

Draft Minutes of meeting held at 7:00pm Thursday 11th December 2025 at Elwick WI Hall

Present: Cllrs Middleton (Chair), Ireland (Vice Chair), Noble, Patrick, Timothy and Robson.

In Attendance: Four residents and the Clerk (M Davies).

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Grylls and Ward Cllr Martin-Wells
2. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Noble and Cllr Patrick, Item 11.
3. **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held 13th November 2025:** The minutes were unanimously accepted as an accurate record and the Chair signed the Minutes.
4. **Matters Arising:** (i) **Breach of planning query:** The Clerk advised there was no further information to report. The Clerk was asked by Councillors to escalate this matter further within HBC. (ii) **Area of overgrown vegetation in Abbots Lea:** The Clerk advised she has now spoken to HBC, who have confirmed the land in question, is the responsibility of DPPC, as it falls under the grounds maintenance contract. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the previous quote received from Meryl Gardens at £2490.00. The Clerk also advised Cllr Middleton and herself had met with OJM Tree Services and Landscaping who had provided a quote of £2000.00 (plus VAT), this quote would include reducing all vegetation in the area to approximately knee-high height, up to the end and along the side of property number 2 in Abbots Lea, the removal of the Eucalyptus tree and stump, along with the removal of all smaller trees etc, including the two trees interfering with the internet connection box. Cllr Middleton advised he would liaise with the resident who raised the matter. The Clerk is to be instructed accordingly. (iii) **Fence at Dene Garth:** The Clerk advised a request has been submitted to HBC to see if they can remove the fence in its entirety as opposed to carrying out repairs to the damaged fence, she has been advised this is now in the hands of the Estates Department at HBC.
5. **Ward Councillors Report:** The Clerk advised an email had been received from Ward Cllr Mike Young, in regards to the Pride in Place Action Week. Cllr Middleton asked if the following question could be raised at the next neighbourhood services meeting; Why is it being carried out within our ward, so late and during Purdah? Cllr Ireland asked if any work that is carried out will be maintained going forward or will it be a one-off event, which may potentially be work for nothing. A resident suggested we could request community skips, Cllr Ireland advised whilst this is a potential request, experience from neighbouring parishes, shows that non-residents travel to use the skips and the containers are then often overfilled, which then results in the waste management company being unable to remove the containers. A resident also suggested a litter pick could potentially be carried out from Sambucas up to Three Gates Farm, or could we ask if the money could be used to purchase a mobile camera for the village, for the prevention of fly-tippers. Cllr Middleton asked if he could have a think on the matter and feedback to the Parish Council. Councillors agreed we don't require a pop-up in the village, however, we would like further information.
6. **Chairman's Report:** (i) Cllr Middleton advised HBC had been in contact following the feedback provided by Cllr Ireland regarding the HBC Civic Remembrance Sunday service and the Parish Councils exclusion. Cllr Ireland had advised HBC Councillors and Officers that Dalton Piercy, Hart and Elwick do not have war memorials and feel the rural communities' war losses are not acknowledged and suggested that the rural Parish Councils lay a wreath in rotation at the Remembrance Sunday Event. All Councillors agreed and the Clerk is to advise the Parish Council when HBC send out the reminder in October. (ii) Cllr Ireland reported on behalf of Cllr Grylls regarding the Tree Equity for Hartlepool Initiative event attended by himself and Cllr Ireland. The initiative seeks to help shape Hartlepool's future Urban Forest and develop a Tree and Woodland Strategy for the benefit of all. Cllr Ireland advised she has requested a copy of the slide show from the presentation. (iii) Cllr Ireland advised she attended the Parish Liaison meeting on 1st December, chaired by new HBC Leader Pamela Hargreaves. All Parish Councils were represented. Denise McGuckin, announced her upcoming retirement in May 2026. The Parish Clerks are to be updated by HBC with a list of senior members. It was advised that grit bins can now be requested online subject to availability. Cllr Robson advised the grit bins within the village are very compacted due to overfilling and need attention. The Clerk is to contact HBC. Cllr Ireland advised she asked if the approved traffic calming measures for Dalton could be put in place as soon as possible, the Clerk advised HBC have been in contact to confirm invoicing details etc. (iv) Cllr Ireland advised she recently attended the Rural Crime Forum, chaired by PCC Matt Storey, this was the best attended Forum for some years. PCC Matt Storey advised he could not provide any feedback regarding his consultation on Police funding as it had not yet closed. There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of reported rural crimes. The Matrix team are now patrolling in the area.
7. **Personnel Report:** Cllr Ireland asked for it to be noted the Clerk has now completed and passed four of the five modules for her ILCA qualification. The Clerk advised her final exam is due to take place on 12th December 2025.

