

Minutes of the meeting of Haswell Parish Council held in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre, Windsor Terrace, Haswell, on Wednesday 24th June 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Cllrs. H. W. Brown; N. Brown; J. K. Gordon; K. Metcalfe; A. P. Nixon, J.P.; W. Ramsay; L. Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. K. Murray-Hetherington (Parish Clerk) and two members of the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: There were no questions or concerns raised by members of the public. There was no representative present from Durham Action Group, which had been invited at their request to present concerns about the increasing number and scale of solar farms across East Durham.

Minute No.	Agenda item
26/104	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: RESOLVED: To accept an apology and reason for non-attendance from Cllr. O. Gray (pre-booked appointment).
26/105	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Personal Interests in any items on the agenda. Cllrs. Metcalfe and Nixon declared a registerable interest in matters affecting the Community Centre.
26/106	MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: On the motion of Cllr. H. Brown, seconded by Cllr. Nixon, it was unanimously RESOLVED: To approve and sign as a true record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th May 2026.
26/107	MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: On the motion of Cllr. H. Brown, seconded by Cllr. Taylor, it was unanimously RESOLVED: To approve and sign as a true record the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 27th May 2026.
26/108	VACANCY: Two candidates had expressed an interest in filling one vacancy for Haswell Plough parish ward. One candidate was in attendance to tell members why he would like to serve as a co-opted parish councillor. He voluntarily advised members of his past and present political affiliations. The candidate and the other member of the public left the room during discussion and voting on this item. [<i>Cllr. Nixon abstained from voting</i>]. It was RESOLVED: That Christopher Treloar shall fill the vacancy for the Haswell parish ward by co-option. The candidate signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
26/109	POLICE REPORT: A written report was received from the Neighbourhood Policing Team. Members were concerned to note that there had reportedly been a very serious incident in Windsor Terrace and another incident in Pesspool Avenue during the period of the report (22/05/2026 to 22/06/2026), which cast some doubt on the validity of the report, and members required the monthly report to be as up-to-date and accurate as possible. RESOLVED: To ask the Neighbourhood Policing Team to consider moving future Haswell PACT meetings to the last Wednesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., namely immediately before Haswell Parish Council's monthly meetings which commence at 6:00 p.m., with effect from Wednesday 30th September 2026.
26/010	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC): Cllrs. Brown and Taylor gave a report on issues relating to DCC, including a meeting with Nathan O'Brien (Tuthill Quarry) at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday 25th June 2026, an informal presentation to go through the plans just with council members, following a previous site visit to Marsden Quarry. Cllr Brown gave a detailed report on the decision to remove the school bus from Haswell to Shotton Primary School and his concerns around safe walking routes. He had asked officers to review the identified safe walking route to Shotton Primary, as this is the route families may use. If this route is deemed unsafe on re-review, parents would be contacted in due course. Cllr. Brown also reported that the new Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 enables a national scheme of delegation, shifting more planning decisions from locally elected councillors to

Chair's Signature:

Date: 29th July 2026

professionally trained planning officers, and routine and policy-compliant applications will be processed directly by officers rather than going to democratically elected committees from 31st October 2026. He explained that Durham County Council's Lane Rental Scheme (DLRS) is a major initiative targeting road congestion. It charges utility companies and contractors per day for carrying out works on the busiest roads during peak hours. The scheme encourages contractors to work at off-peak times and complete projects faster.

- 26/011** **REPORTS:** Cllr. Taylor gave an update on attendance at a meeting at Redhills (Durham) and arrangements for Durham Miners' Gala on Saturday 11th July 2026 (140th anniversary). She gave an update on arrangements for other upcoming community events, including Summer day trips, which had been booked and would be advertised within the parish.
- 26/011.1 The Clerk gave a report on matters relating to grounds maintenance. Members praised the high-quality seasonal planting and general appearance of the public spaces. **RESOLVED:** To authorise the purchase of new tools for the groundsmen's facility, as outlined in a list provided by Cllr. Ramsay.
- 26/011.2 **RESOLVED:** To authorise the purchase of a pre-owned cutting deck at the price quoted (£2,500.00) to replace the equipment accidentally damaged in a recent incident.
- 26/012** **CLERK'S REPORT:** The action log recording agreed tasks was updated and all completed tasks removed. A response was awaited regarding an escalation of outstanding balances for *npower's* unmetered supply. It was unanimously **RESOLVED:** That Wellers Law Group shall be the Parish Council's preferred firm for specialist legal advice and services, working to fixed fees. **RESOLVED:** To instruct the electrician to proceed with remedial work and EICR re-test at the groundsmen's facility at the total cost quoted (£657.33 plus VAT).
- 26/013** **FINANCIAL MATTERS: RESOLVED:** To receive the schedule of monthly income and expenditure and approve payment of invoices which were presented to the meeting.
- 26/013.1 The internal audit report was considered. **RESOLVED:** To approve and authorise the signing of the annual governance and accounting statements for 2025/2026.
- 26/014** **STANDING ORDERS:** At 8:00 p.m. it was unanimously **RESOLVED:** To suspend Standing Orders for a limited period of 20 minutes to progress the remaining business
- 26/015** **COMMUNITY CENTRE:** [Cllrs. Metcalfe and Nixon declared a registerable interest. They left the room, took no part in the discussion and voting, and did not return]. **RESOLVED:** To receive the notes of a meeting with representatives from Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre held on Tuesday 23rd June 2026. The Clerk advised on potential operating models when assuming responsibility for a community centre run by a CIO.
- 26/015.1 The Community Centre's manager had highlighted an on-going vermin problem. Some members felt that food and food waste being kept at the Community Centre as well as the hot weather could be blamed for a rat infestation. **RESOLVED:** To contact Peterlee Rodent Prevention to discuss the measures which may be necessary on the land owned and managed by the Parish Council as the problem is persisting, subject to the suggested rectification at the total cost quoted for all work (£470.00) being entirely on the Parish Council's land and not on land belonging to the Community Centre.
- 26/016** **CONSULTATION EVENT:** Members had received a summary report of findings from a community consultation event held on 21st March 2026 and residents' main concerns appeared to be drugs; anti-social behaviour; and traffic/road safety (speeding).
- 26/117** **NEXT MEETING: RESOLVED:** That the next meeting of the Parish Council shall be held on Wednesday 29th July 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre.
- 26/118** **CONCLUSION OF MEETING:** The meeting closed at 8:20 p.m.