

At a meeting of the Dene Valley Parish Council held at the Dene Valley Community Partnership One Stop Shop, High Street, Eldon Lane on **Monday 11 May 2026 at 6.15 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor T Bird in the Chair

Councillors J Clark and J Moore

Also in attendance:

South Durham Community Partnership – Cheryl Hudson
County Councillor Michael Ramage
Durham County Council – Kate Ward
Clerk - Ian Croft

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence

2. Public Participation

Anthony Westwood, local resident was in attendance and had expressed an interest in being co-opted onto the Parish Council as a Parish Councillor. He had a keen interest in the local community and in improvements which could be introduced. Members of the Council discussed Mr Westwood's interest in being co-opted onto the Council and upon a vote being taken it was

Resolved:

That Anthony Westwood be co-opted onto the Dene Valley Parish Council.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Westwood to his new appointment.

County Councillor Ramage informed the meeting he was making slow progress on his commitment to the provision of seats and planters. Although he had a budget for these items the locations for their provision would need to be agreed and consideration would need to be given to maintenance.

The Chair considered that the provision of a seat over the road from the One Stop Shop, which would become a memorial bench was a priority. Councillor Ramage informed the meeting he could arrange for the seat and suggested a local joinery shop which could provide such a seat. Kate Ward suggested another memorial bench should be placed at The Hollow.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

Kate Ward referred to the damage caused to the CCTV cameras. It was important to clarify that the cameras were not stolen. The poles the cameras were on were cut down but the cameras were seized by the police and returned to Durham County Council. The cameras were sent to the manufacturers in Rochdale but no footage was able to be recovered. One of the cameras had been damaged beyond repair and had been written off but could be replaced on the County Council's insurance. The other camera could be repaired at a cost of £54 and the Parish Council agreed to cover the cost of this repair if needed.

Once repaired a location would be needed to site the camera. Kate Ward suggested that this could be on the One Stop Shop but the Chair expressed some reservation that this could subject the One Stop Shop to some aggravation. He was interested in finding out what the cost would be to place it on the One Stop Shop.

The Chair suggested that cameras could be placed on the building to oversee the CCTV camera with footage being captured on a disc. Councillor Ramage informed the meeting he had recently had cameras installed which captured sound as well as video and informed the meeting he would ascertain the manufacturer of the cameras.

Kate Ward informed the meeting that she would explore getting the camera back from Rochdale. The cameras came with a 5 year SLA of which only two years had been used thus far and she suggested that a refund on the remaining SLA might be possible. Councillor Ramage replied that if Kate could supply him with a copy of the contract he would look in to this.

The Clerk reminded the Council that it had considered the provision of defibrillators and bleed kits within the Parish area and asked whether any consideration had been given to possible locations. Kate Ward suggested that Mark Preston from Missed a Beat, a charity located in Newton Aycliffe could be able to assist with this and provide further information. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Mark Preston and invite him to the next Parish Council meeting.

5. Finance Update

The Clerk provided the meeting with details of income and expenditure for the Council to the end of April 2026. The Chair agreed the balances and signed the accounts and bank statements.

The Clerk reported that an Internal Auditor to carry out the Parish Council's 2025/26 Internal Audit had been appointed.

6. Police Update

The Chair reported that the next PACT meeting would be held on Thursday at 5 p.m. and he would circulate the report from that meeting when it was available.

7. Play areas

Councillor Moore reported that both Rosemount and Mary Terrace were in a satisfactory condition.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted the Parish Councillor's solicitors about the resumption of the asset transfer of the Randolph Street Play Area and would follow this up following the meeting.

Kate Ward informed the meeting she would obtain a price for reinstating the lights on the MUGA at Randolph Park and which could involve the provision of solar lighting.

8. Planning Issues

The Chair circulated a list of planning applications recently received or decided within the Parish area or in neighbouring Parish areas.

9. Footpaths and Highways Issues

The Chair suggested that the bollard on the corner outside of the One Stop Shop should be reinstated. Kate Ward replied that although she would look in to this, because the previous bollard had been damaged then the reinstatement may be looked upon less favourably.

Cheryl Hudson referred to weeds overgrowing on footpaths near to where she lived. Kate Ward asked that if Cheryl emailed pictures of the area to her then she would look in to it.

10. Allotments

The Clerk reported that allotment rent letters had all been sent for 2026/27 rents and payments were being received.

In reply to a question about allotment vacancies, Councillor Moore replied that he believed that some allotments were available on the Coronation A site.

11. Any other business

Councillor Moore reported the problem of electric off road bikes and petrol off road bikes damaging a community field and ruining farmers crops. Kate Ward replied that the best thing to do was to report such incidents as Operation Endurance operations only took place where reports were made.

Cheryl Hudson reported that the next meeting of the South Church Community Partnership would take place on Wednesday 20 May at St Andrews Academy commencing at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting finished at 7.35 p.m.