

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at
19:00 On Thursday 18th September 2025
at St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

Present: Councillors S Corfield, I Diggory (Chairperson), A Langford, M Stabler, K Wood and A Wallage.

In Attendance:

Parish Clerk

County Councillor Alan Bell

County Councillor Phil Heaviside

NOTE: The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies. All Councillors were in attendance.

2. Declarations of interest

It was agreed that declarations of interest would be dealt with as and when the need arose.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

a) Approval of Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th July 2025 be approved as a correct record.

b) Review of Actions

Cllr Diggory advised members that a planning application had been submitted by Woodside Developments which now includes one commercial unit. A positive response to this application had been submitted in line with the discussion at our July meeting.

Cllr Diggory advised members that he had raised the issue of a new defibrillator with the Village Partnership. The suggested site of the Three Horseshoes already has a defibrillator so is not appropriate. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Diggory pursue funding opportunities and liaise with the Village Partnership with regards to the location and purchase of this defibrillator. Information provided by Cllr Stabler on a solar powered free-standing defibrillator was discussed.

Cllr Diggory informed members that the agreed works with regards to cutting back the trees on the left-hand boundary of the Cemetery had been carried out. Positive feedback was received from the residents who had been affected.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

5. Co-option to Parish Councillor vacancies – Deadline for expressions of interest

The Parish Clerk advised that there had been no interest in the current vacancies. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the next submission deadline for applications of 10th November 2025.

6. Finance Report

PART A: FOR INFORMATION					
1. INCOME	Memorial inscription - 2nd inscription (JS) Scotts Memorials - cheque	£40.00			
2. EXPENDITURE					
A) Expenditure previously agreed by Parish Council due this month					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - September 2025(includes annual payuplift and back payment)	BACS	593.61	
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - September 2025	BACS	148.20	
3	Lloyds Bank	Debit Card Charge September (£3.00) & Stamps purchase (£13.60) 1st Class x 8	Direct Debit	16.60	
4	Lloyds Bank	Debit Card Charge August	Direct Debit	3.00	
5	Unity Bank	Account Service Charge (July)	Direct Debit	6.00	
6	Unity Bank	Account Service Charge (August)	Direct Debit	6.00	
7	EON	Electricity Supply - August	Direct Debit	16.87	
8	EON	Electricity Supply - September	Direct Debit	16.87	
9	Anglian Water Business (National) Ltd	Cemetery Water Supply - 2/5 - 1/8/25	BACS (PAID)	169.00	
10	Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd	Removal of tree and tree maintenance	BACS (PAID)	2520.00	
11	Makepeace	Cemetery Maintenance - July	BACS (PAID)	708.00	
12	Makepeace	Cemetery Maintenance - August	BACS (PAID)	708.00	
13	Columbaria	Memoiral Leaf	BACS (PAID)	108.00	
14	CDALC	Training CTP 82-86	BACS (PAID)	32.00	
15	CDALC	Training	BACS (PAID)	20.00	
		TOTAL		5072.15	
B) Expenditure requiring approval					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION
16	G Coates	Village Maintenance (August)	BACS (Paid)	219.70	Y
17	G Coates	Village Maintenance (September)	BACS	110.00	Y
		TOTAL		329.70	
Total Expenditure A + B				5401.85	

Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income and expenditure reported for information.
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

The Parish Clerk referred members to the circulated information. The Clerk advised that there had been an omission in the documentation made available on the website for the Exercise of Public Rights to view the unaudited accounts and this had been picked up by the external auditor. All other aspects of the audit were satisfactory.

Parish Council noted the outcome from the external audit and **resolved** to approve the return.

8. Planning Applications

Cllr Diggory advised that there were two historical planning applications from August. One application required no action and the other has been dealt with (see Item 4b). There were no current applications to be considered.

9. Heritage Garden

Cllr Wallage referred members to her report which was circulated. Given the time of year, Parish Council felt it appropriate to delay the necessary maintenance works until Spring 2026. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the purchase of two Marmax benches for the Heritage Garden. Cllr Wallage agreed to approach the company to see if the benches could be purchased now with a view to delivery next Spring. New quotations for the maintenance work and installation of the benches to be sought prior to Spring.

10. Jubilee Hall – Update

Parish Council received an update on the progress at Jubilee Hall from Cllrs Langford and Wood.

A discussion took place around an area of village green registered to the Parish Council that is to the front of Jubilee Hall. It was agreed to put the possible transfer of ownership of this land onto the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting.

Plans and visuals of the proposals for development of Jubilee Hall were shared.

Cllr Langford advised that meetings continue to be well attended and positive. There is a fundraising event to be held on the evening of 21st November.

11. Road Safety

Cllr Diggory advised that there were a number of linked items for discussion around road safety. Cllr Diggory proposed that items 11, 12g and 12i be deferred to the next meeting.

12. Notices of 12 Motions submitted by Cllr Stabler

a) Station Road development concerns

Motion: That local residents' concerns are noted and the Parish Council monitors the ongoing situation.

