

Minutes of the Meeting of Bowes Parish Council

held at Bowes Hutchinson's School on 15 July 2025 7.30 p.m.

Present

Cllr Hughes (Chair), Cllr Carlisle (Vice Chair), Cllr White, Cllr Tipping, Cllr M Thompson (from item 3), Mr Ross Woodley (Clerk and RFO)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

2. Co-option of a new council member

Following a discussion at the June meeting, the Chair explained the need to ratify the co-option of Mark Thompson at this meeting. There had not been any other applicants and the Council had operated successfully with five councillors for several years. It was **resolved to co-opt Mark Thompson on to the Council. Proposed by Cllr Carlisle seconded by Cllr Tipping.**

The clerk provided a declaration of acceptance of office form for Mr Thompson to sign and explained the register of interest process. The Clerk and Cllr Thompson signed the declaration and the Chair welcomed Cllr Thompson on to the Council confirming that he could participate in the remainder of the meeting as a councillor.

3. Minutes of the Meeting

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held Tuesday 17 June 2025 (circulated as Appendix A of the agenda) were discussed.

It was **resolved to accept the circulated minutes. Proposed by Cllr Tipping seconded by Cllr Carlisle.**

4. Matters arising (unless dealt with later in the agenda)

The Clerk confirmed that he published the AGAR and public rights period on 18 June 2025 and the public rights period runs from 19 June 2025 to 30 July 2025.

The Clerk had discussed the NHS Big Tea with the Village Hall Committee but they had declined to stage an event in the hall.

The Clerk had received a response to a planning query on solar panels within the conservation area. Ostensibly, they are permitted without planning permission, providing that they are on roofs and not on walls or at ground level. The Chair thanked the Clerk for obtaining clarification and noted the position for future developments in the conservation area.

5. Finance & Accounts – See summary below.

(a) Receipts since last meeting £4.00 Allotment Rent - McDonnell

£108.39 Investment interest

£11.18 Bank Interest

(b) Expenses since last meeting £543.00 Clerk salary Q1 2025/26 (payable 30/6/25)

£270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward

£135.60 HMRC PAYE Q1 2025/26 (payable 30/6/25)

£270.00 April and May Grass-Cutting – R Toward

£120.00 24/25 Internal Audit – Butler & Gee

£84.99 Microsoft 365 software license (clerk refund)

(c) It was **resolved to approve the following payments – Cllr Tipping proposed, and Cllr Carlisle seconded:**

- £144.00 Society of Local Council Clerks – ILCA Training

- £270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward
- £76.13 Viking Direct – Small office shredder

(d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the June 2025 meeting, so no retrospective approval was required at this meeting.

(e) Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2025 (month 3)

The Clerk presented Appendix B for receipts and payments to the end of the first quarter in 2025/26 compared with the profiled budget. The Council is within 0.2% of the profiled budget. The underlying position is unchanged with £38,000 of reserves anticipated at year-end. Cllr Tipping noted how close the actual position was to the profiled budget.

It was **resolved to accept the budget monitoring report** – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.

(f) Bank reconciliation at 30 June 2025 (month 3)

The Clerk presented Appendix C, which showed that the bank statements at 31 June 2025 agreed with the cash book balance without any reconciling items. This was signed by the Chair as reviewer at the meeting after agreeing to underlying records. It was **resolved to accept the bank reconciliation** – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.

5 Planning

There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the June 2025 meeting.

6 Correspondence

(a) CDALC have informed parish councils that Durham County Council have two vacancies for parish councillors to sit on the Standards Board. Application forms must be returned by 22 September 1975. None of the councillors wished to apply.

(b) SLCC have informed clerks that Unison rejected the Government's 2025/26 below-inflation pay proposal of 3.2%. Accordingly, a decision is not expected before the Autumn (as in 2024/25). The Council's 2025/26 budget allowed for a 5% pay award. Cllr Hughes noted this prudent budgeting.

7 Cemetery & Village maintenance

The Clerk remarked that he had placed an official order with Ray Watson for repairing the cemetery wall with a concrete base and infill and since the agenda had been published he had received a reply indicating that the contractor would provide him with an estimated completion date shortly.

8 Allotments

Cllr Hughes updated the Council on progress bringing the newly let allotment to the West of the Clint back into use as discussed at the June meeting. He was liaising with the new allotment holder regarding a controlled bonfire to make cultivating the plot easier.

9 Play Park

(a) Cllr Hughes provided the latest playground inspection sheet and confirmed that there were no issues that needed attention.

(b) Cllr Hughes had assessed the need to apply preservative to the fencing and concluded that it would take eight litres of preservative and many hours of labour but the work was not urgent and he would monitor monthly with a view to including the work within the 2026/27 budget if the condition remained acceptable for the rest of this year. He added that he was

planning to plant bulbs in the three tubs by the bus shelter in the Autumn and reclaim the cost of the bulbs.

10 Footpaths

The Clerk confirmed that he had placed an official order with Craig Gibson for repairing the footpaths subject to DCC grant funding. However, he had not received a reply indicating when the work would take place. Cllr White said that he had discussed the work with Mr Gibson and he was aware that the work needed completing before the September 2025 meeting. This was to ensure that there was sufficient time to get two quotes for all the footpath work required in 2026 before DCC issued the 2026/27 P3 grant application forms (likely February/March 2026).

11 Insurance

The Clerk explained that the Council's insurance policy expires on 31 August 2025, which is before the next meeting. As he had not yet received a renewal quote for appropriate cover starting 1 September 2025, he advised the Council to grant him delegated authority to seek quotes from three suitable providers and order the policy that offers best value for money, to ensure that there was no gap in cover awaiting council approval at the next meeting in September. It was **resolved to delegate approval to the Clerk to take out an insurance policy following three quotations with retrospective approval of the payment at the September 2025 meeting** Cllr Tipping proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.

12 New member training

The Clerk confirmed that CDALC had already completed a programme of training for new councillors, although more training is scheduled for October. Meanwhile, he intends to provide Cllr Thompson with one recorded training session on registering interests, the slides for training in the Code of Conduct and links to important reading material recommended by CDALC. It was **resolved to accept this approach to Cllr Thompson's induction.** Cllr Hughes proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.

13 AOB

The Clerk stated that earlier in the day he had received notice from Durham County Council of a proposed footpath diversion whilst a quarry was developed. There was only one month of consultation. The Council discussed the proposal and did not wish to respond to the consultation invitation as the diversion was temporary and reasonable.

Cllr Carlisle noted two other issues which he wished the Clerk to raise with the relevant organisations:

- The Council had formally objected to an application to change the status of a by-way from Sleightholme to the North Yorkshire border near Tan Hill, which would restrict historic vehicular access. The objection was over a year ago and the Council had not heard the outcome. The Clerk agreed to request an update before the next meeting; and
- A traffic flow camera on the A66, which predated the current roadworks, had been knocked into the grass verge. The Clerk agreed to report it to National Highways.

14 Date, time, and venue of the next meeting.

The next Ordinary Meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 September 2025 at Bowes Hutchinson's School at 7.30 in accordance with the timetable published on the Council's website.

Meeting closed at 8.15 p.m. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) the impact of resolutions on crime and disorder in the parish was considered but no significant impact was identified.