

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 16 June 2025 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor J Nicholson in the Chair

Councillors T Bird, J Clark, R Coleman and J Moore.

Also in attendance:

Clerk Ian Croft
South Church Community Partnership - Cheryl Hudson

Ms T Mitchell and Mr R Simm

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Public Participation

Local resident Tracy Walker who raised a problem of two houses in the area which had their windows broken and rubbish piled up. While one of the houses was empty the other had recently been raided and young people continued to go in and out of the house. The Chair welcomed Cheryl Hudson to the meeting. The rubbish accumulated at the houses was attracting vermin.

Councillor Bird considered the houses should be put on a watch and observe status and that the Street Warden would bring in DCC Clean and Green to address the situation of the rubbish. He added that the problem had also been raised at the PACT meeting.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the Chair's update being for May rather than March 2025.

4. Any Issues to be Raised with local County Councillors.

There were no County Councillors in attendance.

5. Matters arising/Chairs Update

Tonya Mitchell and Robert Simm were both in attendance and had expressed an interest in being Co-opted onto the Parish Council. They were both local residents in the Parish and wished to see improvements of the area.

The Council agreed unanimously to co-opt both Tonya Mitchell and Robert Simm onto the Council. The Clerk informed Councillors Mitchell and Simm that he would forward them a Register of Interests Form to complete.

The Chair circulate her update report for June 2025 which included the following:

Blackies Community Woodland Development – the first Community Woodland Meeting was held on 14 May and had been well attended. There had been an excellent discussion on an agreement of the aim of project, local needs and priorities, current issues including anti-social behaviour and an acceptance of what realistically could be achieved in the short and long term. A full report would follow once actions had been concluded which were required following a recent boundary walk with Microsite staff and discussions held with Rob George.

Meeting with MP – Disappointingly, nothing had been heard from the area's MP.

Water Leak at Woodside Meadows - For the moment the issue appears to be resolved however recent discussion with the outsourced engineers reveals that drainage source under Grange Hill Farm land could present future issues as upstream has not been investigated. An email had been sent to Brian Featherstone

Planning Enforcement - A property in Close House was under investigation for the unauthorised construction of an upper floor extension on top of a wooden conservatory. The house owner was refusing to engage with DCC and the issue had been escalated

TSOS - Reports of vandalism to woodland trees and issues of public toileting had been made to DCC. The current visitors to the site are those moved on from Cockton Hill Recreation Ground where they left damage and fly tipping and the same was to be expected once they had left. They had a 28 day stay as per protocol which expires 28 June.

Current Trespass Situation Clayhole Allotments - Following a dog bite report of a Believe Housing employee being attacked by a roaming dog that belongs to 'residents' on land off the DCC owned access lane the Chair was

approached by a gentleman enquiring about buying the allotment land on which it appears he is keeping horses all stallions. There was a property on the site and stables have been built and the asbestos on the site had been partitioned off and the entrance to the site had been gated.

On 22 May 2025 the gentleman was advised that the land was not for sale and was in fact land designated as allotment land with all the protections that affords it. He was also advised the land was contaminated. He was given instruction to vacate the land within 14 days which he agreed to do. On 15 June all property and horses remained on the site and were still there. A message was sent instructing all removal with immediate effect and that a letter of Eviction would be posted this week advising on consequences if not followed. The Parish Council was to instruct Neil Thompson on this matter.

Allotments – An inspection of the Parish Council Allotment Plots had been carried out by the Chair and the Clerk. The inspections highlighted plots on both Grange Avenue and Close House not being maintained as per the tenancy agreement and this had resulted in plots becoming vacant and new tenants taking the tenancies. It was identified that both sites required some work of repairs and cleaning up. Close House in particular required the removal of a great deal of rubbish including removal of discarded asbestos sheeting and dismantling of an asbestos roof. A surveyor had visited the site to assess the work required to remove the asbestos etc and a quote was awaited. The Parish Council would need to agree any works proposed and it was considered the level of rent for Close House next year may need to be increased.

