

Minutes of the annual meeting of Haswell Parish Council held in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre, Windsor Terrace, Haswell, on Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 6:14 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Cllrs. O. Gray (Chair); H. W. Brown; J. K. Gordon; K. Metcalfe; A. P. Nixon, J.P.; W. Ramsay; L. Taylor.

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Members of the public raised questions and concerns about matters that did not relate to the Parish Council's role and responsibilities (concerns about removal of a school bus service; planting wildflowers on land owned by Durham County Council; and fencing which was blocking a bus shelter). It was agreed that the Parish Council shall write to DCC about planting wildflowers.

Minute No.	Agenda item
26/080	ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: RESOLVED: That Cllr. Gray shall be elected Chair of the Council for 2026-27. Cllr. Gray signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
26/081	ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN: RESOLVED: That Cllr. H. Brown shall be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2026-27.
26/082	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: RESOLVED: To accept an apology for non-attendance from Cllr. S. Brown (no reason given).
26/083	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 had declared a registerable interest in matters affecting the Community Centre.
26/084	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: RESOLVED: To receive the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Council meeting held on 22nd May 2025, which were approved and signed as a true record on 25th June 2025.
26/085	APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES: RESOLVED: To consider appointing representatives to serve on any other outside bodies as and when required.
26/086	COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS: RESOLVED: To appoint all parish councillors and Mr. Ricky Carter any other interested resident to serve on the Events Working Group; to appoint Cllr. Taylor as the Chair of the Events Working Group; and to consider appointing representatives to serve on any other working groups as and when required.
26/087	SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS: RESOLVED: To confirm that meetings shall be held on the last Wednesday of each month except August and December at 6:00 p.m. in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Hub.
26/088	VACANCY: The Senior Electoral Officer had confirmed that the council could proceed with co-option to fill the vacancy for Haswell Plough ward. RESOLVED: To advertise the vacancy and consider applications at the next meeting.
26/089	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING: RESOLVED: To approve as a true record and authorise the signing of the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 29th April 2026.
26/090	POLICE REPORT: A written report was received from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Chair's Signature:

Date: 24th June 2026

- 26/091 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC):** Cllrs. Brown and Taylor gave a report on issues relating to DCC, including
- 26/092 REPORTS:** There were no reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 26/093 EVENTS:** Cllr. Taylor gave an update on arrangements for upcoming community events.
- 26/094 COMMUNITY CENTRE: RESOLVED:** To press trustees of Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre (managed by the Hazelwell Centre CIO) for a meeting at the earliest opportunity to catch up with outstanding action points. Members were especially concerned about a couple of local volunteers who had heard nothing further since they expressed an interest in serving as trustees. *[Cllrs. Metcalfe and Nixon had declared a registerable interest. They remained in the room but took no part in the discussion and voting].*
- 26/094.1 **RESOLVED:** That Cllr. Ramsay shall be asked to raise the green steel cabins on behalf of the council to try to solve the problem of rats in the vicinity of the community centre.
- 26/095 CONSULTATION EVENT:** Members received a summary of initial findings from a community consultation event held on 21st March 2026.
- 26/096 CLERK'S REPORT:** The action log recording agreed tasks was updated and all completed tasks removed. **RESOLVED:** To ask the preferred local contractor to draw up a full written quotation for the proposed work to relocate the fence at the Tom Simpson Memorial.
- 26/096.1 Members considered adopting DCC's amended Code of Conduct for Elected Members by adding the following provisions: "*The right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights is the basis of democracy and will be upheld at all times. Members have a democratic duty to represent their constituents and engage in robust political debate. Therefore, in a political context, a degree of immoderate, offensive, shocking or provocative expression, is acceptable*". On the motion of Cllr. Gray, seconded by Cllr. H. Brown, it was **RESOLVED:** To retain the Parish Council's current Code of Conduct, namely without the proposed amendment, to be reviewed each year in May or as and when required. *[Cllr. Nixon abstained]*.
- 26/097 CORRESPONDENCE: RESOLVED:** To invite East Durham Action Group to attend the next parish council meeting.
- 26/098 FINANCIAL MATTERS: RESOLVED:** To receive the schedule of monthly income and expenditure and approve payment of invoices which were presented to the meeting. A response was awaited regarding an escalation of outstanding balances for *npower's* unmetered supply. The oldest invoice period was 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
- 26/099 PLANNING:** DM/24/02410/FPA - application (retrospective) for change of use of unadopted access road into residential garden curtilage and erection of boundary fence. Cllr. Taylor advised that any comments or objections must be submitted as soon as possible.
- 26/100 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC: RESOLVED:** That the public and the press shall be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the next items of business due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
- 26/101 RESOLVED:** To instruct the Parish Clerk to purchase an electric bike for the use of employees for the purpose of travel to and from their place of work as and when required.
- 26/102 NEXT MEETING: RESOLVED:** That the next meeting of the Parish Council shall be held on Wednesday 24th June 2026 commencing at 6:00 p.m. in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre.
- 26/103 CONCLUSION OF MEETING:** The meeting closed at 7:50 p.m.