STANHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in Eastgate Village Hall on 1st October 2025

PRESENT:

Cllr Mrs D Sucliff, Cllr M Brewin, Cllr P Turton, Cllr E Buchanan, Cllr Mrs S Thompson,

Cllr R Lawrie, Cllr D Craig,

Cllr Miss J Carrick – Chairman

Susan Anderson – Clerk

County Councillor Mrs A Savory

Also present – a member of the public

11130
Apologies for Absence
Cllr J Shuttleworth, Cllr Mrs D Wright, Cllr Mrs S Smart, Cllr Mrs C Burdis

11131
To Receive Any Declarations of Interest from Members
Cllr Mrs Savory as she is on the Planning Committee
Cllr P Turton Trustee on the committee to save St Thomas Church Hall

11132
Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2025
Minutes were moved as a true and correct record and were signed by the chairman

11133
Matters Arising

1.Ashcroft-Stanhope Rural Ward – The Parish Wards would have been created, primarily, to ensure fair and effective representation of different parts of a parish on the parish council. Most warding arrangements tend to be long standing and will have been in place for many years.

In respect of Stanhope Parish, the government's guidance would apply "that warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish".

A Community Governance Review would be required to change the electoral arrangements for the parish. This would require public consultation and be able to demonstrate that there is strong local

support to change any existing warding pattern for the parish. Whilst we have powers to instigate a Community Governance Review, we have never done so. We have always responded to a petition from local residents - because this would demonstrate a strong desire for arrangements to change. If a petition was to be raised, it has to be done so in a specific way which DCC can provide further information if required.

To be valid, a petition must be signed by the following number of local government electors from the petition area:
Less than 500 electors at least 37.5% of the electors
Between 500-2,499 electors at least 187 of the electors
More than 2,500 electors at least 7.5% of the electors

There would likely be a cost implication to the parish if we were to conduct any form of review and there are number of factors we must take into account when conducting a review. **Resolved:** It was agreed to send the information to the residents that attended the meeting.

2.**Burnhope Reservoir –** The road has now been inspected and a job has been raised regarding the potholes.
3.**Shittlehopeburn Cottage –** The residents' email was sent to DCC and the Police with their permission. The email was forwarded onto the Police's Traffic Management Team.
4.**Response to concerns from Mr Hall Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner –** Mr Hall would like to thank the councillors for the invite to attend a meeting. Firstly, no complaints have been received relating to the parking at Frosterley School. It is acknowledged that it does get busy during school pick-up and drop-off times. The data has been reviewed and in conclusion there is nothing to note at school times. There is no current speed data as the road is not on the traffic management radar. On a large section of the road DCC have provided a number of signs, road narrows, school warning signs, SLOW road markings and yellow bar markings and a no stopping school area immediately outside the school gate. The 30mph speed sign at the south end of the school is in poor condition and wrongly positioned so a request has been put in to DCC for remedial action to rectify this.
The suggestion for a school crossing patrol is not justified but the education side might be considered. Traffic Management will continue to monitor the situation and periodically visit to monitor.
The residents in Frosterley have nowhere else to park but it does create natural speeds through the village.
Upper Weardale patrols will be conducted when resources allow. The area is also given priority for operation checkpoint.
The complaint regarding a call handler has been highlighted to the Control Room Chief Inspector who has identified a learning opportunity for the call handler and supervision. Any complaints should be reported and the date and time noted.
No concerns at Horn Hall around parking and vehicle speeds with nothing recorded on the collision record. There is no current speed data and Cllr Mrs Savory is looking to have a survey carried out. It is not a location where physical traffic calming measures would be implemented not least given the roads B class status.
The Police visit at St Michaels & All Angels at Frosterley is under review and an investigation has commenced on the damage or destruction of a bat roost.
Mr Hall has stressed that any speeding incidents must be reported to the Police which will then be logged with the date, time and location, this will provide the data which is needed to show where there is a problem. Cllr Brewin went to see the Headteacher of Frosterley School. If ever they need any support with the parking outside of the school, then they will let the Parish Council. Letters are regularly sent out to parents.

5.**Olivers tree services Westgate –** Permission has come through for the trees at Westgate to have the works done. This will be on 14th October.
6. **Toilet Provision over Christmas in Stanhope –** The area where the toilets might be positioned belongs to the Dales Centre. The Dales Centre have agreed to allow a portable toilet for the two weeks over Christmas and New Year when the Dales Centre is closed.
7. **Weardale Area Action Partnership** – Tracy has left the WAAP and she did a wonderful job managing many projects and put in a lot of hard work. A thank you is noted in our minutes.

11134
Correspondence Received

1. A tenant from Westgate Allotments would like to report that she has had produce taken from her plot along with some 8ft bamboo canes and some materials to make a frame. Apparently other tenants have had produce taken. She has contacted some tenants to see if anyone had seen anything. There is no right of way in the allotments so only tenants should be on the site. **Resolved.** Clerk to contact the local Police to see if anything can be done
2. Wolsingham Wayfarers are looking to work with the Parish Council with some of the rights of way in our parish. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that they are a great asset to have.
3. The Weardale Museum has sent the Autumn Newsletter which was sent to all of the councillors.
4. Mr Barton has emailed to say that he is no longer involved in Weardale Renewable Energy CIC.
5. Savills have emailed to advise us that Olivers Trees will be carrying out an inspection on 16th Oct of the trees on Bondisle Allotment Site.
6. We have received a complaint regarding the turning point at Crosshill Allotments. A councillor drove up and got turned and also the chairman and the clerk went up and felt that there is any amount of room.
7. ParkThatBike are working with DCC on a project which aims to make cycling easier and more convenient and to tackle bike theft. Various types of bike racks and secure cycle-store are offered free of charge. They will be supplied and installed by ParkThatBike with no charge to the Parish Council.
8. **The Weardale Practice response to contract changes on 1 October**

The Government have made amended to the contracts that GP practices in England hold and it has been widely circulated in the press over the last few days, today and will be for some time.

