

STANHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in Eastgate Village Hall on 6th August 2025

PRESENT:

Cllr D Craig, Cllr Mrs D Sutcliff, Cllr M Brewin, Cllr Mrs D Wright, Cllr P Turton, Cllr Mrs C Burdis,

Cllr L Blackett, Cllr P Turton, Cllr E Buchanan, Cllr Mrs S Thompson,

Cllr Miss J Carrick – Chairman

Susan Anderson - Clerk

Also Present: County Councillor Mrs A Savory

Mr Graham Hall – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

2 members of the public

11104

Apologies for Absence

Cllr J Shuttleworth, Cllr Mrs S Smart

11105

To Receive any Declarations of Interest from Members

None received

11106

Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2025

Minutes were moved as a true and correct record and were signed by the chairman

11107

Graham Hall – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

A parent from Frosterley School attended the meeting to voice her concerns regarding speeding traffic through the village of Frosterley and speeding traffic past the school itself. Also, the lack of 30mph signs on the route to the school and possibly a 20mph zone around the school. Visiting drivers to the area may not be aware the exact location of the school coming in from Hill End due to overgrown hedges. Vehicles wait on the keep clear signs outside of the school. Vehicles are doing U-turns in the road. The school have written to parents regarding the speeding. In 2023 Cllr Mrs Savory had been working with DCC Highways team. Works have been programmed into a geographical works schedule and will be delivered as the programme is deployed. In 2024 Cllr Mrs Savory had

raised this as a matter of urgency. It is a high priority scheme. After receiving the ladies email Cllr Mrs Savory has spoken to Mr Mowbray and Mr Dunn from DCC to arrange a site meeting in September. She explained that there is a price tag to everything and that a speed survey would come out of her budget, Yellow lines would cost £200. It took months to get a 20mph zone on Lydgate Lane, Wolsingham and there were surveys done, statutory consultees had to be consulted and the cost was around £13,000 which came out of Cllr Savoy's Neighbourhood Budget. The information received from the lady will be sent to Mr Hall. **Cllr Brewin** mentioned that some parents stop in the middle of the road to let their children out, this obstructs the road. Mr Hall commented that Joy Allen is supportive of speed issues and he knows the challenges that can take years before changes to the highway can be made. The chairman asked the clerk to send the ladies letter to all of the councillors and to put Frosterley School onto the agenda for next month.

Cllr Craig mentioned the driving on the A689 and that he has a mile of the straightest road in the dale that goes past his farm. He has always had problems with speeding motorbikes and in Spring this year he requested a Police presence and contacted 101. The person on the phone was obnoxious and Cllr Craig was told that he could not request a Police presence and that he should go through a PACT meeting. He asked for the persons name and eventually got his collar number, possibly Jake Hicks. Joy Allen did arrange for the motorcycle unit to go out but unfortunately it was a misty damp day and its usually on bright sunny days that the bikes are out. Previously there had been two accidents within six weeks which was mentioned in the minutes for September 2024. The first was a motorbike that had skidded around the corner of the farm and went straight under a tractor. A photo was taken of the number plate which was very small and when it was checked with the police the number was not recognised. Luckily no-one was injured but the bike owner tried to blame the tractor driver for the insurance but there were witnesses and it was not the tractor drivers fault. The second incident was on 1st September 2024 on the Sunday night after St Johns Chapel Show. At that accident six police cars turned up which Cllr Craig thought was a bit too much. He blocked the road with his tractor for safety reasons so that no traffic could get passed but the police had been abrupt and he was told to move the tractor. Another time he is not going to try and help. Ideally Cllr Craig would like to see a speed limit of 40mph but even a 50mph would help. Other areas have speed restrictions Mellonby 40mph, Snods 30mph and Fir Tree 40mph.

Cllr Smart

Speed restrictions for Weardale August 2025

"DO NOT WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO DIE", is a call from MP Sam Rushworth, in the Teasdale Gazette Friday 4th July.

So far along the A689 since 2022 to 2025 there have been 4 fatal road traffic accidents, 5 serious accidents since 2018 and 2 slight accidents in 2022.

