

## **URPETH PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 March 2026 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

### **Councillor R Johnson (Chair)**

#### **Present:**

Councillors B Barrett, H Fox, B Scott, I Stewart-Fergusson, C Todd, P Pringle, and D Wood.

Mr Stephen Hann

#### **101. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Norwood and G Holmes-Wood.

#### **102. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **103. Public Questions / Representations**

There were no members of the public present, and no questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

#### **104. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **105. Beamish Museum - Update**

The Clerk advised that Julie Wilson was unable to attend the meeting, however, would attend the meeting in April, if possible, to provide an update. J Wilson had notified the Clerk that she had been unable to obtain a response from County Councillor Cross regarding the proposed meeting to discuss Eden Place. Contact details for the two other County Councillors had been provided and further updates were awaited.

The Clerk further circulated a letter from the Museum regarding trees in nearby woodland at Forgebank Plantation which had been found to have larch disease. Details would be added to the council website, including precautionary measures that any walkers should take when accessing the area.

## 106. County Councillor Report

The Clerk advised that no County Councillor Report had been received for the period.

## 107. Clerk's Report / Correspondence

- Email received from Heritage 100 Walks CIC, which was charity looking to help fund the establishment of a series of walks spanning County Durham. Their founder Kieron Young has asked whether he could attend a meeting to discuss their next project which is to create and install a walk in Ouston / Urpeth and seek support from the parish council. Members agreed to invite K Young to attend the next meeting.
- Notification received via Mr B Anderson that 81 sacks of litter had been picked by children, parents, and proprietors of Pockerley Livery from the Durham / Gateshead boundary, Beamish Woods.
- Request received for access to volunteer litter picking equipment.

## 108. Finance Matters

- i) Monthly Accounts.

**Resolved:** That the following amounts be approved for payment

Clerk	1026.92
HMRC Pay 10	254.38
Street Cleansing Operative	392.52
Street Cleansing Operative	390.72
Annual Insurance Premium	1144.31

## 109. Defibrillators

The Clerk advised that interest had now been registered via BT to adopt the telephone kiosk at Pelton Lane Ends, and a 90-day consultation was underway, concluding on 23 April. Further updates would be provided following the consultation end.

## 110. Co-option of Parish Councillor

Following two expressions of interest received. Mr Stephen Hann and Mr Neil Moffitt had been invited to attend the meeting to outline their suitability for the role.

The Clerk advised that Mr Moffitt was not in attendance.

Mr Stephen Hann outlined his suitability for the role and answered questions put forward by Members.

**Resolved:** That Mr Stephen Hann be duly co-opted to the Office of Parish Councillor and that his acceptance of office be signed.

**Councillor Stephen Hann joined the table.**

### **111. Road Safety – Beamish**

Councillor H Fox reported a road traffic incident involving a pedestrian which had occurred near the Shepherd and Shepherdess some 8 weeks ago. Unfortunately, there had been a disappointing response received from the police regarding the incident and MP Luke Akehurst had been contacted in order to provide support.

Members discussed at length road safety matters in this area, including ongoing concerns regarding police attendance in relation to reported incidences of quad bikes, vehicle incidents, and antisocial behaviour. It was agreed that further contact would be made with Durham Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to report the concerns of the council.

Councillor Fox commented that whilst she acknowledged that reporting of incidents was critical, many residents were apathetic to reporting matters to the police where it was perceived that there would be little or no follow up.

### **112. Allotments**

Councillor Barrett provided an update following the recent site visit which had been undertaken at High Handenhold and the Clerk confirmed that letters had been issued to all tenants where action was required ahead of rent day.

The Clerk further reported damage to the perimeter fence at High Handenhold caused by a vehicle and that a quote for the repairs would be sought.

### **113. Ward / Area Matters**

#### **i) Crossroads – Twizell**

Issues regarding parking on the crossroads, obscuring access, and egress from the crossroads, especially around school pick up and drop off times. Request to be made to parking services to visit the site.

#### **ii) Planning Query – Change of Use**

A query had been received regarding the Change of Use of a premises at West Pelton. The Clerk agreed to raise this with planning and an update would be provided when available.

#### **iii) Council tax billing error**

Councillor Pringle advised that a resident had contacted him regarding a potential council tax billing error. The Clerk agreed to report this to the relevant team at DCC, and an update would be provided when received.