

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 14 April 2026 at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 17 March 2026 for approval. See **Appendix A**.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
The Chair will provide an update on any interest in being co-opted on to the Council and discussions with the landowner about the electric fence at Low Field Farm.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting
 - £7,000.00 Precept 2026/27 – Durham County Council
 - £112.01 Investment Interest (March)
 - £43.65 Bank interest (Q4)
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting
 - £673.91 Swing repairs 50% Deposit - Playdale
 - £560.24 Clerk salary Q4 – R Woodley
 - £336.79 Two lockable filing cabinets – Viking Direct
 - £180.00 Clerk Reference Manual - LexisNexis
 - £140.20 PAYE Q4 – HMRC
 - £104.00 Membership fees – SLCC
 - £88.32 Playground inspections 26/27 - DCC
 - £11.99 Hugo Fox e-mail accounts monthly direct debit
 - £6.00 Bank charges (March)
 - (c) Payments to approve at the meeting – £350.00 Allotment site rent 26/27 – Youngs RPS
£83.87 Subscription 26/27– CDALC
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the March 2026 meeting, or in the case of bank and email charges are monthly contractual payments, except the 50% deposit on the swing repairs, for which the contract was awarded at the March 2026 meeting. Retrospective approval is requested for this payment as the contractor required 50% within seven days of placing the order.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2026 (final outturn)
See **Appendix B** for receipts and payments at the end of 2025/26 compared with the annual budget. The Council finished 2025/26 just 2% (£902) below the original budget, primarily due to outstanding playground repairs, for which a further payment of £674 is due on completion. Therefore, the Council's closing reserves are £38,902, compared to the original budget of £38,000 and a revised budget of £38,500 agreed when the 2026/27 Budget was set. The underlying financial position is virtually unchanged as the £38,500 estimate assumed that the playground repairs would be completed by 31 March 2026 (£674 outstanding), but conversely the £340 expenditure on cabinets (see b above) would take place in 2026/27. After adjusting for these two rephased transactions the reserves are **£38,568**.
 - (f) See **Appendix C** for the bank reconciliation at 31 March 2026 (year-end). This shows the balances on the Unity Trust bank accounts (£6,902) 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. The Chair will check and sign the reconciliation at the meeting.

5. **Planning**

There has been one planning application within the parish council boundaries since the March 2026 meeting. The application relates to establishing a campsite at Gallows Hill just north of the A66 and close to the border with Boldron Parish Meeting.

6. **Correspondence**

(a) The Clerk of Boldron Parish Meeting has written to the Council explaining his objection to the proposed campsite (see above) on several grounds. One key consideration is the road safety risk associated with caravans turning into and out of the site from / to a fast section of the A66, which has already experienced fatal accidents.

(b) A resident who is a keen gardener has offered to plant some flowers in the village at his own expense. The Clerk passed on the Chair's contact details so this generous offer could be explored further.

(c) The Council's new internal auditor (Jenny Linsley) has signed the engagement letter and agreed an internal audit plan for 2025/26. The plan is similar to the plan completed by Butler and Gee in 2024/25 but additional testing will be performed to give assurance for the new assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement. This change was agreed after the Clerk received the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR) form from BDO and found a new objective in the internal audit report.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

The Clerk has had several discussions with a funeral director and gravedigger regarding a burial scheduled for later this month. Initially, the gravedigger intended to use small plant to dig the grave, but following a site visit confirmed this was not feasible due to the steps. He then had difficulty locating the grave using the Clerk's cemetery plan. Whilst the location has now been confirmed, a discrepancy was identified between the plan and burial records and the Clerk advises the Council to consider the need for a reconciliation.

8. **Allotments**

There are no matters for consideration at this month's meeting regarding the allotments, other than the approval of the invoice for the Clint Gardens site (see 4c above).

9. **Play Park**

To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground, noting that Playdale have set a provisional installation date of 18 May 2026 for the new swing post.

10. **Footpaths**

The Clerk has received two quotations for the 2026/27 P3 footpath repairs. The choice of contractor to include in the grant claim to Durham County Council will be considered under item 16.

11. **Data Protection and Retention**

The Clerk transferred the retained paper records to the new lockable cabinets and deleted or retained electronic files in accordance with the data retention policy by 31 March 2026. The Clerk also sent each councillor the GDPR training slides that he had prepared. Training will be held either shortly before or after this meeting.

12. **Accessibility Statement**

See **Appendix D** for the updated Accessibility Statement. The Council is asked to approve this document, which demonstrates the Council's compliance with the latest regulations.

13 **Publication Scheme and Freedom of Information Policy**

See **Appendix E** for the updated Publication Scheme and Freedom of Information Policy, The Council are asked to approve this document, which is designed to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

14 **AOB (for discussion only)**

15 **Date, time, and venue of the next meeting (the Annual 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 Selection of preferred contractor for 2026/27 footpath repairs (noting the work is conditional on grant funding from Durham County Council)

The Clerk received two quotes for a common specification of footpath repairs prepared by Councillor White and covering four different footpaths within the parish boundaries. The aggregate sum quoted by Contractor A was £3,305 plus VAT, compared to £3,800 plus VAT quoted by Contractor B. However, contractor B was £530 cheaper for one path (West Low Field). Councillors previously discussed splitting the work between contractors based on the lowest bid for each path. Councillor White recommends selecting Contractor A for all works to avoid difficulties obtaining the requisite permission from landowners.

17 Clerk overtime

The Clerk booked leave for the final two weeks of the financial (and holiday) year but due to time-critical work discussed at items 6, 7 and 11 above ended up working normal weeks. The Clerk requests the Council to retrospectively approve the payment of eight hours overtime for this work. The Clerk also estimates that if the Council resolves to request a reconciliation of burial records to the cemetery plan (see item 7 above) a similar level of overtime will be required over the next month. The Clerk estimates that providing the recently announced 2026/27 local government pay offer of 3.3% is accepted the Council's salary costs can still be kept within the approved budget. However, if the final pay award is higher than the offer, or further overtime is needed later in the year, a small overspend is possible.