Is that sufficient to warrant speed restrictions?

In Eastgate there are 122 parishioners on the electoral roll. 116 signed a petition in September 2024 re Speeding in the Dale. We are being ignored.

It is impossible for 2 large vehicles to cross the bridge going into Eastgate.

A 60-mile speed limit is in place through the village!

The straight going into Eastgate is treated like Silverstone circuit, and is directly on the approach to the bridge. Vehicles have been known to crash into the dining room of the Cross Keys Pub and do considerable damage. Thankfully no loss of life.

The Rookhope road going into the village of Eastgate, past Cragside Caravan Park is not safe to walk. An incomplete footpath coupled with 7 entrances close together, used by farmers, caravans, cars, families with small children and pushchairs does not stop motorbikes, cars and bicycles from speeding past in excess of 60 miles per hour. Its downhill. It's on a blind bend too.

DCC has made changes to speed limits at Dipton, Harperley / Fir Tree, Bishop Auckland so if they have the will changes for the better can be made.

Finally I refer back to Sam Rushworth and the newspaper article where he says "county council officers should listen to local people and parish councils who know first hand about traffic problems in their areas."

This information to be sent to Mr Hall

Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that the speed limit has been an on-going scheme which took three years and it had to hit the criteria.

Cllr Mrs Wright a letter had been received from a resident of Horn Hall.

Traffic problems at Horn Hall Stanhope

Numbers 1,2,3,4 and 6 Horn Hall Stanhope DL13 2JR are in a cul-de-sac with a single access to the road linking Stanhope with Barnard Castle. For a number of reasons there is a considerable risk of a serious road accident at the point of access to the cul-de-sac.

The residents have 9 cars and social contacts and commercial deliveries result in considerable traffic. Immediately before the point of access there is on the north section of the main road a formidable hump which limits the view of road users from all three directions. Cyclists and motorbike riders are particularly affected if they have their heads down. This section of the main road is limited to 40mph which is not low enough to suit the area.

The road forms a gateway to the attractive moors to the south of Stanhope and there is a high level of recreational traffic particularly at weekends and holiday periods. It is unfortunately too tempting

for drivers who have come through Stanhope relatively slowly to anticipate the closely situated derestriction sign and accelerate as they approach the hump in the road.

As a resident I and my family have been involved in a number of incidents.

Recently I was driving out of the cul-de-sac in broad daylight intending to turn right and stopped at the opening as several fast-moving motorbikes passed going in the direction of Barnard castle.

Waited for about two minutes with my window down to listen for a further bike and then commenced my right turn. When I had nearly completed my turn a very fast-moving motorbike came over the hump and swerved to the right within the few inches between the bonnet of my car and the bank at the edge of the road. The bike continued at a fast speed apparently trying to catch up the other bikes. I was very shocked being involved in a near fatal accident and stopped the car to give myself time to regain my composure to enable me to continue to keep an important appointment. My husband was with me and confirms the details of my experience.

On the following weekend my elder son, an experienced driver, was coming from the direction of Barnard Castle and started to turn right into the cul-de-sac and waited on his side to make sure the road was clear. As he started his turn a fast-moving car appeared over the hump and the only reason there was not a serious collision was my son managed to pull back. My son comments that even if a car was only travelling at 30mph it would need to be at the top of the hump to be visible from the cul-de-sac entrance.

I understand that all our neighbours have experienced occasions when they have had to pull back to avoid collisions.

Sleeping policemen seems to me to be the only practicable solution.

Letter to be sent to Mr Hall

Cllr Mrs Wright mentioned that she is being approached in the shop by residents concerned with the speed through Eastgate, the motorbikes particularly this time of the year. She mentioned that yes the speed vans go out at Steel Works, Wolsingham, Westfield, Frosterley, Mart at St Johns Chapel but people know where they are. It would be better to do some serious speed catching in between the villages if it can be done. When the Parish Councillors were in White House yard with the speed gun a bike had been doing 93mph. Cllr Brewin was out in Frosterley there was a vehicle doing 84mph.

