HASWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Haswell Parish Council held in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre, Windsor Terrace, Haswell, on Monday 21st September 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Cllrs. H. W. Brown (in the chair); J. K. Gordon; A. P. Nixon, J.P.; W. Ramsay; L. Taylor; C. Treloar.

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Members of the public raised questions and concerns regarding a shocking incident involving vehicles being set ablaze in the Old Recreation Ground near Kestrel Way on the evening of Thursday 28th August 2026. Residents were advised that the Parish Council acts as the sole trustee for the charity, which owns and manages the field, but the charity's decisions must legally be kept separate from regular council business, and they were invited to attend the trust board meeting immediately after the Parish Council meeting to discuss the matter in more detail.

Minute No.	Agenda item
26/134	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: RESOLVED**: To accept an apology and reason for non-attendance from Cllrs. K. Metcalfe [other appointment] and N. Brown [unwell].
26/135	**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.
26/136	**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS 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 previous parish council meeting held on Wednesday 29th July 2026.
26/137	**POLICE REPORT:** There was no written report from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.
26/138	**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC):** Cllr. Taylor reported on the County Durham Plan consultation on topics and issues which will help shape jobs; transport; the environment; town centres; and community facilities. She reported that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning rules and considerations for plan-making and development decisions in England, shifting more planning decisions from locally elected councillors to officers from 31st October 2026. She mentioned that the Government had opened consultations allowing elected mayors to intervene in planning applications of potential strategic importance. Cllr. H. Brown reported that DCC had reversed its controversial ban on keeping 'show cockerels' on council-owned allotments following discussions with residents. A public meeting had been arranged to discuss DCC's decision to remove the school bus from Haswell to Shotton Primary School.
26/139	**LOCAL NETWORK FUNDING:** [*Cllrs. Nixon declared a registerable interest, left the room and took no part in the discussion and voting*]. **RESOLVED**: To submit an application for a Local Network Fund grant for a generator [£7,000] and a 40ft shipping container [£3,000]. Cllr. Ramsay agreed to obtain the necessary quotes to support the application.
26/140	**REPORTS:** Cllrs. Gray; H. Brown; N. Brown; and Taylor had attended Haswell & District Mencap's 50th anniversary celebration event on behalf of the Parish Council.

Chair's Signature: Date: Wednesday 28th October 2026

26/141 **CLERK'S REPORT:** The National Joint Council (NJC) had reached an agreement on a 3.3% increase in pay, which had been implemented and backdated to 1st April 2026.

26/141.1 **RESOLVED:** To ask Cllr. Metcalfe to seek a suggestion (by the end of October 2026) for a name for the new woodland site which had been planted on Durham County Council's land.

26/141.2 The action log recording agreed tasks was updated and all completed tasks removed. The question of outstanding balances for *npower's* unmetered supply had been escalated and a complaint was being handled by the Energy Ombudsman.

26/141.3 A design and quote had been received to renew the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) like-for-like with what is currently there. Members discussed the possibility of a tailored two-phase approach to the project and the 'spread payment plan' over five years.

26/142 **FINANCIAL MATTERS: RESOLVED**: To receive the schedule of monthly income and expenditure and approve payment of invoices which were presented to the meeting. Cllr. H. Brown handed the Parish Clerk £21 cash donations from a summer excursion which was handed to Cllr. Gray as reimbursement towards the £38 cost of replacement locks.

26/143 **PLANNING:** There were no planning applications to consider.

26/144 **EVENTS: RESOLVED**: That the Events Working Group shall convene a meeting to consider feedback from the Summer Carnival and to consider upcoming community events.

26/145 **ITEMS REQUESTED BY MEMBERS:** Cllr. Treloar had raised a request with DCC relating to the provision of a litter bin on or near land to the east of 1 Church View, which had been refused because a bin had previously been destroyed by fire. Cllr. Taylor agreed to ask officers at DCC for a new robust metal bin set to the side of the bus shelter at that location.

26/145.1 Cllr. H. Brown had suggested the installation of a metal commemorative soldier silhouette statue. **RESOLVED**: To purchase two solder silhouette statues at a cost of £350 to be installed to the side of each of the Parish Council's main notice boards. Cllr. Brown indicated that he would seek funding from Durham County Council's members' small grants allocation.

26/146 **FLAGPOLES:** Members considered a proposal from a member of the public for the installation of two flagpoles. It was unanimously **RESOLVED**: That the installation of two flagpoles would be out of proportion in terms of affordability and additional responsibility.

26/147 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**
Cllr. H. Brown asked for an item to be included on the agenda relating to the installation of play equipment on the former bowling green.

26/148 **NEXT MEETING: RESOLVED**: That the next meeting shall be held on Wednesday 28th October 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre.

26/149 **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.

26/150 **STAFFING:** Members considered matters relating to the employment of a Public Space Operative. **RESOLVED**: To ask the Parish Clerk to draft a timetable and advertisement for the recruitment of a groundsman for consideration at the next meeting.

26/151 **COMMUNITY CENTRE:** Members discussed matters relating to the appointment of new trustees of Haswell & Haswell Plough Community Centre (managed by the Hazelwell Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation).

26/152 **CONCLUSION OF MEETING:** The meeting closed at 8:00 p.m.

Chair's Signature: Date: Wednesday 28th October 2026