

WOLSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD
TUESDAY 9TH June 2026
6.30 PM
Town Hall, Wolsingham

PRESENT: A Bonar, Y Bell, S Bittlestone, P Gardner, D Brown, J Bell, R Ormerod

- 1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** I Rodgers, A Savory, J Bartram, Sarah-Ann Baxter(Clerk)
- 2) TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** None
- 3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 4) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 12th May 2026:** Cllr Gardner queried the comments regarding the new housing development, noting they were all negative, and should we be reflecting both positive and negative points. Other Councillors pointed out that all comments raised and discussed in the meeting had been negative and the Minutes were, therefore, an accurate reflection of the meeting.
Item 6 i) re the War Memorial. Cllr Bittlestone requested clarification that it was recording of war memorials. This was confirmed
The Minutes were agreed as a true record.
- 5) MATTERS ARISING:**
 - i) Christmas – no further developments as focus is on the Summer Fair
 - ii) Summer Fair – the next meeting is 19th June at 4pm. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help on the day is encouraged to contact the Clerk. The choir is unable to sing at the Summer Fair but would be interested in Christmas.
 - iii) S106 Play Ground Equipment – No update
 - iv) Speeding / Community Speed Watch – The price of the speed matrix flashing signs is approximately £14,000 each. We would need 4. This cost is currently beyond the capability of the Parish Council. Anyone who is interested and has time available should contact the PCSOs at Stanhope and they can be trained in the community speedwatch van.
 - v) Bike Track in Recreation Woods Update – A meeting was held on Monday June 1st at the bike track – Cllr Rodgers, Cllr Bonar and the Clerk, several parents, a couple of residents and representatives from the Wayfarers attended. They discussed issues, and complaints from residents, eg bikes going onto the footpath. The Wayfarers are happy to help clear some nettles round the area to provide an alternative track for the bikes avoiding the footpath. The parents and children were all happy to carry out the work to make it work. The Clerk is dealing with insurance in this respect. It was noted that cutting back the nettles would make it easier for other cyclists using the tracks in the woods and it was also noted that two of the kids practicing on the bike track had competed in a competition at Hamsterley Forrest and done well.
- 6) CORRESPONDENCE:** None
- 7) MAINTENANCE WORKS:**
 - a) St Anne's Hall – Nothing to report

- b) Recreation Ground – The rabbit holes on the field areas need filling. Any volunteers, please contact the Clerk. There was discussion regarding the locked gates to the overflow car park. They were locked to avoid unofficial camping. The fences have been fixed so it may be possible to open the gate. It was unclear if the gate would be left open as there is currently no one to open it each morning.
 - c) Town Hall – A bench outside the library railings has two bolts missing, as well as a missing slat and a warped one.
 - d) Demesne Mill – Nothing to report.
 - e) Thornley Woods – Nothing to report.
 - f) Allotments – See Item 8 below
 - g) Angate Street Toilets – The men's is shut because the bolts have been removed from the toilet base, so the water flows everywhere when flushed. SAB is sourcing quotes from plumber to do this. Also watching to see whether the roof is leaking. No water accumulating on the roof any more as downcomer has been unblocked.
- 8) Recreation Allotments Rabbit Control – Cllr Bonar explained that legally, we are required to control vermin on our land and need to make a decision. It was agreed to use Ferrets on the Recreation allotments, as rabbits were in evidence during a recent inspection. Reputable firms would be investigated.
 - 9) Closed Churchyard Wall – Quotes have been requested. One received was considered too expensive. Another quote is awaited.
 - 10) A Game games pop up-feedback – Cllr Gardner attended this event at St Annes. It is local charity who operated online for youths opted out of school, often neurodivergent. Attendees were all ages. 3 full sessions. It brings people together and encourages conversations as well as being cross-generational. They are getting a lot of requests from parents with kids with special needs. It was noted that the events were not well advertised, and no members of the Parish Council had known about the event or heard of the organisation. Cllr Gardner will invite them to come and talk to us on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - 11) Foodie Book Club - community lunch feedback – Cllr Gardner attended the Community Lunch 2 weeks ago. It was well attended by people from all over the Dale. Extremely sociable. The next lunch will be held at St Annes on June 30th. Jenny Green commented that she can advertise community events like this for free in the Town Crier.
 - 12) Youth Voice; Co-opting young people and young adults – Cllr Gardner explained that Durham Community Action advertised an event on their website about Youth Voice. They held a session with 3 Groups (one from Gateshead) talking about people in their area listening to them and making decisions about their future. The Parish Council don't often hear from younger people. Cllr Gardner knows a 25 year old who is "very keen" to get onto the Council. This person was strongly encouraged to apply.
 - 13) Local Networks- local parish priorities – Cllr Gardner outlined the existence of Community Network events held in Crook last year and the drop-in session held recently. Cllr Savory and Cllr Gardner had attended. They will put together a 4-year plan and want to know our priorities. They have already been invited to the next Council meeting. It was suggested this should be a priority for us rather than leave it to the County Council and perhaps if we have something to present to them, and help them, rather than the other way round. If we present priorities, these are local schemes that would benefit, match funding perhaps.

14) Finance

i) Payments / Accounts May 2026 – these were agreed & accepted.

15) PLANNING – Nothing to Report

Cllr Brown gave thanks to the Well-Wishers for the work done at the Holy Well at Chapel Walls and noted they will be doing some fundraising in the next few months.