

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith
Councillor Berry, Councillor Elgie, Councillor C Hales, Councillor Henfrey
Councillor Jackson, Councillor Jordan, Councillor McArdle, Councillor Savage
Emma McCann (DTC) (Minutes)

Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said;
“Before I begin this meeting, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of GWTC to say ‘Thank You’ to Fraser for his dedication and commitment to our community of Willington and the surrounding areas. During his ten years as one of our County Councillors, working in partnership with Olwyn, he has supported and helped many residents with their many concerns and supported various projects using his Neighbourhood Budget. Congratulations on your new job and every good wish for the future.”

1. ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Tinsley.
Proposed Councillor Jackson
Seconded Councillor Henfrey

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.
None received. Councillors are reminded that if anything comes up on the agenda, they can declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests at that point also.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident agenda items requested through the Clerk.
None received.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th January 2025, as written, and circulated, were agreed as a true record.
Councillor D Hales signed the minutes.
Proposed Councillor Elgie
Seconded Councillor Smith

MATTERS ARISING (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

5. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

New Planning Applications

DM/24/03326/FPA - Our Lady And St Thomas RC Primary School Cumberland Terrace
Willington - New single storey extension to the existing school (reception and nursery),

new deck and canopy and alterations to existing outdoor play area, access and parking

For Information Only

DM/24/03357/FPA - Kevs Autos South Street Willington - Extension to existing commercial repair garage to facilitate body repairs and restoration. Existing repair bay requires indoor storage

For Information Only

DM/24/03404/FPA - Willington Cricket Club Manor Road Willington - Extension to club house

Approved BNG Not Required – 5 Feb 2025

Councillor D Hales reported that the Chair of the Cricket Club had contacted the Town Council last year asking for a letter of support for their plans to extend the club house. The letter of support was provided. Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith had met with the Chair who were told of the full plans of using the building for community use and events. Councillor Smith had mentioned about the youth provision within the Town Council and would the new plans at the Cricket Club be able to facilitate this in the future. Councillor D Hales expressed her disappointment that she had provided a letter of support for community use but new plans state it is a players lounge.

DM/25/00029/FPA - Springfield House Springfield Terrace - Proposed demolition of existing dwellings and introduction of 4 houses and associated works

For Information Only

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

DM/24/03429/FPA - 167 New Row Page Bank - Retention of stable block and car port within garden curtilage

Previous Planning Application Decisions

DM/24/02067/FPA - St Aidens House High Street Willington - Change of use of existing building (Use Class E(g)) to a dwellinghouse with ancillary workspace including external alterations

S106+Approved BNG Not Required

DM/24/02482/FPA - 169 New Row, Page Bank - Construction of a new triple garage, driveway and 1.8m high closed board fence

This application is no longer available for viewing. It may have been removed or restricted from public viewing.

DM/24/02335/FPA – Oxenhope House, 2 Hunwick Lane, Sunnybrow - Demolition of existing garage and replacement with single storey rear and side wrap around extension. 2no. two storey gable extensions to the front and erection of detached double garage to front

Application Withdrawn – December 2024

DM/24/03249/FPA - 15 Greenways Sunnybrow - Two storey extension to side with single storey extension to rear

Approved BNG Not Required - 24 Jan 2025

Previous Planning Applications Waiting Decisions

DM/24/00171/RM - Land To The East Of Ash Drive, Durham Road, Willington - Reserved matters application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) within parts of Phases 1 and 2 for the erection of up to 112 No. dwellings with associated landscaping and engineering works pursuant to DM/18/03443/OUT

DM/24/01313/FPA - The Bungalow 26 Cumberland Terrace Willington Crook - Retention of static caravan, 4 No. metal containers and metal column for CCTV

6. TO APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION (DECEMBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025)

The DTC reported,
The Council began in December 2024 with a starting balance of £37,755.99.
There was expenditure of £8,539.73 and credits of £100.00, leaving an end balance of £24,501.30.
The Council began in January 2025 with a starting balance of £24,501.30.
There was expenditure of £13,354.69 and credits of £32,552.76, leaving an end balance of £48,514.33.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor C Hales

7. TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET REPORT (JANUARY 2025) AND FINANCIAL DECISIONS

The DTC reported.
The budget and report were circulated prior to the meeting for your consideration.
Our Budget for 2024-2025 had increased to £174,609.80 due to the additional grants and funding as detailed at the meeting in November 2024.

Following further successful funding applications submitted by Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith, the Budget has increased by a further £31,440.76. This funding is for Phase Two and Phase Three of improving the building and services.
This gives us a Budget for 2024-2025 of £206,050.56.
There is a Spend to Date as of the 31st January 2025 of £162,775.76. There are committed costs of £2,128.00. This leaves an Available Resource on Budget of £41,146.80.
Proposed Councillor Berry
Seconded Councillor Savage

Phase Two which has been previously discussed, included having the damp proofing done throughout the building, implementation of a new ground floor kitchen and the installation of a stairlift, to make the building more accessible to all. The funding for the stairlift is still to be credited to the account to the value of £2,940.00.
Councillor D Hales confirmed the structural works of Phase two were now complete. Phase three includes purchasing new furniture for the ground floor and first floor and to provide equipment for the new ground floor kitchen. An element of the funding has been allocated to give members of the community the opportunity to volunteer and will include training opportunities, giving them status at our various events. Councillors can be part of the training. Volunteers will be given t-shirts to wear within the offices or outside at events when they are in post. The grant needs to be spent quickly, by the end of March 2025. The funding has come from the UKSPF Infrastructure Fund, working closely with Liz, Lindsey and Ashley. All due diligence and financial regulations have been considered and discussed with the DTC. We have used local businesses and people who are familiar with the building and layout to undertake this work.
A fourth bid has been submitted which will improve the connectivity within the building and provide a community hub for the town. If Phase four is successful, this will make the total amount of successful funding from the UKSPF fund approximately £75k.

