

WOLSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD
TUESDAY 9TH September 2025
7.00 PM
Town Hall, Wolsingham

PRESENT: I Rodgers, Y Bell, S Bittlestone, A Savory, J Bartram, J Bell, D Brown,
P Gardner, Sarah-Ann Baxter(Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 17 Members of the public attended

- 1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** H Yeulet, A Bonar
- 2) Allotment Competition Awards:** The Mill Isle Allotment prize was jointly won by Robert Galbraith & family and Kevin Butcher, with the Recreation Allotment prize going to Tracey Greener. The Chair thanked Bob Richardson for travelling to judge the competition and Robert Galbraith for organising the judging.
- 3) TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** Cllr David Brown declared an interest in the following item. Mrs Vivien Welsh on the behalf of the Well Wishers group, who help to maintain the Holy Well, had requested some help with trees and other maintenance both of the Holy Well & Chapel Wall well. The Chair confirmed that neither well was the responsibility of the Parish Council, however Cllr Savory would ask Durham County Council to look into the overhanging trees at Holy Well. Cllr Brown, who's land Chapel Wall well resided in has agreed to liaise with the group regarding its maintenance.

A resident asked about parking restriction in the Market Place. The Clerk confirmed that Durham County Council had just sent through plans which showed that 5 parking bays would have the parking restriction lifted. There were other proposals regarding single & double yellow lines at the entrance to Meadhope Street and opposite Wolsingham School. Cllr Savory also highlighted that the Paring Wardens had been out and Cllr Gardner pointed out that a resident had put parking signs in Angate Square, Cllr Savory would look into this.

ACTION AS

It was asked by a resident if the Parish Council could help with the maintenance of the new Churchyard. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council were not responsible for this area and that it fell to the Parochial Church Council. Cllr Savory has been liaising with them and they will try to have more cuts completed next year.

- 4) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Savory – Planning Matters, Cllr J. Bell in the Recreation Toilets.
- 5) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 8th July 2025:** Minutes were agreed as a true record
- 6) MATTERS ARISING:**

- i) New Toilets – The toilet doors have been adjusted by and appear to be functioning correctly. It was agreed to write to the company who installed the doors expressing our concerns & extra costs incurred.

ACTION SAB

- ii) Christmas – Cllr Savory to liaise with Cllr Yeulet regarding the working group.

ACTION AS & HY

- iii) Flagpole – The Clerk has contacted a specialist company in Newton Aycliffe & Cllr Savory will approach the Fire Brigade regarding the placement of the flag.
- iv) 40mph Buffer Zones – Cllr Savory has had a meeting with Durham County Council and at the moment there is no change to their stance on 40mph buffer zones at the entries to Wolsingham, however this may be reconsidered if/when houses are built opposite the petrol station. Cllr Gardner suggested it would be

appropriate for more up to date data to be held to allow better future planning. Cllr Savory pointed out that all County Council budgets were tight and that priorities for funding had to be made.

- v) 24-26 Market Place Parking Issues – a letter has been sent to the owner of the Black Bull asking for the Keep Clear to be unobstructed and for the bins to be relocated. The Black Bull have already applied for a smaller bin.
- vi) DCC Toilet Recreation Ground – Cllr Savory explained that it is still closed and Cllr J Bell had written twice to Durham County Council concerning the toilet and has not received a response.

7) CORRESPONDENCE:

5i) Mrs Vivien Welsh – Holy Well & Chapel Wall Well – discussed as above

5ii) PROW 167- The Clerk had received several queries as to when the footway would be open, she went on to explain that the legal processes were still being worked through.

8) MAINTENANCE WORKS:

- a) St Anne's Hall– The hall has been decorated over the summer by Councillors and the Clerk. There is now a fridge in the kitchen and the small room is now available to hire for meetings. It was agreed that the Clerk look into getting the halogen downlighters on the outside of the building replaced with led lights. **ACTION SAB**
 - b) Recreation Ground –The Clerk is seeking funding from the National Lottery to replace the wooden climbing equipment with a new Ninja Trail. Cllr Savory will look to seek funding from the available S106 monies to fund the removal & disposal of the old equipment. Cllr Gardner queried the funding, as studies have shown young people numbers are expected to go down in Weardale, and could the monies be better spent elsewhere. Several Councillors expressed how popular the play park was, not only with tourists but with local families.
 - c) Town Hall – Nothing to Report
 - d) Demesne Mill – The tree works at the top of the park have been completed.
 - e) Thornley Woods – Nothing to Report
 - f) Allotments – Cllr J Bell & the Clerk have carried out the annual inspection. A plot on the Recreation Allotments had become vacant and this had been re-let from the waiting list.
 - g) Angate Street Toilets – Nothing to report
- 9) Flower Beds – Cllr Savory asked could the Wolsingham School Garden Club have the use of another area where an old flower bed used to be in the Recreation Ground. This was agreed, as they had done such a good job of rejuvenating the smaller bed.
- 10) Memorial Cleaning – Cllr Savory has information on funding available to clean memorials, she will pass this onto the Clerk. **ACTION AS**
- 11) Play Ground Equipment – As discussed above
- 12) Radio 2 Challenge – The Clerk has been approached by Children in Need regarding the possible use of St Anne's Hall for a stop off for Radio 2's Sara Cox in her 5-day challenge. More details will be given once this is confirmed.
- 13) Finance**
- i) Payments & Reports for July/August 2025 – Agreed.
 - ii) Clerks Salary – It was agreed the Clerk's salary would be increased in line with the national pay scale increases.
 - iii) Town Hall Office Contract – The current occupiers of the office have given notice and the office will be vacant from the end of October. It was agreed that this should be advertised.

- iv) WRECASS has been wound up and the monies have been transferred to the Parish Council where it was agreed they would be ringfenced for community events etc. Cllr J Bell would supply the Clerk with objectives agreed by the WRECASS committee. The Chair thanked David Sugden for all his hard work in making this happen as the bank had not been very efficient. **ACTION JB**
- v) The bi-annual tree surveys are now due and the Clerk has been approached by a company who would appear to be able to do the works considerably cheaper. It was agreed that a quote would be obtained from the usual supplier and a comparison made. **ACTION SAB**

14) PLANNING – Councillors noted that an application for the construction of an office building at land east of 1-6 Deneside Business Units was refused planning permission by DCC Planning Committee solely on nature conservation grounds.

Date of next meeting – October 14th 2025 to held at the Town Hall, Wolsingham at 7pm