



MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY 2026

COUNCILLORS: Wilkinson, Jackson, Thelwell, Platten, Hannan & Watson
Clerk: Martin Clark

Public Participation

No public present.

1. Acceptance, or otherwise of apologies

Cllr Jerom submitted his apologies.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

Resolved – No personal or pecuniary declarations were made.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 03 December 2025

Resolved – That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on the 03 December 2025 be approved.

4. Clerks Report

The Clerk gave members a verbal update:

- Dealing with correspondence relating to two commemorative benches that may require repairing.
- Preparing the 2026/27 budget recommendations and report.

Resolved – that the information be received and noted.

5. Finance/Accounts

5.1 January reconciliation and payments – Received.

Resolved – That the January meeting payments and reconciliation be approved.

5.2 Budget 2026-27 and Precept Request (report received)

Resolved - That the Gainford & Langton budget be approved at £35,208 (-3.7%) and the sum of the precept request from DCC; and (b) That the approved Minutes January 2026

maintenance budget be used towards clearing leaves from the footpaths from the Tees View bus shelter to the doctors surgery, and the footpath and steps from High Green to Low Green during the autumn and winter period.

6. Village issues/Maintenance

None referred.

7. Correspondence

None	
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8. Planning

None

Date & time of next ordinary meeting

Wednesday 11 February 2026 6.30pm

Appendix A

BUDGET 2026/27 – REPORT

This report considers the 2026/27 budget to enable recommendations to be formulated and precept request.

Administration (Clerk/Audit/Subscriptions/Fees/Bank Charges/General) Recommendation - £12,384 (increase £613)

Insurance

The insurance cover for the council is recommended to increase by 4% based on the actual cost in 2025/26 - £1,323.

Recommendation is £1,376 (increase £53)

Rents – Spa & Recreation field

The council pays Raby Estates an annual rent for both the Spa and Recreation field. The rent for the recreation field has increased to £1,035. The Spa rent remains at £50

Recommended - £1,085 (increase of £235)

Website

This is the annual hosting fee for the revised website at £20 per month. An additional £100 placed in this budget to cover costs required for small improvements to the council website.

Recommendation - £340 - no change

Donations under S137

This budget has generally not been used in the previous 3 years and given the council having in place grant aid and community support written into its overall budget I am recommending this budget going forward remains unchanged.

Recommendation - NIL (no change)

Chairs Fund

This figure is recommended to remain as 2025/26

Recommendation - £200 (no change)

Grass Cutting

The budget set for 2025/26 was set at £5,830 and included regular cuts to GAP. A 4% increase for 2026/27

Recommendation - £6,063 (increase of £233)

Recreation Field Maintenance

This budget header is to cover the cost of the annual 2 x fertiliser spreads across the area. Based on the spend over the last three years I am recommending no change.

Recommendation - £3,000 - no change

Floral Displays

This is recommended for a further decrease in 2026/27 as there will be an underspend this financial year, as in the previous year, of approximately £900. The underspend will be placed in the ear marked reserve.

Recommendation - £500 (decrease of £950)

Village Repairs and Maintenance inc litter picking

The budget set in 2025/26 is deemed sufficient going into 2026/27.

Recommendation is £3,800 (no change)

GAP

Budget to cover the cost of inspections and any minor repairs required.

Recommendation - £600 (decrease of £200)

Community Events

This has been broken down into known events the council support annually:

Gainfest - £1,000 – (increase of £150)

November event - £1,000 (decrease of £2,200)

£3,200 was budgeted for 2025/26 and has not been spent. This will go into an ear marked reserve. For 2026/27 the budget will only be a nominal amount to supplement the underspend in reserve.

Christmas

The recommended budget includes projected electricity costs over 12 months, replacement lights, and Santas Sleigh contribution.

Recommendation - £700 – (increase of £200)

Community Support (Grant Aid)

The council wishes to support local groups and projects, through grant applications, under the approved policy. The council needs to work within the approved budget, so I am recommending the Community Support budget be left unchanged for 2026/27.

Recommendation - £3,500 (no change)

Budget Header	Recommendation
Council Administration	£12,384
Insurance	£1,376
Rents – Spa & Recreation field	£1,085
S137 Donations	£NIL
Chairs Fund	£200
Total	£15,045
Maintenance	See below
Grass Cutting	£6,063
Floral Displays	£500
Recreation field maintenance	£3,000
Village Repairs/Maintenance	£3,800
GAP	£600
Total	£13,963
Community Events	See below
Gainfest	£1,000
November event	£1,000
Christmas inc electric	£700
Total	£2,700
Community Support (Grant aid)	£3,500
Total	£35,208

1. Factors taken into Consideration.

- 1.1 Anticipated carry over as 31 March 2025 will be in the region of £48,000.
- 1.2 The council tax base upon which the precept is calculated is 506.30 for 2026/27, a small increase of 7.10 on the 2025/26 figures.
- 1.3 The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant payable to the parish council in 2025/26 was £483.00, for the 2026/27 financial year it will be £NIL.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 For 2026/27 I have continued to make recommendation that better reflect the council's work over the next financial year. Its aspirations with regards supporting community events, and community groups while still maintaining good levels of services for what the council is responsible for.
- 2.2 Some budget items have been reduced due to underspends in the current financial year.

As can be seen from **Appendix A**, if all the budgetary items recommended are approved, the total 2026/27 demand on Durham County Council would be **£35,208**. This would result in a small annual decrease in the parish council element of the council tax.

I recommend the budget to the council, and a precept request of **£35,208 at £69.54 for a Band D property**.

Appendix A

	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Council Administration	14,151	14,932
Maintenance	14,830	14,019
Community Events	4,550	2,700
Community Support	3,500	3,500
Total	37,031	35,101
LCTRS Grant	483	NIL
Precept Request	36,548	35,208

25/26 Band D £73.21

26/27 Band D £69.54

Appendix B

Ear Marked Reserves.

Additional ear marked reserves for 2026/27 include, November event underspend, & Balmer Hill award monies. The projected underspend on floral budget is included.

I am recommending an increase in the allotment reserve to cover a notice board and repairs.

General reserves increases by £2,900

Parish Environment Improvements - £10,000

Children/Young People - £2,000

Elections - £3,000

Floral - £1,700

Allotments - £3,500

Christmas lights long term improvements - £10,000

November Events - £3,200

Balmer Hill - £2,000

General reserves - £12,600

Martin Clark

Clerk/RFO