

Draft Minutes of meeting held at 7:00pm Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Elwick WI Hall

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

**In Attendance:** One resident and the Clerk (M Davies).

1. **Apologies:** Ward Cllr Martin-Wells
2. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Noble and Cllr Patrick, Item 11.
3. **Minutes of Parish Council meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> December 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 with the Ward Councillors. **(ii) Area of overgrown vegetation in Abbots Lea:** Cllr Middleton advised communication had been received back from the resident who had raised the initial concern about the overgrowth in the area. The suggestion from DPPC, that all vegetation in the area is reduced 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. The resident advised they had spoken to some of the residents but not all. Cllr Middleton advised he would create an artist impression of what the area would look like following the completion of the work, along with a letter. It was **unanimously agreed**, that the letter should advise, if any residents have any concerns or questions, they should contact the Parish Council in the first instance and that the Parish Council will carry out the work subject to a majority of residents agreeing. **(iii) Ash tree located on the embankment near the allotments:** The Clerk advised OJM Landscape services have quoted to remove the tree, however due to the position of the tree and the overhanging limbs etc. on the road a road closure will be required to carry out the work safely. The quote received totaled £2080 (plus VAT) to close the road and remove the tree in question. Cllr Middleton advised he would speak to one of the allotment holders to establish if the contractors could access the tree from the allotments to avoid a road closure. Cllr Patrick was asked to speak to Meryl Gardens to obtain a quote to remove the tree and The Clerk was asked to speak to OJM to ask, if access was possible from the allotments, could the tree be removed without closing the road. The Clerk was also asked to ascertain that if the road did have to be closed, could a second quote be provided to clear the area on the embankment at the same time. Cllr Grylls advised he is awaiting confirmation from Anglian Water and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust as to who is responsible and who owns the areas of land east of the playground.
5. **Ward Councillors Report:** The Clerk advised she had emailed Ward Cllr Young to advise DPPC did not feel at this moment in time a pop-up in the village regarding the Pride in Place Action Week was required and request further information be forwarded to DPPC. Ward Cllr Young had responded by directing the Clerk to the HBC website, where agendas minutes etc. could be viewed.
6. **Chairman's Report:** **(i)** Cllr Middleton advised due to the Christmas and New Year period he had nothing to report. Cllr Ireland and Cllr Noble also advised they had not attended any HBC meetings during this period.
7. **Personnel Report:** Cllr Ireland asked for it to be noted the Clerk has now passed her ILCA qualification.
8. **Village Maintenance:** **(i)** Cllr Middleton and Cllr Grylls advised Tees Valley Wildlife Trust have instructed their arborist to inspect the Ash tree near the play area and the trees with Ash dieback in the Howls. **(ii)** The Clerk advised we are still awaiting a quote from OJM Tree Services and Landscaping to carry out the pond scraping and reinforcement of the dam in the pond; she will chase this up.
9. **The Batts Maintenance:** **(i)** Cllr Noble advised nothing to report on this occasion. Councillors commented on how good The Batts is currently looking. A resident asked Councillors if they could advise what is happening with the meadows, Cllr Middleton advised the area will be left as scrub land.
10. **Dalton Piercy Village Hall Trustees Report:** **(i)** Cllr Patrick advised despite the bad weather the building is now watertight, with approximately 25% of the tiles left to go on, along with the ridge tiles. The windows are now fitted and interior work is about to start. Trustees have agreed to install underfloor heating. If weather does not delay them further, once the gutters and downpipes have been installed, the scaffolding will come down and work will start on the ramps and patio. **(ii)** Cllr Noble advised DPVHA had organised the annual Carols around the Tree on Christmas Eve, which had been a great success and very well attended, with the Hartlepool MP Mr. Jonathan Brash and the Leader of HBC, Pamela Hargreaves also supporting the event. DPVHA would like to extend thanks to the Bearby family for hosting the refreshments and also to Santa, whose attendance had been organised by Cllr Middleton.
11. **Finance:** **(i)** The Clerk advised she had circulated to Parish Councillors a financial transaction report as listed below for December 2025. This was accepted as an accurate record by all Councillors present.

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

Payments	£
Clerk – November Salary	311.20
Clerk – Internet / Phone (October 2025)	20.00
Wave Water	118.03
Asda Refreshments for December Parish Council Meeting	31.77
Aldi Refreshments for December Parish Council Meeting	29.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>510.12</b>

- (ii) The Clerk advised an Actual against Budget report to date had been circulated to all Parish Councillors, this was accepted as an accurate record by all Councillors.

12. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:** (i) Cllr Ireland advised the next Cleveland Rural Crime Forum is scheduled to take place in February and she will be attending. (ii) Cllr Noble advised the HBC Neighbourhood Services meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of January and she will chase a date for the traffic calming measures to be installed in the village. Cllr Grylls and Cllr Middleton both requested Cllr Noble to enquire as to what speed calming measures are being put in place as Cllr Middleton is concerned for motorbike users etc. (iii) Cllr Robson advised he would chase with HBC Highways the condition of the verges. (iv) Cllr Timothy raised concerns regarding drivers/residents driving over the Village Green to access their properties and also drivers/residents having to drive onto the Village Green to go around large parked vehicles by the Villa. It was **unanimously agreed**, the Parish Council write to residents to remind them, there should be no parking on the road and the Clerk was asked to try and source some large rocks which could be located in the areas to prevent drivers driving on the green and causing further damage etc. (v) Cllr Timothy reminded Councillors the Parish Council Elections for DPPC are scheduled for May, and asked the Parish Council to consider advertising this and to establish if there is any interest; if anyone has any questions they are always welcome to speak to any of the Parish Councillors. It was agreed the Clerk is to put a note on the website and Cllr Noble is to add a note to a future Village Life report. (vi) The Clerk advised grass cutting quotes for the 2026 season are still pending and are due in February, prior to the next Parish Council meeting. (vii) The Clerk confirmed she had contacted HBC to request the grit bins were attended to in the village to free up the solidified grit and refill them. Cllr Patrick confirmed the grit bins had been refilled accordingly. A resident asked if the Parish Council could enquire with HBC if a grit bin could be situated close to the playground, as the bank in that area gets icy due to the running water etc. The Clerk advised she would contact HBC to enquire if this is possible and the cost involved etc. The resident advised they regularly clear leaves and debris away from the drains to ensure the water flows away and HBC clear the gutters. (viii) Cllr Middleton asked Cllr Noble and the Clerk to advise residents in both the Village Life report and on the website, prior to April, of the increase in the precept for 2026/2027, and reasons why. (ix) Cllr Middleton asked if notification had been sent to allotment holders regarding the annual rent increase. Cllr Noble advised the tenancy agreements renew in May and they need 12 months' notice; it was **agreed by all** this was to be amended so the tenancy increase would apply for the 2026 / 2027 agreements. (x) Cllr Noble raised concern regarding the double Hawthorn hedge located in The Batts; following advice from TV Wildlife Trust, who recommended the hedge is removed to avoid costly maintenance in the future. Following a suggestion from Cllr Noble, it was **agreed that** Cllrs Robson, Patrick, Noble and Middleton should inspect the current state of the hedge on the following Saturday morning and then make a recommendation to full Council as to what action should be taken, if any. The Clerk was asked to invite OJM to attend the meeting.
13. **Correspondence:** (i) The Clerk advised on the 5<sup>th</sup> January she had received an email from the Hartlepool Community Trust regarding Community Resilience Grants; unfortunately, this was the first time the Parish Council had received notification regarding the grant and the closing date was 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026, and she felt the Parish Council would not have adequate time to prepare an application. She had therefore contacted the representative from Hartlepool Community Trust to ask why the information had not been circulated in sufficient time to allow potential applicants to prepare applications. A response had been received to advise they couldn't find the original email so one may not have been received. The Clerk was also asked to forward the Parish Councils email address so we receive future correspondence direct. (ii) The Clerk advised following the Pride in Place project email discussed at the last Parish Council meeting a resident had kindly forwarded their correspondence with Cllr Mike Young, which she had forwarded to all Councillors prior to this evening's meeting. (iii) The Clerk advised an invoice had been received from NALC for the 2025/2026 subscription and this was passed to Cllr Noble to arrange payment at her earliest convenience.
14. **Public Forum:** (i) A resident asked the Parish Council if they would be able to arrange acknowledgment of the death of a resident ~~who~~ had once been a long-serving Parish Councillor. All Councillors agreed and asked Cllr Noble to include this in the next Village Life report. It was noted that both Cllrs Grylls and Ireland had attended the funeral.
15. **Planning applications:** None received.

**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 at 7:51pm*

16. **Confidential Matters** - Confidential matters only, recorded separately.

17. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 7pm at Elwick W.I. Hall.

Meeting concluded at 8:16pm

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