

GREATER WILLINGTON PARISH
22nd May 2025
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

IN ATTENDANCE

Present: Councillor D Hales (Chair)
Councillors M Elgie, C Hales, K Logan, P Savage, A Smith
Emma McCann (Town Clerk)

3 residents

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Councillor D Hales opened the Parish meeting and welcomed those in attendance. Health and Safety procedures and comfort facilities were given.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON THE 21st MAY 2024.

In order to facilitate business, the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting had been ratified at the next available meeting which was 13th June 2024.

Resolved1. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on the 21st May 2024 as printed and circulated have already been approved and taken as a true record.

3. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor D Hales presented the report as follows;
Dear Resident,

I have pleasure in presenting the 2024/25 Annual Report.

This was the final year of the current Council's term of office as elections are due in May 2025. The Council consists of members who were elected unopposed in May 2021 and as there were still vacancies, there were filled with co-opted members in May 2022.

I would like to extend a big thank you to our parish residents who have volunteered their time to become a Town Councillor. They take an active part in supporting the Town Council in various neighbourhood and environmental activities. During this year we have continued to encourage community involvement and enjoyment.

For the second year running, Greater Willington entered Northumbria In Bloom Awards and we were awarded the 'Best Small Town' category, gaining a silver quilt award.

Once again, we have worked hard to provide a programme of events for our residents. This year we began with a special 'Thank You' event, where residents were asked to nominate a member of our community who they felt went over and

Signed by the Chair
Dated: 21st May 2026

above within our community. Nominees were given a certificate with their citation and a box of celebration chocolates.

The 80th Anniversary of D-Day was commemorated with a service in the morning at the George Burdon McKean Memorial Site when members of the community, alongside children from our four Primary Schools and Parkside Academy. The special D-Day flag was raised. In the evening the beacon was lit following a short service on Dante's Heap.

On June 24th, the residents of Coronation Terrace and the surrounding areas were woken by a house explosion. In the early hours of the morning, the resident in the house was very badly injured and his young dog was killed. It is almost a year since this happened and I would like to thank the residents for their resilience as they are still living with the aftermath of the explosion, and like them, we are hoping the site will be redeveloped soon.

We held a Little Brass Bash on the Town Green in July and although the weather was extremely wet, everyone had a great time. The bands were superb and had everyone dancing and having fun. The children enjoyed their bubble wands, high glow bands and funky glasses.

During the summer holidays we held three Fun & Food events which were well attended. The themes were Olympics at GWTC, Meet the Animals and Dinosaur Day.

Residents had an Away Day to South Shields in August.

In September we held a Family Fun Day on the Town Green. Although the weather beforehand was extremely wet, on the day of the event the sun came out! There was a wide range of activities and inflatables for the children, including unlimited popcorn and ice cream. All of this was free of charge and greatly appreciated by our residents. William Clark shows also supported the Fun Day. We had Blackberry Donkeys, Jack Drum Arts Runaway Samba Band and Brian the Lion, Cave Pod, Jungle Bus, Food vendors and more.

During this year we also trialled Youth Provision in the Council office, working in conjunction with Groundwork. We would like to develop this provision over the coming term of office.

Councillor Angela Smith, Deputy Town Mayor and I attended an AAP event when we found out about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and how it could support community venues. Through this fund, we have been able to replace the roof of the building, treat the rising damp and water ingress upstairs and downstairs, create a kitchen from what was the gents' toilets. We have also created a Conference Room and Digital Hub upstairs, and the large room downstairs has been changed to create a Community Hub. To ensure accessibility, we have had a stairlift fitted. The Town Councillors and Staff were very supportive during the works that were being carried out as were residents, especially when we needed to curtail 'Welcome Space'. This work has secured the building for the future of our residents and a venue for the Town Council.

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We were invited to the Green Fair at Willington Open Door Methodist Church. Our display boards shared 'all year-round allotmenting' making simple bug houses and homemade seed bombs.

This year the Civic Carol Service was held at Willington Open Door Methodist Church followed by the lighting of the Christmas Tree by pupils of Parkside Academy.

In February, Councillor Fraser Tinsley resigned from his role as Town Councillor due to personal circumstances. We thanked him for his time and commitment to his role.

The Miners Banner has now come home to Willington. It will be put on display in the Community Hub.

In April, we held a commemoration for the Brancepeth Colliery 'A' Pit Disaster followed by the lighting of the beacon. Residents laid white roses at the base of the beacon. Each rose had the name of one of the miners who lost their lives in the disaster, the roses also had a purple ribbon tied around them in remembrance of the pit ponies who also lost their lives.

During this year, our Town Clerk Helen Cogdon, retired due to ill health. We would like to thank her for all her years of service to the Town Council and the residents of Greater Willington. Emma McCann was appointed as her successor.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, both residents and councillors for their support during this year. There is a lot of unseen work in the role of Councillor and many hours spent on Council activities, it is much appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Dorothy
Town Mayor

4. COMMUNITY FORUM

Questions from Members of the public

Councillor D Hales welcomed the residents in attendance to this Annual Parish Meeting. She asked that when speaking, residents do it in turn, while listening carefully, taking on others' views and being respectful.

FK reported that the public toilet had been broken and repaired but her radar key isn't working to gain access. Councillor D Hales explained that we were not aware there was any issues with the toilet. The Town Clerk will check with DCC for an update and will inform FK with an outcome. She also reported issues with the footpath between Dene View and Sunnybrow. Clean and Green have previously cleared. Also, the land opposite Dene View, the drain cover is not safe. This will be reported.

FK asked about the proposal of 142 new houses at Sunnybrow. There are 190 comments on the application so far. DCC are in the process of arranging a Public Consultation, but no dates have been set yet. Closing date for comments is 2nd June.

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Comments were received regarding many issues relating to parking on pavements on the High Street. There have been traffic measuring in place by the Highways team. Different teams are working together to make Wellington safer.

Another issue is blocked pavements which is causing obstructions for people with pushchairs and mobility scooters. Traffic wardens have been round in the past, but they receive a lot of negative press because of tickets issued. There needs to be more preventative measures in place. Disabled badge holders are unable to park close to the shops as people are parking where they want. The Highways Officer has been very helpful.

Councillor Savage suggested if Believe Housing created driveways for their properties, it could ease some of the congestion.

Councillor D Hales thanked residents for their input and comments.

5. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Signed by the Chair

Dated: 21st May 2026