West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 19:00 on Thursday 16th April 2026

at St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

Present: Councillors I Diggory (Chairperson), K Wood, M Potts, M Scott, M Stabler and A Wallage.

In Attendance:
Cllr Diggory advised that the Parish Clerk was unable to attend due to illness. In his absence, Cllr Wallage had agreed to take the minutes.

NOTE: The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Langford as he was on holiday.
Parish Council resolved to approve this absence.

Cllr Corfield was not in attendance; an apology had not been received.

It was however noted that Cllr Corfield had attempted to attend the last meeting but had been unable to gain access to the building.

Cllr Stabler asked the Chair if item 15 on the agenda could be moved to come before item 12. This was agreed.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Scott declared an interest in relation to item 12 as she was helping the Community Association to prepare funding bids.

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

3. Shelly Equine Assisted Therapy CIC.

Shelly Bruce and a colleague were in attendance to outline the nature of the service they provided and how the Parish Council might be able to support them.

Parish Council noted that the organisation, based in Leamside at Norton Grange Farm, was seeking support to help identify and attract young persons in need who may benefit from their services, as well as seeking funding support.

Parish Council Resolved that the Parish Clerk send details of the PC grant policy and application form and to share contact details of other organisations that may be able to assist, for example Durham Community Action and the Village Partnership.

Signed:……………………………………… Dated:…………………………

4. Public Participation

Cllr Heaviside was in attendance and gave an update on resident's concerns about the lack of an accessible bus service for anyone with mobility issues. Cllr Wood declared an interest in that he was involved with a community bus project (NECA) that was seeking feedback from communities to demonstrate need. He offered to refer any concerns about the lack of service provision so that this need could be captured within the project to help support any requests made by the Parish Council to bus companies for improved services. (Cllr Wood to send details of the project to the Clerk).

It was noted that DCC still operate a "Linked In" community bus request scheme but its use doesn't appear to be actively promoted by DCC.

Cllr Heaviside also advised he had attended the recent PACT meeting at Jubilee Hall where residents raised concerns about anti-social behaviour from off-road electric bikes. The Police advised they had received no reported incidents of this and encouraged residents to call in any issues on 101 so that these could be logged and appropriate action taken.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

a) **Approval of Minutes. Parish Council resolved** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th March 2026 be approved as a correct record.

b) **Review of Actions.** There were no actions to review from these minutes.

6. Planning Applications

Parish Council noted that none of the applications reported related to properties in West Rainton and Leamside so no response was required.

Signed:……………………………………… Dated:…………………………

7. Finance Report

PART A:	FOR INFORMATION				
1. INCOME		Credit Interest	422.71		
		Precept	44,757.11		
		Interment of Ashes	70.00		
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 - April	BACS	513.75
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - April	BACS	128.40
3	Makepeace Landscapes	Cemetery maintenance - March	BACS	624.00
4	Brambledown	Cemetery - Installation of steps	BACS	3334.12
5	EON	Electricity supply	DD	16.87
6	Unity Bank	Service charge	DD	7.00
		TOTAL		4624.14

B) Expenditure requiring approval

ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION
7	ICCM	Membership renewal 2026/27	BACS	110.00	Y
8	CDALC	Subscription charge 2026/27	BACS	441.03	Y
9	SLCC	Membership Fees	BACS	116.00	Y
10	Jones Boyd (Durham) Ltd	Maintenance of payroll	BACS	108.00	Y
11	Narkedesign Ltd	Alt Text Complaiance Plugin Sub 1 year	BACS	49.00	Y
12	G Coates	Heritage Garden and Village maintenance	BACS	130.00	Y
		TOTAL		954.03	
		Total Expenditure A + B		5578.17	

Parish Council resolved to:
1. Note income and expenditure reported for information.
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B

8. Risk Management Strategy

a) **Review of Risk Management Strategy.**
Parish Council resolved to approve the Strategy and noted that Cllr Wood had a few comments that he would email to the Clerk.

b) **Review of Risk Assessment**.
Parish Council resolved to approve the Assessment.

9. Budget Position Q4 2025/26.

Parish Council noted the year end budget position and that a revised budget for the current year would be prepared to reflect the actual outturn position.

Signed:……………………………………… Dated:…………………………

10. Q4 2025/26 Bank Reconciliation.
Parish Clerk noted the bank reconciliation report which was certified by Cllr Wallage from sight of actual bank statements.

11. Village Maintenance
Parish Council resolved to approve the continuation of last years' arrangements for the Cemetery Maintenance Contractor to undertake strimming around the Village at the same cost as last year.

