

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
13th November 2025

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)
1 resident

Meeting started at 6.00pm.

WELCOME

Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone in attendance.
She also introduced the newly co-opted Town Councillors Judith Guthrie and Michelle Hall.

74-2526 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.

75-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

76-2526 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.

77-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received.

78-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

79-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 9TH OCTOBER 2025

i. Matters arising

None.

ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th October 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th October 2025, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Logan

Seconded Councillor Elgie

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th December 2025

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

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

80-2526

PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

None received.

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- DM/25/02415/CEU – 3A Commercial Street, Willington - This application seeks a Certificate of Lawfulness under Section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the use of a container as a self-contained dwellinghouse (Use Class C3)

Refused 28 October 2025

81-2526

TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor C Hales showed all councillors the new system of recording the reviews comments. It has been produced on an A3 document which holds all comments for the four quarters of 2025-2026. These will be transferred to an electronic sheet at following the final quarter in February 2026.

Thanks were extended to the TC and Councillor Smith for all their support and assistance throughout the review process.

No real issues across the sites. There are some letters going out following the reviews on 3rd November 2025. Quite a few commendation letters going out to acknowledge great progress and some management letters regarding the condition of some plots. It is possible that some tenancies will not be renewed in April 2026.

We are seeking legal advice on a couple of issues which we hope will be rectified in due course.

82-2526

BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for October 2025

The Council began in October 2025 with a starting balance of £89,698.58. There was expenditure of £9,352.17 and £3,675.48 credits, leaving an end balance of £84,021.89.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Guthrie

The Town Clerk asked councillors to note one of the incomes which is £2,609.82. This is the money that belongs to Springfield Allotment Association. For them to retain a bank account, it costs them money each month which isn't sustainable for them as a group so we will hold their funds for them. The subs that were collected for 2025-2026 needs to be added to this amount. When anything needs to be paid out of the Association money, it will be taken from their balance which will be included at the bottom of our budget for information only going forward.

83-2526

BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for October 2025

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

An application for funding of £999.00 towards the Pantomime from County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt was submitted. This was successful and has been added to the budget, which has now increased to £173,593.22.

The current spend to date is £108,970.64 with further committed costs of £12,971.54. This leaves an available resource on budget of £51,651.04.

Proposed Councillor Logan

Seconded Councillor Smith

The Office Running Costs budget heading needs to be increased.

The TC recommends taking £5,000 from the Staffing Budget to cover the Office Running Costs until the end of the financial year.

This will increase the Office Running Costs to £16,500.00 and reduce the Staffing Budget to £52,000.00.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor S Jackson

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

Further quotes have been received from local firms for the replacement window in the Community Hub. QVS Windows will supply and install the window for £590 which includes VAT and fitting.

Proposed Councillor L Jackson

Seconded Councillor Hall

84-2526

TO CONSIDER THE PRECEPT 2026-2027 INFORMATION

Information was received on Tuesday relating to 2026-2027 precept. An indicative tax base figure has been provided, and it is noted that there will be no LCTRS Grant. Durham County Council are due to meet on 10th December 2025. The Precept request must be submitted by no later than 23 January 2026. Using the indicative tax base, some proposals have been suggested. These will be reviewed again at our ordinary meeting in December 2025. The TC explained to Councillors that as DCC are due to meet on 10th December 2025 and we meet on 11th December 2025; it may be that there isn't enough time for councillors to review all the information and it may be necessary to call an extraordinary meeting in January 2026.

85-2526

TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor Smith has received some issues from residents regarding houses with rubbish in the yards. This has been reported to the TC who has reported this to the local Neighbourhood Warden. County Councillor Emma Hunt was in the office on Tuesday with the Neighbourhood Warden and it was discussed about organising a strategic meeting with GWTC, DCC County Councillors and the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss Willington and a way forward as we have various issues that need addressing. It is paramount that we do something. We will provide updates when available. Councillor D Hales explained that the graffiti in the areas is dreadful. It is in three places. The language used isn't very nice. It is giving a false impression of the town. The Neighbourhood Warden is in the process of having forms signed by the local businesses where the graffiti is situated. These forms will allow DCC to paint over the graffiti.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th December 2025

Councillor Smith said that it has also been discussed about the house on Coronation Terrace, residents are frustrated that nothing has happened. These concerns were passed to County Councillors on Tuesday.

