

**West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held**  
**at 19:00 on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026**  
**at St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton**

**Present:** Councillors S Corfield, I Diggory (Chairperson), A Langford, M Potts and K Wood

**In Attendance:**

Parish Clerk

County Councillors Alan Bell and Phil Heaviside

1 x Member of the public

NOTE: The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

Cllr Diggory advised members that Cllr Wallage had informed him of her intention to resign from her role as Parish Councillor. Cllr Diggory advised members that whilst stepping back from her role, she had offered to continue her support with this year's summer bedding planting plan. Parish Council expressed their thanks for all of the work that Cllr Wallage had carried out over many years in the role and wished her well for the future.

**1. Election of Chairman for 2026/27**

Cllr Wood proposed Cllr Diggory for Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Langford. There were no further proposals. **Parish Council resolved** to elect Cllr Diggory as Chairperson for the coming Year.

**2. Declaration of Office**

Cllr Diggory signed the acceptance of office form which was witnessed by the Parish Clerk.

**3. Election of Vice Chairman for 2026/27**

Cllr Diggory proposed Cllr Wood for Vice Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Langford. There were no further proposals. **Parish Council resolved** to elect Cllr Wood as Vice Chairperson for the coming year.

**4. Apologies for Absence**

The Parish Clerk advised that Cllr Scott (on holiday) and Cllr Stabler (ill-health) had submitted their apologies for being unable to attend. **Parish Council resolved** to approve these absences.

**5. Declarations of interest**

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

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

## **6. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

### **West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership**

Cllr Wood advised that he was happy to become the Parish Council's representative at the WR&LVP meetings. There was no further interest from Parish Councillors present. **Parish Council resolved** to approve Cllr Wood as the representative for the Parish Council at the WR&LVP Meetings.

### **Smaller Councils Forum**

Cllr Diggory advised that he would be happy to represent the Parish Council at the Forums. There was no further interest from parish Councillors present.

**Parish Council resolved** to approve Cllr Diggory as the representative for the Parish Council at the Smaller Councils Forum.

## **7. Parish Councillor Vacancies**

**a)** The Parish Clerk advised that there had been no further interest in the current vacancy. He advised that he would inform Electoral Services of Cllr Wallages resignation.

**b) Parish Council resolved** to advertise the current vacancy with a deadline for applications of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

Cllr Diggory advised everyone present that the member of public present was in connection with item 26 a) on the Agenda. Cllr Diggory advised members that he was moving 26 a) to the next item on the Agenda and suspending standing orders to allow the individual to speak.

## **26. General Correspondence**

### **a) Email from a resident regarding trees on Village Green land**

The resident explained the situation (letter in supporting documents) and his concerns regarding three large trees situated on village green land in front of his and a neighbour's properties.

Cllr Diggory advised members that he had visited the site and spoken to the resident.

After some discussion **Parish Council resolved** to approve Cllr Diggory's suggestion of asking Special Branch Tree Services to carry out a site visit and appraisal of the trees in question.

The member of the public left the meeting.

## **8. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

## **9. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Cllr Diggory advised that Cllr Stabler had made some comments regarding the minutes, which he had circulated to all members of the Parish Council. After consideration of these comments those present felt that the minutes should remain unchanged.

**Parish Council resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

## 10. Review of Standing Orders

The Parish Clerk referred members to the revised Standing Orders that had been previously circulated. There were no comments and **Parish Council resolved** to approve and adopt the updated Standing Orders.

## 11. Review of Financial Regulations

The Parish Clerk referred members to the revised Financial Regulations that had been previously circulated. There were no comments and **Parish Council resolved** to approve and adopt the updated Financial Regulations.

## 12. Finance Report

| PART A: FOR INFORMATION                                           |                                              |                                                |                |            |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. INCOME                                                         |                                              | Nil                                            |                |            |                  |
| 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 - May                  | BACS           | 513.75     |                  |
| 2                                                                 | HM Revenue and Customs Only<br>465PD00171320 | HMRC Liability - May                           | BACS           | 128.40     |                  |
| 3                                                                 | Makepeace Landscapes                         | Cemetery maintenance/Village Strimming - April | BACS           | 708.00     |                  |
| 4                                                                 | Lloyds                                       | Service Charge (balance after repayment)       | DD             | 0.03       |                  |
| 5                                                                 | EON                                          | Electricity supply                             | DD             | 16.87      |                  |
| 6                                                                 | Unity Bank                                   | Service charge                                 | DD             | 7.00       |                  |
| TOTAL                                                             |                                              |                                                |                | 1374.05    |                  |
| B) Expenditure requiring approval                                 |                                              |                                                |                |            |                  |
| ITEM                                                              | PAYEE                                        | PURPOSE                                        | Payment Method | AMOUNT (£) | BUDGET PROVISION |
| 7                                                                 | Cartridge Save                               | 4 x Inks for Printer                           | Debit Card     | 129.70     | Y                |
| 8                                                                 | Miss Annette Simpson                         | Internal Audit 2025/26                         | BACS           | 230.00     | Y                |
| 9                                                                 | Anglian Water (National) Business Ltd        | Cemetery Water Supply 2/2-1/5/26               | BACS           | 171.52     | Y                |
| 10                                                                | G Coates                                     | Village Maintenance x 20hrs                    | BACS           | 290.00     | Y                |
| TOTAL                                                             |                                              |                                                |                | 821.22     |                  |
| Total Expenditure A + B                                           |                                              |                                                |                | 2195.27    |                  |

### Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income and expenditure reported for information.
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B
3. Approve a regular invoice for the room hire of £60.00 which had been received after the finance report had been completed.

