

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 21 January 2025 at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 10 December 2024 for approval. See Appendix A.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
The Clerk will confirm that the DCC deadline for budget submission was met and Durham Community Action informed of the position regarding potential land for affordable housing. At the date of drafting this agenda DCA had not provided the survey results.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting £754.00 DCC Grant for Footpath Works
 £47.49 Bank Interest
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting £904.80 C Gibson footpath grant-funded repairs.
 £400.00 P&EJ Simpson cemetery grounds maintenance.
 £6.95 C Tipping refund for noticeboard key cutting.
 - (c) Payments to approve at the meeting – £542.88 New clerk salary Q3
 £252.00 Mazars 2023/24 limited assurance review
 £152.98 PAYE deducted and payable to HMRC.
 £69.06 Old Clerk back-pay Q1 and Q2 post pay award
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the December 2024 meeting. No urgent payments have arisen separately.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2024 (month 9)
See Appendix B for receipts and payments to date compared with the annual and profiled budget.
The 2024/25 forecast outturn and closing reserves are extremely close to budget.
 - (f) See Appendix C for bank reconciliation on 31 December 2024.
 - (g) Direct Debit Payments
The website provider now only accepts payments by direct debit or debit card. Before the next meeting, the annual subscription will be due and a direct debit should be in place for the gov.uk e-mail registration. Government grants will be applied to the latter so the first payment will be taken in October 2025. The Clerk requests Council approval to set up direct debits to the website provider in line with their payment plan to avoid disruption to website access.
5. **Planning**
There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the December 2024 meeting. The Clerk has received at least ten e-mails from Woodland Parish Council asking all parish councils in South-West Durham to object to a planning proposal for a leisure and holiday let development in Hamsterley Forest. The Council are asked to consider if they wish the Clerk to respond to these e-mails, noting that the Council does not usually comment on planning applications outside its boundaries.
6. **Correspondence**
 - (a) Durham County Council have asked if the Parish Council wish to comment on the North-East Local Transport Plan before consultation closes on 26 January 2025. It is a lengthy document but

includes a project to divert traffic from Barnard Castle Town Centre by 2040, which could impact on Bowes. There do not appear to be any concrete proposals on how to achieve this. For more details, visit: <https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/localtransportplan>

(b) CDALC have explained that they are proposing a sector wide response to consultations on strengthening the standards and conduct framework and local audit reform but parish councils may wish to respond separately. From a brief read through the proposals are unlikely to impact an authority as small as Bowes PC significantly, but proposals to allow parish councillors to sit on County Council standards committees and an inflation linking of the external audit exemption threshold seem sensible.

(c) Northern Powergrid have informed the Clerk that they are to undertake pruning of trees interfering with electricity cables at the play park and village hall.

(d) Two residents have asked the Clerk if the Parish Council has the power to clear snow and prune trees on Back Lane. The Clerk referred both to DCC as highways authority.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

(a) To discuss the burning of green waste at the cemetery proposed at the December 2024 meeting

(b) To discuss the emergency snow clearance at the cemetery to allow safe access to a funeral, for which a farmer procured by the funeral director is expected to bill the Parish Council.

8. **Allotments**

(a) To discuss the recent break-in and criminal damage at the allotments, including damage to the locks of a shed recently donated to the Council.

(b) To discuss repairs to the allotment walls for which the Clerk could find no record of an order or agreement with a contractor and no budget has been allocated.

9. **Play Park**

To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground including an update on the cost of non-urgent repairs discussed at the December 2024 meeting.

10. **Footpaths**

To confirm that the 2024/25 footpath work is complete and the DCC grant funding received.

11. **Bank mandate**

To consider progress updating the bank mandate so the new clerk can initiate payments.

12. **Gov.UK Email Domains**

To confirm that these are now set up (where requested) and the Clerk and Councillors should use these rather than personal e-mail addresses to discuss council business in future.

13. **Noticeboards**

To consider taking down out of date notices on the noticeboards in the bus shelter and adding a new notice with the Clerk's contact details and the website address.

14. **AOB**

15. **Date, time, and venue of 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.

16 **To approve the grass-cutting contract.**

As agreed at the December 2024 meeting the Clerk has drafted a formal contract extending the grass-cutting contract by two years. The draft contract will be shared with the Council for approval before the Clerk and Contractor sign it.