

# Minutes of the Meeting of Bowes Parish Council

held at Bowes Hutchinson's School on 20 January 2026 7.30 p.m.

## Present

Cllr Carlisle (Chair of meeting and Vice Chair), Cllr Thompson, Cllr White, Mr Ross Woodley (Clerk and RFO)

### 1. Apologies and declarations of interest

Cllr Hughes (Chair) and Cllr Tipping sent their apologies.

### 2. Minutes of the Meeting

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held Tuesday 9 December 2025 (circulated as Appendix A of the agenda) were discussed.

It was **resolved to accept the circulated minutes. Proposed by Cllr Thompson seconded by Cllr White.**

### 3. Matters arising (unless dealt with later in the agenda)

The Clerk confirmed that he had sent a specification to three internal audit suppliers (including the incumbent) seeking quotations for consideration at the February meeting. Cllr White declared that he had inspected the shrub in the play park and confirmed that it did need removing because it had grown larger than expected. He added that he would deal with this personally.

### 4. Finance & Accounts – See summary below.

(a) Receipts since last meeting £725.00 Burial Fee – Brownless

£112.01 Investment Interest (January)

£48.82 Quarterly bank interest

(b) Expenses since last meeting £560.24 Clerk Q3 salary – R Woodley

£140.20 PAYE Q3 - HMRC

£11.99 Email accounts (monthly) – Hugo Fox

£6.00 Bank charges

(c) It was **resolved to approve the following payments – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded:**

- £43.27 Clerk GDPR Overtime (4 hours) – R Woodley

- £10.60 PAYE on GDPR Overtime – HMRC

(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, so no retrospective approval was required at this meeting.

(e) Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2025 (month 9)

The Clerk presented Appendix B for receipts and payments at month 9 of 2025/26.

The Council are 5% (£2,054) below the profiled budget, which is a significant increase on the previous month, but is distorted by the overdue payment of Q3 salary and tax (£700) and outstanding playground repairs, for which a quote is still awaited. The report indicates that the underlying position is slightly improved with £38,500 of reserves anticipated at year-end, which is in line with the 2026/27 Budget (see item 11).

It was **resolved to accept the budget monitoring report – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.**

(f) Bank reconciliation at 31 December 2025 (month 9)

The Clerk presented Appendix C, for the bank reconciliation at 31 December 2025 (month 9). This shows the balances on the Unity Trust bank accounts reconcile to the cash book without any reconciling items. It also shows the long-term investment with Redwood Bank as a memorandum item. The Chair checked the reconciliation to the bank statements and cash book and signed each document. It was **resolved to accept the bank reconciliation – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.**

## 5 Planning

There has been one planning application within the parish council boundaries since the December 2025 meeting. It relates to an application to demolish six sheds and replace with a facility for 64,000 free-range hens at Myre Keld Farm. Cllr Carlisle expressed surprise at the number of hens but all agreed that there was no need for the Council to comment on the application.

## 6 Correspondence

- (a) The Clerk explained that a resident had sent the Council an article from the local press covering the formation of a protest group against the proposed wind farm near the Stang Forest. Cllr Carlisle noted this development but reminded members that they had already agreed not to comment on the planning application in an official capacity, and instead to consider participation in the proposed consultation.
- (b) The Clerk declared that Durham County Council have issued a public path diversion order confirming the diversion of a footpath on the north side of the A66 between Bowes and Boldron to facilitate work at Hulands Quarry. The Council agreed not to comment as part of the consultation on the diversion. Cllr White revealed that the footpath was already closed near the quarry so he assumed the diversion was now in place.