As you can see on the budget, we have gone over budget on two areas, Office and Professional Services and Building Works.
Office and Professional Services has gone over budget due to the necessary regular bills to run the office, also for the IT packages and support, telephone leasing, photocopier

leasing, CCTV strategic cameras around the town. As we had an issue in the reception area, this was investigated, and it was necessary for us to replace the flooring in the reception area which included some other remedial works to complete.

The Building Works – Phase One and Phase Two has exceeded the budget by approximately 8.6% of the amount received in funding. (Attached is a Building Works Report for information on the additional expenditure outside of our control).

Councillor Smith confirmed that as the structural works were underway, other works came up that we couldn't ignore and they had to be addressed.

There is currently just under £27k in the Staffing Budget. There is only two months left of this financial year and Staffing costs until the end of the year will only be around £5,300.00.

My recommendation would be to move £4,000 into Office and Professional Services and £3,000 into the Building budgets from the Staffing budget. There will also be enough money to allocate the £5,000 into the Staffing budget for 2025-2026 instead of taking that from reserves.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor McArdle

Councillor Berry thanked Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith and the DTC for the work undertaken to bring these plans forward and complete. Councillor Smith thanked all councillors as this has been for all of the council and the community.

Councillor D Hales said this has been a great undertaking and that it is future proofing the building. She confirmed the rooms are already heated so it makes sense to make use of the whole building. Having the alterations and other upcoming works completed, will make this achievable.

Councillor McArdle thanked the original members of the council who purchased the building initially in order for us to develop further for the whole community.

A VAT Reclaim has been submitted from July 2024 to the end of December 2024 to £8,288.50. Can this amount be allocated as follows.

£3,000.00 Decorating and Deep Cleaning of the Building

£5,288.50 Family Fun Day 2025

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor Smith

Councillor D Hales thanked the DTC for all the work that has gone into the finance reports and VAT reclaim.

8. TO RECEIVE THE TOWN COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor Jackson said the hanging baskets need to be ordered by end of March. We require some extra brackets and additional brackets for support on some columns. Column 51 needs checking for permissions.

Councillor McArdle had contacted Northumbrian Water regarding glass being swept into the drains on Rockingham Road. She was informed this was a DCC matter, so she reported it to DCC who came out and cleaned the drains as part of their normal works. The glass was following an incident where the local bus to Bishop Auckland had been the victim of criminal damage. The driver is shaken up following this. There is currently an investigation ongoing.

Councillor Henfrey asked if there was an development on the public toilet. The DTC confirmed that Councillor Tinsley had been working on this before his resignation of his County Councillor role and was unfortunately not here to provide an update. The DTC

clarified the last update provided was that a discussion with DCC had taken place about needing a consultation to discuss the option of demolition. We will update as and when we can.

Councillor Jordan gave an update on the situation with the homeless gentleman who is living in a tent on the top area of the green near the pit pony. Councillor Gunn confirmed this and explained that the gentleman is currently in hospital and the homeless team are looking to find accommodation for him once he is discharged. Councillor Gunn thanked Councillor Jordan for providing hot drinks and refreshments during this difficult time and said that the compassion from residents regarding this situation is amazing with many residents phoning with their concerns.

9. TO RECEIVE THE COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

County Councillor Olwyn Gunn started her report by saying congratulations on the new kitchen and all the completed works. This is a great community space to be used.

Sue Hine is stepping down at Willington Open Door Methodist Church.

Mary Kelly Foy has recently written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding the state of NHS Dentistry in Durham. She is pushing for improvements.

A meeting with Councillor D Hales and Councillor Smith has recently taken place regarding the Miners Banner. It is currently at Redhills. A public meeting has been arranged for Monday 3rd March 2025, 6pm at the Town Council office. Stephen Guy, Chair of the Durham Miners Association will be in attendance where he will discuss the history of the Miners Gala, the process of applying to enter and any further support to ensure the Willington Banner is represented by the people of Willington.

The Full Council meeting of DCC is next Wednesday, 19th February 2025. One item on the agenda is the Council Tax.

The housing development at Sunnybrow could be submitted to the planning portal in the coming weeks. The developers have asked for a meeting to discuss the changes that were brought up at the public consultations before the Christmas period.

Traffic calming measures are going to be implement in Sunnybrow.

An email was received regarding an application to have Sunnybrow Play Area listed as an Asset of Community Value. This has been supported. Councillor D Hales confirmed we have received the same email and we have also supported the application.

10. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATIONS

None received.

11. TO CONSIDER CIVIC FUND APPLICATIONS

North of England Brass Band Championships have been held at The Gala Theatre annually since 2015. 44 bands, 1320 bandsmen, women and children with nearly 1500 spectators attend over the two day event. The would like a donation towards the cost of hiring The Gala Theatre which cost nearly £6,500 in 2024.

It was suggested to provide a donation of £100.00.

Proposed Councillor Berry

Seconded Councillor Jackson

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Office will be closed week commencing 24th February 2025. Reopens at 9am on Monday 3rd March 2025.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 13th March 2025 at 6pm.