

GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
11th September 2025

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales
Councillors - M Elgie, C Hales,
L Jackson, S Jackson, K Logan, A Smith
Emma McCann, Town Clerk (TC)
County Councillor Emma Hunt
3 residents

Meeting started at 6.00pm.

WELCOME

Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone in attendance. She updated Councillors that Emma Berry had sadly passed on 25th June following a stay in hospital. Emma was a committed councillor, joint portfolio holder for allotments and was keen to support the community. Thank you Emma for the time you gave as a councillor for GWTC. It is much appreciated. You will be a big miss by all who knew you.
Everyone stood for a minute's silence.

40-2526 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.

41-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Savage and County Councillor Cathy Hunt.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Logan

42-2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received. Councillors were reminded that they could declare an interest on anything on the agenda at the start of the topic.

43-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

None received.

44-2526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents' questions requested through the Town Clerk.
Mr Wooff presented his proposal which is to try and combat social isolation within the Parish. The proposal has been shared with Willington Open Door Methodist Church, St Stephen's Church, Our Lady & St Thomas RC Church and Durham Community Action. The Town Clerk asked Mr Wooff to provide

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 9th October 2025

an updated copy of the proposal for her to circulate to members following the meeting.

Mr Logan asked if there are any meetings scheduled for 2025 for the volunteers who had completed the training. Councillor D Hales informed that the volunteer policy is being drafted and it would go to full council in October. A volunteer code of conduct will be given to volunteers which will include giving GWTC the names of 2 references.

We are taking a cautious approach as we need to ensure not only the safeguarding of our residents who will be using the hub but also the volunteers themselves.

A draft timetable will be produced as again we want to ensure longevity of the hub and a regular events calendar needs to be produced.

Councillor D Hales continued by providing a huge thank you to the volunteers for their fantastic support given to ensure the Family Fun Day was a success. She expressed how sorry she was that herself and Councillor C Hales were unable to attend on the day. She has received lots of positive feedback from residents who were grateful that we organised such a fun day. Councillor Smith said all the volunteers had been amazing on the day and everyone supported throughout the event.

Ms Kay expressed her concerns that the public toilet on the high street has not yet been repaired and opened up for public use. She explained that herself and the Town Clerk has been chasing this issue for a few weeks now and no further forward. She expressed frustrations at the lack of communication between DCC and GWTC. Councillor Smith explained that there is sometimes a lack of communication with DCC as we are not always kept updated with issues within the town on a regular basis. The Town Clerk informed Ms Kay that she had received correspondence from DCC that they have ordered the parts for the toilet and it would be repaired soon. County Councillor Emma Hunt asked the Town Clerk to forward the emails to her and she will also chase this up.

45-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE 2025

i. Matters arising

None.

ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th June 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th June 2025, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Proposed Councillor ME

Seconded Councillor AS

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

Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.

46-2526 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 10TH JULY 2025

i. Matters arising

None.

ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10TH July 2025

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10th July 2025, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th October 2025

Proposed Councillor KL
Seconded Councillor AS

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

Councillor Smith signed the minutes as a true record.

47-2526

PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- DM/25/01006/FPA – Land To The West Of 1 New Row, Oakenshaw - Installation of combined miners and war memorial in recreation ground
- Approved 01 August 2025 – BNG Not Required.
- DM/25/01262/VOC - 4 Prospect Place, Sunnybrow - Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission DM/19/00016/RM to allow retention of alterations to fenestration and dormer windows, and stone boundary wall
- DM/25/01441/FPA - Site Of Former Willington Health Centre, Chapel Street, Willington - Erection of 8no. dwellings and associated works
- DM/25/01646/FPA - 16 Abbots Green, Willington - Proposed granny flat
- Approved 04 August 2025 – BNG Not Required
- DM/25/01952/DRC - Our Lady And St Thomas RC Primary School, Cumberland Terrace, Willington - Discharge of condition 4 (canopy details) pursuant to DM/24/03326/FPA
- DM/25/01290/FPA - Boyne Cottage, Park Street, Willington - Retention of fence on garden wall
- DM/25/01225/FPA - Oxenhope House, 2 Hunwick Lane, Sunnybrow - Demolition of existing garage and replacement with new ground floor wrap around side and rear extension with pitched roof. Extension of two front bay windows on ground and first floors
- DM/25/02103/DRC - Phoenix House, 29 Watling Terrace, Willington - Discharge of conditions 3 (windows - front elevation only - retrospective), 5 (WSI) and 6 (Post Investigation Assessment) pursuant to DM/21/00429/FPA

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received

- DM/25/01494/DRC - The Grange And Learning Centre Willington - Discharge of condition 5 (drainage) of planning permission DM/24/02145/FPA
Approved 01 July 2025
- 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)
Approved 30 July 2025 – BNG Not Required
- 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

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 9th October 2025

alterations to existing outdoor play area, access and parking

Approved 04 July 2025 – BNG Not Required

- DM/25/01276/DRC - Brancepeth Colliery Reclamation Site, East Of Dunelm Industrial Estate, Willington - Discharge of Condition 6 (Construction Management Plan) and 7 (Biodiversity Gain Plan) pursuant to planning permission DM/25/00104/FPA
Approved 13 August 2025

- 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
Approved 05 August 2025

48-2526

TO CONSIDER THE ALLOTMENT REPORT

Councillor C Hales acknowledged all the help and support from previous town councillor Emma Berry who had been co-opted on at the same time as him in the previous term of office. They were joint portfolio holders for allotments and worked well together in a positive way for all sites.

