

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales
Councillors – M Elgie, 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.

108-2526 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.

109-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Town Councillor Pauline Savage
Proposed Councillor Guthrie
Seconded Councillor L Jackson

110-2526 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.

111-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received.

112-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dr Brendan Luke had requested to speak regarding a Planning item which is for discussion under item 114-2526. The application is relating to a previous planning approval for the erection of his new home, but they are wanting the condition 8 (occupancy restrictions) removing. Dr Luke gave a thorough description of the proposal and the reasons for the removal of the condition. Councillors sympathised with Dr Luke. He was informed that this issue would be discussed later in the agenda and that he and his mam, Jean Luke, were welcome to stay for the duration of the meeting. They agreed. Councillor D Hales thanked Dr Luke for the information, which would be considered when making their decision.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 12th March 2026

113-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2025

i. Matters arising

None.

ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 11th December 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 11th December 2025, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor C Hales

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

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

114-2526 PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- DM/25/03383/VOC - Land To The North Of Oakenshaw, Farmhouse, Stockley Lane, Oakenshaw - Removal of Condition 8 (Occupancy Restriction) pursuant of planning permission DM/15/02058/FPA
Following the information receiving during Public Participation, Councillors had a discussion and reached a unanimous vote to fully support this application. It was agreed that a response to the Planning Officer be written and submitted on behalf of GWTC.
- DM/25/03559/FPA - Unit 7C & 7D Harvey Court, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Retrospective Change of Use from Class E to Sui Generis Mixed Use (Creative Play and Cafe) including External Alterations

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- DM/25/03288/DRC – Brancepeth Colliery Reclamation Site East Of Dunelm Industrial Estate Willington DL15 0ER - Discharge of Condition 3 (land contamination scheme) pursuant to planning permission DM/25/00104/FPA (resubmission)
Application Approved 19 December 2025

115-2526 TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Delivered by Councillor Charles Hales.

Allotment Reviews: February. Complete spreadsheet for digital presentation.

Budget for allotments for 2026-27 financial year.

Occupancy across sites. The Town Clerk has recorded and identified most recent vacancies/availability

Security across sites. Gates/locks accessibility review.

Current issues: Oakenshaw: rats/waste. RSPCA inspection hen welfare.

Progress acknowledged on most recent visit (10th Feb). Progress on new

OCA plot 10. OCA Chair and Vice Chair met Councillor C Hales and the Town Clerk on site and spoke of their vision. Scale of proposed polytunnel will require DCC approval, potentially of commercial size, currently ongoing.

Park Top: Little to report as site was again secured, waste removal on some plots, problematic because of skip access.

Springfield: Water supply shut down. Currently requires external resolution.

Signed by the Chair _____

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Rosedale: more integrated into GWTC allotment portfolio but still with some independence of governance. Issues identified over fly tipping and burning and resident complaints over cockerels. Town Clerk sought advice from DCC allotments, update to follow.

Currently reviewing the following:

- Revised calendar for bonfires.
- Skip provision/cost.
- Provision for grass cutting to be put out to tender.
- Cost of water provision and the number of unauthorised spurs. Water bills have been increasing - water is not a legal right.

Councillor C Hales expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk for her continued support and administrative efficiency. The Deputy Town Mayor for her support especially in accompanying site reviews, also to Jacky Fleming (Park Top) and Andrew Smith, Chair of Springfield Association for their advice and service to GWTC and allotmenting.

The Town Clerk discussed the revision of rents for 2027-2028 as we notify tenants 12 months in advance of any rental changes. Proposals for 3% and 5% were tabled. A unanimous decision was reached to increase by 5%.

Resolved1. That the information is noted.

Resolved2. That the rents for 2027-2028 be increased by 5%.

116-2526 BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for December 2025

The Council began in December 2025 with a starting balance of £63,814.49. There was expenditure of £6,943.56 and £800.00 credits, leaving an end balance of £57,670.93.

The Council began in January 2026 with a starting balance of £57,670.93. There was expenditure of £5,033.62 and £221.44 credits, leaving an end balance of £52,858.75.

Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Elgie

117-2526 BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for January 2026

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

The current spend to date is £142,421.24 with further committed costs of £13,014.06. This leaves an available resource on budget of £18,157.92.

Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor C Hales

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

Building Works

Repointing to front of the building and removal of old signage

Quote 1 £4,455 +VAT

Quote 2 £3,486 +VAT

Resolved1. Agreed to use Quote 1.

Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor L Jackson

Signed by the Chair _____

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New signage
Quote 1 £1,252.04 +VAT
Quote 2 £750
Quote 3 585 +VAT
Resolved2. Agreed to use Quote 1.
Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Guthrie

There will be an underspend in Staffing of around £13,000.
Recommendations to move;
£5,000 to CCTV
£7,000 maximum to cover building costs and new signs
Resolved 3. To move £12,000 from the Staffing Budget to £5,000 to CCTV
and £7,000 to cover the costs of the building works and new sign
Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Smith

A VAT Reclaim was submitted and received to the value of £16,748.48
covering November 2024 to December 2025.

Recommendations to allocate this to projects 2026-2027;
£10,000 to the Family Fun Day 2026
£2,250 or £6,500 to the Big Brass Bash – this year we have been given the
opportunity to hold either the Little Brass Bash or the Big Brass Bash. This
will be decided once all applications are in. Depending on which one we
have, we may need to allocate a food element. More details will follow in
due course.
Resolved4. To allocate the VAT Reclaim of £16,748.48 into Projects for
2026-2027. £10,000 to the Family Fun Day and up to £6,500 to the Brass
Bash.
Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor Smith

118-2526 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN CLERKS MONTHLY REPORT

The Town Clerk confirmed her report was circulated to members with the rest
of the papers for consideration.

The report provides an update on key issues raised and addressed during
the past month within the Parish. These matters have included parking
concerns, anti-social behaviour, environmental issues, community upkeep,
infrastructure, and public facilities.

Work continues to address a range of local concerns raised by residents. 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.

119-2526 TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor D Hales acknowledged the help of County Councillors Emma Hunt
and Cathy Hunt following an altercation between two town councillors and
residents when flags were removed that were damaged.

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Councillor D Hales said that she and Councillor Smith had met with County Councillor Cathy Hunt on two separate occasions prior to and after Christmas to discuss priorities for the area, a visit to the Family Hub has been organised for towards the end of this month.

They have also had a meeting with Mary Kelly Foy which included a site visit to Coronation Terrace. Letters have since been delivered to residents of Coronation Terrace, Kensington Terrace and Garden Houses. They will also receive a monthly letter to keep them updated on what is happening. Mary Kelly Foy has also written to Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith as a follow up to their meeting.

Mary Kelly Foy is working closing with GWTC and County Councillors Cathy and Emma Hunt. We are all fighting for the residents and would hope that by the anniversary date, there should be some resolution.

Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith have attended a Charity Night hosted by the Mayor of the City of Durham. Next week they will be attending an event hosted by the Mayor of Great Aycliffe. The Chain of Office has been repaired.

Councillor Smith said everyone is working hard for the residents of the area and especially in relation to Coronation Terrace. She has been talking with County Councillor Emma Hunt regarding the homelessness in the area.

Councillor Elgie asked if there was any update on the field at the rear of Helmington Grove. County Councillor Emma Hunt said she was waiting for Councillor Elgie to contact her. Councillor Elgie said she would contact her after the meeting.

Councillor Hall said she had reported a streetlight that was off and some rubbish bags outside of the gym to the Town Clerk. These have both been resolved so she thanked the Town Clerk for organising this. She also asked if we knew who is responsible for the brick wall outside the Spiritualist Church. The Town Clerk said she would try and find out. Also, could the Town Council meetings be put on our Facebook page. This was agreed and the Town Clerk will put a notice on each month.

Councillor L Jackson asked if there was any update on the flag's situation. County Councillor Emma Hunt said she has a meeting on Monday 16th February 2026 with the Leader of DCC. She will update when there is further information.

Councillor S Jackson asked if we are doing the hanging baskets in 2026-2027. Councillor D Hales said that we need to arrange a meeting to discuss this. Councillor S Jackson said there was one bracket to remove from Heavenly Bliss as the business is now closed and there are two brackets missing. Councillor L Jackson asked why are the baskets on the businesses. The Town Clerk confirmed that the original baskets were part of a project that she had initiated using funding from the AAP to tidy up the High Street. She explained that the businesses who have a second basket contribute to the second one. The column baskets came further down the line. Also, the columns need to be tested every 30 months. This also needs to be factored into the costings.

