



WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

1 Poplar Street, Waldridge Village
Co Durham, DH2 3SE
clerk@waldridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk

23rd July 2026

To: The Chairman and members of the **WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL**
(Parish Councillors Barker, Hall, Kinnear, Lewcock, Moist, Moffat, Sexton, Smith & Summerson)

In attendance Parish Councillors Sexton (Chair), Hall, Lewcock, Moist, Moffat, & Summerson

Co-ordinator – Jackie Smart

Below are the minutes of the meeting of the **WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL** held at the Parish Rooms on Tuesday 14th July 2026.

BUSINESS

1. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence from Cllrs Smith & Barker
3. Public Questions –
 - Carol raised the issue of the dog bin in the childrens play area. It's already been moved once, but advised still not ideal as can smell. Cllr Sexton advised Durham County Council matter, advised Carol to email himself or Cllr Moist as County Councillors & they'd arrange to have it moved further away
 - Carol raised a 2nd question around bushes on land in front of her house. Cllr Sexton advised this is also a Durham County Council issue, as she was advised when she raised it at the December 25 meeting
 - Cynthia asked what she paid council tax for, citing a historic issue around getting a dropped kerb for her husband. Again Cllr Sexton advised this wasn't a Waldridge Parish issue & not the appropriate place to discuss. Advised contact himself or Cllr Moist who would be happy to meet & discuss.
4. Minutes for June agreed by all councillors in attendance. (All councillors received a copy of the minutes & no discrepancies raised)
5. No Pecuniary Interests declared
6. **Agenda-Motions:**
 - Action Log - Action Log reviewed - All other actions remain on-going
 - Correspondence/RFO update –
 - DCC have advised they can no longer provide payroll services from April 27 – we will need to explore other options
 - Payroll claimed our employee Tax & National Insurance contributions twice in June, flagged with them. As we're now in credit with HMRC it will be corrected over next month or so.
 - Facebook group currently suspended pending closure
 - County Cllr Report – Nothing at this point
 - The future of the Parish Rooms – this is an initial stage of the council consultation, following notices being posted on Facebook, website & notice boards on 1st July. A number of village residents had emailed concerns about losing a 'village' asset & were in attendance of the meeting. It was reiterated that the parish rooms are a parish asset, of which the village is 7.6% of properties.
 - Cllr Summerson gave a short presentation outlining the issues facing the Parish Room – very limited usage, increasing costs & deterioration of the building that will require substantial investment. Potentially £50k plus with no guarantee usage will improve.
 - The council outlined that it's not necessarily the nominal usage & running costs that present the biggest issue, but the liability of owning an old building that requires significant work.
 - **The full presentation is posted on our website, along with updated frequently asked questions**