Councillor C Hales reported that all sites are doing well. Thank you to the Town Clerk for providing information for the Allotment Officers Forum, where officers can network, explore solutions to common problems and share good practice around allotments management. The next meeting will be in the New Year. Thank you to Councillor Smith for assisting with the allotment reviews, your support is valued.

The majority of the plots are let.

Well done to the following allotmenters for their awards;

Oakenshaw

First Prize	Plots 8 & 9
Highly Commended	Plot 15 and Plot 1
Best New Plot	Plots 32 & 32

Springfield

First Prize	Plot 3
Highly Commended	Plot 5 and Plot 22
Best New Plot	Plot 28

Park Top

First Prize	Plot 4
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Mr J Fleming will also receive a Special Award for all the hard work and dedication he provides to the site.

These awards for Park Top are the first in 3 years.

A secure calendar has been noted for quarterly reviews which includes providing relevant information on a spreadsheet to compare from each visit. It has been suggested to take photos of the gardens at each review.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th October 2025

49-2526

BANK RECONCILIATION

i. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for June 2025

The Council began in June 2025 with a starting balance of £136,994.71. There was expenditure of £13,257.81 and credits of £1,350.55, leaving an end balance of £125,087.45.

ii. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for July 2025

The Council began in July 2025 with a starting balance of £125,087.45. There was expenditure of £13,788.79 and credits of £275.29, leaving an end balance of £111,573.95.

iii. To approve the Bank Reconciliation for August 2025

The Council began in August 2025 with a starting balance of £111,573.95. There was expenditure of £17,089.98 and credits of £5,517.05, leaving an end balance of £100,001.02.

Resolved 1. That the Bank Reconciliation for June 2025, July 2025, and August 2025 are approved.

Proposed Councillor ME

Seconded Councillor SJ

50-2526

BUDGET REPORT 2025-2026

i. To approve the Budget Report for August 2025

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

The TC reported the Budget for 2025-2026 was agreed at £164,744.22 at June 2025 meeting. An additional £2,350 was agreed to be added from the 2024-2025 underspend to cover the costs of picnic boxes and goody bags for the Little Brash Bash and the cost of a coach to Durham Miners Gala. This made the Budget £167,094.22.

Since the June Meeting, the Budget has increased by £4,500 which is due to successful funding applications from Believe Housing (£1000), County Councillors (£1,500), Point North (£2000). The Budget is now at £171,594.22.

The current spend to date is £89,853.03 and an available resource on budget of £81,221.19.

There are a couple of budget headings which are low and will not last until the end of the Financial Year.

My recommendation would be;

1. Reduce the Staffing Budget by £10,200 and allocate as follows:

£2,000 into Running Costs

£1,000 into Allotments

£7,200 into Projects.

This would increase the Running Costs to £11,500, Allotment Budget to £6,500 and Projects Budget to £28,068.50. Also reducing the Staffing Budget to £57,200.

Councillor Smith informed councillors, particularly new councillors this year that sometimes we need to via between the budget headings which is normal practise.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th October 2025

Resolved 1. To approve the recommendations.
Proposed Councillor CH
Seconded Councillor SJ

ii. To approve Financial Decisions

Halloween Disco

£260 Disco + £45 prizes = £305

Damp Proof works to main room

£1090 Damp Proofing + £250 Skip = £1,340

This figure may increase slightly depending on the size of the skip needed.

The works are booked in for 1st and 2nd October. If any Councillors are available to help move the furniture, it would be greatly appreciated.

We will need to look at redecoration costs following the works.

Community Hub

We have received income of £1,200 from Groundworks for the room hire for Youth Provision. £1,000 of this money to be allocated to the running of the Community Hub.

Proposed Councillor CH

Seconded Councillor SJ

51-2526 TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON EVENTS 2025-2026

VJ Day 15th August 2025

A short service at George Burdon McKean memorial site included the raising of a flag in remembrance.

Family Fun Day 16th August 2025

An excellent day throughout. Enjoyed by all. Lots of positive feedback.

Thanks were extended to County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt for their funding, North Point and Believe Housing.

