

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 21 April 2026 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

Councillor R Johnson (Chair)

Present:

Councillor R Johnson (Chair), Councillors B Barrett, H Fox, S Hann, G Holmes-Wood, K Norwood, B Scott, I Stewart-Fergusson, C Todd and D Wood.

Also in attendance:

Julie Wilson (Beamish Museum)
Kieron Young (Heritage 100 Walks CIC)

114. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Pringle.

115. Declarations of Interest

Councillors B Barrett, D Wood and G Holmes-Wood having used the associated transport in previous years, declared an interest in Item number 10 on the agenda and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

116. Representations from the Public

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

117. Minutes

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

118. Beamish Museum – Update

Julie Wilson provided an update on behalf of Beamish Museum.

Members were advised that a letter had recently been distributed to residents within Beamish Village and surrounding areas providing updates on forthcoming events, parking arrangements, and the use of parking marshals. It was reported that recent events had been managed successfully, with no significant issues reported to the Museum.

Members raised ongoing concerns regarding traffic congestion, particularly on Station Road, which on two recent days had caused traffic within the village to come to a standstill. It was noted that emergency vehicle access would have been extremely difficult during these incidents. While event signage was considered clear, Members commented that vehicles were still being diverted through the village, and

that signage alone was not always effective without a physical presence to redirect traffic.

It was suggested that the use of cones had been beneficial, and Members discussed the possible introduction of permanent “village access only” signage. Councillor Todd confirmed that such signage did exist, however discussions were required with Durham County Council regarding whether permanent restrictions for village access could be implemented.

In relation to Eden Place Car Park, J Wilson advised that she was awaiting a response from County Councillors in relation to these matters and an update on a proposed meeting date would be shared with the Clerk when available.

Members further advised of issues within Eden Place woodland area relating to antisocial behaviour involving e-bikes as well as reports of shooting activity. It was agreed that the matter should be raised with Durham Constabulary, and J Wilson confirmed that she would also report concerns to the Museum security team.

119. County Councillor Report

The Clerk advised that no report had been received from County Councillors for this meeting.

120. Clerk’s Report / Correspondence

i) Office Contact Number and Mobile Contract

The Clerk sought agreement for the purchase of a mobile phone so that the council could advertise an office telephone number to avoid the Clerk using her personal number for work related calls and messages. The Clerk explained that the council currently reimbursed the Clerk with £20 each month towards phone calls and this would cover the cost of a mobile phone contract.

Resolved: That an office mobile phone be purchased at a cost of no more than £20 per month.

ii) Highways Improvement Scheme

Councillor Wood provided an update following a recent meeting with County Councillor K Genner where the cancelled road safety project had been discussed. Members were advised of details around why the proposal had not progressed, with feedback indicating that local member support had not been forthcoming and that funding had consequently been lost. Councillor Wood agreed to provide the Clerk with a copy of the correspondence received.

121. Finance Matters

Resolved:

That the following amounts be approved for payment and the income received be noted.

Clerk	1031.62
HMRC Paye 1 x 2 employees	274.38
Street Cleansing Operative	500.40
Street Cleansing Operative	480.20
Parish Online	546.00
CDALC	746.62
ICO	52.00

122. Ouston and Urpeth Heritage 100 Walks

The Chair welcomed Kieron Young to the meeting who was in attendance to provide a presentation on Heritage 100 Walks CIC and plans to install a walk in Ouston / Urpeth.

Members were advised that the project aimed to create and promote a series of circular walks across County Durham, highlighting local heritage and encouraging community pride and visitor engagement. It was reported that 23 routes had already been established, attracting several thousand walkers, with most routes accessed digitally via a mobile application.

K Young presented details of the proposed Ouston and Urpeth walk, approximately four miles in length, noting that part of the route extended briefly into Gateshead. Improvements to a section of track were identified, with an estimated cost of £900.

In order to meet the costs of the project a request was therefore made for financial support.

Resolved:

That a contribution of £300 be approved in support of the Heritage 100 Walks project.

Councillors B Barrett, D Wood and G Holmes-Wood declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

123. Miners Gala

Members considered arrangements for the 2026 Miners Gala and marching of the banner.

Members discussed costs associated with transport to and from the event and enquiries which were being made in relation to a protective rain cover for the banner.

Resolved:

i) That one vehicle be booked for the event in line with the quote provided. Should further transport be required following advertisement of the event, then the Chair may consider approval of additional costs if permitted under delegated authority.

ii) That the Clerk continue to make enquiries regarding a protective cover and report back to the council on costs when a quote had been received.

124. Allotments

The Clerk provided a brief update in relation to allotment sites at High Handenhold and Plantation View and advised that a Freedom of Information request had been received from a tenant which had now been satisfactorily concluded.

125. Ward / Area Matters

i) Beamish – Trees

Councillor Norwood raised concerns regarding a tree at Beamish which had lost several large boughs during Storm Dave and appeared to be diseased. It was noted that residents had cleared debris from the road. The Clerk agreed to contact Durham County Council to establish land ownership and to request that the tree be assessed and made safe. It was noted that responsibility would rest with the highway authority should the tree fall onto the road.

ii) Bus Shelter

Councillor Barrett reported that a bus shelter had been removed at Urpeth Grange and the area tarmacked with a new bus stop sign installed, however there was no indication that the shelter would be replaced. The Clerk agreed to contact Durham County Council and provide feedback when a response was received.

iii) Clean and Green matters

Concerns were raised regarding the overgrown and damaged signage at the A693 roundabout near the Trinity Green Estate, and excessive leaf debris remaining on pavements along Station Road and the A693. The Clerk agreed to report the matters to DCC.

iv) Anti-social behaviour

Issues relating to antisocial behaviour and policing were discussed, and Members expressed a desire for improved engagement with local police, including the sharing of crime data and potential attendance at a future meeting.

v) Big Spring Clean

Dates for group litter picks to be postponed to allow for improved attendance.