

Belmont Parish Council Minutes held on Thursday 9th April 2026 at 6:00 pm in Belmont Community Centre.

Present: Chair, Councillor E.S. Mavin, Councillors, C. Gray, G. Chissell, T. Coll, P. Finley, J. Fletcher, R. Hornby, C. A. Lattin, L. Mavin S.C. White.
Mrs S. Overton Parish Clerk.

Members of the public. (2)

25.139 To Receive Update for Belmont Community Association.

Finance

Councillor L. Mavin provided an update on the current financial matters. The Council noted the financial position, recent income received, current expenditure, and the savings achieved in staffing costs. All bank accounts were reported to be healthy.

She asked for permission to purchase the remaining items required for the Community Centre, which included two table ends, additional tables and chairs, and kitchen equipment, using the BCA account.

AGREED.

Security

Following an incident in the car park involving a male reportedly acting suspiciously, it was agreed to consider options for CCTV cameras.

Safeguarding concerns were raised regarding the use of the toilet facilities, specifically whether they should be accessible only to centre users or also to non-users. Further consideration will be required.

Upcoming Activities

Future activities commencing soon include setting up a play group and a coffee morning/lunch club. All staff have now completed first aid training.

The Chair thanked her for her report and acknowledged the time and effort she has given to the BCA.

25.140 To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors D. Hodgson, A.C.Walker, M. Corrigan, and M. Watson.
RECEIVED.

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

There were no declarations of interest received.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

25.142 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

a) Members of the Public .

Two attendees were present to discuss the modernisation of the BMX track and asked whether councillors would support the project. The Chair noted that the track had recently undergone repairs and that Belmont Parish Council had previously considered its closure. The Chair also confirmed that the track is regularly inspected under the Service Level

Agreement with Durham County Council. One attendee stated that the area needs a BMX track and suggested that an asphalt surface would be easier to maintain. Councillors raised concerns about the significant cost of the project and the need for external funding. The attendee agreed to explore fundraising options and report back with further information. The Chair thanked the two attendees for their input.

b) Police – see attached*

A PACT report was circulated to councillors which included an incident in which a male was observed acting suspiciously at the top of Belmont Community Centre one Thursday evening. The police were notified but were unable to locate the individual. A bag was later discovered in the vicinity containing two machetes. Members discussed the matter and expressed concern regarding the security of the building. It was suggested that CCTV cameras be installed outside the Community Centre and that additional security measures be introduced to prevent unauthorised individuals from entering the premises to use the toilets.

c) Neighbourhood Warden.

No report received.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

25.143 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 12th March 2026 – see attached*
AGREED.

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

1. The Clerk reported that she had contacted the local painter and decorator regarding the painting of the memorial seats within the parish. She noted that he is unable to undertake the work due to health issues.
AGREED: Councillor Chissell will make enquiries to identify a specialist painter who deals with powder-coated finishes for the benches.
2. Councillor Hodgson reported that he had cleared the guttering on the Cemetery Robing Room.
3. The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the newly appointed contractor regarding an issue with a sunken grave that requires topping up and another that needs turfing.
4. Councillor L. Mavin is making enquiries into the purchase of a birdbath for the cemetery, to be installed in memory of the late cemetery contractor.
5. The Clerk informed councillors that the precept has been credited to the Council's account.
6. A concern was raised by a resident regarding the condition of the paths in the cemetery, which may require resurfacing. The Clerk will speak to the cemetery contractor to see what can be done.

25.145 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 April 2026 and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.

AGREED.

25.146 To Receive Update for Community Garden Project.

The Chair reported he had received no update from Ramside Estates regarding the Community Garden Project.

AGREED: The item will be passed over to the Environment Committee for attention.

25.147 To Receive Update on Target Hardening for Moorfield.

Durham County Council has completed the installation of fencing and kissing gates on Moorfield. It was reported that Limecragg Avenue may also require a kissing gate, as the existing fence has been removed. It was noted that Councillor E. Mavin has been in contact with the police and is awaiting a report.

RECEIVED.

25.148 To Receive Update on Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Hornby provided an update to members on the current progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

RECEIVED.

25.149 To Receive Committee Reports.

a) Finance (Chair Councillor S.White)

To Receive receipts and payments for March 2026 - see attached reports*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

(b) To Receive bank balance for March 2026 - see attached *

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

(c) To Receive quarterly reporting for January, February, March 2026 - see attached*

RECEIVED AND AGREED.

A Finance and Assets Committee meeting is to be arranged.

Councillor White was thanked for his report.

b) Planning Committee (Chair Councillor Hornby)

1. To Receive the weekly planning applications for March 2026 - see attached*

RECEIVED.

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

RECEIVED.

3. To Receive Planning Report.

Councillor Hornby gave a planning report which included the following outcomes.

60 Dragonville, Sherburn Road – REFUSED following objections, including parish concerns about the size of the proposed property.

22 Hornbeam Close, Gilesgate Moor – Change of use to a dog-grooming business
APPROVED.

Kepier Farm, Kepier Lane – Retrospective demolition of brick kiln and reinstatement of footings REFUSED following multiple objections.
RECEIVED.

4. Consultations

Discount Market Sale Supplementary Planning Document closes 13th May.

Interim HMO policy consultation – close 5th May – recommend Parish Council responds.
(Information can be found on letstalkcountydurham for further information).

Councillor Hornby was thanked for his report.

c) Communications (Chair, Councillor L.Mavin)

Spring judging for Northumbria in Bloom has taken place, and the judges appeared very pleased with the progress throughout the parish. Summer judging is scheduled for 1 July, with the intention of providing refreshments at Ramside.

The Chairman's Report is due for completion in May, and it was suggested that Durham City Parish Council be contacted to discuss their printing and delivery arrangements.

An article will be prepared for the next newsletter explaining the use of food waste bins, including guidance on what can and cannot be placed in them.

The next Communications Committee meeting is to be arranged, and members will be notified by email once a date is confirmed.

Councillor L. Mavin was thanked for her report.

d) Environment.

Minutes of the Environment Committee were circulated to councillors – see attached*

Friends of Belmont Scrambles

Councillor White is arranging a visit to the Scrambles Nature reserve for Sunday 17 May and will be sending an email to all councillors who wish to attend.

Friends of Kepier Woods report – see attached*

A report was circulated to councillors which included information regarding trees being cut down without permission on Durham County Council land. The individual responsible has been identified, and Durham County Council is to send them a letter.

Councillor Coll reported that she may have enough plants for the rain planters in the cemetery.

Councillors Watson and Councillor White were thanked for their reports.

25.150 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

Potholes

A concern was raised regarding potholes on Belmont Industrial Estate Main Road, the matter is to be reported to Durham County Council for attention.

Sports Pavilion

A concern was raised regarding reports that one or two users of the sports pavilion have been driving their vehicles along the footpath leading to the building. It was noted that this

behaviour allegedly resulted in a near-miss involving a dog walker in the area. Councillor E. Mavin will contact the dog walker concerned.

Update on Buckinghamshire Road

An update was provided on proposed safety improvements for Broomside Lane. A kerbed island and new road markings are planned to enhance safety at the junction. It was confirmed that a STOP sign will not be installed, as the junction does not meet the required criteria. No costings have yet been received. Councillor E. Mavin has agreed to fund the works from his Neighbourhood Budget.

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

25.152 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 14th May 2026 at 6:00pm.