assessment. Councillor Hornby highlighted the continued need for more open spaces, parks, and playing fields in the parish. He stressed that this should be raised in consultation responses and supported by local residents to strengthen the case for improved facilities.

#### 2026/27 Budget Proposals

The council received an update on the 2026/27 Budget Proposals, noting that further reductions to public services are expected. Members expressed concern about the potential impact on the community and stressed the need to prepare a strong and informed response to the consultation.

#### Medium Term Planning 2026/27–2029/30

Phase 2 of the consultation was noted, and members discussed its implications for the Council's medium-term planning. The council recognised that the outcomes of this phase will need to be considered when setting future priorities and allocating resources over the 2026/27–2029/30 period.

#### Household Waste Recycling Consultation

The council noted the Household Waste Recycling Consultation and discussed the possible changes being proposed. Members agreed to review the consultation in more detail and consider submitting a response to highlight any impacts the changes may have on local residents and recycling services.

#### **The Chair suspended Standing Orders.**

##### Ashdown Avenue

It was reported that a property in Ashdown Avenue is experiencing ongoing waste issues. The matter will be addressed by a visit from the Neighbourhood Warden.

##### Street Lights Moorfield.

A resident reported that two street lights on Moorfield remain out of service. The fault was first raised four months ago, and the Chair informed the resident that Durham County Council are currently experiencing technical problems which have delayed the repairs.

A resident raised concerns about damage to the football pitches caused by e-bike users. The Chair responded that measures are currently being implemented to block unofficial entrances and install gates at the official ones. These actions will prevent e-bike users from entering the pitches, thereby avoiding further damage, while also deterring antisocial behaviour and protecting community facilities.

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

25.101 To Receive feedback from councillors who attend any training events.  
Councillor Coll and Councillor L. Mavin attended County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) training on the Charity Commission Website, noting the need to confirm trustees are content for councillors' names to be published online.  
Councillor Hornby and Councillor White attended a NALC Share Point Forum meeting on the Future of Planning Reform, which discussed proposed changes and their impact on local councils.

25.102 To Discuss councillors allowances.  
This item was discussed earlier under Parish Precept.

25.103 To Receive Committee Reports.  
a) Finance.  
To Receive receipts and payments for November 2025.  
RECEIVED AND AGREED.

To Receive bank balance for November 2025.  
RECEIVED AND AGREED.

Precept for 2026/2027 AGREED under a separate agenda item.

b) Planning.

Councillor Hornby gave a report on Weekly Planning Applications and Countywide Delegated applications for November 2025.

Councillor Hornby noted that the HMO application for 49a Annand Road has been re-submitted. The landlord believes that the percentage calculation relating to HMOs in the area has changed, and therefore the application may now meet the required criteria. The council will continue to monitor the progress of this application.

c) Communications.

Councillor L. Mavin reported that she had received twelve nominations for residents identified as worthy recipients, who will be provided with Christmas gift bags. This initiative is intended to offer support and festive cheer to those who may otherwise feel isolated during the holiday season.

d) Environment

Friends of Belmont Scrambles

Councillor White reported that he is in the process of obtaining a quote for the sycamore tree, which is expected to be no more than £300. He also noted that the removal of the cemetery tree stumps should cost less than £500.

Councillor Watson stated that he is deferring his review of land ownership concerning Broomside Lane until the full parish council meeting scheduled for February.

It was noted that Durham County Council's gardening contract was delivered to a high standard this year.

Gilesgate Primary School expressed their gratitude to the parish council for the generous donation of £120.00, which will be used to purchase netting for plants.

Councillor E. Mavin is contacting Durham County Council to request birds-mouth fencing for Broomside Lane.

There is nothing that can be done regarding the vennel at Willowtree Shops, as it is too narrow to install any deterrent for anti-social behaviour. Two bollards have been placed in front of Willowtree

Shops, and the neighbourhood warden is to be informed about a near-miss incident involving two members of the public.

25.104 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

Gilesgate Moor

Councillor Corrigan reported that the flashing lights on Sunderland Road were not functioning. The issue is to be reported to Durham County Council for further action. Councillor Watson said he had reported the potholes on Wantage Road.

Belmont

A concern was raised that double-decker buses on Brackendale Road make nearby houses shake as they pass, Councillor L. Mavin will look into the issue and report back.

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

(a) Royal Garden Party 2026

A discussion took place regarding nominees to attend the Royal Garden Party 2026 in recognition of past Chairs of Parish Councils.

AGREED – Ex-Chair C.A. Fletcher to be put forward for nomination, with one guest.

(b) Lord Lieutenant Celebration Event

The Lord Lieutenant is retiring, and a special celebration event will be held at Raby Castle on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026. As only one person can be nominated to attend, the Council considered the matter.

AGREED – Councillor L. Mavin to attend.

25.106 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 6:00 pm.