Questions

- Asked about consultation, how long would it take & why haven't we contacted all residents individually – it will take as long as it needs, notice posted to Facebook, notice board & website. We are aware it's been discussed on village facebook too. There's obviously a cost implication to send letters to 1755 properties, but we will consider that
 - Do the council not have reserves specifically allocated to repairs – the council has reserves yes, but they are a contingency to cover all possible liabilities of the council. Non is specifically allocated to the repairs of the parish rooms, though we have a provision for the roof.
 - Is the parish council classed as a charity – no we're a local authority organisation
 - Angela – what would you do with the money if it was sold? – as no decision has been made that hasn't been discussed. It would of course be used across the parish.
 - How would you sell the building – again, as no decision made we haven't made that decision. As it's an unusual building, it may be that auction would be the best option, but we'd take expert advice on that, if that's the option we choose.
 - Is there the option to have the rooms listed as a community asset & if it was sold it could be something that provides on-going value to the community – you could apply to have it listed as a community asset
 - John – where would you have parish meetings in the future? – again, as no decision has been made we haven't really discussed that, maybe the village hall?
 - Fiona - Can you not apply for grant funding – no, as a parish council we're not eligible to apply for grants. We're not aware of any DCC money to apply for, but we'll keep looking
 - Gillian – do you plan on doing essential repairs to heating before winter as I have rooms booked & would need heating – the heating does work though we've been advised at the last service that it's coming towards the end of life.
 - What have the parish council done to increase usage – advertised on Facebook & website. We do get enquires, but often the rooms aren't suitable for their needs
 - Gillian – rooms aren't always clean when we come in, could you not get one of your 6 staff to do that? – we only have 4 employees, 2 part time (clerk/RFO & maintenance) 2 part time seasonal staff for flowers. They do come in & sweep around, however some of the issues have been caused by someone unauthorised entering the rooms, hence the cameras. Employing a cleaner would add additional running costs
 - Carol – the village paid for these rooms, before there was other houses in the parish – the rooms were purchased by the parish council in 1984, when there were other properties contributing to the precept. The deeds are held in the name of Walldridge Parish Council & as such are a parish asset.
 - Cynthia – how much usage would it take to keep it open – we don't have a definitive figure
 - What criteria would you use to say the parish rooms provide 'value for money' – this is an initial discussion, we don't have a set criteria
 - Have you considered hiring someone to create a marketing strategy – no, but it's worth considering
 - Query raised around costs to repair, comparison with 'home' fixes – the parish rooms is a public building, that's for hire. Any repairs must be compliant with safety & building regulations.
 - Grace – mentioned the possibility of a community group to sort repairs/maintain, but felt it needed to be just people from village – all works would have to come with the appropriate certification for building regs
 - Query raised that we couldn't give concrete figures of what it would cost to repair & what it would take to keep rooms open – this is an initial consultation. If we chose to look at repairs then we go to the expense of structural engineer & specialist reports to find out what needs doing, that alone could cost 5-10% of our current reserves, without anything being done.
 - Query raised on why parishes wages bill was so high 25-26, quoted 59% - explained issues last year, overlap of clerks, back monies to be paid from payroll error & holiday pay owed, bill expected to be £10k lower this year
- Events –
 - Summer Cinema Night – We have a tent this year to weatherproof the event. Three films showing across the day, still tickets available. Promoted on Facebook, Notice Boards & Website. Merry Tipple attending on the evening. Councillors will supervise setting the event up, toilets coming Friday, rest will be set up Saturday morning.
 - Halloween – Cllr Barker will give an update at the next meeting

- AOB –
 - Millenium Green Play Area – Cllr Lewcock gave an update – quotes in for all inclusive play roundabout, lead time 8-10 weeks. Quotes will be shared with councillors, Quotes also in to replace & move goal post, again lead time around 8 weeks. Green gym equipment also being reviewed – Proposal to agree quotes & proceed (JL) agreed unanimously
 - Cllr Summerson raised the issue of minutes for a meeting not being published until agreed at next meeting – Cllr Sexton explained this was procedural & we have no jurisdiction to change it

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 8th September 2026

Yours faithfully, **Cllr Paul Sexton (Chair)**

Details	Income	Expenditure
British Gas Service Contract		£ 30.82
Community Waves	£ 48.93	
BP Harperley Nursery		£ 168.00
BP Ad-Vantage		£ 829.82
GE View - planters		£ 1,414.68
BP Harperley Nursery		£ 80.10
BP Trade UK		£ 19.98
BP Castle Wood		£ 595.00
J Hall Room Hire	£ 20.00	
Eon DDR		£ 128.68
Eon DDR		£ 265.40
BACS DDR Staff		£ 1,222.01
BACS DDR Staff		£ 1,222.01
Merry Tipple		£ 150.00
STO MC Robson		£ 80.00
BP Angel Koi (Plants)		£ 161.75
BP Harperley Nursery		£ 16.20
BP Amazon Blink Subscription		£ 80.00
BP Amazon Water Retaining Gel		£ 281.25
CLS Scouts Room Hire	£ 30.00	
Bank Charge		£ 25.65
DCC - Barrels Neighbourhood Grant	£ 2,550.00	
BP Sainsbury - Van Fuel		£ 111.65
BP Amazon - NB		£ 7.58
BACS DDR Staff		£ 2,804.69
Bank Charge		£ 7.00
J Rich Room Hire	£ 50.00	£-
J Hall Room Hire	£ 40.00	£