The amendment which is grabbing the headlines is that from Wednesday 1 October, "patients will be able to make unlimited non-urgent consultation requests, medication queries, and admin enquiries online from 8am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday"

The Weardale Practice, like many other GP practices in England have moved to a total triage model to request GP appointments, submit medication enquires and other admin type requests.

Money has been invested in the total triage process to clear the back-log of GP appointments and the waiting time for doctor appointments. Patients typically had to wait 4 weeks for a GP appointment and same-day appointments were often pre-booked.

We have a limited capacity of appointments and time, so with the increase in online requests this will have an effect on other parts of patient services. The government is recommending that we use waiting lists for doctor appointments.

Moving to the 'new' model today would crucify the hard-work and money spent to implement the new process. Whilst the new booking process has not been popular with all patients – we would urge that you support the practice to maintain the current model which allows us to manage the requests and booking of doctor appointments.

Total triage means that a clinician reviews requests for GP appointments and decides the urgency for the appointment. We consider all requests for GP appointments as potentially urgent and therefore cannot allow unlimited requests between 8am and 6pm. We are not changing the number of requests that we make available each day. We will also treat medication queries as potentially urgent.

The government are now suggesting that we introduce waiting lists for routine GP appointments. This poses significant patient safety concerns due to the waiting times for these appointments and the delay to health care interventions such as 2WW wait referrals.

We provide an outcome to 93% of all requests for all online forms on the day and 85% of appointments have an appointment within 2 weeks.

The Weardale Practice are compliant in regard to the online forms for urgent and non-urgent requests or queries.

Historically The Weardale Practice, like all other GP practices in County Durham, open between 8am and 6pm. We will continue to operate during these hours. Unless we change staff contracts, receive funding for the additional hours and there is supporting public transport - opening until 6.30pm is not feasible.

I hope that you understand the impact of the new government contractual requirement and why need to consider all requests for GP appointments and medications queries as urgent until a clinician has reviewed them.

Our admin\reception teams have been briefed as to the changes that the government are introducing and I would kindly ask that you respect that they are working within guidelines outside of their control.

11135
Planning Matters

DM/25/02350/FPA
Formation of opening in wall into parrock: installation of timber field gate and posts: creation of dropped kerb (partly retrospective)
Briar Barn
Briar Hill
Ireshopeburn
Cllr Mrs Thompson cannot understand why two openings are needed especially as the proposed one is right on a corner. Two driveways are not necessary. **Resolved:** Clerk to object to application

11136
Finance

1. Mazars have completed the review for the year ended 31st March 2025 and have enclosed the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. There are no minor issues identified. The notice is on the website and in the Notice Board.
2. Bank reconciliations figures for approval 30th Sept 2025**. Resolved:** Agreed

11137
CDALC
Nothing to report

11138
Accounts for Payment

S Anderson Salary	£925.81
HM Rev	£82.53
S Anderson Expenses	£38.25
S Anderson Home as Office	£35.00

Accounts for Receipts

Vodafone	£35.12

Direct Debits

Bank Charges	£9.10
EE Ltd	£30.00

Resolved: Approved

11138
New Matters for Discussion

1. Cllr Brewin mentioned that the builders at Frosterley Church have been rude to people saying that the path is not a public footpath. Apparently, Cllr Shuttleworth has correspondence relating to the path.
2. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that planning applications do take time as they are County wide
3. Cllr Mrs Savory reported that the traffic inspector was out at Frosterley School and there was no speeding, everything has a price tag. Horn Hall was also inspected and hopefully something will be put in place. The Notice Board at Eastgate is on DCC land.

4. Cllr Mrs Thompson was very impressed with some road markings on the Allendale to Hexham road. They are yellow and white squares with a white triangle and beige grit which look like speed bumps but aren't.
5. Cllr Miss Carrick would like to report that the water meter at the Village Hall, Eastgate has been found.
6. The seat opposite the C0-Op needs repairing as the bolts are sticking up and could be taken away. **Resolved:** Clerk to report to DCC
7. Light number 68 at Centenary Close is not working. **Resolved:** Clerk to report
8. There are some pot holes in Chapel Street, Stanhope that need repairing. **Resolved:** Clerk to report to DCC
9. A bollard has been hit by the MS Shop and there is concrete all over. **Resolved:** Clerk to report to DCC
10. Cllr Buchanan mentioned that there are some pot holes on the hill out of West Blackdene, Carroway Bank where it joins the other road. **Resolved;** Clerk to report to DCC

A member of the public spoke about Frosterley School who is a concerned about speeding traffic. She had an email from Traffic Assets who seemed positive to have 20mph zone outside of the school but the scheme would have to be funded. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned the lengthy process that she went through at Lydgate Lane. Even if traffic assets do support the scheme, then funding has to be found and the criteria has to be met. Signage is being looked at for the school. The member of the public would like to try and get funding through what was the AAP and the County Councillors.

11139
Clerks Business

1. GDPR – The Information Data Protection Policy has been sent to all councillors which is to be reviewed. No information must be sent to anyone asking for personal details such as their email address, address and telephone number. All councillors to confirm that they have read the Information Data Protection Policy.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm

Date of next meeting is Wednesday 5th November 2025 at Eastgate Village Hall commencing at 7pm

----------Signed----------Date