This item was seconded by Cllr Diggory who advised that he had contact with representatives of Banks. They confirm sales are

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Dated:.....

progressing well and all work is on target with completion scheduled for 2027. Parish Council noted that concerns had been made by residents to Cllr Stabler.

b) War Memorial Valuation

Motion: That the Parish Council increases the value of the War Memorial to a minimum of £7,600 (original cost-plus compound inflation), and seeks advice from Historic England, The War Memorial Trust or Imperial War Museum for guidance about establishing a more realistic valuation for insurance purposes.

This item was not seconded, therefore no further action.

c) Adoption of an Information Management System

Motion: That the Parish Council immediately introduces a unique distinct identification number (UIN) to all documents, communications, emails, letters, calls, complaints, internal reports / advice, NALC / CDALC / SLCC communications, FOI, SARS, Asset Register etc.

Cllr Stabler advised that he was withdrawing this motion.

d) Creation of a Cemetery Group

Motion: That the Parish Council commences a 6-month consultation exercise to gauge public interest in the creation of "A Friends of West Rainton and Leamside Cemetery Group" similar to other groups throughout the country.

This item was not seconded, therefore no further action.

e) Cemetery Maintenance

Motion: That the Parish Council updates its cemetery regulations to increase the size of adult graves to 9ft x 4 ft which takes into account both vertical and horizontal spacing between burials, the cemetery maintenance contract is reviewed to ensure areas within grave surrounds and headstones are maintained, and where families have opt-out the councils work flexibly and in partnership with the bereaved.

This item was not seconded, therefore no further action.

f) Financial Regulations

Motion: Proposed Amendment to West Rainton and Leamside Parish Financial Regulation Item 5.18 to ensure more stringent financial management of council resources by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and an appropriate level of oversight by Members.

This item was not seconded, therefore no further action.

g) Road Safety – Moorsley Road

Motion: That the Parish Council write to Durham County Council's Highways Department to raise the issue of road safety on this section

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Dated:.....

of road and supports the installation of traffic management / calming measures and street lighting.
Item deferred to October meeting.

h) **Public Transport**

Motion: That West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council writes to Durham County Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Team (copying the Lumley and West Rainton Division County Councillor's into this communication) about re-establishing the X20 hourly bus route through the village to service the local population.

Cllr Diggory seconded the motion and Parish Council agreed to write to Durham County Council. Cllr Diggory agreed to draft the correspondence.

i) **Road Safety – Station Road**

Motion: That the Parish Council raises the issue of road safety on Station Road Bank with DCC Planning and Highways Departments to see whether additional off-road parking can be provided by Banks Homes or Durham County Council alternatively traffic calming measure in the form of a "Priority to Oncoming Traffic" contra flow system heading towards West Rainton from Leamside can be installed.

Item deferred to October meeting.

j) **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Consultation**

Motion: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will be charged with investigating complaints from individual members of the public that they suffered injustice arising from maladministration in all local authorities, and be able to recommend redress to remedy that injustice including financial compensation. I move the Parish Council notes the ongoing consultation.

Cllr Diggory seconded this motion and Parish Council noted the ongoing consultation.

k) **Number of Parish Council Meetings**

Motion: Propose standing orders are immediately amended so that the parish council holds 6 bimonthly meetings annually in May, July, September, November, January and March.

This item was not seconded, therefore no further action.

l) **Access to Village Green Map**

Motion: That the Parish Council makes available on its website the Village Green Map for ease of reference for local residents.

Cllr Diggory seconded this motion. Parish Council agreed to post the details of Village Green land within the Parish on the website with a narrative explaining what Village Green land is.

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Dated:.....

13. Supply of Christmas Tree

The Parish Clerk advised that the Christmas Tree had now been ordered from Durham County Council to meet a deadline for guaranteed supply.

14. Smaller Councils Forum

Cllr Wallage advised that there hadn't been a meeting. The next meeting is 20th November 2025.

15. West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership

Cllr Diggory advised members that he attended the Partnership meeting on the previous night. He advised that Ken Groves is now the new Chair of the Partnership and Maureen Storey is the new editor of the Village News.

Discussions took place regarding Jubilee Hall and the Village Show. Some discussion took place regarding the future relationship between Village Partnership and the Community Association.

16. General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised there was no general correspondence.

County Cllr Bell requested permission to speak to share information.

He advised that the planning application decision for Woodside Developments is still pending, as is the appeal decision on the previously refused application. He advised that a speed-watch campaign survey will be taking place shortly. Cllr Bell commented that DCC were looking to replace or remove bus stops and mentioned the one on Chantry Place. It was felt that this one be left for now while the Parish Council explores the opportunity of the X20 bus being redirected back through the Village.

Cllr Bell discussed the Adventure play area and the fact that Durham County Council were reluctant to replace a part from the zip line that has been damaged again.

Cllr Bell also praised the Parish Council for the work on the recreational area and the new fencing that now encloses the development.

It was agreed that an item be placed on future Agendas for County Councillor updates.

17. Date and time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is Thursday 16th October 2025 at 19:00.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....