## 7 Cemetery & Village maintenance

- (a) As agreed at the last meeting the Clerk has liaised with Cllr Carlisle to ascertain the views of Gilmonby Parish Meeting regarding their interest in the cemetery. Cllr Carlisle explained that Gilmonby Parish Meeting had sent him a minute from the Annual Parish Meeting of May 2002 that said:

*“While Leonard Cooper and David Carlisle were members of the Bowes Parish Council, Gilmonby Parish did not have to have its own representative, Leonard Cooper had been told it was not required.”*

Accordingly, Gilmonby Parish Meeting were satisfied that Cllr Carlisle as a Gilmonby resident could attend parish council meetings and ensure that the interests of Gilmonby residents were represented without specific invites to the Parish Meeting. The Clerk stated that he had retained the email correspondence between Gilmonby Parish Meeting and Cllr Carlisle as evidence of this agreed approach but added that the position would need reviewing if Cllr Carlisle left Bowes Parish Council.

- (b) The Clerk remarked that an application has been received to erect a headstone in memory of Mrs Patricia Raine. He presented a copy of the proposed design and inscription for approval. All were comfortable with the straightforward design and inscription.

It was **resolved to accept the memorial application – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Thompson seconded.**

## 8 Allotments

The Clerk advised the Council to consider the timing of the next unannounced inspection of the allotments to confirm compliance with the tenancy rules and conditions. Cllr White said that he had done an informal inspection of part of the allotments recently and

addressed the only apparent issue. He was willing to complete the inspection. Cllr Thompson said that he would like to accompany Cllr White.

It was **resolved that Cllr White and Cllr Thompson would jointly inspect the allotments for compliance with tenancy rules and conditions at an unannounced date in the next two months**– Cllr Thompson proposed, and Cllr Carlisle seconded.

## 9 Play Park

Cllr Hughes had informed the Clerk that there were no new issues arising from his playground inspection undertaken before his accident. Cllr Carlisle asked if Durham County Council had provided a quotation for repairing the swing frame. The Clerk replied that he had chased this and would do so again if the quotation did not arrive with the quarterly inspection report due at the end of this month.

## 10 Footpaths

Councillor White said that he was still working on a specification for repairs due in 2026/27. As previously agreed, two quotations are to be requested based on a common specification and the work would all lie within parish boundaries. The relevant contractors have been identified and would be instructed to use similarly durable materials to those used in 2025/26.

## 11 2026/27 Budget and Precept

The Clerk reminded members that the Council approved the 2026/27 draft budget at the December 2025 meeting. This involved setting a precept of £7,000 equating to an increase in council tax of 4.18%, which is designed to achieve a balanced budget and leave reserves of £38,500 at 31 March 2027. However, at the December meeting the Chair had noted some minor errors in the budget report and the Clerk agreed to amend the report, adding a table of comparative data and presenting the final budget to this meeting before submitting the precept notification to Durham County Council. See Appendix D for the finalised 2026/27 budget report for approval. Cllr Carlisle welcomed the comparative data, which illustrated that Bowes precept was relatively low and an increase slightly above inflation was justified and prudent. The Clerk provided the precept notification for the Chair to sign and confirmed that he would submit it to Durham County Council ahead of their deadline of 23 January 2026.

It was **resolved to approve the final 2026/27 budget and precept based on option 1 (a precept of £7,000 – 4.18% increase) and for the Clerk to submit the relevant notification to Durham County Council by 23 January 2026**– Cllr Thompson proposed, and Cllr Carlisle seconded.

## 12 Data Protection and Retention

The Clerk stated that 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 separated paper records between those for retention and secure destruction and will bring the latter to a meeting for the Chair to take away and burn when the Chair has recovered from his operation. The Clerk will also bring a crate of records to be donated to the historical society, which the Chair has agreed to facilitate. Cllr Carlisle noted this progress and the unavoidable delay to disposal.

## 13 AOB

- (a) Cllr White informed the Council that a resident had expressed concern about an electrified fence being erected without a warning sign by a footpath adjacent to Low

Field Farm. Cllr Carlisle said that there were various alternatives to keep animals secure whilst ensuring public safety ranging from insulation to placing a sign near the fence and he would discuss these with the landowner.

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

The next Ordinary Meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 February 2026 at Bowes Hutchinson's School at 7.30 in accordance with the timetable published on the Council's website.

Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) the impact of resolutions on crime and disorder in the parish was considered but no significant impact was identified.

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