Cllr Turton mentioned the speeding at the top of Crawleyside Bank up by Weatherhill Cottage. What with lines of Porsche cars and motorbikes it is a dangerous road. It is hard to get registration numbers of the bikes as some have small number plates and are going too fast.

Cllr Buchanan Cllr Buchannan asked if the Police worked with the Police from Alston in Cumbria. The speed van is out regularly at Hartside along with a drone, motorbike team and high-speed pursuit vehicles catching people driving recklessly. Cllr Buchanan also mentioned that people driving too slowly is just as bad and can cause an accident. He feels that the dale stops at St Johns Chapel as the speed van is never deployed up at Cowshill.

Mr Hall mentioned that all speeding incidents should be rang in to the Police so that it can be logged with the date and the time. The more calls there are then it can build a picture that there is a problem and resources can be sent to that area. Mr Hall does know that there has been a problem with the call handlers and if you are not happy with the reply then it should be reported with the date and time and the recordings can be listened too. New technology has been fitted along with extra call handlers.

Mr Hall knows the dale and exactly where Frosterley School is. Community Speed Watch is the first step to slow traffic down but the lady felt that it was unreliable data as it only slowed the traffic down whilst the van was there.

Cllr Savory The dale is very large and with the reduction in officers we must help the police by providing as much information as possible. We have to ring in when speeding occurs then the motorcycle team can be sent up the dale.

Cllr Craig mentioned the parking opposite the road junction by the Hare & Hounds at Westgate. Its just an on-going problem over many years.

Mr Hall asked did the councillors know who the local Police are and how the Parish is using them. A councillor mentioned that there is a car parked inconsiderately at the bottom of the doctor's bank regularly which has been reported to the police. The Government are investing in Neighbourhood Policing and twenty-four additional police have been employed. Mr Hall mentioned that the Police should be attending the Parish Council meetings for a discussion like he has had. Insp Andy Reeves is pro-active and has been visiting the schools and attended the Stanhope Weekender. He would like the Police to be more familiar and more visible and they should know everything that is going on in the dale. It was mentioned to invite the Police to a Parish Council meeting. Mr Hall said that both PC Scott Ruddick and PC Trevor Pattinson are very good and that we should use them. There is a meeting with the Rural PCSO's at Aykley Heads discussing livestock, machinery in Weardale and Teasdale. Rural Eye is working well. Advice and guidance on trackers for Quad Bikes and tractors and also to fit cameras. Gamekeepers have good quality cameras.

Cllr Brewin mentioned that there had been an assault near to Kenneths Bridge, Frosterley and the Police had been called. On the 18th July between 10.30 and 12.30 there were problems at St Michael and All Angels Church, Frosterley. The ridging tiles were being stripped by the contractor and there are no barriers up to prevent any accidents. There has been no bat survey done and the scaffolding is not correct. The police were called and also the planning enforcement officer was in attendance. There is a right of way through the church and the contractors still have no barriers up or warning signs and have been there again on 6th/7th August.

Mr Hall is happy to attend another Parish Council meeting or any councillors can have a confidential chat. He is going to go to the sales at St Johns Chapel mart and would like a list of the sale dates. The chairman thanked Mr Hall for attending.

11108

St Thomas Church Hall

The Community Group has six months to try and purchase the Church Hall, this will expire on 24th December. A feasibility study needs to be done and Community Engagement to see if the hall can be purchased, a business plan needs to be done, events to be held in the hall, survey needs to be done. Cllr Mrs Savory, Cllr Shuttleworth and the MP are to meet. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that there will be stand at the show to pass on any information. There was a member of the public who is interested in being involved and Cllr Turton passed information to the lady.