12. West Rainton and Leamside Community Association Funding Request.
Cllr Scott, reiterated her involvement supporting the CA with funding applications.

In the absence of Cllr Langford, who had submitted the request in his role as Chair of the Community Association, Cllr Wood explained why this "in principle" funding request had been made.

Parish Council Resolved to:

a) **Not approve the funding request** as it had not been submitted in accordance with the Parish Council grants policy.
b) **Approve the creation of a Jubilee Hall earmarked reserve of £10k from general reserves;** this would demonstrate the Parish Council's support of the work in progress to secure the sustainability of the Hall. In creating this reserve, it was stressed that this was not a commitment or guarantee to provide any funding to the Community Association. All requests for funding would need to be submitted and considered in accordance with the Council's grants policy via the standard application form and provision of appropriate supporting information.

Parish Council noted that Cllr Diggory advised he would prepare a response to the funding request reflecting the above which would be circulated to members.

13. Motion - Proposal to install three additional Parish Council noticeboards.
This motion was moved by Cllr Stabler and seconded by the Chair to allow the item to be discussed.

Parish Council Resolved not to approve the motion but noted that there was an action in the Annual Plan to consider how to improve community engagement. A suggestion to display approved council minutes on the community noticeboard in the Jubilee Hall was well received.

14. Motion – Development of a Media / Public Statements Policy
This motion was moved by Cllr Stabler and seconded by Cllr Wood to allow the item to be discussed.

It was noted that the Parish Council's policy relating to press and media may not have been reviewed for some time.

Parish Council Resolved that a draft policy be prepared by the Clerk for consideration and approval at a future meeting.

15. Motion – Development of a Resolution Tracker

NB: As mentioned under Item 1, this item was considered at the meeting before item 12.

This motion was moved by Cllr Stabler and seconded by the Chair.

It was noted that PC need to keep track of resolutions and decisions so that progress on delivering agreed actions could be monitored**.**

Cllr Diggory advised that in reviewing the Annual Plan, a resolution tracker had been devised to capture any outstanding agreed actions that should be captured in the plan. An example to illustrate how this would work was tabled.

Parish Council resolved to approve the format of the tracker tabled to capture resolutions made from May 2025 and noted that the Chair will be responsible for updating this from the approved minutes.

16. Motion – Proposal to hold Parish Council meetings in the newly refurbished café/meeting room in Jubilee Hall.

This motion was moved by Cllr Diggory and was generally considered to be a more appropriate venue that would help improve community engagement.

Parish Council resolved to approve the motion with effect from the June Parish Council Meeting.

Post meeting note: Confirmation of booking dates required from June 2026 to May 2027 to be agreed at the next Parish Council meeting on 21st May.

17. Heritage Blue Plaque

Parish Council resolved to purchase a plaque to celebrate the mining heritage of the village, as proposed by Cllr Stabler at the last PC meeting, at a cost of ££638.67 (ex VAT). The plaque to be located on the outside wall of Jubilee Hall, subject to the agreement of the Community Association and appropriate wording.

18. Annual Plan

Cllr Diggory gave a brief update on the Annual Plan and tabled a summary of the 6 themes covered by the plan and an extract from the plan to demonstrate how it will be informed by the resolution tracker going forward.
Parish Council noted the final proposed themes and that actions within the plan will be regularly updated to monitor progress on delivery. Cllr Diggory will circulate this updated Annual Plan before the next meeting in anticipation of it becoming formally adopted.

19. General correspondence: For consideration

a) <u>Request from a resident to view minutes and supporting documents held by the Parish Council was noted.</u>
   In response, it was noted that minutes and supporting papers for the last 5 years are published on the website and that earlier signed approved minutes held by the Clerk are to be archived with DCC at the Story (as older minutes have been) as these must be held in perpetuity and can be viewed by the public there on request.

Signed:……………………………………… Dated:…………………………

b) Damage to cemetery fence.

Councillor Diggory advised that the Clerk had received a notification from a neighbouring resident that some fencing in the cemetery had been blown over into their garden during a recent storm. **Parish Council noted** that the Parish Clerk is to obtain quotes for the required repair.

20. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting was called by the chairman of the Parish Council under LGA'72 Schedule 12 Part 3 paragraph 15(1)(a).

Parish Council noted the date, time and venue for this year's Annual Parish Meeting to be 14th May at 18.30 in the Church Meeting Room and that the Chair would issue an agenda for the meeting at least 7 days in advance.

21. Date and time of next Parish Council meeting

Parish Council noted the next meeting would be on Thursday 21st May 2026 at 19.00 at St. Mary's Church meeting room.

Signed:……………………………………… Dated:…………………………