

**DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7:30pm.
At Wall Village Hall.**

PRESENT	Cllrs: Mark Wood Chair, Elisa Wyrley-Birch, Vice Chair, Joshua Boulton-Baker, Andrew Gillespie, John Lamb, Jane Michie. Clerk: Alix Pearson.
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NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
2766	1. Apologies for absence and Declaration of interests Apologies were received from County Councillor Antonia Azocar-Nevin. There were no declarations of interest.
2767	2. Approval of Minutes The minutes were approved as true record of the previous meeting and signed. There were no matters arising that were not addressed in the agenda.
2768	3. Clerk's Reports Financial The clerk presented Q3 report of expenditure which was approved and signed by the Chair. The bank balance at 15th January 2026 was £8963 Progress of new website and email The clerk had contracted Parish Online to provide the new website, register the domain and provide email addresses. Photographs were provided and information has been brought across from the existing website. The new website is now ready for the clerk to populate with relevant documents. The partially populated site can be viewed here . wallparish.gov.uk Clerk to set up email addresses and prepare documents to upload. It was agreed that it would be timely to review the Parish Council's current policies, to ensure that they were relevant and up to date. Cllr Boulton-Baker kindly volunteered to support the Clerk in this work.
2769	4. Consideration of 26/27 Precept Further to the budget approved at minute 2758 20th November 2025, Cllrs awaited the outline costs for work recommended in the tree health survey report, minuted at item 7 2772 below. The tax base notified by NCC was almost the same as that applied in 25/26, with the band D indicative charge being £45.63. It was noted that the budgeted expenditure for 26/27 was £14,788, which exceeded anticipated income of £9,618 precept + £2,400 toilet grant = £12,018 by £2,770. Although the Parish Council is likely to hold reserves of C£8,000 by the end of 25/26, much of this sum is earmarked for future drainage work on the back green, with the potential of tree work always on the horizon. Cllrs considered it responsible to make an increase in the precept to help it keep pace with routine annual expenditure. Cllrs unanimously approved an increase in the precept of 10%. 26/27 precept requirement £10,580. Impact on Band D precept approx £5 per annum. Clerk to send signed precept request form to NCC.

2770	<p>5. Review of Planning Applications</p> <p>There were no new planning applications. The two solar farm applications had not yet been decided.</p>
2771	<p>6. County Councillors Report</p> <p>Apologies had been received from the County Councillor. Antonia's report appears at appendix 1.</p>
2772	<p>7. Chair's Maintenance Report, Including Tree Survey</p> <p>The Clerk had previously circulated the tree condition report from the Arborist. The report identified only four trees requiring early attention. The Coronation Beech in the centre of the green required 30% crown reduction. Three ash trees in the woodland between Crook Hill and Old Lane were suffering from ADB and considered to be in terminal decline. Other ash trees should be monitored. The Chair had obtained quotations from a trusted Tree Surgeon.</p> <p>For crown reduction of the Coronation Beech - £800 + VAT</p> <p>For removal of diseased ash trees - two options suggested, one requiring road closures, the other toppling the diseased tree into the woodland. Both £2,500 + VAT with additional costs associated with the road closures.</p> <p>Councillors considered this carefully and it was unanimously agreed that the option with no road closures was favoured, on the grounds of cost, convenience and creation of additional habitat from the felled trees. It was agreed that at least one additional quotation should be obtained for this work. Chair to contact Johnny Porteus who had done some recent work for Cllr Lamb, to his satisfaction.</p> <p>Action Cllr Wood.</p> <p>The subject of car parking on the green was revisited and it was agreed that some information might be placed on the new website, which could cover the terms of the lease of the green from the Allendale Estate and the historical laws pertaining to Village Greens.</p> <p>Action - Clerk.</p> <p>A resident had raised the issue of repeated dog fouling on the green with the clerk The clerk is in touch with the dog warden for the area.</p>
2773	<p>8. Review of Fix My Street Posts</p> <p>Cllr Wyrley-Birch had monitored all posts, and found no items being the direct responsibility of the Parish Council.</p>
2774	<p>9. Village Hall Report</p> <p>The Trustees meeting which had been scheduled for 14th January had to be postponed. Cllr Boulton-Baker reported that the Christmas concerts had raised around £1200, taking the Spend a Penny fundraising project to c£2,500. The VH Chair intended to ask Trustees to proceed with the toilet refurbishment, making up the balance from VH reserves.</p> <p>The roof survey on behalf of NCEL had taken place. The surveyors required additional information, which was provided after significant efforts from the Village Hall Vice-Chair. We await the final report from NCEL.</p>
	<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 19th March 2026 at 7.30pm. The meeting ended at 9.15pm</p>

WALL PC REPORT 15.01.26

- 1) **Brunton Bank.** During Glens absence, the officer David Robson has been covering Glens area but he was unaware of the Brunton bank situation. On the 6th of Jan, I was informed Glen would be back the following week. I haven't had an update so I will keep on nudging them to see what's going on.
- 2) **Trees and power lines.** I met with a parishioner that lives just below Brunton bank and they showed me some trees that have started growing into the power lines. I contacted Michael Armer from the tree department at NCC and he told me that the trees are on private land and so they would need to contact Northern Power grid to get this problem sorted. Does anyone know who owns this land?
- 3) **Weeds.** When I asked David hunt about the way NCC manages weeds in Northumberland his response was very detailed and I can send the email he sent me if you would like to read it all. The last part is what I have put in this report:

We are aware that there are alternative options to using glyphosate-based products and an extensive trial of these options took place a couple of years ago to help inform our approach to weed treatment activity. Alternative products evaluated during the trial included, hot foam, burning lance, pelargonic acid, nonanoic acid, acetic acid and a mechanical 'walk behind' weed ripper brush. The results from the trial of alternatives were not compelling enough to result in the council deviating from the use of glyphosate products. The alternative techniques and products proved to be either prohibitively expensive to purchase or apply, unacceptably ineffective at killing weeds or dangerous to apply for our staff. There were some positive results / approaches which could be used in specific locations on a limited scale, mechanical weed ripping being the best example of this as it enables a rapid improvement to the visual appearance of an area that is heavily overgrown with weeds and helps slow down further emergent growth but is extremely labour intensive and as such would not be an affordable option for adoption as our primary approach countywide. The disappointing results from our trial will not prevent future trials taking place as new products enter the market and we intend to periodically trial new technologies/ products/approaches as they emerge to help inform our approach to weed control and to keep this under regular review as we go forward.

This article shows other County Councils that are leading the way for greener ways of managing weeds. Unfortunately, NCC is not on the list.

https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/pesticide-free_towns?fr=sNTBmNzg3MjIzNjc