

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
9th April 2026

IN ATTENDANCE

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

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.

141-2526 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.

142-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor Emma Hunt.
Proposed Councillor L Jackson
Seconded Councillor Guthrie

143-2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received. Councillors were reminded that they could declare an interest on an item on the agenda at the beginning of the item.

144-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received.

145-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr & Mrs T requested to speak on a planning application that is next to their property. They raised concerns that the works had already been carried out in relation to the planning application and how it has affected their property. They would like the bricks that are extending onto their side be removed and the wall be restored to its original state.

Councillor D Hales thanked Mr and Mrs T for the information. Councillors will contact the Town Clerk by noon tomorrow (Friday 10th April 2026) with comments to create a draft response ready for submission to DCC Planning on Monday 13th April 2026.

Mr P requested to speak regarding the recent fires at Spectrum. He raised concerns that these incidents have had to use up Police, Fire and Ambulance resources. Councillor D Hales expressed that we are aware of the three

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incidents that has occurred and that the Town Clerk has reached out to the owner of the building to find out what the plans are for the building. County Councillor Cathy Hunt assured everyone that the building and grounds have been made secure and additional patrols put in place to keep everyone safe and the building. She explained that there is no quick fix for an issue like this but progress is already being made with a way forward.

146-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 12TH MARCH 2026

i. Matters arising

None.

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

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on March written and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor S Jackson

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

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

147-2526 PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- 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

For Information Only – Standard Consultation Expiry Date: 31 March 2026

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TBA5YZGD0BK00&activeTab=summary>

- DM/26/00586/FPA - 18 Bainbridge Avenue, Willington - Demolition of existing outbuilding and replacement with a rear extension, removal and rebuilding of the brick boundary wall, and replacement of the kitchen window with patio doors

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TBN60NGDJ2V00&activeTab=summary>

- DM/26/00616/TPO - Springfield House, Springfield Terrace, Willington - Fell to ground Ash (T1), removal of 4 lowest limbs of Sycamore (T2), reduce laterals by 2 metres and reduce height by 2.5 metres of Sycamore (T3) and cut back Yew tree to boundary wall to clear obstruction of footpath (T4) protected by TPO WVDC-2-1989

For Information Only – Standard Consultation Expiry Date: 06 April 2026

<https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TBQVIPGDJ4P00&activeTab=summary>

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ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- 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
Approved 02 April 2026
- DM/25/03365/FPA – Newmarket, Coleridge Close, Sunnybrow - Proposed single storey side and rear elevation including canopy, boundary fence and reposition external AC unit
Approved BNG Not Required 30 March 2026

iii. Premises Licence Application

An application has been received asking for an alcohol licence from the Happy Shopper, which has taken over the old Food 4 Less Shop at 61 High Street, Willington. They would like to sell alcohol between 7am and 11pm. Councillors raised concerns on the amount of premises that already currently sell alcohol and the impact this will have on the community, especially the youth.

Councillors are to provide the Town Clerk with comments by Monday 13th April 2026 ready for submission to Licensing.

148-2526 TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor C Hales reported that the skips for Oakenshaw and Springfield Allotments will be delivered on Friday 10th April 2026.

The first quarterly reviews of the new season will take place in May 2026. Whilst some tenants have vacated their plots, new tenants have joined. The majority of tenants are on a 12 month tenancy, some have been given 6 months probationary tenancies.

149-2526 BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for March 2026

The Council began in March 2026 with a starting balance of £64,675.64. There was expenditure of £10,924.45 and £2,087.41 credits, leaving an end balance of £55,838.60.

Proposed Councillor Guthrie
Seconded Councillor Smith

150-2526 BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for March 2026

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

The current spend to date is £158,277.28 with further committed costs of £10,897.25. This leaves an available resource on budget of £4,418.69.

Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Logan

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

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Hanging Baskets £1,101+VAT
Watering £2,500-£2,750 +VAT
Resolved1. Agreed.
Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Savage

Bingo Afternoons, the first Tuesday of the month. £400 allocation for the cost of bingo supplies and small prizes.

Resolved2. Agreed.
Proposed Councillor Elgie
Seconded Councillor L Jackson

151-2526 TO RECEIVE CO-OPTION UPDATE

Three residents had expressed interests in applying to be a Town Councillor but only one submitted an application form. The Town Clerk, Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor will arrange an informal meeting with the candidate and will update members in due course.

152-2526 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN CLERKS MONTHLY REPORT

The Town Clerk has been in contact with DCC regarding dog fouling issues, building control issues relating to the property at 62 High Street, and an increase in rats in the area.

She has organised litter picks with the schools and a Community Litter Pick which is to take place on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 10am. The location is yet to be arranged. Residents have been asked to take part and to let us know of any grot spot areas within the community. She has also organised two Easter activities for children after successful funding of £1061.93 from Fun and Food.

The Chair will discuss these further in her report.

The Town Clerk has ordered new flags to replace the worn and weathered flags and the George Burdon McKean Memorial Site. The French Flag has already been removed due to it becoming loose in the winds. The Union and Canadian Flag will be removed as they have also come loose.

The AGAR has arrived and she has arranged for the Internal Audit to commence. Further information will be provided at the Annual Meeting in May 2026.

Resolved1. That the information is noted.

153-2526 TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor D Hales said that she attended the Mayor of Durham Fundraising event in Durham Town Hall in aid of St Cuthberts Hospice with Councillors C Hales and Smith. St Cuthberts Hospice is a charity close to many people's hearts and depends on donations to provide many of its services. Councillor D Hales has been a volunteer for 14 years and knows how much this means to families. She and Councillor Smith had met with Mary Kelly Foy's assistant following an update posted to the residents of Kensington Terrace, Coronation Terrace and Garden Houses. On 1st April 2026 she took part in litter picking with Councillors Smith and Savage and children of Willington Primary School and in the land around the school and in just under 1 hour they collected 10 large bags of litter. The children were very vocal about the litter that they collected which appeared to be lots of beer bottles and vapes.

