

AG E N D A
Ordinary Meeting of Bowes Parish Council on
Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 7.30pm at Bowes Hutchinson's School

1. **Apologies and declarations of interest** – if any.
2. **Minutes** of the Meeting held Tuesday 12 November 2024 for approval. See Appendix A.
3. **Actions arising from the previous meeting** (unless dealt with later in agenda)
All actions agreed at the previous meeting are covered later in this agenda.
4. **Finance & Accounts – See summary below**
 - (a) Receipts since last meeting
 - £523.50 Burial fees for unreserved plot (non-resident)
 - £216.00 Allotment Rents 1/11/24 to 31/10/25
 - £43.50 Bank Interest
 - (b) Expenses since last meeting
 - £364.68 New Clerk training and handover
 - £135.00 AR Toward final 2024/25 grass-cutting invoice
 - £78.76 Smiths Signs for playground and cemetery
 - £10.00 CDALC for clerk training event
 - (c) Payments to approve at the 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.
 - (d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the November 2024 meeting. No urgent payments have arisen separately.
 - (e) Budget Monitoring to 30 November 2024 (month 8)
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 covered under item 4(g).
 - (f) See Appendix C for bank reconciliation on 30 November 2024.
 - (g) 2025/26 Budget and Precept Demand
See Appendix D for a detailed report setting out the draft 2025/26 budget and the precept to be requested from Durham County Council and implications for council tax bills. The report includes the 2024/25 forecast outturn and closing reserves and proposes a balanced budget to maintain reserves at this level throughout 2025/26. It also shows the impact of two alternative precepts. The Council are asked to approve the budget and precept or suggest amendments before the budget is finalised in January 2025.
5. **Planning**
There has been one planning application within the parish boundaries since the November meeting. It involves upgrading the heating system at Dotheboys Hall.
6. **Correspondence**
 - (a) CDALC informed the Council that the Government will fund on a first come first served basis 50% of the cost of defibrillators located on an external wall in an area of a village that is accessible 24 hours per day. The Council may wish to consider applying for such an asset, noting that if they do the 2025/26 budget at item 4 (g) will require amendment.

(b) A local charity (WAG & Company North East Friendship Dogs) are seeking referrals from any residents suffering from loneliness and isolation who would benefit from a weekly visit from a volunteer with a pet dog. They have a local team in Eggleston and would welcome donations to help them expand their operations throughout the region.

(c) Durham County Council have informed the Council that a new telegraph pole is to be installed in Back Lane, Bowes by a broadband provider (GoFibre). This does not need planning consent and is part of an initiative to improve the reliability of rural broadband.

(d) As discussed at the meeting on 12 November Durham Community Action have e-mailed the Clerk about a survey they are running into affordable housing in rural parts of the County. The results were expected by the end of November 2024 and the charity wanted to attend a future meeting to explain the results and how the Council could help. At the time of drafting this agenda the results have not yet been received but the Clerk will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

7. **Cemetery & Village maintenance**

(a) To discuss the impact of the ground maintenance work completed at the cemetery involving tree pruning, cutting, and clearing over-growth from elderberry bushes and spraying saplings.

(b) To update the Council on discussions with the footpath contractor about stone wall repairs.

8. **Allotments**

The Clerk will update the Council on progress collecting 2024/25 allotment rents.

9. **Play Park**

To consider the latest inspection sheet for the playground.

10. **Footpaths**

To discuss the impact of work to repair stiles and way markers and progress with the grant claim.

11. **Bank mandate**

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

12. **AOB**

13. **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.

14. **To consider extending the grass-cutting contract for two years.**

The current grass-cutting contract is informal (an e-mail exchange with the former clerk) and is due to expire on 31 March 2025, although an option was provided for in this informal contract to extend it on the same terms until 31 March 2027. Providing the Council are satisfied with the quality of work, the Clerk proposes to implement this option by preparing a formal contract and signing on behalf of the Council. Quotations will then be sought in 2027 for a new three-year (extendable to five) contract.