

AGENDA
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 17 February 2026 at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 20 January 2026 for approval. See **Appendix A**.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
The Clerk will confirm that the 2026/27 precept was notified to Durham County Council on time and the budget is now on the website. Cllr Carlisle will update the Council on the issue regarding an electrified perimeter fence at Low Field farm.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**

(a) Receipts since last meeting	£200.00 Memorial Fee – Raine £108.39 Investment Interest (January)
(b) Expenses since last meeting	£143.86 Annual website fee – Hugo Fox £43.27 Clerk GDPR overtime – R Woodley £20.00 New councillor training - CDALC £11.99 Email accounts (monthly) – Hugo Fox £10.60 PAYE on GDPR Overtime – HMRC £6.00 Bank charges
(c) Payments to approve at the meeting – £180.00 Clerk Reference Manual (Arnold Barker on Local Council Administration) – SLCC £104.00 Membership fees - SLCC	
(d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the December 2025 meeting, or in the case of bank and email charges are monthly contractual payments, except the new councillor training approved at the September 2025 meeting (late bill) and the annual website fee, for which there is a direct debit instruction (invoices no longer issued). Retrospective approval is requested for this annual fee, which is unchanged from the prior year.	
(e) Budget Monitoring to 31 January 2026 (month 10) See Appendix B for receipts and payments at month 10 of 2025/26 compared with the profiled budget. The Council are 3% (£1,349) below the profiled budget, primarily due to outstanding playground repairs, to be discussed at item 9 of this agenda. As last month, a net underspend of £500 is forecast meaning that £38,500 of reserves are anticipated at year-end, which is in line with the 2026/27 Budget.	
(f) See Appendix C for the bank reconciliation at 31 January 2026 (month 10). This shows the balances on the Unity Trust bank accounts (£8,568) 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.	
5. **Planning**
There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the January 2026 meeting.

6. **Correspondence**

(a) The Project Manager of the proposed wind farm near the Stang Forest has written to the Council requesting the nomination of a councillor representative (and substitute) to sit on the Hope Moor Community Liaison Group ensuring that local communities are consulted and the project team are able to address local concerns. The Council are asked to consider this request.

(b) CDALC have asked for more parish councils to participate in the pilot digitalisation of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) project being run by Smaller Authorities Auditor Appointments Limited (SAAA) in 2025/26. SAAA are seeking a sample of smaller authorities in each county area to complete their AGARs using their new on-line tool this year ahead of a proposed mandatory roll-out by 2027/28. The Council are asked to consider this invitation.

(c) Unity Trust have informed the Council of an increase in bank charges from £6 to £7 per month with immediate effect.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

There are no matters to discuss this month.

8. **Allotments**

There are no matters to discuss this month.

9. **Play Park**

(a) To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground, and the quarterly inspection report from Durham County Council.
(b) The Clerk will update the Council on his discussion with Durham County Council on the cost of repairing the rotting swing post noted on their previous inspection report as posing a medium health and safety risk. DCC do not have capacity to undertake the work in-house so obtained a quote from Playdale as sub-contractors. This was considerably more than budgeted and in accordance with financial regulations the Council is obliged to seek a second estimate. DCC explained that any contractor must use Grade 4 Certified Play-Grade timber to comply with health and safety regulations. The Council are asked to consider suitable contractors to invite to quote.

10. **Footpaths**

Councillor White will report progress preparing a specification for repairs due in 2026/27. As previously agreed, two quotations are to be requested based on a common specification. The Clerk advises the Council to ensure that these quotations are received in the next three weeks so a decision can be taken at the March meeting and a grant claim submitted to Durham County Council by the end of March.

11. **Data Protection and Retention**

In October 2025, the Council agreed a new plan for ensuring GDPR Compliance and in November 2025 the Council discussed an audit of paper records held by the Council in a filing cabinet and two large crates. The Clerk reflected on this discussion and updated the Data Retention Policy, which was approved at the December meeting. In accordance with the GDPR Plan, the Clerk has now drafted a data protection policy for consideration and approval – see **Appendix D**. This plan includes a draft data breach reporting form, privacy notice and data consent form and once approved will be published on the Council's website.

12. **AOB**

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

Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider and resolve the agenda items that require the exclusion of the Press and Public in accordance with the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960 for matters appertaining to confidential information.

14 Appointment of the internal auditor for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28

The Clerk requested fixed price quotes from three internal auditors selected from a list of suppliers issued by CDALC. One internal auditor immediately replied stating that they did not have the capacity for any extra clients, so an alternative internal auditor was invited to bid. Only one quotation was received by the relevant deadline. The Clerk will provide details of this quotation at the meeting and advises the Council to approve the appointment, noting that the procurement has identified a shortage of suitable internal auditors and a delay would risk leaving the Council without an internal auditor in place for 2025/26 year-end.