

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance Committee held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 at 11:00am via Zoom.

Present: Councillors S Walker, L Brown, P Layton and F Robinson.

Also present: Parish Clerk A Shanley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors E Hopgood, E Scott and L Wilson. The Chair accepted that Councillor F Robinson was attending the meeting as a substitute for Councillor L Wilson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH JUNE 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2025 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

5. REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chair introduced the item and confirmed she had reviewed the financial papers in advance and was satisfied with the accounts presented. The Clerk then provided a comprehensive financial update. He advised that total expenditure to the end of August stood at £103,022, representing 27.8% of the total annual budget. He clarified that while the spend may appear low, several large invoices are still expected and not yet reflected in the accounts, including the all-out election costs, budgeted at £20,000, expected to be similar to the £16,000 cost from the previous election cycle when inflation is considered. Additionally, an invoice for £10,000 relating to the Safety of Women at Night project was still awaiting submission and payment.

The Clerk highlighted forthcoming expenditure for events across October, November and December—traditionally the Parish Council's busiest and most costly period. Other upcoming financial commitments include funding for ShopWatch radios, a £2,500 young people/clean air initiative, and prepared budget allocations relating to the County Durham Plan review for housing allocations.

The Green Move-Out Fund was discussed at length; this fund, entirely raised through contributions from landlords, supports additional waste collections during student move-in/move-out periods. The Green Move-Out programme had received positive feedback, with very few complaints recorded. The Clerk saw value in publicly recognising supporting landlords—as some had been proactive partners—and proposed that a newsletter feature and publicity photographs be arranged to acknowledge their contribution and counter negative perceptions of landlords within the city.

The Clerk advised that the internal audit for 2024–2025, carried out by the appointed internal auditor, reported strong governance, financial management and robust internal controls, with the Council again being formally commended for sound financial practice. No variances or issues of concern were flagged by the auditor

No further questions were raised, and the Committee noted and accepted the financial update.

6. PREPARATIONS FOR BUDGET SETTING 2025-26

The Chair outlined that the budget-setting process would follow the same structure as previous years, but begin earlier to support timely planning and community engagement. Committee chairs will be expected to begin preparing estimates and reviewing prior spend at their next scheduled meetings.

Councillor P Layton queried whether funding previously used to support homelessness services—specifically financial support that assisted rough sleepers into accommodation—was still active. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council has never directly budgeted for housing placement, although historically it had supported the Winter Night Hub initiative. He advised that rough sleeper numbers had risen locally and that he would raise this at the next City Operation Group meeting, attended by third sector services, the police, and County Durham Council. The Clerk also committed to recirculate guidance to members on how to report rough sleeping, including contact details for Humankind and DCC Homelessness Team

The Clerk confirmed that he had already begun compiling contact details for community centres and facilities to enable early consultation ahead of future grant funding. He also advised he would be meeting with Councillor Elizabeth Scott to review the events budget, anticipating growth in expenditure next year. The Clerk suggested that community-centre funding may operate through a structured bidding process and that this would be brought back to Full Council.

The Committee agreed to the revised timetable and the early commencement of budget-setting work.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 14th January 2026 – 11:00am

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council Finance Committee
(19th November 2025)**