8. **Village Maintenance:** (i) Cllr Middleton advised to date grass cutting quotes are still pending, the Clerk advised the current contractor Walkers has advised they will provide their updated prices in February. (ii) Cllr Middleton advised he had been approached by a resident regarding the drain near Abbots Lea, the issue had been reported to HBC but they advised it was the responsibility of DPPC. Councillors advised the drain is situated on a private road, the Clerk was asked to write a letter to the resident asking them to arrange for the drain to be cleared. (iii) Cllr Middleton advised Anglian Water and Teesvalley Wildlife Trust have now visited the site to inspect the Ash tree near the play area and the trees with Ash dieback in the Howls and we are now waiting for their feedback. (iv) Cllr Middleton advised we are awaiting a quote from OJM Tree Services and Landscaping to carry out the pond scraping and reinforce the dam in the pond (v) Cllr Middleton advised during OJM Tree Services and Landscaping visit to the village it was brought to our attention a tree on the embankment, next to the allotments, which had a large cavity in the base and it was advised the tree required removal as soon as possible. The Clerk was asked to contact HBC arborist for advice.
9. **The Batts Maintenance:** (i) Cllr Middleton advised Mr Caygell has now strimmed the scrubland. (ii) Cllr Middleton advised Mr Caygell has now provided his scheduled costs for 2026.
10. **Dalton Piercy Village Hall Trustees Report:** (i) Cllr Patrick advised the bad weather has hindered the builders again and work on the roof has been delayed, they are now in the process of fitting the roof window and contractors should be in a position to start the roof work commencing 15th December. Once the roof is completed, hopefully by Christmas the building should be watertight. Work will then commence on the interior. Cllr Robson asked if the drain will be sufficient and Cllr Noble advised it is a combined drain, using the existing system. The Clerk advised she had received an email from HBC enquiring if the hall will be ready in time to be a polling station for the 7th May 2026, Cllr Patrick advised the building will be ready in time for this.
11. **Finance:** (i) The Clerk advised she had circulated to Parish Councillors a financial transaction report as listed below for November 2025. This was accepted as an accurate record by all Councillors present.

1st November 2025 – 30th November 2025

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>£</u>
Nil	0.00
Total	0.00

<u>Payments</u>	<u>£</u>
Clerk – October Salary	373.40
Clerk – Internet / Phone (September 2025)	20.00
CE & CM Walker Ltd. Oct Grass cutting	270.00
Amazon – Cart Maintenance (paint & brushes etc)	64.04
Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping – Batts Maintenance	3350.00
Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping – Replace 3x Oak Tubs	120.00
Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping – Apply Weedkiller in village	1200.00
Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping – Plant cart in Village	100.00
Meadowfield Gardens Landscaping – Plant x17 oak barrels	935.00
Total	6432.44

- (ii) The Clerk advised an actual against budget report had been circulated to all Parish Councillors, this was accepted as an accurate record by all Councillors.
12. **Proposed Budget / Precept 2026 - 2027:** The Clerk advised the proposed budget for 2026 – 2027 had been circulated to all Parish Councillors. Councillors discussed the allotment water bills to date for 2025 – 2026 against the allotment rent the Parish Council receive to cover this, it was suggested that an amendment is made to future allotment agreements and allotment rent is to be increased to £144 per plot (£432 in total), this was proposed by Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Timothy and then **agreed by all**. Councillors also asked the Clerk to increase the proposed income for Wayleave from £0.00 to £50.00. The proposed precept / budget was proposed by Cllr Ireland and seconded by Cllr Timothy. The Clerk is to submit a request to HBC for a precept of £18523.50 and concurrent of £2839.00 totalling £21362.50. A resident asked if this increase would be communicated with residents, Councillors advised residents are notified by HBC, but a note would be added to the website in due course and a note may be added to the DPPC village life report for February 2026.
13. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:** Cllr Timothy suggested in the future could the Parish Councillors consider locating a Christmas tree at the bottom end of the Village near the Batts and could we potentially submit a funding bid to Redgap to install solar panels to power the lights etc for it.
14. **Correspondence:** (i) Cllr Middleton advised Santa has confirmed he will be able to attend the village Carols around the Tree from approximately 5:30pm. Councillors agreed some sweets are to be purchased for the children. The Clerk was asked to produce a flyer to advertise the event and she advised she would arrange 100 copies. (ii) The Clerk advised an email had been received from a resident asking if the Parish Council were aware of the situation with postal deliveries reported on the Facebook Page. Councillors advised this is an issue unfortunately DPPC have no control over, they are aware of the issue. (iii) The Clerk advised an email had been received from a resident asking if the Parish Council could provide a street sign for Highgate Meadows along with the addition of a cul-de-sac sign, as it is becoming evident drivers are unaware the street is a cul-de-sac and attempting to drive through the estate hoping to exit and driving at speed until they come to a dead end. Councillors advised this matter has been discussed in the past and

the development has not been completed, however once the completion is confirmed, DPPC will approach HBC for appropriate signage. (iv) The Clerk advised an email had been received from HBC, enquiring if Councillors would like their image next to their individual names as they do with Ward Councillors on the HBC website. All Councillors present declined the offer and asked the Clerk to respond accordingly.

15. **Public Forum: (i)** A resident advised in early 2025, they carried out a collection of rubbish and dog mess along the beck, and while this was carried out they split the snowdrops up. The resident asked the Parish Council if they may have permission to carry this work out again in early 2026. Parish Councillors, thanked the resident for their hard work and all agreed they had no objections to the resident doing this again, if the resident was happy to carry out the work at their own risk as DPPC would not be responsible or liable.
16. **Planning applications:** Notification of a planning application ref: H/2025/0363. Proposal: Section 73 application to vary conditions 2, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 of planning permission H/2023/0057 (Construction of new grade separated junction comprising erection of bridge structure and of new highway North of Elwick Village linking to the existing highway, with associated hard and soft landscaping, drainage features and ancillary works) to amend approved access tracks, and make provision for additional access tracks to facilitate landowner access, a new field bridge, field bridge details, a new underpass and water-course alignment and connection clarifications Location: Land in the vicinity of Elwick Village and the A19 comprising multiple parcels of land Elwick Hartlepool. Councillors all advised they had no comment regarding this application.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC: The Parish Council may at any point pass a resolution that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) the public and the press shall be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business if publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted e.g. Employment matters, terms of commercial tenders and negotiations for contracts for legal proceedings, preparation or advice.

All residents left the meeting by 8:34pm

16. **Confidential Matters** - Confidential matters only, recorded separately.
17. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 8th January 2026, 7pm at Elwick W.I Hall.

Meeting concluded at 9:24pm