Councillor S Jackson said another artic lorry had become stuck on Stoney Bank. He said it needs some sort of weight limit on that road. County Councillor Emma Hunt said there is an issue with boundary on who is responsible for that side of the river. The Town Clerk agreed to look into the boundary and chase this. Also, there are a lot of potholes in the town and

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there are some on the Manor Road area. The Town Clerk has received complaints about other roads so she will add them all to the same email to DCC.

Councillor C Hales said he has just been re-elected at the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust as a Public Governor for Wear Valley and Teesdale.

120-2526 TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Councillor Emma Hunt said they are starting a project on the little 'Red Bench'. Parkside Academy are going to be involved.

There have been 9 suicides in the area in the last year or so and DCC will be reaching out to these families in relation to this.

There will be QR codes on the bench for residents to access help and support in different aspects.

121-2526 S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

The Chyrelle Addams Support Trust has submitted a request funding towards their charity name change. Previously called Chyrelle Addams Cancer Support Trust, they have omitted the word 'cancer' as over the last 12 months or so, they have noticed that there are other NHS hospital departments who could benefit from their fundraising to buy much needed equipment in aid of patients' recovery. They have recently purchased a hydraulic physiotherapy chair for the stroke unit at BAGH. The funding will go towards wheeled storage for transporting merchandise, printing of new leaflets and business cards, professional backdrop, personalised carrier bags, raffle tickets for tombola, pens, card reader, digital wall calendar, lanyards and new polo tops.

Their total project cost is £1,200 and they would like £500 from GWTC. For their name change.

Councillor D Hales said the Charity have a room for storage at the Town Council office which is free of charge. They also hold a monthly coffee morning to help raise funds for much needed equipment. The Town Clerk said their monthly coffee morning is taking place next Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 10am till 2pm. Everyone welcome.

Resolved1. To award £500.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Guthrie

Brancepeth Colliery Air Rifle Club is in its infancy, established in January 2026. They provide a safe and disciplined venue for regulated target air sports. They have roughly 60 members from the local community, military veterans and young people who are looking to foster the spirit of comradeship. They are fundraising to enhance their rather basic welfare needs such as a dry place to make hot drinks, seating for members and money towards designated toilets, they are currently using a portaloos. Even basic items such as cups, spoons, hot water and carpets are required. Several ranges in the local area have closed which has created a void. The youth section is run by a former serviceman and chaplain. There is a large number of ex-servicemen and women, many with PTSD. The group is there to support, promote and train. They are currently in talks

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with Durham County Scouts to promote the premises to them as they are also now without a range.

The total project cost is around £4,500. They have secured sponsorship from Air Ability, Bench Rest GB, Captain Shrapnel and others.

All required documents provided apart from accounts as they are a new group. A bank account has been opened in their own name.

A discussion was held regarding safety.

Resolved1. To approve £500 in principle which will be released when confirmation has been provided that the Police have also been informed and all the checks have been carried out.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Hall

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

Durham Hospitals Radio has submitted a letter of request for grant support to help them to continue their service supporting patients and their families during their time at UHND.

They were originally formed in the 1960s and is staffed by volunteers and is entirely self-supporting. The station broadcasts 24/7. They have recently been shortlisted in seven categories for the National Hospital Radio Awards 2026 which are being held in Bolton in March.

Resolved1. To approve £50.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor L Jackson

North of England Brass Band Championships have expressed their gratitude for the sponsorship of £100.

122-2526 NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Following the publication of the Notice of Vacancy between 12th December 2025 and 7th January 2026, due to the resignation of Mike Currah, no requests were received in order to hold an election. We can now proceed with co-option to fill the vacant seat.

Resolved1. To advertise a Casual Vacancy for One Town Councillor at Greater Willington Town Council

Due to staff annual leave, we will advertise the vacancy on Monday 2nd March 2026 for a four week period, ending on Monday 30th March 2026.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor C Hales

123-2526 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

The Town Council office will close at 3pm on Wednesday 18th February 2026 and will reopen at 9am on Monday 2nd March 2026.

124-2526 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – Thursday 12th March 2026

The meeting concluded at 7.10pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

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