A recent breach of the terms of the tenancy agreement and numerous complaints from other plot tenants had led to a plot holder being issued with a letter of advice from the Clerk.

A report of sheds being broken into and fly tipping of tree chippings by an external source has raised the need for review of security, the tenancy agreement and monitoring. The site had been visited by the Neighbourhood police team who had provided advice on Allotment Watch and security, including consideration of the introduction of opening and closing times. Various plot holders had been engaged and their views sought.

Police and DCC Reports – The Chair provided the following update:

- Horses tethered on Randolph Park
- Resident in Valley Grove reported to DCC Neighbourhood Warden ,RSPCA and DCC Animal Welfare Team for excess dog barking, garden and yard issues and welfare concerns of having 24 dogs and 2 lambs in the property .
- 4 reports of ASB by off road bikes and quads made in the past week.

Sure Start Building – This building was now on the market and the Parish Council needed to decide whether it should and how it should move forward on this

6. Finance Update to include Audit for 2024/25 and Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25

The Council considered the Annual Audit report for 2024/25 and also the responses to the issues raised in the Audit recommendations. These would be attached as an annex to the agenda item and placed on file. The Council agreed the AGAR for 2024/25 which was duly signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer. The AGAR would be submitted to Mazars, external auditors before the deadline of 30 June.

The Clerk provided the meeting with details of income and expenditure for the Council since the last meeting. The Chair agreed the balances and signed the accounts and bank statements.

7. Parish Council Policies and Procedures.

The Clerk informed the Council that one of the issues highlighted in the Annual Audit was that the Policies and Procedures of the Council were either out of date or in some cases did not exist.

The Clerk informed the Council that he would be updating the Policies and Procedures and would bring at least one to each meeting going forwards for formal adoption by the Council.

8. Police Update

The Chair reported that the camera in Gibson Street was up and working.

Councillor Bird informed the meeting that anti-social behaviour was the main issue to report from the PACT meeting. Councillor Bird also raised the issue of replacing the seat in Gibson Street now that the CCTV camera was working. **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Simm that the Parish Council install a seat in Gibson Street to replace the one which was burnt. The Parish Council agreed to this and requested that Councillor Bird obtain a price for the seat replacement.

Councillor Mitchell referred to the floral tributes following a recent stabbing in the Parish which she considered served to continue the hurt and acted as a constant reminder to the incident. The Chair replied that these would probably be removed following the trial of the accused.

9. Play Areas

Councillor Coleman circulated details of a quote from a company who had expressed an interest in carrying out repair work to the Auckland Park Play Area. The company would need to inspect the Park to assess the work and to be able to provide a quote and the call out fee for the inspection was £90 plus VAT. The Parish Council agreed to meet this cost and requested that Councillor Coleman arrange for the inspection to take place and for the invoice to be forwarded to the Clark for payment.

10. Planning Issues

Councillor Clark circulated details of planning applications which had been received or determined in the Dene Valley Parish and surrounding areas since the last meeting (for copy see file of Minutes)

11 Footpaths

Councillor Moore reported that serious attempts had been made to set fire to the woodland area at Millbank. The Neighbourhood Wardens were aware and did occasional walks in the area.

The Chair informed the meeting that she had once again reported a sunken stile which was getting even deeper.

Councillor Simm reported that the footpaths on the Westgarth land were overgrown.

12. Allotments

The allotments issues had been covered in the Chairs Update report earlier in the meeting.

13 Any other business

Cheryl Hudson informed the meeting that the next meeting of the South Church Community Partnership would be held on Wednesday at 1.00 p.m. in St Andrew's Academy. Councillor Nicholson replied that she would attend this meeting and provide an update about the woodland works taking place within the Parish.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Monday 14 July 2025

The meeting finished at 8.50 p.m.