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The children said that people should be putting litter in bins as they are close by. There was another litter pick in the afternoon with Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School and Councillor Hall took part in this one too.

Councillor D Hales had attended the Good Friday services at Willington Open Door Methodist Church Community Allotment at Rosedale and Victoria with Councillors C Hales and L Jackson. It was an extremely moving Service. Reverend Bruce gave a wonderful citation. Refreshments were served.

On Wednesday 8th April 2026, we held the first Fun and Food Event. Thank you to Councillors Smith, Savage, Logan, L Jackson and S Jackson for their support. Thank you to C Hales for helping with the food shopping and to the Town Clerk for ordering all the equipment.

On Monday 13th April 2026 at 7pm we will be holding a Commemoration Service on Dante's Heap (named because of the sporadic fires that used to break out. There will be a window display and a small exhibition in the office from Monday 13th April 2026 until Wednesday 15th April 2026.

Acknowledgement was given to Ken, Nigel and Olive Linge, as they provided most of the information available. We also have a descendant of one of the men killed in the explosion coming from Essex. He will be helping to carry the banner. The Miners Banner will be paraded at the Commemoration Service, and a practice run will take place this Sunday 12th April 2026 with the carriers for the banner.

Councillor D Hales reminded members of the Community Litter Pick that will be taking place on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 10am. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Councillor Smith expressed that although there is monthly updates there is still nothing really happening at Coronation Terrace. There have been fires all over the town; not just at the Spectrum. She had rang 999 on Monday 8th April 2026. There was a fire over where the Scout Hut used to be. Young people aged around 7-10 years were seen in the vicinity. Whole trees were alight. A main concern that as the weather becomes warmer and drier, it poses a huge risk.

Councillor Savage said she is passionate about outside spaces and the environment. She asked County Councillor C Hunt what is happening with the roundabout at the bottom of Willington, who said that there was a delay due to Gleasons, but it will be done by Clean and Green, they are just waiting for a date to start. Trees from opposite Cottles will go in.

Councillor Savage asked if Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group could be involved in this. The conifers would be better suited to the roundabouts on the industrial estate as there is a lot of anti-social behaviour with bikes etc. County Councillor explained that this would be different project. She will contact Darren Hunt about this and take this forward and keep Councillor Savage involved.

Councillor Savage said she had contacted him already regarding a rubbish fire that had been carried out at Rosedale Terrace. The rubbish was removed immediately.

Councillor Savage asked for an update on the flags situation as they are now looking really shabby. County Councillor C Hunt said the costings have now come through from Geoff Knight. She expressed that she and County Councillor E Hunt have an idea of rolling out the flagpole idea across the County which is being investigated.

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Councillor Smith said that the County Councillors have been supportive in all of this but the residents have spoken and it has to be their choice on what happens following the pole. County Councillor C Hunt said she agrees. Councillor D Hales reminded all that we do fly the Union Flag at the George Burdon McKean site. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had a call from DCC asking about which firm installed the flagpoles and who maintains them etc. This information was passed on to the DCC worker.

Councillor Guthrie reported some fly tipping at the back of Our Lady & St Thomas RC Church. She has received an email back from the Neighbourhood Warden to confirm it would be cleaned up.

Councillor Hall asked about the white lines at Hall Lane being missing. County Councillor C Hunt said she had reported this and spoke to Tim McGuinness. The Traffic Team is going out to investigate. Councillor Hall also mentioned at there was dead trout in the river near Ian Bell's Memorial. The Town Clerk confirmed she had reported this and had no response but would chase it up again tomorrow.

Councillor Elgie asked County Councillor C Hunt for an update on the field at the back of Helmington Grove who confirmed that it was County Councillor E Hunt who was looking into this so would need to speak to her about it.

Councillor C Hales raised concerns that were expressed to him by Dan Turner, Practice Manager of Willington Medical Group. Councillor C Hales is a member of the PPG and there are not enough people joining it to make it viable. The last meeting he attended there was only 3 people in attendance. They are looking for greater representation. They meet every 2 months on a Monday afternoon.

Councillor Smith thanked County Councillor C Hunt for sorting the issue with the path issue as the work was done quickly.

The Town Clerk confirmed that she would start copying the County Councillors into emails relating to the town and DCC.

Councillor D Hales thanked County Councillor C Hunt for all they do for the community.

County Councillor C Hunt said that due to increased anti-social behaviour in areas and she and County Councillor E Hunt are looking at purchasing a supply of ring doorbells to be given out to more problematic areas. There may be other options to look at before this is fully rolled out.

154-2526 TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Councillor C Hunt raised a sensitive issue regarding an issue within the town. She provided an update on the situation for members.

155-2526 S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

No new applications received.

The Town Clerk contacted the school asking for the additional documentation as discussed at the last meeting. Once this has been received, the grant can be released. Head Teacher Mrs Ruth Veitch has thanked the Town Council for the support and funding.

Brancepeth Colliery Air Rifle Club has provided an update. They are building a bigger rest room which will offer a warm space to sit and chat and enjoy refreshments. Ten members of the group have completed the

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range conducting officer course. The club will also be attending their first competitions beginning in May.

A few of our members have competed in GB Benchrest Shoots and secured a number of trophies.

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

None received.

156-2526 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

157-2526 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 21st May 2026 at 6pm

Annual Meeting – Thursday 21st May 2026 following the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.15pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

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