



Minutes of a meeting of Evenwood and Barony Parish Council held in Randolph Community Centre, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland, DL14 9RE, on Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 6:40 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Bolden (in the Chair); A. Breeze; J. Cosslett; C. Hodgson; A. Marshall; B. Medhurst; E. Pettit; R. Potts; R. Spraggon.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. K. Murray-Hetherington (Parish Clerk); Mr. M. Paul (Teesdale Mercury); and 6 members of the public.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Clerk announced that members had marked Armistice Day with a one-minute silence at the preceding meeting of the Randolph Social Welfare Centre charity's trustee board.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Members of the public raised questions and concerns relating to the £37,000 parish grant awarded to the Randolph Community Centre Foundation Trust for 2025/26. A resident raised an issue relating to land adjoining her home at Devonshire Place, which belongs to an outside proprietor. It was agreed to place an item on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Minute No.	Agenda item
025/353	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were no apologies for non-attendance. The Clerk announced that Alison Deakin had resigned from the Council due to other long-standing voluntary commitments and the Notice of Vacancy for Lands ward had been published.
025/354	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.
025/355	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: The attendance list was amended to include Cllr. Barbara Medhurst. On the motion of Cllr. Spraggon, seconded by Cllr. Cosslett, it was RESOLVED: To approve as a correct record and authorise the signing of the amended minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14th October 2025.
025/356	MATTERS ARISING: 025/340 - A tree survey on the village green had been instructed by Fisher German LLP on behalf of the Church Commissioners and was scheduled to be carried out on 12th November 2025. The Commissioners were still reviewing the proposal formally hand over or transfer ownership and control of the Village Green to the Parish Council for a nominal consideration (payment), to ensure it is well maintained.
025/357	ACTION LOG: RESOLVED: To note the agreed tasks recorded on the action log.
025/358	JUBILEE ALLOTMENTS: Mr. Michael Proud, Secretary of Jubilee Allotments Association assured members that reports from the Allotments Working Group regarding allegations relating to cock-fighting and puppy farming were unfounded and had no basis in fact. He agreed to take steps to remove a caravan from the allotment site. He also agreed to a management agreement, a legal document that would outline how the Parish Council as the landowner delegates the day-to-day management of the allotment site to an association. The Clerk agreed to prepare a draft document for his consideration. [Cllr. Breeze arrived at 6:50 p.m. and Cllr. Potts arrived at 6:55 p.m.]
025/359	FINANCIAL MATTERS: RESOLVED: To receive the schedule of monthly income and expenditure and approve payment of those invoices which were presented to the meeting. Cllr. Marshall verified the bank reconciliation, and signed and dated the schedule of income and expenditure and invoices as evidence of this.

Chairman's Signature:

Date: 9th December 2025

- 025/360 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR):** The External Audit Team at Forvis Mazars LLP had finally completed their delayed limited assurance review and a copy of the certified AGAR had been published on the council's website. There were no significant matters arising from the review that gave cause for concern. Minor scope for improvement in 2025/2026 was recorded, for which satisfactory responses were given. For example, the external auditor was advised in an email accompanying the AGAR that the Parish Council is the sole managing trustee of the Randolph Social Welfare Centre and a new Virgin Money Business Current Account was opened for the charity on 7th April 2025, an arrangement which was not in place in time for this accounting period (2024/25). It was unanimously **RESOLVED:** To receive the audit report for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2025 and to note the matters arising.
- 025/361 BUDGET SETTING:** Members considered a budget sheet showing the Parish Council's agreed budget for the current financial year; how and where money had been spent over the past year; and whether spending was higher or lower than anticipated. Durham County Council had indicated that withdraw the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant payments to local town and parish councils (discounts to those on low incomes) would be withdrawn from 2026/27.
- 025.361.1 Members considered a request from the Randolph Social Welfare Centre charity for a grant in the sum of £9,000 by way of a contingency fund. It was unanimously **RESOLVED:** To award the sum of £9,000 to the Randolph Social Welfare Centre charity
- 025/361.2 Members considered a request from the Randolph Community Centre Foundation Trust for a parish grant in the sum of £35,000, supported by the account sheet; auditor's report; and two funding sheets. On the motion of Cllr. Marshall, seconded by Cllr. Pettit, it was unanimously **RESOLVED:** To award the sum of £5,000 to the Randolph Community Centre Foundation Trust, subject to receiving further satisfactory evidence, specifically bank statements for the last 12 months.
- 025/361.3 On the motion of Cllr. Potts, seconded by Cllr. Spraggon, it was unanimously **RESOLVED:** To approve the annual budget.
- 025/361.4 On the motion of Cllr. Potts, seconded by Cllr. Spraggon, it was **RESOLVED:** That the official precept request for 2026/27 shall be reduced by 5% from £65,500 to £62,225. There were 8 votes in favour and 1 against.
- 025/362 NEXT MEETING: RESOLVED:** To confirm the date of the next meeting: Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 7:00 p.m. Cllr. Pettit submitted an apology in advance for non-attendance [holiday].
- 025/363 ITEMS REQUESTED BY MEMBERS:** Cllr. Spraggon requested an item for inclusion on the next agenda to discuss a resident's concerns relating to land adjoining her home at Devonshire Place.
- 025/364 CONCLUSION OF MEETING:** The meeting closed at 8:30 p.m.

These draft minutes are not the official record until formally approved at the next meeting.