

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 16 September at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 15 July 2025 for approval. See **Appendix A**.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
The Clerk confirmed that he had submitted Cllr Thompson's declaration of interest form to Durham County Council. He had also obtained three insurance quotations and selected the cheapest, which was a new policy from Zurich Municipal designed specifically for small parish councils. The premium of £448 represented a saving of £140 on the 2024/25 premium and an underspend of £162 against budget.
The Clerk had obtained an update on the planning application to change the status of a by-way near Sleightholme. No decision had been reached. He had also reported the issue with the A66 traffic flow camera to National Highways, but they required more information on the location before investigating.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting
 - £143.86 Refund of duplicate direct debit (see below)
 - £112.01 Investment Interest (August)
 - £112.01 Investment Interest (September)
 - £9.87 Bank Interest
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting
 - £448.00 2025/26 Insurance - Zurich
 - £270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward
 - £144.00 ILCA clerk training - SLCC
 - £143.86 Duplicate direct debit refunded - Hugo Fox
 - £76.13 Shredder – Viking Direct
 - £0.77 Bank charges
 - (c) Payments to approve at the meeting – £577.63 Clerk Q2 salary plus backdated pay award
 - £144.40 PAYE Q2 including back-pay – HMRC
 - £54.00 Clerk training in Allotment Policy – SLCC
 - £20.00 Cllr Thompson new member training - CDALC
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the June 2025 meeting except the insurance for which it was agreed that retrospective approval would be given at this meeting to ensure continuity of cover.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 31 August 2025 (month 5)
See **Appendix B** for receipts and payments to the end of the month 5 in 2025/26 compared with the profiled budget. The Council is within 1.7% of the profiled budget, with the underspend fully accounted for by unbilled cemetery wall repairs. The underlying position is unchanged with £38,000 of reserves anticipated at year-end.
 - (f) See **Appendix C** for the bank reconciliation at 31 August 2025 (month 5). This shows the balances on the new Unity Trust bank accounts with the long-term investment with Redwood Bank as a memorandum item.

5. **Planning**
There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the July 2025 meeting.
6. **Correspondence**
(a) CDALC and SLCC have informed parish councils that after further negotiation Unison accepted the Government's pay proposal of 3.2% backdated to 1 April 2025. There was no appetite for industrial action given the challenging financial position of local authorities and the Government's commitment to negotiate the 2026/27 earlier with compensation for the below inflation 2025/26 award. The payments at item 4c include the backdated pay award.

(b) CDALC have provided a link to a parish profile that Durham County Council have compiled. You can find them at [InstantAtlas Durham – Parishes](#) and if you select your parish it will create you an infographic of your parish including population data (totals, age distribution, ethnicity, health), economic activity, household data and mode of travel to work.
7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**
(a) To approve a new application for a headstone for a Bowes resident (design and inscription to be shared at the meeting) noting that approval for a separate headstone application was granted through e-mail exchange in August 2025 because the original application in April 2025 had been lost in the post.
8. **Allotments**
(a) To approve an application from two allotment holders to swap their plots from 1 November 2025.
(b) The Clerk intends to attend allotment policy training and update the allotment rules following this training. He will then seek new signed allotment agreements from each allotment holder when sending out the 2025/26 invoices in October. The Council are asked to consider and approve this proposal together with the allotment rents to apply, noting that there was no increase in 2024/25 and inflation is currently running at about 4%.
9. **Play Park**
(a) 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. **IT Policy**
The 2025 Practitioner's Guide requires smaller authorities to develop and approve an IT Policy. The Council are asked to consider and approve the policy at [Appendix D](#).
12. **Data Protection and Retention**
The Clerk proposes to develop a new GDPR and data retention policy for approval at the October meeting. He will then undertake an audit of manual and electronic records held to ensure personal data is only retained where strictly necessary and identify paper documents for secure destruction. The actual process of shredding what is likely to be several hundred documents will be lengthy and require the approval of overtime. The Clerk will estimate the overtime required once the policy has been approved and the results of the audit presented to the Council.
13. **Training**
The Clerk has booked Cllr Thompson a place on the CDALC training for new councillors later this month. He also intends to book a place on the SLCC Allotment Training as referred to in item 8(b). The 2025/26 Budget does not make provision for either event. The Clerk advises the Council to

include a general training budget in 2026/27 with delegated authority for the clerk to book places on appropriate training courses and order appropriate training materials as and when the need arises.

14 **AOB**

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