

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 17 June at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 13 May 2025 for approval. See **Appendix A**.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
Cllr Hughes to feedback on interest from residents in being co-opted on to the Council and to introduce any candidates attending the meeting. Cllr Hughes also to confirm submission of register of interest forms by the 3 June 2025 deadline.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting
 - £219.00 Snow clearance contribution – Blenkiron
 - £57.81 Investment interest
 - £27.11 Bank Interest
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting
 - £32,000.00 Long term investment – Redwood Bank
 - £700.00 Clint Gardens Rent 24/25 & 25/26 – Youngs
 - £438.00 Cemetery snow clearance – Mark Tiplady
 - £411.00 Allotment wall and bench repairs – RB Watson
 - £270.00 April and May Grass-Cutting – R Toward
 - £66.72 Playground inspections 24/25 – D.C.C.
 - £5.14 Postage reimbursement to clerk (4 stamps)
 - £4.49 Bolts reimbursement to Cllr Hughes (playground)
 - (c) Payments to approve at the meeting – £543.00 Clerk salary Q1 2025/26 (payable 30/6/25)
 - £270.00 Grass-cutting (2 cuts) – R Toward
 - £135.60 HMRC PAYE Q1 2025/26 (payable 30/6/25)
 - £120.00 24/25 Internal Audit – Butler & Gee
 - £84.99 Microsoft 365 software license (clerk refund)
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the May 2025 meeting, although the long-term investment was approved under agenda item 19(a) and the cemetery snow clearance under item 15(b). See item 7 of this agenda for an explanation of how settlement was reached and the funeral director invoiced for their 50% contribution.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 31 May 2025 (month 2)
See **Appendix B** for receipts and payments in May 2025 compared with the profiled budget. At the end of May 2025 reserves were just 0.4% (£182) more favourable than forecast because most of the expenditure deferred from 2024/25 had been incurred. The underlying position is unchanged with £38,000 of reserves anticipated at 31 March 2026.
 - (f) See **Appendix C** for the bank reconciliation at 31 May 2025.
 - (g) See **Appendix D** for the 2024/25 Internal Audit report received from Butler and Gee to consider and approve. There are no recommendations or control weaknesses to address.
 - (h) See **Appendix E** for the 2024/25 Annual Review of Internal Control to consider and approve. Internal control is assessed as effective reflecting the positive internal audit report.

- (i) See **Appendix F** for the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement to consider and approve.
- (j) See **Appendix F** for the 2024/25 Accounts to consider and approve.
- (k) See **Appendix F** for the 2024/25 Exemption Certificate to consider and approve

5. **Planning**

There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the May 2025 meeting.

6. **Correspondence**

(a) North Pennines National Landscaping have invited councillors to their annual conference on 25 June with an application deadline of 18 June. The paramount theme of the conference is Nature-Friendly Farming.

(b) An allotment holder has e-mailed the Clerk expressing concern about the impact of vacant allotments and questioning allotment policy. He has also sent information about footpath damage. The Clerk has responded.

(c) County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust have asked parish councils to consider holding a fundraising event on 7 July 2025 as part of the NHS Big Thank You 'Big Tea' campaign. However, Bowes Parish Council would need to hire premises to participate.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

The proposal at the Annual General Meeting to share the costs of a snow clearance invoice with the funeral director who ordered the work has been accepted by the funeral director. The Clerk has paid the invoice from the contractor and recharged 50% to the funeral director. The Clerk sought free legal advice from CDALC, which confirmed this was an acceptable resolution. However, CDALC confirmed that if the Council had an agreed and publicised policy on recharging the cost of snow clearance and communicated this at the time of granting permission for burial they would be entitled to recharge the full cost. The Clerk advises the Council to adopt this new policy.

8. **Allotments**

An application has been received to let the one remaining vacant allotment for an initial 4 months starting 1 July 2025 with a long-term commitment to renew the letting from 1 November 2025. Council approval is sought.

9. **Play Park**

To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground.

10. **Footpaths**

The Clerk has received approval for £2,027.30 of P3 Footpath Grant from Durham County Council. DCC rejected the application for an additional £2,141 for more substantive repairs at West Low Field as there were insufficient funds left in the grant pot and they would also need convincing that work of this scale was necessary and provided value for money through a quote from a second contractor before approving any future grant claim in respect of this project.

11. **Bank and investment strategy**

(a) The Clerk will confirm that the first stage of the new banking and investment strategy approved at the Annual General Meeting has been implemented. £32,000 has been invested in a two-year fixed term deposit with Redland Bank. The final interest rate was 4.12%, compared to a current base rate of 4.25%. Considering consistent economic forecasts of falling interest rates it is likely the return will exceed the base rate over the life of the investment.

(b) The next stage is to switch the current account and instant access savings account to Unity Trust Bank. The Council will need to agree the terms of the bank mandate. The Clerk advises that it allows for any two signatories on all transactions (except internal transfers between accounts) and at least two councillors are named along with the Clerk as authorised signatories.

12 **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Complaints Policy**

See **Appendix G** for the draft anti-fraud and corruption policy and **Appendix H** for the draft anti-complaints policy to consider and approve.

13 **AOB**

14 **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.

15 **To approve the contract for repairs to the cemetery walls**

The Council have received two quotes for repairing the cemetery walls. The quotes are not currently like for like as the repair methods differ. However, there is little difference in the price quoted. Accordingly, the Council may resolve to let the contract to the contractor whose method they prefer or request a new quote from the other contractor based on adopting the preferred method.