11109

Matters Arising

1. **Willard Grove and Frosterley Lime Trees** – The Lime trees at Willard Grove and Frosterley have had the epicormic growth removed as requested.
2. **Guttering at St Johns Chapel** – All of the weeds have been removed from the guttering at the St Johns Chapel toilets.
3. **Weardale Surgery meeting** – An email has been sent requesting some dates and times for a meeting with the Practice Manager. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 27th August with two councillors from Stanhope and two councillors from Wolsingham.
4. **Newtown House Grounds** – Cllr Mrs Savory has referred this to the planners so that they can contact the owners to have the grounds cleared. The area has now been cleared of weeds. Cllr Mrs Thompson would like the planners to receive a thank you for organising that the owners had to tidy the grounds up. Cllr Mrs Savory would pass the thanks on.
5. **Memorial planter on Crawleyside and the Cemetery Planters** – D Hunt is trying to get some plants from the yard but they are hard to get this year.

6. **Dog Fouling in Frosterley Play Area** – The Neighbourhood Warden has been in the Play Area again and it is clear of all dog foul.
7. **Bondisle Allotments** – The plot has been inspected by Complete Weed Control. The area is looking good with no signs of JKW. The area was not sprayed as they wanted to make sure there is no JKW at the last visit. Someone has dumped some waste vegetation by the wall at the back of the plot.
8. **Phone Box in Stanhope** – The phone box is covered in graffiti and is being used as a toilet. Clean and Green cannot do a one-off clean as it belongs to BT. Cllr Mrs Wright would like the Parish Council to buy the phone box so that it can be turned into a book swap and community notice board. There is a lady who would paint some pictures of Weardale onto the glass of the phone box free of charge. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact BT
9. **Post Box, Stanhope** – A resident from Stanhope has knitted a wonderful postbox cover as she is leaving Stanhope.
10. **Wearhead Flower Bed** – Cllr Blackett showed a photograph of Wearhead flower bed which has been grass seeded over. The seed hasn't grown and the bed is full of dandelions. **Resolved:** Cllr Mrs Savory will deal with this
11. **Flower bed Frosterley** – Stockley Grove flower beds have not been planted and it was thought that the flower group in Frosterley were to plant these. Cllr Brewin mentioned that the plants had died that had been planted. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that money is tight and the beds that had been planted had come out of her and Cllr Shuttleworth's budget money. Cllr Mrs Wright mentioned that another time she can get plants at cost price.
12. **Northern Lithium** – Northern Lithium this year are not doing the grant money but will be another year. If any groups are in need of any money then they could apply this year and the application would be looked at.

11110

Correspondence Received

1. Eastgate bus shelter near to the cement works was in need of a good tidy. This was reported to D Hunt and the shelter was cleaned.
2. A tenant from Willard Grove allotments enquired if ducks were allowed on allotment plots. As it states in the Allotment Rules that no ducks are allowed a reply was sent. Since then the tenant would like to know the reasoning behind this. I did say that it was a council decision not to allow any ducks on any of our allotment sites. This actually goes back to 2019 when we had a complaint regarding the welfare of some ducks on one of the sites. This led to the decision to not allow ducks.
3. A request came in to have the war memorial weeded at Cowshill and also the area where the bench is needed weeding too. This was sent to D Hunt.
4. An email via the website has been received about who is responsible for the tidying of the path in Rookhope Cemetery. D Hunt will arrange to have the footpath cleared.
5. Eastgate Village Hall would like to thank the Parish Council for the grant money.
6. Cllr Turton has seen that there has been a number of break ins at the swimming pool recently. Alarming the pool has also appeared in several urban exploration videos where people access/break into abandoned places and make videos. The pool buildings are not secured properly against intruders and signage needs to be put up advising that urban exploration is trespass. Cllr Mrs Savory has organised for pool carpark to be barriered off.
7. Work has now commenced on the preparation of a new County Durham Plan. This is an opportunity for landowners, developers, community groups and other stakeholders to suggest sites across the county that could support future development. The Call for Sites is open from 30th June to 15th August 2025. The easy-to-use online platform is at letstalkcountydurham.cp.uk/en-GB/folders/countydurhamplan

8. We have an update from APHA in relation to the recent case of Avian Influenza in the Stanhope area. Following successful completion of disease control activities and surveillance in the zone near Stanhope. The 3km protection zone has ended and the area that formed it becomes part of the 10km surveillance zone. This means restrictions are still in place in a 10km zone but are not as onerous for keepers of birds. On the 22nd July the 10km zone has been lifted and there are now no restrictions in place.

