WITTON-LE-WEAR PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 2026

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Witton le Wear Parish Council held on **Monday 14th September 2026** at Witton le Wear Community Centre commencing at 18-15.

Present: Cllrs C Murray-Leslie (Chair), C Cook M Campbell, L Docherty, L Bentley.

Residents: Mrs A Yuill, Mrs J Blair.

26/85/1 Cllr Murray-Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

26/86/2 Apologies received from Cllr L Langstaff-Wood,

26/87/3 There were no declarations of interest.

26/88/4 The minutes of the regular meeting on Monday13th July were accepted and signed by Cllr Murray-Leslie. (proposed Cllr Bentley, seconded Cllr M Campbell
Amendments following correction of minor typing errors.
(Resolved)

26/89/5 The Clerk presented the WLWPC financial report 01/07/26 thru 30/08/26 together with a projected spend for the remainder of the fiscal year. It was agreed the funding for the fence should take priority over other projects. There were no issues or irregularities. Signed by Cllr Murray (Resolved)

26/90/6 There were no electronic decisions. (No action)

26/91/7/1 Action 26/49/9 to review & agree WLW updated standing order. (action Cllr Murray-Leslie)

26/91/7/2 Request from 'Stormin the Castle' to display signs advising the residents who to contact if the volume of the music was deemed excessive. Notices on boards and in WW. (Resolved)

26/91/7/3 Links to CDALC training course information sent to Cllrs. (Resolved)

26/91/7/4 Email from Mr J Kirton regarding planning consent to pollard lime tree. Cllrs recognised the concerns. They noted the planning committee highlighted a lack of evidence from professional arborist and suggested this might be the most effective course of action.
(Clerk to contact Mr Kirton).

26/91/7/5 Following a complaint about an advert being missed from the WW the Cllrs it was agreed to recirculate information about the charges for commercial advertising and to review communications with contributors to ensure a consistent approach is taken.
(action – Clerk).

26/92/8/1 The path strimming/clearing has now taken place, after contractors agreed to delay the work due to the hot/dry weather. Pruning back of bushes along the railway path will be carried out at appropriate time. Work with parish map and walks still being developed.
(ongoing actions – Cllr Bentley)

26/92/8/2 Cllr Cook advised the last cemetery gate is now back in place. (Resolved)

26/92/8/3 Cllr Cook advised DCC have agreed twice weekly collections to the dog bin adjacent the river crossing bridge. (26/79/14/4) (ongoing actions – Cllr Cook)

26/92/8/4 60mph limit at West End / A68 - nothing to report (26/80/15/1) (ongoing)

26/92/8/5 Access to Escombe playing fields for Youth Club. Clarification that the youth club would like to access this playing field for trips but are unsure of permissions. (Cllr Docherty - ongoing)

26/92/8/6 Cllr Rodiss has agreed some funding towards the bulbs that will be planted under the new village green fence, however until the fence has been replaced it is not possible to plant them, therefore this is on hold. It will be possible to consider later flowering bulbs if we miss the spring bulb planting window. In the meantime the Clerk will clarify the process for accessing the funding. (Cllr Bentley – ongoing, action Clerk)

26/92/8/7 A revised draft WLWPC Standing Order document has been created and will be circulated for comments) (ongoing – Cllr H Murray-Leslie & Clerk)

26/93/9 Cllr Murray-Leslie reminded Cllrs that Parish Council files are now stored in the MS 365 shared drive. (action – all Cllrs to use new email accounts and contact the Clerk to resolve access issues)

26/94/10 Believe Housing have not yet granted permission for the planter proposed to the north end of St James Gardens. (action Cllr Cook and Clerk)

26/95/11 The specification for the village green fence has been developed technically. Clerk to phone fencing contractors to discuss re-fresh or re-quote to include standard information (action Clerk)

26/96/12 Due to holidays it was agreed the production and distribution of the next Witton Word would be overseen by the Cllrs.
(actions – Clerk to ensure list of regular contributors and distributors together with deadlines is added to shared drive. Cllrs Murray-Leslie and Langstaff Wood to manage WW content to printers. Cllr Bentley to manage distribution of WW to distribution team.)

26/97/13 A preliminary release of the parish plan and its findings was shared with the Cllrs. Mr Parsons who has collated and analysed the data is to be asked to produce summary for inclusion in the next WW. (action Clerk)

26/98/14 A list of planning applications was shared with the Cllrs for comments. Cllrs were encouraged to look at the full details on the Durham County Council planning portal. Cllr Murray-Leslie advised that comments from the Parish Council must be related to potential conflict with planning guidelines not personal views. The Cllrs had no concerns with the work above more fully described on the. (resolved)[HM1.1]

26/99/15/1 Cllr Cook reported she had spoken with DCC regarding the bollards to be placed adjacent the school gates and this was on the scheduled jobs list.
(action – Cllr Cook – ongoing)

26/100/15/2 Cllrs reported there were works planned for the A68 to secure the bridge. Clerk to contact DCC highways to ask for updates on the workscope and possible impact on village. (action clerk)

Supplementary to Agenda

Local residents Mrs A Yuill and Mrs J Blair shared information and progress with the proposed bus to Witton le Wear.

- The preference remained to provide a regular service bus serving the village.
- The bus companies have been reluctant to revise routes to include villages such as Witton le Wear. Further investigation has discovered that several rural areas in County Durham and Darlington villages around Darlington have benefitted from such action. This will be brought up with Durham County Council.
- The meeting with Stanhope transport group is proving very positive with the proposal to provide a bus service 2 or 3 days a week connecting to existing services. The proposed bus would be an 8 seater with space to accommodate a wheel chair in the back. The service would require volunteer drivers supported by the Stanhope transport group.
- The proposed bus would be electric and require an EV charging point exclusive for use by the bus. Discussions are ongoing about the siting of this.
- Fare structure to be established

Meeting closed at 20-00.

Next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council – 9th November 2026, 18-15 at WLW Community Centre.

Signed by the Chair ..... Date 9th November