Minutes of the Meeting of Bowes Parish Council
held at Bowes Hutchinson's School on 15 September 2026 7.30 p.m.

Present
Cllr Hughes (Chair), Cllr Thompson, Cllr White, Mr Ross Woodley (Clerk and RFO)

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest**
Cllr Carlisle sent his apologies. Cllr Hughes declared an interest in item 8.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting**
Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held Tuesday 14 July 2026 (circulated as Appendix A of the agenda) were discussed.
It was **resolved to accept the circulated minutes.** Proposed by Cllr Thompson seconded by Cllr Hughes.

3. **Matters arising** (unless dealt with later in the agenda)
The Chair stated that he had held an initial discussion with one resident who might be interested in co-option. He intended to hold a further discussion and update members at the next meeting. The Clerk stated that the Council needed to consider extending Councillor Carlisle's approved absence due to illness, because this approval expired on 17 September and the Council would be inquorate if any of the other three councillors were unable to attend a meeting. It was **resolved to approve the ill-health absence from meetings of Cllr Carlisle for a further six months.** Proposed by Cllr White seconded by Cllr Thompson.

The Chair commented that he had tried to register the Council's objection to the Gallow Hill planning application, but the portal no longer accepted comments.

The Clerk declared that he needed further information from Cllr White and Cllr Thompson to complete the on-line form that Unity Trust required to initiate additions to the bank mandate. This information was supplied at the meeting and the Clerk agreed to complete the online application and update the Council at the next meeting.

4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below.**

(a) Receipts since last meeting £125.00 Memorial Fee -Teesdale Memorials
£112.01 Investment Interest (July)
£112.01 Investment Interest (August)

(b) Expenses since last meeting £448.00 Insurance Premium – Zurich
£270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward
£11.99 Email accounts DD (July) – Hugo Fox
£11.99 Email accounts DD (August) – Hugo Fox
£7.00 Bank Charges (July)
£7.00 Bank charges (August)

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

- £601.20 Clerk salary Q2 26/27 – R Woodley
- £252.00 25/26 external audit – BDO
- £150.20 PAYE Q2 26/27 – HMRC

- £135.00 Grass-cutting (1 cut) – R Toward

(d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the July 2026 meeting, or in the case of bank and email charges are monthly contractual payments.

(e) Budget Monitoring to 31 August 2026 (month 5)
The Clerk presented Appendix B for receipts and payments at month 3 of 2026/27
This indicates a 4% (£1,765) underspend against the profiled budget. However, this is due to the payments awaiting approval at item 4c above (£1,138) and the unpredictable timing of cemetery and village repairs and maintenance, with all now expected in the second half of the year. Accordingly, the Clerk forecasts a break-even outturn leaving reserves at £38,500 in line with the approved 2026/27 budget. The Chair suggested the Clerk obtains expressions of interest in cemetery tree work, which was anticipated to be the costliest item in the second half of the financial year. It was **resolved to accept the budget monitoring report** – Cllr Thompson proposed, and Cllr Hughes seconded.

(f) Bank reconciliation at 31 August 2026 (month 5)
The Clerk presented Appendix C, for the bank reconciliation at 31 August 2026 (month 5). This shows the balances on the Unity Trust bank accounts (£12,590) reconcile to the cash book without any reconciling items. It also shows the £32,000 long-term investment with Redwood Bank as a memorandum item. It was **resolved to accept the bank reconciliation** – Cllr Thompson proposed, and Cllr Hughes seconded.

(g) The Council's external auditors (BDO) issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) on 26 August 2026. BDO completed their limited assurance review without the need for any queries. Their report included a boilerplate '*other matter'* stating that "*In the prior year the smaller authority was exempt from review. We have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives in the Accounting Statements*." The Chair welcomed the positive report with no recommendations for the Council to consider. The Clerk confirmed that he had published the final version of the AGAR including BDO's report and certificate with the statutory completion notice on the Council's website well in advance of the statutory deadline of 30 September.

