

Minutes of the Meeting of Belmont Parish Council
held on Thursday 12th March at 6:00pm
in Belmont Community Centre

The Chair expressed thanks to Councillors G. Chissell, D. Hodgson and L. Mavin for their assistance in setting up the new table and chairs in the Committee Room. Mr A. Thurlwell, Parish Office, was also thanked for his support.

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

Also present: Mrs S. Overton (Parish Clerk).

Members of the Public: (2)

25.124 To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Corrigan, J. Fletcher and A.C. Walker.
RECEIVED.

25.125 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.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

25.126 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

a) Members of the Public

A resident has reported that the road surface in front of the Travellers Rest bus stop about 50 metres west of the Sunderland Road/Moor Crescent junction, has sunk by roughly two inches. When it rains, the dip fills with water, and passing vehicles create a splash that soaks people waiting in the bus shelter.

b) Police

Councillor Watson reported on the recent PACT meeting. A request had been made for CCTV to identify quad-bike users on Moorfield, but the Neighbourhood Warden advised this would be ineffective as the riders wear balaclavas. The Chair noted that police will be carrying out an operation on Sunday in the Belmont area targeting off-road bikes. The use of drones was suggested as a possible alternative for identification.

Concerns were raised about speeding vehicles along Carrville High Street in the early mornings and evenings.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have sent a letter to the Neighbourhood Wardens requesting dog-fouling spray and signage to address ongoing issues.

c) Neighbourhood Warden

There was no Neighbourhood Warden report received.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

25.127 To Receive update on Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Hornby, Joanne Grant (Durham County Council) and P. Conway met to review planning policy changes. Updated housing rules will need to be added to the Neighbourhood Plan. Work is on hold until Durham County Council responds to the Habitat Plan, so a first draft isn't expected before September. The group confirmed its priorities: protecting green spaces and meeting local housing needs. Another meeting will take place next month, and a strong housing section will be important for the plan.

25.128 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 12th February 2026 – see attached*

AGREED.

Matters arising

A site meeting was held with Durham County Council officers, parish councillors and a resident to review safety concerns following a recent collision at the Buckinghamshire Road/Broomside Lane junction. Durham County Council did not support the request for a STOP sign. Alternative measures discussed included slow-down markings, chevrons, additional signage and kerbing.

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

1. The Clerk reported that a headstone in the cemetery had fallen. Repair work has been arranged and is scheduled for next week.

2. The Clerk reported that she had submitted an application to the Parish Paths Scheme 2026 Grant

3. The Clerk reported that the Service Level Agreement for playground inspections has been paid for 2026 and that regular safety inspections will continue as planned.

RECEIVED.

25.130 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 March and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.

AGREED.

25.131 To Approve Co-Option of Councillors.

It was resolved that Francis Robinson (Carrville Ward) and Catherine Gray (Gilesgate Moor Ward) be co-opted onto the Parish Council. Councillor L. Mavin will contact them regarding the decision.

AGREED.

UNANIMOUS.

25.132 To Receive Update on Cemetery Contractor Vacancy.

Two applicants were interviewed for the Cemetery Contractor post. The applicant with ten years' experience was appointed. It was agreed not to enter Belmont Cemetery in this year's Northumbria in Bloom competition to allow the new contractor time to settle into the role.

AGREED.

UNANIMOUS.

25.133 To Approve the Asset List.

The Clerk reported that the Asset List has been updated to reflect the refurbishment of Belmont Sports Pavilion.

APPROVED AND AGREED.

The Clerk will contact a local painter and decorator to request a quote for repainting the war benches in the parish, as the current paintwork requires attention.

AGREED.

25.134 To Approve Grant for Friends of Belmont Scrambles, Belmont Allotments and Friends of Kepier Woods and Gilesgate School Garden Project.

It was agreed to approve the following community grant applications:

Friends of Belmont Scrambles – £500.00

Belmont Allotments – £500.00

Friends of Kepier Woods – £500.00

Gilesgate School Garden Project – £250.00

APPROVED AND AGREED

25.135 To Receive Committee Reports.

a) Finance – Chair, Councillor White.

To Receive Receipts and Payments during the month of February – see attached*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

To Receive bank reconciliation during the month of February – see attached*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

Service Level Agreement Durham County Council for the provision of fixed play equipment inspection and maintenance

The Clerk reported that payment has been made for the Service Level Agreement with Durham County Council for the provision of fixed play equipment inspection and maintenance at a cost of £2,824.

Neighbourhood Planning Support

Invoice from JO-ANNE GARRICK LTD regarding preparation and update of draft neighbourhood Plan is expected shortly £1,848.00.

AGREED.

NEST Pension Scheme

Councillor White requested approval for the two members of staff to be enrolled in the NEST pension scheme, with employee contributions at 5% and employer contributions at 3%, funded from contingency:

AGREED.

Councillor White was thanked for his report.

b) Planning

Chair, Councillor R. Hornby gave a report which included the following:-

1. To Receive Weekly Planning Applications for February 2026 - see attached* RECEIVED.

2. To Receive Countywide Delegated for February 2026 - see attached* RECEIVED.

Consultations open

The following consultations are currently open or active for comment in the Durham area:

Housing Association Consultation

Durham City Conservation Area – Keping Hospital

Family Hub Consultation.

Discount Market Sale Consultation.

County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Consultation.

Councillor Hornby was thanked for his report.

c) Communications – Chair Councillor L. Mavin.

The Pavilion opening event will take place on Saturday 21 March at 12:30pm, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by a buffet. Parish Councillors and group users are invited.

Councillor L. Mavin was thanked for her report.

d) Environment – Chair Councillor Watson.

Councillor Watson and Councillor Coll met with a representative from Friends of Belmont Scrambles to discuss the hogweed invasion. A quote of £1,248 for three years was received for non-hazardous treatment, and approval is required for the cost to be met from the Environment Committee budget. Councillor Watson is also seeking involvement from Network Rail.

AGREED.

A litter pick will take place on Sunday 29 March with Police Cadets assisting; all councillors are welcome.

Installation of Rain Planters – Robing Room, Belmont Cemetery

Councillor Watson sought approval for the installation of three galvanised rain planters to be positioned in situ at the Robing Room, Belmont Cemetery.

The total project cost is £1,600.77, inclusive of plants.

Subject to approval, Durham Weirs Trust will commence works in April.

AGREED.

Councillor Chissell reported litter issues at Tesco Extra were still ongoing, the Neighbourhood Warden has spoken to Tesco about the situation.

Willowtree Avenue Vennel – Barrier Request

The Neighbourhood Warden is revisiting the issues at the Willowtree Avenue vennel. A barrier had previously been refused, but the matter is now being reconsidered following a similar approved case in Darlington.

AGREED.

Councillor Watson was thanked for his report.

25.136 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

Gilesgate Moor.

Speed restrictions will commence on the 8th June 2026 until the 26th June 2026 at Musgrave Gardens.

Councillor Hornby noted that the daffodils at Sharps Crescent are looking lovely.

Carrville

Councillor Hornby reported that the proposed road closure at Wantage Road has been postponed following concerns raised by residents who received an information letter that had not been worded correctly and had caused some confusion. The drainage works are still going ahead, however, they will not affect residents in the vicinity. He added that the One. Network link is free to use and can send alerts when roadworks are scheduled to take place.

Belmont

Cheveley Park Shops – Rent Increases

Councillor Finlay raised concerns regarding rent increases at Cheveley Park shops.

Members noted the impact on local businesses and the wider community. It was agreed that Councillor E. Mavin will write to the landlord to outline these concerns.

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

25.138 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 9th April 2026 at 6:00pm.