Councillor Savage mentioned the concerns regarding transferring the conifers to the roundabout at the bottom of Willington. These concerns have been brought up by other members of the Environmental Group also. The roundabout is a key entrance to the town and should be attractive and welcoming. We do have a silver birch tree which is the tree of Willington. It has been suggested to put this tree in the centre and plant around it. It would make it appealing. Can we look at making this roundabout similar to ones in Durham City? Once the graffiti has been removed from the gable end at the Takeaway shop, it is suggested to consider planting on the grassed area as a barrier to deter people getting close to the wall and causing vandalism. It would be a good idea to plant the conifers in this location rather than on the roundabout. Can the TC contact the County Councillors and DCC with this suggestion? Councillor Smith said it would be a good idea for the County Councillors to work with the Environmental Group. Invite them to a meeting to discuss things.

Another suggestion for the conifer trees would be on the roundabout on the industrial estate. This area is often churned up by youths on bikes. There have been reports made recently to the police regarding the bikers and their dangerous driving. The police are looking into this.

Councillor D Hales informed members that the Police may check the footage on the old William Hill building to see if they can see anything relating to graffiti. She also mentioned that following a discussion with the police on Sunday, they confirmed they are prioritising areas and sending resources in try and do a clean sweep to try and stop some of the mischief happening. Hopefully this will happen in Willington soon.

Councillor S Jackson asked if councillors need the iPad's that they have. Is it not beneficial financially just to have printed papers rather than the iPad's. The TC explained that the iPad's are bought and already paid for, the costs now are the update and ongoing costs. A discussion was undertaken and views were given. It was explained that all email addresses and devices are protected. Also, we have a support package in place which allows for any repairs etc The TC will speak to Transcendit to see if we can look at reducing some of the costs going forward.

Councillor Guthrie suggested asking if DCC could power wash the graffiti off as it has been done previously on the Spiritualist Church. Councillor D Hales explained it depends on the type of paint that has been used. It was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Wardens have obtained permission and the Clean and Green team will deal with it.

Councillor Logan said a resident had approached her about missing minutes from the website. The TC explained that the website has recently been revamped and she will ensure that all minutes are up to date.

Councillor Elgie said she has issues that the County Councillors are dealing with. She asked the TC for the contact numbers for the County Councillors. The TC will pass on the numbers following the meeting.

Councillor D Hales thanked everyone for their support at Remembrance Sunday on 9th November 2025. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant was extremely impressed that there were around 300 people in attendance. The Remembrance Day event on Tuesday 11th November 2025 held in the Town

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th December 2025

Council office due to the bad weather. It was an amazing event. There were all four Primary Schools, Parkside Academy and The Grange. This is the first event The Grange has attended at the office. The Primary School students read poems and 'planted' poppies. The poppies will be transferred to the large poppy on the wall in reception. There were three headteachers in attendance which is a great support.

Councillor D Hales and Councillor C Hales will be attending DCC Civic Dinner at the Radisson in Durham on 28th November 2025.

Councillor Pauline Savage asked the TC to pass on thanks to County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt for their funding of £499.60 towards the plants.

86-2526 TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

As no County Councillor was present, these reports were deferred.

87-2526 S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

None received.

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

A request for support has been received from Willington Youth FC. They are hosting a Christmas Party for all their children on Sunday 14th December 2025. The party will consist of inflatables at Parkside Academy, followed by food, drinks and games at the Clubhouse at Willington AFC grounds. They have 116 children confirmed to be attending the event. They would like to purchase selection boxes for the children as a Christmas Present from the club.

The Manager from The Black Horse Inn has approached the Town Council for support towards selection boxes to be given out at their annual Christmas Events which include Breakfast with The Grinch and Storytime with Santa Claus. They anticipate attendance from around 120 children.

Following a discussion, it was suggested sponsoring both of these events using money under the Communication and Marketing budget which includes sponsorship.

Resolved1. To sponsor each event and provide £100 to Willington Youth FC and £100 to The Black Horse Inn.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor S Jackson

88-2526 CO-OPTION

i. To update on second Co-option Round

The two newly co-opted councillors were welcomed at the start of the meeting. They have signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the TC. They have completed their Register of Interests which are now on DCC and the Town Councils website.

89-2526 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

The Annual Pantomime takes place this Saturday 15th November 2025 at Willington WMC. It is Sleeping Beauty. Starts at 3pm and should last around

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th December 2025

70 minutes. Thank you to County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt for their funding towards the Pantomime. Civic Carol Service will take place at Our Lady & St Thomas RC Church on Thursday 27th November 2025 at 6pm. The Service will be led by Father Jim Angus. The Christmas Tree will be switched on at 7pm. Refreshments will be served in the Town Council office.

90-2526 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – Thursday 11th December 2025

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th December 2025