## 13. Meetings Calendar 2026/27

**Parish Council resolved** to approve the meeting times and dates for the coming year.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

#### **14. Internal Audit Report 2026/27**

The Parish Clerk referred members to the Internal Auditors Report. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the Report.

#### **15. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26**

The Parish Clerk introduced the item and proceeded to work through the Annual Governance Statements to explain how the Parish Council meet their requirements. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the Annual Governance Statements. The Parish Clerk then presented the Accounting Statements for year 2024/25. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the Accounting Statements. The Chairman and the Parish Clerk signed the required documentation.

#### **16. 2026/27 Revised Budget**

**Parish Council resolved** to approve the revised budget.

#### **17. Planning Applications**

No planning applications were received within the Parish area.

#### **18. Annual Parish Meeting**

Cllr Diggory fed back to members regarding the Annual Parish Meeting. 8 members of the public had been in attendance.

Road traffic issues were again highlighted and Cllr Diggory advised members that he would try to make contact with the Highways Department at Durham County Council.

The lack of a footpath joining end of Marks Lane to the Three Horseshoes public house was also discussed.

Cllr Diggory advised everyone present that his presentation and report would be made available on the Parish Council website.

#### **19. Dispensation Advice from Durham County Council**

The Parish Clerk advised members that advice had been sought and received from Durham County Council regarding the two recent dispensations that were approved for Cllrs Langford and Wood with regards to Jubilee Hall discussions. The dispensations stand as granted.

Cllr Wood was advised to update his Register of Interest Form to include his position on the Community Association.

DCC also advised that Cllr Diggory would not need to declare an interest or require a dispensation.

#### **20. Motion – Parish Council to consider adopting an Employee Code of Conduct**

Cllr Stabler was not present and as a result the motion was not moved and Cllr Diggory as Chairman advised that the motion be treated as withdrawn.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

## **21. Proposal to seek clarification of the planning conditions surrounding proposed retail unit on the Community Hub Site**

Cllr Potts advised members that he had been made aware of public speculation regarding a link between the development of a potential retail unit being set up in a former chapel and changes to the planning conditions for the Community Hub. The speculation is fuelled by the fact that the chapel has now been put back on the market.

Cllr Diggory advised that he had spoken with Durham County Councils' Planning Department who confirmed there was no linkage between these two applications. However, they did comment that they have learned lessons from the Community Hub development insofar as planning permission was granted before the developer was able to demonstrate they had secured one or more tenants for the site.

Woodside Developments currently hold three live planning applications for the Community Hub - the original plan for the Community Hub, a plan for housing only and a plan for housing and one retail unit.

Under the present circumstances Parish Council felt that the community would be unlikely to receive the anticipated benefits from the Community Hub development, i.e. one that benefitted the whole community.

## **22. Cemetery Fencing – Parish Council to consider quotations in respect of damage to the cemetery fence**

The Parish Clerk referred members to the circulated quotation. Only one had been received despite requesting quotes from four companies. Some information had been received regarding ownership of the fence but Parish Council felt on the balance of probability and the fact that within the Deeds the Parish Council accepted responsibility for erecting a fence around the Cemetery the ownership would be the Parish Councils.

**Parish Council resolved** to approve the quotation received to repair the fencing that had been damaged in the storm.

## **23. Christmas Arrangements**

The Parish Clerk advised Councillors that he had agreed to look into the provision of the Christmas Tree and lighting arrangements. In making enquiries the Parish Clerk advised members that Leamside Nurseries had offered to provide (install/dispose) a large Christmas tree free of charge. With regards to lighting arrangements a price was received from a private Company which exceeded that of Durham County Councils provision.

**Parish Council resolved** to approve acceptance of the offer of a Christmas tree from Leamside Nurseries and also to use the service provided by Durham County Council to dress the tree with the lights and then store them once the tree is removed. These arrangements will see a saving in excess of 50% compared to the previous year's cost.

## **24. West Rainton and Leamside Village Partnership Update**

Cllr Diggory advised there was no update.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

**25. Smaller Councils Forum Update**

Cllr Diggory advised there had been discussion around rural housing and employment rights.

**26. General Correspondence**

a) Discussed earlier in the meeting.

No further correspondence had been received.

**27. Date and time of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting is Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 19:00.

Meeting to be held at the Jubilee Hall.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....