11111

Toilet Provision over Christmas

It was felt that toilet provision is needed over Christmas and New Year when the Dales Centre is closed. The councillors wondered about placing the toilet by the seating area at Garden Close, Stanhope. Cllr Miss Carrick had a price of £150 for the two weeks and she will check to see if the hire company have their own insurance cover. **Resolved:** Cllr Mrs Savory will check with Durham County Council for permission for the fortnight.

11112

Planning Matters

Cllr Mrs Savory declared an interest

DM/25/01628/FPA

Change of use to equestrian and erection of stable block and hay store with associated fencing and hard surfacing and alterations to dwelling house (installation of solar panels, doorway, air source heat pump and raised platform to rear)

2 Newfield Farm

Stanhope

Cllr Mrs Wright had received an email from a resident concerning the planning application behind Front Street in Stanhope. All Cllr Mrs Savory could say was that amended plans had been received and that objections can be sent to the planners as a resident and by the Parish Council. The deadline date is 12th Stember and Cllr Miss Carrick asked if the Parish Council would receive the amended the application. **Resolved:** Clerk to find out

Cllr Mrs Sutcliff asked if planning permission was needed for solar panels in fields. There had been a large application go in at Lanchester and the community were against it. The application was called to committee and it was refused. Every application will be looked at on its own merit.

Cllr Miss Carrick wondered why there were only a few planning applications now when we used to have many. Apparently its because there are not as many planning officers

PLANNING APPROVALS FOR AUGUST MEETING

DM/25/00692/FPA

Change of use of part of ground floor of building to coffee shop – use class Eb)

Station House

Mellbutts Bank

Frosterley

11113

Finance

1. Eventually broadband has been sorted after weeks of no internet. The problem started when maintenance was done to the mast but the clerks did not come back on. After many phone calls the service had been cancelled and was told that with the mast being upgraded I wasn't

compatible anymore. After contacting the chairman it was decided to change from Vodafone to EE and Northgate Systems have sorted this out.

2. The bank reconciliation figures for 30th June 2025 were sent to all of the councillors.
3. A resident from Westgate has reported a tree in Westgate Allotments that they are concerned about. Olivers Tree Services have been contacted to see if the tree does need cutting back. The inspection of the trees that was done recently was for the safety of the trees. After contacting the chairman, we asked Olivers Tree Services for a quote and it would cost £460 to have the two trees pruned back to clear the building. **Resolved:** Agreed
4. Npower sent an invoice for £138.25 which I rang up about as all the bills are paid annually by direct debit now for the public lighting. I was told one of the accounts was terminated and that this was the final bill. Npower told me to contact Northern Powergrid but this had to be logged via a portal which we do not have access to. Councillor Shuttleworth sent all the details to the Street Lighting manager at DCC for him to look into. The manager has a list of lights that the Parish Council are responsible for from a Street Lighting report done in 1996 and a colleague is going to cross reference them to make sure they are the Parish Councils. Even doing this it will not flag up which lights have been disconnected from the network.
5. There is a Notice Board 1500 x 1200 mm (2 door) which is solid wood frames lockable in either oak, beech, ash or sapele from the noticeboard company online. The frame is 35mm wide with a 9mm thick and is a natural untreated true hardwood. Doors are glazed with 2.5mm thick polycarbonate glazing and have a lock and key. Title plates can be personalised with logo and text of your choice total £389.00 excluding vat. Planning Department would need all of these details first. **Resolved:** Cllr Mrs Savory will check to make sure that the Notice Board does not belong to DCC
6. The bank reconciliation figures have been sent to all of the councillors.

