THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF

THE SHOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2026.

Present:	Councillor R Hardy (Chair) D Brooks, L Hill, S Maitland H Mountain, M Mountain. County Councillor H Brown
Apologies:	I Cochrane, J Dale, County Cllrs L Taylor & L Penders

TIME SET ASIDE FOR QUESTIONS/ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Dixon Blakey raised the following issues for Durham County Council:

- Potholes and poor footpath condition throughout the village
- Church walk requires cleaning especially leaves on a regular maintenance schedule
- Repairs to road next to bedding centre on Station Road inadequate and will not last
- Former tip near Edderacres Farm -no action since previously raised

County Councillor Brown explained that he had asked for an action plan for Shotton and these matters would be included. The Clerk reminded everyone that such matters should be logged directly with DCC via their "Do it Online Portal"

2024. **TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED that the apologies for absence received on behalf of I Cochrane and J Dale be received and noted.

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2025. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

RESOLVED that, the information given be noted.

2026. **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26th JANUARY 2026**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 2026, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2027. **GROUNDSMANS REPORT**

Mr Hammond reported that all matters were proceeding to plan and that grass cutting had started early due to good weather. Maintenance work at the cenotaph would commence soon.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and the Members thanks to the Groundsman ne noted.

2028. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS OF THEIR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

No reports were received.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

2029. **COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County Councillor Howard Brown reported on the following matters:

- DCC Budget impacts on adult services
- Thornley Crossings Waste Transfer Station under review, Although saved for current year important to ensure representations are made during consultation process
- Meeting with Police to discuss action plan for Shotton and a day of action for Shotton is currently planned
- PCC Joy Allen to fund a second drone based in Peterlee to support identification of offenders
- Care Village location has been identified in Sherburn to improve Adult and Young social care provision
- New Area Networks to replace AAPs are set up and ready to commence in April 2026

Cllr. L Hill raised the issue of the access on to the walkway from Station Road at the bridge was in poor condition and required attention.

RESOLVED that, the information given be noted.

2030. **SHOTTON PARTNERSHIP AND AAP UPDATE**

Councillor R Hardy explained that a report would be made to the next meeting. provided a progress report on recent matters and covered the following items:
RESOLVED that, the information given be noted.

2031. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

i. Schedule of Payments

RESOLVED that the cheques and payments read out and detailed by the Clerk for February 2026 be endorsed and approved for payment under telephone banking arrangements.

ii. Review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Asset & Risk Registers

The Clerk outlined that the Risk Register was a live document and was regularly updated to take account of current and emerging risks particularly for major capital projects. Similarly, the Asset register was updated as and when assets were disposed or added by the Clerk and Members were provided with updates.

RESOLVED that the Councils Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Asset Register and Risk Register as reviewed be noted.

iii. Request for Financial Assistance – Our Day of Lourdes – Grass cutting

RESOLVED that the request for financial assistance from Our Lady of Lourdes, Shotton towards grass cutting at their cemetery be approved in the sum of £500

2032. **PLANNING MATTERS**

RESOLVED that the planning matters (applications, approvals, appeals and withdrawals) details of which had been circulated electronically when notified to all Members; be received and noted.

2033. **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE CLERK**

The Clerk reported on the following items:

a) *YIF Community Outreach Youth Hub*

Confirmation had been formally received that the closeout reconciliation by SIB had been finalised, and no further evidence was required for both Capital & Revenue accounts. There was a difference in SIBs figures to the amount of overspends to those noted by the Council but for the purposes of the grant requirements these had been concluded.

The Clerk was still chasing up Scottish Power the electricity provider as no energy had been recorded despite meter readings being provided and a formal complaint being lodged by the Council.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted, the actions taken by the Clerk be endorsed and further developments be awaited.

b) *Clerk Additional Hours*

In February 32 additional hours respectively had been worked by the Clerk, and more were expected for March to deal with recruitment and employment matters and year end processes.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

c) *Christmas Tree*

Councillor S Maitland outlined that arrangements were in hand to remove the old tree and replant with a new tree

RESOLVED that the information given be noted

d) *Clerk Recruitment*

RESOLVED that a Special Meeting of the Parish Council be held on Wednesday 4th March at 5.00pm to interview the shortlisted candidates.

e) *Information Technology Policy, Council Website, IT Matters & AGAR Assertion 10 requirements*

The Clerk confirmed that new IT Policy adopted at the last meeting was in place and that updates to the website were now completed with the following outcomes:

- Accessibility compliance improvements completed
- WAVE accessibility score improved from 8.0 to 9.7
- Accessibility Statement updated (to reflect current position and monitoring approach)
- GDPR/Privacy information updated (including a new clear cookie statement)

All Councillors now have their own official council email address which had been provided to each Member and should be used for all Council business going forward. Members were also reminded of the requirements of the Councils IT policy regarding their own PCs, tablets and mobile phones.

RESOLVED that the information given be received and noted.

2034. **CORRESPONDENCE, BULLETINS & CIRCULARS**

- Ad Gefrin Tacnbora Tour Standard Bearer Finalists – Invitation for Rona Hardy to attend the Final Awards ceremony event on 20th March 2026 at Ad Gefrin Centre, Wooler

RESOLVED that the correspondence, bulletins and circulars, details of which were read out by the Clerk be received, and the information contained therein, be noted and the Councils best wishes for Rona at the Awards evening be recorded.

2035. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting will be held at the Community Hub on Monday 30th March 2026 at 6.00pm.

2036. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that, pursuant to section1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the personal and confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item

2037. **CLERK RETIREMENT & GROUNDSMANS FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT & CHANGES TO CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

The Clerk provided details of the potential handover needed following recruitment of a successor. The handover requirements would be subject to the experience of the appointed successor and adapted to suit. The Clerk confirmed that despite retiring on the 31 March 2026 he would be willing to support the handover with the new Clerk based on being paid at his usual hourly rate for the hours undertaken being invoiced to the Council on a monthly basis.

The Clerk circulated an offer letter setting out the terms that had been provision ally agreed with Mr Lawrence Hammond (Groundsman) allowing him to take flexible retirement on 31 March 2026 on the basis of changes to his employment conditions of contract and working hours which would bring efficiencies to the Council.

Members thanked the Clerk for facilitating the arrangements which would bring efficiencies to the Council going forward whilst retaining the skills and services of Mr Hammond.

RESOLVED that the information given be received and noted and the Clerk be delegated with full authority to deal with all, matters regarding the recruitment of the Clerk and the flexible retirement arrangements of the Groundsman.

CERTIFIED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIRMAN .....

Date: 30 March 2026