

## **URPETH PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 19 May 2026 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

### **Councillor B Scott (Vice-Chair in Chair)**

**Present:** Councillors B Barrett, S Hann, G Holmes-Wood, K Norwood, B Scott, D Wood, I Stewart-Fergusson and C Todd

#### **1. Election of Chair**

##### **Resolved:**

That Councillor B Scott be elected Chair of the Council for the ensuing year.

Members recorded their appreciation to the outgoing Chair for the measured, thoughtful and effective work undertaken by Councillor Johnson over the past year.

#### **2. Acceptance of Office of Chair**

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by the newly elected Chair.

#### **3. Election of Vice-Chair**

##### **Resolved:**

That Cllr Todd be elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the ensuing year.

#### **4. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from H Fox, R Johnson and P Pringle.

#### **5. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 April 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair with the following amendment:

Minute number 115 - Councillor D Wood further declared an interest in Item 9 on the agenda as a member of Ouston Parish Council who had also committed funding to the project. Councillor Wood abstained from voting but spoke on the item.

Members furthermore expressed disappointment regarding the lack of attendance by County Councillors and considered it reasonable to expect their attendance at parish meetings. It was agreed that this issue should be raised at the smaller council's forum to establish whether this was a wider issue across County

Durham, and that separate contact should be made to express the council's ongoing disappointment.

## **7. Representations from the Public**

There were no representations from members of the public.

## **8. Appointments to the Allotment Committee**

**Resolved:** that the following members be appointed to the Allotment Committee:

Councillors B Barrett, B Scott and R Johnson.

## **9. Review of Policies and Procedures**

The Council reviewed the Policies and Procedures listed on the agenda. The Clerk advised that Policies 1 to 5, which included Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Risk and Asset Registers had been reviewed and that no changes were required or proposed at this time.

In relation to the IT Policy, members were advised that the document had been developed to meet the requirements of Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement Return and had been drafted in a proportionate way to reflect the size, resources and day-to-day operations of a small parish council, whilst still maintaining appropriate controls and governance.

In relation to the Asbestos Policy and Procedure, members were advised that the Council were required to have an up-to-date Asbestos policy and asbestos register.

A recently reported incident in which asbestos had been identified at an allotment site highlighted the need for robust arrangements to manage asbestos risk.

Both documents were presented for approval and formal adoption.

**Resolved:** that the Policies and Procedures listed at agenda item 9 (1-7), including the IT Policy and the Asbestos Policy and Procedure, be approved and adopted.

## **10. Finance Matters**

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

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Clerk                      | 1031.32 |
| HMRC Paye 2 x 2 employees  | 265.98  |
| Street Cleansing Operative | 445.96  |
| Street Cleansing Operative | 457.56  |
| Environmental Inspections  | 180.00  |

## **11. Allotments**

Members received an update in relation to the allotments, including details regarding a request for skips at High Handenhold and matters relating to asbestos removal.

During the discussion on skips, members considered the current position, associated costs and alternatives to skip provision, and agreed that the Allotment Committee would discuss this further with the Association.

The Clerk further highlighted damage and deterioration of a boundary post at High Handenhold which had been reported by a tenant. The Allotment Committee further agreed to review at the next site inspection.

## **12. Ward / Area Matters**

### **i) Policing and PACT Meetings**

The Clerk advised that further to an email sent to the local Inspector regarding police liaison and crime statistics, it was noted that a response had been received which was shared with the meeting. It was further discussed whether a future meeting could be aligned with a PACT meeting, and it was agreed that at least one member would attend the next scheduled PACT meeting on 10 June and report back to the next council meeting.

### **ii) Updates on matters previously reported**

The Clerk provided an update on those matters which had been reported to DCC and the responses which had been received and passed to residents where applicable.

### **iii) Litter picking**

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson asked whether there were any plans for a collective litter pick in the near future. Councillor Todd, referenced discussion at the previous meeting regarding the Big Spring Clean. She advised that due to time restraints it was unlikely that a date could be secured before August, and that dates in September may be possible, and any dates secured could include possible involvement with schools and civic pride activity.

It was suggested that posters for noticeboards could be displayed to seek interest from the public in taking part.

### **iv) Noticeboards**

Further to discussion regarding the condition of noticeboards and the costs associated with their replacement, it was suggested by Councillor Todd that some attempts to refurbish some of the noticeboards in poorer condition could be undertaken at the locations in which residents had indicated that they were still required. Members agreed with the proposed course of action.