Halloween Disco 22nd October 2025

4.45pm – 6.45pm Willington WMC

Club will be providing Hot Dogs. Children's Fancy Dress Competition with 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes.

Pantomime 15th November 2025

Willington WMC have allowed us to hire their room again. Show this year is Sleeping Beauty. A funding application will be submitted to Local Networks as County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt have agreed funding.

52-2526 TO RECEIVE TOWN COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor D Hales started by welcoming Councillor L Jackson who was recently co-opted on to GWTC.

Councillor Smith said there were issues on the Town Green as people from the travelling community have set up on site next to the pit pony. The horses have made a mess on the green and there has been about 3 fires. Is it possible to have some bollards in place? County Councillor Emma Hunt has reported this issue previously.

Councillor S Jackson asked County Councillor Emma Hunt if there was any update on the supermarket planning application. She said not that she is aware of but she will look into it. He also expressed concern regarding the condition of Commercial Street. County Councillor Emma Hunt informed members that they are looking at ways to fix up the high streets in small towns.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th October 2025

He also asked about the issue with the building on the High Street with barriers round. The Town Clerk explained that a resident was almost hit by a falling slate so had reported it to DCC. Building Control has erected heras fencing around for safety. She will ask for an update.

Councillor Logan said that she had really enjoyed the volunteer training. It was a brilliant opportunity, and it was beneficial to expand her knowledge and to get to know the other volunteers. She thanked the Town Clerk for answering any questions throughout the sessions. She believes it would be a good idea to promote councillors and volunteers working in partnership to encourage a positive image to the community. Councillor Logan has received some queries from residents regarding ASB who she has sign-posted to DCC and Believe Housing. She suggested that the next time the Neighbourhood Wardens are in, could we arrange for housing officers to be present to. The Town Clerk said she would try to make the arrangements.

Councillor Elgie expressed concerns regarding the allotments at the back of Wareham Way and Helmington Grove, Sunnybrow. County Councillor Emma Hunt said she would speak to Joe Quinn at DCC about this.

Councillor D Hales said on 6th September 2025, GWTC supported Willington Open Door Methodist Church at their Eco Fare. They took displays and produce from their own allotment. Thank you to Councillors C Hales, A Smith, P Savage, S Jackson and L Jackson for attending and helping. This will go on the Town Councils Facebook page and website. Any surplus produce from allotments were kindly donated to the Open Door Church.

Councillor D Hales also reported that the Little Brash Bash was a great event with over 200 people in attendance. It was wonderful seeing so many residents enjoying it.

53-2526

TO RECEIVE COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Councillor Emma Hunt reported that they had secured the s106 money for the Town Green Play Park repairs and improvements. There will also be a camera installed. This should all be sorted and ready for Summer 2026.

54-2526

S137 PAYMENTS

i. To consider Community Fund Applications

GWEIG would like to continue with the crocus flower display at the entrance to the town. Flowering bulbs like crocuses enhance the towns overall aesthetic appeal. Once planted they return year after year with minimal maintenance, providing a sustainable and cost effective way to brighten the town each spring.

Councillor D Hales declared an interest as treasurer of GWEIG. Councillor Smith declared an interest as a member of GWEIG.

Councillor S Jackson said he thought GWEIG was separate to GWTC so that they could apply for funding that GWTC cant. The Town Clerk confirmed it is correct that the group is separate from the Town Council and that they are eligible to apply to us for funding. Match funding is to be provided by County Councillors Cathy Hunt and Emma Hunt.

Councillor Smith said that a lot of unforeseen work is carried out by the Environment Group members. Councillor Savage, who is the Chair of the group does a great amount of work overseeing it all and initiating the projects etc.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 9th October 2025

Proposed Councillor C Hales
Seconded Councillor S Jackson

ii. To consider Civic Fund Applications

None received.

55-2526

CO-OPTION

i. To update on previous Co-option Round

Two applications were received at the previous round of co-option. Emma Berry was one of the applicants and unfortunately she had passed before we were able to process the applications.

Councillor L Jackson was the other applicant so was formally invited on to the council. An informal meeting was held between her, Town Clerk Emma McCann and Councillors D Hales and A Smith on 4th September 2025. At this meeting, Councillor L Jackson signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

ii. To agree to advertise a Casual Vacancy for Two Town Councillors at Greater Willington Town Council

To advertise the vacancies week commencing Monday 15th September 2025 for a three week period.

Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Logan

iii. To agree the timetable of events in the Co-option Process

To implement to co-option process on 15th September 2025 for a period of 3 weeks to allow to provide an update at the next ordinary meeting on 9th October 2025.

56-2526

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Northumbria In Bloom Awards – Wednesday 17th September 2025
GWEIG and two special entries, Our Lady & St Thomas Catholic Primary School and St Stephen's Church.

57-2526

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – 9th October 2025 at 6pm

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm