

WOLSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD
TUESDAY 12TH May 2026
6.45 PM
Town Hall, Wolsingham

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

- 1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** A Bonar
- 2) TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** Judith Elliott asked if the gate to the play area could be made to self-close and also requested extra 'No Dogs Allowed' signs on the entrances to the play area. Cllr Rodgers explained that the Council along with Cllr Savory are looking to get the play area upgraded this year and the gates will be addressed then. It was agreed temporary signs would be erected.

A number of residents highlighted the proposed development on the Wolsingham School site as a concern, especially around the junction area onto Leazes Lane. Volume of traffic, existing congestion, conflict with pedestrians were all noted. Cllr Rodgers explained that the Parish Council have already responded to the pre-planning consultation raising these concerns and that everyone will be given an opportunity to formally respond when a planning application is lodged with DCC.

Letters had been received from Alison Hirst, Jane Slack & Kathleen Perry objecting to the use of the bike track in the woodland between the Recreation Field and the river. The main concerns raised were safety issues for pedestrians using the family walk, possible collisions between bikes & pedestrians and the unsightly look of the bike track. Several children and their parents attended the meeting and there were concerns that the bike track would be made inaccessible to them. Cllr Rodgers explained that the Parish Council had given permission for this area to be used as a bike track several years ago and the Recreation Ground is a shared use facility. It was agreed that a site meeting take place between the Parish Council and the users of the bike track to discuss future use and to see if any improvements could be agreed.

Christine Smith asked if there had been any further updates from DCC concerning the parking in the Market Place, specifically the provision of 5 all day parking bays. Cllr Savory will chase this up with the Highways Dept.

Enid Martin again highlighted the problem with parking around the Black Bull and blocking of the access to 24-26 Market Place. Cllr Savory will ensure the Street Wardens are made aware of this.

Jennifer Tasker asked if the approaches to Wolsingham could be improved in appearance. Councillors noted that the verges & signage were the responsibility of DCC and that the businesses of the Town should be supported as they contribute to employment and the community.

- 3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Savory - South West Planning Committee
- 4) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 10th March 2026:** Minutes were agreed as a true record

5) MATTERS ARISING:

- i) Christmas – The working group meetings have been taking place and the Christmas Festival will take place on the 27th-29th November. After several requests have been received for coloured lights on the Christmas tree it was agreed for the Clerk to look into the costs for the provision of a set of coloured lights.
- ii) S106 Play Ground Equipment – Cllr Savory will chase this up with DCC. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Ninja Trail should be installed before the summer holidays.
- iii) Wild Flower Planting – An area of planting has been agreed with Sue Able on the edge of the copse to the West of the football field in the Recreation Ground.
- iv) Thornley Village Verge Conditions – Cllr Savory reported that the Clean & Green team will look at the damage again.

6) CORRESPONDENCE:

- i) North East war Memorials Project – Information has been received from a resident that the Imperial War Museum is responsible for the recording of war memorials.
- ii) DCC PROW No.136 Creation, Public Bridleway No's 134 & 137 Diversion – representatives from the Wolsingham Wayfarers advised this was a sensible diversion taking the PROW away from the farmyard. No other objections were raised from the floor.
- iii) Bike Track in Recreation Woods – Jane Slack, Alison Hirst, Kathleen Perry – addressed under Item 2
- iv) Local Network Team – Sue Richardson – This was an introduction from the Local Network team which replaces the old AAP. The area the team covers is now larger. It was agreed to invite the team to a future Parish Council meeting.
- v) Speeding – West End of Wolsingham – Brian Schudel – It was asked could speed reduction measures be put in place at the West End of Wolsingham as there is some concern in the area of Stanhope Road & the School. Various other issues were also raised including poor parking, lack of crossing points, provision of 40mph buffer zones & lack of enforcement. Cllr Savory will raise the issue with DCC Highways but explained that a speed survey for one location now costs £500 and speed visors are in excess of £12000 each now. Cllr Gardner asked if a whole town traffic audit would be appropriate, these are expensive to carry out & funding for which would have to be sourced externally.

7) MAINTENANCE WORKS:

- a) St Anne's Hall – The new main door has been installed along with an upgrade to LED lighting throughout. Hopefully the roof lights will be replaced during the summer holidays.
- b) Recreation Ground – One of the goalposts has been removed due to it being corroded. If anyone sees anti-social behaviour or vehicles on the Recreation Ground could this be reported to the Police by ringing 101. The rabbit holes will need to be filled in.
- c) Town Hall – It was agreed to make enquiries regarding quotes for the painting of the Town Hall windows.
- d) Demesne Mill – Works to tidy & clear the car park have been completed, further investigations into the drainage system are required.
- e) Thornley Woods – Nothing to report.

- f) Allotments – With regards to vermin/rabbits the Clerk explained that as not all of the allotment holders were in agreeance to the type of pest control, no further measures could take place.
 - g) Angate Street Toilets – The roof drainage system has been cleared and the roof will be monitored over the next few months to see if it still leaks.
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- 8) Gravestones Management – Cllr Rodgers – The Parish council are responsible for the maintenance of the old Closed Churchyard and it was agreed that the Clerk will attend training prior to completing a gravestone inspection.
 - 9) Summer Fair – Clerk – This event is to raise funds for the Christmas Festival. It will take place on Sunday 26th July at St Anne's & the Recreation Ground.
 - 10) Possible Development off Leazes Lane – Cllr Rodgers - addressed under Item 2
 - 11) Northern Heartlands - PLACE Lab Artwork – Clerk – The Parish Council have been approached by Northern heartlands to install a piece of artwork in the Recreation Ground. More details to follow.
 - 12) Knowledge for Change – Cllr Gardner – Cllr Gardner explained that the Rural Durham Community Research Network is running a Knowledge for Change project which is looking at places where the people of Weardale meet & interact. There are a number of workshops running where residents can become involved.
- 13) Finance**
- i) **Payments / Accounts March & April 2026** – these were agreed & accepted. Cllr Brown suggested it would be worth looking into a better accountancy system, which would give more long term security for the Council records. This was agreed and the Clerk will look into this.
 - ii) The Clerk presented the AGAR audit documents, year-end accounts for 2025/26, as well as the internal auditors report. The Council agreed that these documents could be submitted to the external auditors.
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- 14) PLANNING** – Nothing to Report