5 Planning

Cllr Hughes declared that there were two extant planning applications within the Bowes Parish Council boundaries since the previous meeting. The first relates to a proposed new farm building. The second relates to new vehicular access to a property in the village. A third planning application to replace windows at Dotheboys Hall had already been approved. Cllr White stated that as a working farm he did not think planning approval was required for the proposed new agricultural building. Cllr Hughes agreed that this application was simply provided for information and asked if anyone had any objections to the other application regarding access to a property at West Byres. All confirmed that they were comfortable with the proposal.

6 Correspondence

(a) Cllr Hughes remarked that the Planning Inspectorate wrote to the Council explaining that as the Council were not identified as a statutory consultee, they were unable to formally comment on and publish the Council's feedback on the scoping study. However, the Planning Inspectorate subsequently published a 60-page Scoping Opinion, which included a response to many of the issues raised by the Council. The Hope Moor Project Team have informed the Council that they are still considering the extensive feedback received and will discuss their response at a meeting of the Community Liaison Group on 23 September. Cllr

Thompson confirmed that he would attend and feedback to the next Bowes Parish Council meeting.

(b) The Clerk advised the Council to consider a request from Brity (a first aid training provider) to display a poster on its website and / or noticeboard showing the location of defibrillators in the village with advice on what to do in a cardiac emergency. Cllr Hughes said that he would contact the school to check the information was accurate as he was not aware that the school had a defibrillator as indicated by Brity's map. It was **resolved that subject to Cllr Hughes confirming the accuracy of the information the poster would be displayed on the noticeboard and website**– Cllr Hughes proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.

(c) Cllr Hughes noted that SLCC and CDALC have informed the Council that the 2025/26 local government pay award has now been accepted by the unions. The award backdated to 1 April 2026 is 3.3%, which is slightly above inflation but below the 5% budgeted. The salary approved at 4c above includes this pay award and the associated backpay for quarter one.

7 Cemetery & Village maintenance

There are no matters for consideration at this month's meeting. Cllr Hughes agreed to visit the cemetery to assess the work discussed at 4(e) above, and the Clerk agreed to seek expressions of interest in the work. After the next meeting a specification will be prepared for sharing with interested contractors.

8 Allotments

(a) The Clerk stated that an allotment holder has complained about the dry condition of the allotments, which he attributes to a drainage pipe that diverts water from the moors to a gutter before reaching the allotments. He would like the Council to consider removing the pipe to improve irrigation. However, the Clerk advised the Council to consider the unpredictability of climate change. Although this summer has been exceptionally dry, most forecasts predict an exceptionally wet winter. Removing the pipe could result in the allotments being waterlogged if these forecasts are accurate. Cllr Thompson said that removing the drainage pipe now the drought had ended made little sense. It was **resolved that the drainage pipe at the allotments would not be removed.** – Cllr White proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.

(b) The Clerk explained that he had received a request to be added to the allotment waiting list from a Lartington resident. The Clerk had informed the applicant of the Council's allotment policy, which is to only consider applications from non-Bowes residents where there are vacant plots, which is not currently the case.

9 Play Park

Cllr Hughes said that he had inspected the play equipment and found that there were no new issues arising. He agreed to bring the inspection sheet to the next meeting.

10 Footpaths

Cllr White stated that no progress appeared to have been made by the contractor appointed to undertake the approved P3 footpath works for 2026/27. He asked if the Council could consider re-allocating some of the work as there had not been much difference between the two quotations and grant funding could be jeopardised if the work was not done soon. The Clerk advised against this and said that the contractor had told him the work would be done '*soon*' in the Summer and by 31 October at the latest. Cllr Hughes asked Cllr White to speak to the contractor to confirm this timescale was still realistic and if not suggest he

consider sub-contracting the work he could not complete in time. Cllr White agreed and the Clerk added that he would also send an e-mail requesting a progress report.

11 AOB

Cllr White said that a large pothole on the Boldron Road / A66 junction had still not been repaired. Cllr Hughes said that he had reported this to the Highways Agency several months ago and would do so again.

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

The Council agreed a 2026/27 meeting timetable at the Annual General Meeting in May 2026. The next meeting is scheduled for 13 October 2026.

Meeting closed at 8.20 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.