

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
12th March 2026

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales
Councillors – J Guthrie, C Hales, M Hall
L Jackson, S Jackson, K Logan, A Smith
Emma McCann, Town Clerk (TC)
County Councillor Emma Hunt

Meeting began at 6.00pm.

WELCOME

Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone in attendance and went through the safety procedures in the event of a fire.

125-2526 NOTICE OF MEETING

It was confirmed that a Public Notice of the Meeting has been given in accordance with Schedule 12, paragraph 10(2) of the LGA 1972.

126-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Town Councillors Elgie and Savage.
Proposed Councillor S Jackson
Seconded Councillor Hall

127-2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received. Councillors were reminded that they could declare an interest on anything on the agenda at the start of the topic. Councillors were also reminded that if anything changes on their ROI forms, they should update them as soon as possible.

128-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received.

129-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Wheatley had contacted the office prior to the meeting and asked to speak regarding the road safety issues on Stockley Lane. He provided a thorough representation and informed members of different courses of action that have made no difference.
The Town Clerk will forward this request on to Highways. This information was also passed to County Councillor Emma Hunt who agreed to look into this also.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 9th April 2026

130-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2026

i. Matters arising

The Town Clerk reported that we have been successful in being approved for a Big Brass Bash. Further details will be provided at future meetings.

ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th February 2026.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th February 2026, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Guthrie

Seconded Councillor L Jackson

iii. Chair of the Meeting to sign the minutes as a true record

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

131-2526 PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- DM/25/03365/FPA – Newmarket, Coleridge Close, Sunnybrow - Proposed single storey side and rear elevation including canopy, boundary fence and reposition external AC unit

For Information Only

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=T6NJCYGDHTI00&activeTab=summary>

- DM/26/00317/CEU - Land To The North Of Oakenshaw, Farmhouse, Stockley Lane, Oakenshaw -Certificate of lawfulness application for an existing operation or activity to secure confirmation that planning permission DM/15/02058/FPA has been lawfully implemented with all pre-commencement conditions being discharged and the preparation of foundations commencing on site prior to the expiry date of the application and therefore remains extant

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TA966VGDIOH00&activeTab=summary>

- DM/26/00341/PNA - Burn Farm, Willington - Prior Notification under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the erection of an agricultural building for storing hay and straw.

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TACVG2GDIPT00&activeTab=summary>

For Information Only – Prior Approval is Required – Decided 11/03/2026

- DM/26/00493/FPA - Granary Cottage, 5 Stockley House Farm, Oakenshaw - Construction of sun room, removal of external steps, enlarge 2 windows, internal ground floor alterations, internal first floor alterations including installation of roof light & convert garage into a bedroom and en-suite annex

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th April 2026

Dr Luke has expressed his gratitude for the supporting letter on his planning application DM/25/03383/VOC.

An email was received from Beacon Comms regarding a Pre-Consultation letter for a proposed telecommunications upgrade Willington Cricket Club. It was agreed to forward the email to members for comments by Monday 16th March 2026. Also, to ask the agents if neighbouring properties have been notified of this.

An email from planning had arrived at 4.55pm tonight which was an application recently submitted seeking approval for the allocation of monies presently being held in DCC Section 106 account. The monies are available for this proposed scheme within the Electoral Division and as such the proposal is considered to have merit in principle. A final decision will be made when the application has been considered at a forthcoming meeting at DCC Section 106 Working Group. The Town Clerk explained this has been discussed previously at other Town Council meetings with both County Councillors.

It was agreed to forward the email to members for their comments by Friday 20th March 2026 as comments are required within 21 days.

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- DM/25/03212/FPA - Sewage Treatment Works, Cobey's Carr Lane, Todhills - Erection of kiosks and associated works
Approved BNG Required – Decided 24.02.2026

132-2526 TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor C Hales reported that he had recently met with the Town Clerk and Councillor Smith to discuss all three allotment sites managed by the Town Council, and who would be receiving management letters. The letters have now been delivered. There are a lot of renewals this year. There have been a couple of new tenants querying the Notice to Quit. These are legal documents that are sent to all allotment tenants to remind tenants that they are not secure tenants on the sites and tenancies only last 12 months at a time.

The Town Clerk said the letters were hand delivered by the Councillors D Hales, C Hales and Smith and a couple by herself. This has saved a considerable amount of money as large stamps are now £3.15 each and we have a lot of allotment tenants.

133-2526 BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for February 2026

The Council began in February 2026 with a starting balance of £52,858.75. There was expenditure of £4,931.59 and £16,748.48 credits, leaving an end balance of £64,675.64.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor C Hales

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134-2526 BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for February 2026

The budget for 2025-2026 is £173,593.22.

The current spend to date is £147,352.83 with further committed costs of £17,324.00. This leaves an available resource on budget of £8,916.39.

Proposed Councillor S Jackson

Seconded Councillor C Hales

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

All HR Policies need to be reviewed and formally adopted. This work can be undertaken by DCC who we hold SLA with. It is recommended to £3,000 from the available budget for 2025-2026 to go towards these costs. Councillor D Hales informed members that employment law has changed this year and so we need to update our regulations. She also confirmed that DCC would charge £75 per hour to look over any draft policies that we have. Alternatively, they would charge IRO £200 for any model policies.

