

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
12th June 2025

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales
Councillor M Elgie, C Hales, K Logan,
Councillor Savage, Councillor Smith,
Emma McCann, Town Clerk (TC)
2 residents

Meeting started at 6.00pm.

WELCOME

Housekeeping and health and safety was provided to all in attendance.
Councillor Savage arrived at 6.10pm.

25-2526 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.

26-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Elgie

27-2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

28-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

29-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents' questions requested through the Town Clerk.
T Sharp, Deputy Chair of the OCA submitted a proposal prior to the meeting. This was regarding the previous Community Garden that was ran by the OCA. They would like to convert it into a Nursery Garden for growing the villages floral displays of winter, spring and summer bedding plants. Councillors noted this proposal and that the Town Clerk would be in contact regarding next steps.

30-2526 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THE 22ND MAY 2025

i. Matters arising
None reported.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th September 2025

ii. To approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 22nd May 2025

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on the 22nd May 2025, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Logan

iii. Chair of the Council to sign the minutes of the 22nd May 2025 as a true record

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

31-2526

PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- DM/25/01415/DRC - Brancepeth Colliery Reclamation Site, East Of Dunelm Industrial Estate, Willington - Discharge of Condition 3 (land contamination scheme) pursuant to planning permission DM/25/00104/FPA
Standard Consultation Expiry Date: 20/06/2025
- DM/25/01494/DRC - The Grange And Learning Centre Willington - Discharge of condition 5 (drainage) of planning permission DM/24/02145/FPA
- DM/25/00474/FPA - Parkside Academy Hall Lane Estate Willington - Installation of demountable classroom (20m x 9m) on land adjacent to school car park (Retrospective)

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- DM/25/01039/FPA - Land Adjacent To 42 Denewood Close, Willington - Change of use of land from open space to domestic and enclosure with 1.85m timber fencing to side (Retrospective)
Approved 04/06/2025 BNG Not Required.
- DM/25/00104/FPA - Brancepeth Colliery Reclamation Site East Of Dunelm Industrial Estate Willington - Extension to existing warehouse for covered bulk storage of carbon materials
Approved 01/05/2025 BNG Not Required.
- DM/24/03429/FPA - 167 New Row Page Bank - Retention of stable block and car port within garden curtilage
Approved 21/05/2025 BNG Not Required.
- DM/25/01242/DRC - Land North Of Croft Way, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Discharge of conditions 3 (Construction Management Plan) and 4 (Habitat Creation and Management Plan) pursuant to DM/23/00966/FPA
Approved 11/06/2025

It was noted that the Town Council has submitted their objection to the planning application DM/25/00992/FPA for 142 dwellings at Sunnybrow.

32-2526

BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for March 2025

The Council began in March 2025 with a starting balance of £39,914.40.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th September 2025

There was expenditure of £22,527.57 and credits of £36,492.17, leaving an end balance of £53,879.00.

ii. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for April 2025

The Council began in April 2025 with a starting balance of £53,879.00.

There was expenditure of £34,093.60 and credits of £126,616.09, leaving an end balance of £146,401.49.

iii. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for May 2025

The Council began in May 2025 with a starting balance of £146,401.49.

There was expenditure of £11,431.52 and credits of £2,024.74, leaving an end balance of £136,994.71.

Resolved 1. That the Bank Reconciliation for March 2025, April 2025, and May 2025 are approved.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Elgie

33-2526 BUDGET REPORT 2024-2025

i. To approve the Final Budget Report for 2024-2025

The budget report for 2024-2025 was circulated prior to the meeting for consideration.

ii. To agree the committed costs of 2024-2025

There are committed costs on the final budget for 2024-2025 of £29,516.41. There is a further £600 committed costs to be added £100 sponsorship as agreed in 2024-2025 and a Community Fund award of £500. This concludes the costs at £30,116.41.

Resolved 1. That the 2024-2025 Budget Report is approved as accurate.

Resolved 2. That the committed costs of 2024-2025 be approved and added to the budget for 2025-2026.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Logan

34-2526 BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for May 2025

The budget report for May 2025 was circulated prior to the meeting for consideration.

The TC reported the Budget for 2025-2026 was agreed at £133,839.31 based on the following figures,

Precept - £123,039.31

Allotment Income - £5,800

Reserves - £5,000

At the meeting 13th February 2025, it was agreed that the remaining £5,288.50 of the VAT Reclaim which was submitted in December 2024 be allocated to the Family Fun Day 2025. £500 donation was also received from William Clark Shows for the Family Fun Day. These amounts has been added to the Project Budget.

There was £25,928.58 left of the UKSPF Funding and there was also £4,187.83 of committed costs from 2024-2025. These are also added to the budget for 2025-2026.

This has increased the budget to £169,744.22.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th September 2025

The £5,000 reserves was to allow the Staffing Budget of £75,000 on a scenario where two members of staff at 28/30 hours. At the present time, the only employee is the Town Clerk. A second member of staff will be employed in due course, but the budget will not hit £75,000.

The Allotment Budget was £3,500. Due to high water bills and large amounts of asbestos being found at Springfield Allotments, we are almost spent on this budget. We have 3 more quarterly water bills for each of the three sites, grass cutting, hedge cutting, allotment awards and any other maintenance works as required.