11114

CDALC

No report

11115

Accounts for Payment

JRB Enterprise	£540.00
Zurich Municipal	£1543.36
Makepeace Motors fencing & seat	£1716.00
Makepeace Motors Playpark birds nest swing	£2781.10
Northgate Systems 5G Router/ onsite installation	£320.40
S Anderson salary	£925.81
HM REV	£82.53
S Anderson Home as Office	£35.00
S Anderson Expenses	£6.96
BT Clerks phone bill PAID 24/07/2025	£81.44

Eastgate Village Hall August Hall Hire	£30.00
Paul Irwin Grass Ashcroft	£180.00
TOTAL	£8242.60

DIRECT DEBITS

Bank Charges	£8.50
Npower	£138.25
Vodafone	£27.34
EON Play Park Ashcroft	£22.98

Accounts for Receipts

VAT Refund	£554.11
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11116

New Matters for Discussion

1. Cllr Brewin would like the planning permission delayed or revoked at St Michaels Frosterley. The contractors are parking their cars on the graves and there is no health and safety. **Resolved:** The enforcement officer to be contacted at DCC
2. The road from the Black Bull, Frosterley to Hill End has not been weed killed. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact D Hunt
3. Cllr Craig mentioned a young lad that lived 2.8 miles away from St Johns Chapel School and there was a problem getting a school taxi. This has been resolved. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned that Wolsingham School have had a hundred applications that the school could not accommodate. The school has a good reputation and Wolsingham is the first choice.
4. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned about the Urban Explorers and they got into the Stanhope Swimming Pool. They had got the canoes out and went into the water. The police did attend. There has been anti-social behaviour in the car park so the entrance has been barriered off. Incidents must be rang in so that they get logged or taken into Stanhope Police Station.
5. Cllr Blackett mentioned the pot holes along the reservoir at Burnhope and that they still haven't been repaired. **Resolved:** Clerk to chase up
6. There is a fairly sizable tree in Slitt Wood gone into the water fall. **Resolved;** Clerk to report to DCC
7. Cllr Mrs Burdis needs clarification as to who will be responsible for planting Stockley Grove next year.
8. Cllr Turton asked if there had been any update on the bridges in Ashes Quarry being repaired. **Resolved:** Clerk to write for an update

9. Cllr Buchanan mentioned the walkers on the Weardale Way that they have to pass an unsafe structure. There is a hand written sign diverting walkers to the left. **Resolved:** Clerk to write again to DCC
10. Cllr Mrs Thompson is concerned that with the parking being stopped in the swimming pool people have nowhere to park. A motorhome is parking every weekend near to the entrance into the bungalows. If an ambulance was needed there is not much room into the Newtown entrance road.
11. Cllr Mrs Savory would like the councillors to know that there should be an announcement shortly regarding the swimming pool.
12. Cllr Lawrie mentioned that the allotment inspection had been done without the full allotment committee being there, Cllr Mrs Wright agreed. This was done as no inspection took place in June and the chairman was on holiday so it was the perfect opportunity to do the inspections during the day.
13. Cllr Miss Carrick wondered how many councillors had received a housing questionnaire through their doors.

11117

Clerks Business

An allotment inspection took place of all of the six sites on Tuesday morning which was all done in three hours. The chairman asked the clerk to write to the tenants whose plots were untidy and not cultivated.

Crosshill – 3 plots untidy, one has a small pond letter to be sent for the pond to be covered over, self-seeding sycamore trees to be cut back, electric pole plot to be trimmed.

Willard Grove – one plot untidy flag stones, progress on plot where tenant was asked to do or tenancy not renewed. Street light number 121 needs reporting as it is on all of the time

Bondisle – One plot untidy plus self-seeding trees

Old Hall – Nettles need strimming down around entrance track

Westgate – Double plot very overgrown if not tied up then tenancy will not be renewed, bottom plot possibility of sharing, 2 plots need tidying

Ireshopeburn – Centre plot very overgrown needs shrubs and bushes cutting right back, stone boundary wall up from the gate needs repairing as the stones are falling in over

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.35PM

Date of next meeting is Wednesday 3rd September at Eastgate Village Hall commencing at 7pm

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