Resolved1. To allocate £3,000 to a separate budget heading for HR costs

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor L Jackson

135-2526 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN CLERKS MONTHLY REPORT

The Town Clerk confirmed her report was circulated to members prior to the meeting for consideration.

The report provides an update on key issues raised and addressed during the past month within the Parish.

All reported issues have been forwarded to the appropriate departments, and progress will continue to be monitored. Further updates will be provided as necessary.

Resolved1. That the information is noted.

136-2526 TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor D Hales said that she and Councillor Smith will be meeting Mary Kelly Foy's assistant for an update on Coronation Terrace and other issues within Willington. If Mary Kelly Foy is available on the date that is to be agreed, she will also attend. They will provide updates in due course.

Councillor D Hales would like to thank a gentleman called Richard, who has been out and about in Willington litter picking and doing a general tidy up of the area.

The Big Spring Clean is a national project getting communities working together. We would like to involve the schools and local community. All councillors agreed that notices are posted on GWTC Facebook page and the website asking for support. Dates and times to be arranged and circulated to members. The Town Clerk will contact the local schools inviting them to take part.

Councillor D Hales thanked Councillors Smith and C Hales for their help in delivering the allotment paperwork to tenants.

The Town Clerk has submitted a funding application to Fun and Food for Easter Activities. One event will be planting flowers and associated activities, and the second event will include a petting farm and linked activities. The dates are 8th and 15th April 2026. The Town Clerk will provide members the

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full details and if any of them are able to help on the days, please let her know.

Councillor D Hales informed she had attended some civic events with Councillors Smith and C Hales and they had discussed the various activities that we provide as a small town for our residents. The other dignitaries were impressed with the range of events that we offer them and all free of charge. She would like to commend the Town Council for everything we do.

Brancepeth Colliery Pit Disaster, this year will be 130 years since the explosion. On 13th April 2026. We will be asking councillors and residents for help. We are hoping to take the banner up to the event also. Councillor S Jackson asked about involving the young people as they were a great help last year. This was agreed. Further details will be provided in due course.

Councillor D Hales expressed thanks to County Councillor Cathy Hunt for organising the visit to the Family Hub. It was an amazing visit. She asked County Councillor Emma Hunt if there was still a poll out regarding the flags. The response from County Councillor Emma Hunt was that she is still back and forth with DCC. Councillor Smith said the flags are making the area look so untidy. We want to celebrate our community and have it looking nice.

Many areas in Willington are looking untidy and we need to address them. Councillor Smith said the Town Council gets a lot of criticism but as a town council we are restricted on what we can do. Every town councillor around the table is passionate about the town.

Councillor Hall has reported to the Town Clerk regarding burnt out vehicles which have been removed by the Neighbourhood Warden for the area. Dog fouling is a major issue within the town. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had reported lots of fouling around the local primary schools and on the High Street to DCC. There are also a lot of parking issues at Parkside Academy. The Town Clerk will contact DCC and Parkside.

Councillor Guthrie informed members that she has reported dog poo bins that have been full and overflowing. They have since been emptied.

Councillor S Jackson asked about the Family Fun Day and if we would be having the same equipment etc as last year. It was explained that the children enjoy these and are very popular. He also asked if the Fun Experts could provide more staff on the day. The Town Clerk confirmed that the company is very accommodating with us and already provide around 8 members of staff. She said she would ask the question regarding more staff. Councillor S Jackson confirmed the prices for the hanging baskets for 2026 has not been provided yet.

137-2526 TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Councillor Emma Hunt reported the issues of parking on the High Street. The Traffic Wardens will be in and around the area to observe.

Councillor Smith discussed the issue on the double yellow lines at Kensington Terrace.

The Police have had the drones out in response to the offroad bikes.

Councillor D Hales said the roundabout into Willington from Durham requires remedial improvements. Councillor Smith said the Town Green is a mess too.

The Pharmacy incident, the person has been caught and is in prison.

For the first time in a long time, there are no rough sleepers been spotted in the area.

Signed by the Chair _____

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The Memorial location should have been removed by now but is still in place. County Councillor Emma Hunt will chase this.
The Town Clerk reported that there has been an increase in rats in the area. Councillor Smith said it is alarming how fast the area is deteriorating. DCC Councillors, the Neighbourhood Warden and Town Councillors are arranging a walkabout in the area soon.

138-2526 S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

An application for funding has been received from Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School for the Revival of their School pond. The existing pond in their forest area has become overgrown and without water as the liner is damaged. They would like to bring it back to life to support Science teaching, stem projects and enhance their already established School Garden area which includes a Forest School Group is. NIB recognised progress and efforts with a special award.

Total project cost is approximately £10,000. They have received some donations, will be using some school funds and fundraising for the rest. Councillor Hall declared an interest as she works at the School.

Resolved1. To approve £500 in principle. To ask for a copy of a governing document, latest accounts and proof of bank account.

Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Smith

Brancepeth Colliery Air Rifle Club and Chyrelle Addams Support Trust have thanked us for the funding towards their projects.

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

Durham Hospitals Radio have sent an email thanking us for the funding of £50.00.

139-2526 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

140-2526 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – Thursday 9th April 2026

The meeting concluded at 7.02pm.