

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 14 October at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 16 September 2025 for approval. See [Appendix A](#).
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
The Clerk declared that as requested at the September meeting he had raised the conversion of a front garden to parking at a property in a conservation area without first obtaining planning approval with Durham County Council. The planning inspector had visited the site and agreed that planning permission was required owing to the depth of the excavation and requirement for new access to a public highway. A planning application had been requested.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting
 - £125.00 Headstone Fee – Teesdale Memorial
 - £125.00 Headstone Fee - Allison
 - £108.39 Investment Interest (October)
 - £35.42 Bank Interest
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting
 - £577.63 Clerk Q2 salary plus backdated pay award
 - £270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward
 - £144.40 PAYE Q2 including back-pay – HMRC.
 - £54.00 Clerk training in Allotment Policy – SLCC
 - £6.00 Bank charges
 - (c) Payments to approve at the meeting – None at the time of drafting this agenda, but a further grass-cutting invoice is expected before the meeting and will be authorised if received on time.
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the September 2025 meeting, except for the bank charges, which were approved as part of the Banking and Investment Strategy in May 2025.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 30 September 2025 (mid-year)
See [Appendix B](#) for receipts and payments at the mid-way point of 2025/26 compared with the profiled budget. Although the Council are 4.7% (£1,908) below the profiled budget the underspend is almost fully accounted for by unbilled cemetery wall repairs and training costs plus quarter two staff costs not being paid until early October. The underlying position is unchanged with £38,000 of reserves anticipated at year-end.
 - (f) See [Appendix C](#) for the bank reconciliation at 30 September 2025 (mid-year). This shows the balances on the new Unity Trust bank accounts with the long-term investment with Redwood Bank as a memorandum item. In accordance with financial regulations the bank statements and cash book supporting the reconciliation will be provided for the Chair's quarterly check at the meeting.
5. **Planning**
There has been one planning application within the parish council boundaries since the September 2025 meeting. This relates to a heating upgrade including the installation of a heat pump at a listed building (Dotheboys Hall),

6. **Correspondence**

(a) Durham County Council sent the Clerk a briefing note on changes to advise services that they run in conjunction with partners such as Groundworks North East and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Council may wish to publish the note on its website and / or noticeboard.

(b) Durham County Council have started their consultation on their 2026/27 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and changes in council tax. Parish councils are asked to submit any response by 14 November. The new administration has indicated a preference for a council tax freeze, which would increase the 2026/27 deficit to £20M and the four-year deficit to £71M. The consultation proposals do not provide any detail about how such a gap could be bridged as only £4M of savings have been identified but list a wide range of services being reviewed for further savings.

(c) CDALC have invited councillors to attend its Annual General Meeting in Shildon on Saturday 25 October at 10 a.m. If any councillors wish to attend there are two places available and bookings are required by 20 October.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

(a) Cemetery fees were subject to benchmarking and a comprehensive review in 2024 leading to significant increases that took effect from 1 April 2025. The increase was primarily due to 15 years of inflation without a change in the fee scale. The Council are asked to consider if due to the scale of the increase in 2025/26 they wish to freeze fees for 2026/27 or to prevent the income being eroded by inflation they wish to commit to an annual increase.

(b) The cemetery wall repairs were nearing completion at the time of drafting this agenda. The Council are asked to nominate a councillor to inspect the work upon completion to confirm the requirements have been met.

(c) The Council have previously discussed planting bulbs in the village flower tubs '*during the Autumn.*' The Council are asked to consider facilitating this by the next meeting.

8. **Allotments**

See **Appendix D** for a draft tenancy agreement including the allotment rules and policy, which the Clerk intends to send to allotment holders with their 2025/26 invoice. This reflects the increase in allotment rents approved at the September meeting and good practice identified by the Clerk attending SLCC allotment policy training. The Council are asked to discuss and approve the agreement.

9. **Play Park**

To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground.

10. **Footpaths**

Cllr White to update the Council on the progress of the grant-funded 2025/26 footpath work.

11. **Data Protection and Retention**

In September 2025, the Council resolved to update its GDPR and Data Protection Policy including its data retention policy, undertake a data audit and arrange the secure destruction of paper records with the new policy due to be approved at this meeting. However, the Clerk attended two free training sessions on GDPR in early October and concluded that a new approach to ensuring GDPR compliance was required. The Council are asked to consider and approve a new plan for ensuring GDPR Compliance at **Appendix E**.

12. **Charities**

The Council are not sole trustees of any charities but councillors do make up most of the trustees on the John Bousfield and Kipling charities. The last meeting of these charities was in November 2024 and the trustees are required to meet at least annually as approved at this meeting. The Clerk (as

Treasurer and Secretary of the two charities) intends to arrange the 2025 charities meeting to take place immediately before the November 2025 Bowes Parish Council meeting and to clarify if Chris Redfern wishes to remain as a trustee after resigning from the Council. The trustees resolved at the 2024 meeting to work with Teesdale Community Resources to identify how they could best use donations from the charities to relieve poverty in Bowes and report back to the next meeting. Barclays Bank have contacted the Clerk several times in the past year asking for evidence that the charities are active (either fundraising or spending funds already received) as a condition of free banking. The Clerk provided the minutes of the last meeting as evidence the charities were committed to expenditure during 2025. Councillors who are trustees of these charities should reflect on these issues before the next meeting.

13 **AOB**

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