

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 19:00 on Thursday 16th July 2026 at Jubilee Hall, West Rainton

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

In Attendance:

Parish Clerk

County Councillors Alan Bell and Phil Heaviside

NOTE: The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Parish Clerk advised that Cllr Stabler had submitted his apology for being unable to attend (holiday). **Parish Council resolved** to approve this absence.

2. Declarations of interest

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

3. Parish Councillor Vacancies

There had been no interest in the current vacancy. The Parish Clerk advised that there were now two vacancies for co-option since the resignation of Avril Wallage. **Parish Council resolved** to approve a deadline of 9th September for applications.

4. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

a) Approval of Minutes

Parish Council resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2026.

b) Review of Actions

Cllr Diggory advised that he had spoken with the Planning Officer regarding Arden House and that the application for change of use is progressing through the planning system.

The trees on South Street have now had work carried out on them although the ivy has been severed which was unexpected and this will need to be removed as it dies off.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

The rear of the Cemetery has also been cleared although this area needs some further work to improve its appearance. Cllr Scott was approached for ideas with regards to this area and she agreed to have a look and come back with some options.

6. Planning Applications

Cllr Diggory referred members to the application for a children's residential care home. The home would be for two children and is from a company based in Lancashire.

Cllr Diggory advised that there have been 28 objections logged against the application. Parish Council did not feel a response was required to the application.

7. Finance Report

PART A: FOR INFORMATION					
1. INCOME		Burial - PR (Aldersons)	£740.00		
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 - July	BACS	513.75	
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - July	BACS	128.40	
3	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - August	BACS	513.75	
4	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - August	BACS	128.40	
5	Makepeace Landscapes	Cemetery Maintenance, Rear Hedge line reduction and fence repairs	BACS	2244.00	
6	Jones Boyd	Payroll Maintenance	BACS	108.00	
7	Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd	Tree Survey (3 trees South Street)	BACS	480.00	
8	Unity Bank	Service Charge	DD	7.00	
9	Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	DD	3.00	
10	EON	Electricity Supply	DD	16.87	
TOTAL				4143.17	
B) Expenditure requiring approval					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION
11	WR&LCA	Room Hire x 2 hrs	BACS	33.00	Y
12	G Coates	Ronseal for HG fence	BACS	9.99	Y
13	G Coates	Village Maintenance	BACS	347.00	Y
TOTAL				389.99	
Total Expenditure A + B				4533.16	

Parish Council resolved to:

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

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

8. Budget Position Q1 2026/27

The Parish Clerk referred Councillors to the previously circulated supporting paper. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the budget position.

9. Bank Reconciliation Q1 2026/27

The Parish Clerk referred Councillors to the information relating to the bank reconciliation. As Avril had left, Cllr Langford volunteered to check and sign off the Reconciliations.

10. Installation of Defibrillator

Cllr Diggory advised Councillors that finding a location for the defibrillator was proving difficult. Whilst the original proposal was for a location near the Church this has not been achieved.

Cllr Wood suggested that the garage could be a location and Parish Council requested that he speak to the garage about the possibility of locating the defibrillator there.

11. Christmas Celebrations

Parish Council resolved to approve the date of 17th December 2026 for the Christmas Carols event. Jubilee Hall to be hired from 6.30pm until 9.00pm on the evening and the Parish Clerk was asked to get in touch with Pittington Brass Band with a view to them attending for a 7.00pm start.

12. Community Grants Policy

Further discussion took place around proposals and Parish Council asked the Parish Clerk to work on reviewing the Policy in line with suggestions made.

13. Suicide Prevention Bench

Correspondence had been received which was shared with Councillors in relation to an organisation wishing to site a suicide prevention bench in the village. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the idea and it was felt that replacing one of the existing benches outside of Jubilee Hall would be appropriate. The Parish Clerk was asked to advise the organisation that refurbishment works would be ongoing at Jubilee Hall but once complete there would be an opportunity to install a bench.

14. West Rainton and Leamside Village Partnership Meeting

Cllr Wood advised that he had attended the last meeting. The Partnership agreed to support Jubilee Hall with £5000.

The Village Market is going to be run by the Community Association moving forward.

15. Smaller Councils Forum

A recent CDALC meeting featured a presentation by DCC's Planning Policy Manager on progress of DCC's Local Plan. At present this Local Plan is still in its scoping stage and will not go out for consultation until Spring 2027. Two areas of concern were housing developments and changes to planning.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Housing Developments

Under new government directives we are likely to see a call for a 50% increase in housebuilding in the county. Last year DCC put out a call for possible development sites. In West Rainton and Leamside an area of over 125 hectares was submitted for potential housing developments, but no firm decision has been made regarding any of these sites.

Changes to Planning Decision Making:

Currently, councillors can call in applications for consideration by planning committees and override planning officer decisions. However, under the proposed National Scheme of Delegation for planning functions that power will be significantly reduced. In future, the default position will be that most applications will be determined by planning officers with the involvement of planning committees being the exception. The Government hopes these changes will speed up housing developments, but members noted that they could also have a detrimental impact on local democracy.

16. General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised that he was in receipt of correspondence from the Information Commissioners Office which detailed the outcome of a recent complaint. The outcome showed the Parish Council acted appropriately and there was no further action required by the Parish Council.

17. Date and time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is Thursday 17th September 2026 at 19:00.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....