Training and Subscriptions is already overbudget due to the subscriptions for CDALC and NALC coming in higher. There are training opportunities within the year for councillors and staff that may be beneficial.

My recommendation would be;

1. Remove the Reserve of £5,000 as this is no longer required for the Staffing Budget so this will decrease to £70,000.
2. Reduce the Staffing Budget by a further £2,800 and allocate as follows:
 - £2,000 into Allotments
 - £800 into Training and Subscriptions

This would increase the Allotment Budget to £5,500 and the Training and Subscriptions Budget to £2,000. Also reducing the Staffing Budget to £67,200.

This will then make the budget for 2025-2026 to be £164,744.22.

There is a Spend to Date as of the 31st May 2025 of £45,740.12. This leaves an Available Resource on Budget of £119,004.10.

Resolved 1. To remove the Reserve of £5,000 from the Staffing budget.

Resolved 2. To reduce the Staffing budget by a further £2,800.

Resolved 3. To increase the Allotments Budget by £2,000.

Resolved 4. To increase the Training and Subscriptions Budget by £800.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Smith

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

Andrew Guy - £990 To complete maintenance works within the office to bring compliance up to date.

Banner Cabinet - £900 To supply and install a cabinet for the miners' banner to be housed securely.

Insurance was already agreed £441.08. This has been paid.

PPL PRS - £335.35 + VAT

PPL PRS is the UK's music licensing company. If you use, play or listen to recorded music in your business, you need a music licence.

Little Brass Bash - £2000 To use some of the underspend of 2024/2025 budget. This is to cover the costs of picnic boxes for adults and packed lunch and goody bags for children.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th September 2025

Miners Gala – To cover the cost of one coach to take residents to the Miners Gala in Durham. They will be expected to make their own way back to Willington following the end of the event. A large plastic envelope will be needed to cover the banner in inclement weather. Costs to be investigated. These costs will also be covered by the underspend from 2024/2025.

Proposed Councillor Logan

Seconded Councillor Elgie

35-2525

TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor D Hales reported on the timetable of events.

Durham Miners Gala 12 July 2025 - herself and Councillor Smith has had recent meetings with Thompsons Solicitors regarding the procedure of carrying the banner for the Miners Gala. Thompsons will carry the banner, and residents will be asked to carry the ropes. A coach will be booked to take residents into Durham but they must find their own way home. Further details will be provided closer to the time.

Family Fun Day 16 August 2025 – the Town Clerk has applied for funding towards the event. £1,000 approved from Believe Housing. £2,000 applied to from Point North but no decision made yet. County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt are willing to put money into this but are awaiting funding allocations.

Away Days are in the pipeline. Councillors have noted that residents are keen to have an away day, so we are currently looking for locations to ensure all age groups are considered. Councillors are to email the Town Clerk with their suggestions.

VJ Day will be a muted event due to this not being celebrated as a national commemoration. We will be raising a VJ Day flag and making a small display in the office window to mark this occasion.

Councillor Smith reported she has been receiving positive comments from residents on how the town is looking and how the opening of the hub is making it more inclusive to the full community.

Councillor C Hales expressed that banners can be put on display at the Cathedral. It might be worthwhile seeing about this for next year when we commemorate 130 years for the Brancepeth Colliery Pit Disaster.

Councillor C Hales, as Allotment Portfolio Holder reported on allotment issues. He expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk and Councillor Smith for their assistance in working alongside him to maintain the allotments. We are impressed overall with what has been seen in recent months. We have given commendations to some tenants for their progress and we are currently dealing with some management issues.

A site visit took place at Rosedale Allotments where recommendations were put in place to give a tenant a second chance on their plot.

Oakenshaw Allotments has had a rather large water bill. During the walkabout 18 spurs were noted, some with 2-3 splitters.

Park Top Allotments have had an extremely large water bill too. These will be monitored.

Springfield Allotments are doing well. The Chairman of the site has made a significant impact in supporting tenants and insuring the upkeep of the site is well managed. There is a great support team.

A Well-Being Garden was proposed. Discussions have been made and further details will follow in due course.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th September 2025

Councillor Savage has been in discussions with Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School. They would like to be involved in Litter Picks. The Town Clerk will contact Civic Pride and arrange for around 10th July 2025 and will liaise with the school and councillors regarding final details. Also, she has been actively working on the Northumbria In Bloom project. Regular meetings are happening to keep the flower beds maintained.

Councillor Logan reported she has been attending the Volunteer Passport training along with other councillors and the Town Clerk.

Councillor Elgie reported the parking issues at Sunnybrow. The Town Clerk will speak to the Neighbourhood Warden. Also, the flowers have been removed from the Sun stone structure at the top of Sunnybrow. Residents are really disappointed about this, as is the Town Council. The Town Clerk will enquire with DCC regarding the future planting.

Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith had recently met with County Councillor Cathy Hunt. A list of tasks and issues etc were discussed. Another meeting will be requested in due course as a follow up.

36-2526 TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Deferred.

37-2526 S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

None received.

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

None received.

38-2526 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cuppa with a Copper – Friday 27th June 2025 at 2pm.

Northumbria In Bloom Summer Judging – Monday 14th July 2025.

39-2526 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – 10th July 2025 at 6pm

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th September 2025