

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the
JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING
of the Council held at 7pm on
Monday 12th January 2026
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

MINUTES

Present	Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Chairman) and Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Tony Stubbs, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman
Officers	Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mel Carr and Myles Mantripp.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. STC Minutes / Committee Reports:

a. Notes of Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group held Wednesday 5th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / AB)

b. Minutes of the Monthly meeting held Monday 10th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / JH)

c. Minutes of the P&R committee held Monday 10th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / DJ)

d. Minutes of the Environment committee held Monday 10th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / DJ)

e. Minutes of Community Development & Engagement committee held Monday 10th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (MW / JF)

f. Minutes of Finance Working Group held Thursday 13th November 2025:

These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / AB)

- g. **Minutes of Estates Working Group meeting held Monday 17th November 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / DJ)
- h. **Minutes of Fireworks Working Group meeting held Tuesday 18th November 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / AB)
- i. **Minutes of the Personnel meeting held Monday 24th November 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / JF)
- j. **Minutes of the Finance Working Group held Thursday 27th November 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (DJ / JH)
- k. **Minutes of Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group held Tuesday 2nd December 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JF / AB)
- l. **Minutes of Finance Working Group held Monday 15th December 2025:**
These were confirmed as a correct record. (JH / JF)

RESOLVED: To accept all of the minutes as above and recommendations contained therein.

4. **Matters of Information:**

4.1 **The Sedgefield Plan:**

To not review The Sedgefield Plan at this time but to do so when there are any significant changes to the NPPF, and/or the County Durham Plan, which would impact upon Sedgefield or to consider this matter again at some point in 2025/26 if there have not been any changes at national or principal authority level, i.e. to ensure a watching brief is kept over the Town's neighbourhood plan. The Clerk has contacted Mr Stuart Carter of DCC to make him aware of this matter. Mr Carter has confirmed receipt and will be issuing a note to existing neighbourhood plan groups to advise on the review of the County Durham Plan and implications upon neighbourhood plans. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter. To review in 2025/26 although this may move into 2026/27 depending upon national and County level timeframes.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.2 **Planning application DM25/01625/FPA Land to East of Beacon Avenue:**

No further information has been received regarding this planning application. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.3 Shute House Planning Permission:

The Clerk has informed the SCA Trustees of the Town Council's support for the proposed planning application and will consider this planning application further when it is to be considered under agenda item 10.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4.4 Report from County Cllr Ian Catchpole:

A meeting between both local County Cllrs and Town Cllrs to obtain more information regarding the sports proposal and how future Section 106 monies are to be managed by DCC had been scheduled for 12th January 2026. County Cllr Catchpole had requested this meeting be deferred and will supply a new date/time when he is able. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

4.5 Current Planning Applications:

Comments on planning applications 1-4 were submitted to DCC Planners.

Further information regarding planning applications DM/25/02441/FPA (South Hallgate) and DM/25/02641/FPA (Mahon House) has been requested. No response has been received from DCC Planners as yet. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

No comments or objections were received from Cllrs in relation to planning applications DM/25/02915/FPA, DM/25/02916/AD, DM/25/02928/FPA, DM/25/02930/LB and DM/25/03122/TPO.

No comments or objections were received from Cllrs in relation to planning applications DM/25/02423/FPA, DM/25/02812/FPA, DM/25/02986/FPA, DM/25/03055/AD and DM/25/03056/FPA.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

5. Dates of Meetings:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated details of all meetings in January 2026 plus civic events until February 2026. Since the production of this information, the Clerk reported a Policy & Records Management Working Group had been scheduled for 9.30am on Tuesday

20th January 2026 to update members on the progress towards compliance with Assertion 10. Cllr Allan Blakemore reminded all Cllrs of the requirement for them to complete Assertion 10 prior to 31st March 2026.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

6. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Allan Blakemore, closed the meeting to allow the public to give their views and comments.

County Cllr Chris Lines reported that he had attended a meeting earlier that day of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee where some progress had been reported in relation to the systemic problems within the County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust breast services, as detailed in his previous County Cllr reports. The committee will continue to scrutinise the issue and Cllr Lines will update the Town Council when there is more to report.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

7. Internal Reports:

7.1 Chairman's Report:

No report had been submitted.

7.2 Mayor's Report:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Mayor's Report which detailed the actions he had undertaken since the last Monthly Meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

8. External Reports:

8.1 Report From Durham County Councillor Chris Lines, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County Councillor Chris Lines.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8.2 Report from Durham County Councillor Ian Catchpole, Sedgefield Division:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a report from Durham County

Councillor Ian Catchpole. This report was that which had been submitted for the Council's cancelled December 2025 Monthly Meeting. Since the production of Committee packs for the January 2026 meeting, a further report had been provided by County Cllr Catchpole and this had been electronically circulated to all Cllrs on 6th January 2026 and paper copies circulated at this meeting. Cllrs said they required more time to consider this report and noted a proposal from County Cllr Catchpole for a community event.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To receive the information in this report.**
- ii) **Town Cllrs to consider County Cllr Catchpole's proposed community event and then request the Clerk to schedule a meeting between Town Cllrs and County Cllr Catchpole to discuss.**

9. Correspondence:

9.1 Confirmed Article 4 Direction (email from Mr Michael Kelleher, Durham County Council dated 17th November 2025):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email from Mr Michael Kelleher of DCC dated 17th November 2025 confirming the new Article 4 Direction that will come into effect on 17th August 2026 whereby planning permission will be required for any new Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMO) conversions from that date forward.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

9.2 Durham County Council – Open Space Needs Assessment Consultation (email from Ms Emily Preston, Ethos Environmental Planning dated 19th November 2025):

The Clerk reminded all that this item of correspondence had been issued to all Cllrs in November 2025 and when the December 2025 Monthly Meeting had been cancelled, instruction had been issued to all to complete this consultation in their capacity as a private individual if they wished to do so.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

9.3 Introduction to Banks Group (email and attachment from Ms Kate Culverhouse, Banks Group dated 20th November 2025):

The Clerk reminded all that this item of correspondence had been issued to all Cllrs in November 2025 giving Cllrs the opportunity to attend an initial public consultation event regarding a potential application for 50 dwellings on the south eastern boundary c

Sedgefield. Several Cllrs had attended. The Clerk had not been able to attend but had met subsequently with Ms Kate Culverhouse and Mr Matt Bishop of the Banks Group and had duly emailed an update on this potential project to all Cllrs on 12th December 2025 accompanied by a draft site plan at that time (the finalized plan will be submitted with any planning application to DCC as Banks Group indicated this was to be updated following feedback from the initial public consultation event) plus images of the different types of properties which were to be included. Ms Culverhouse has confirmed that Banks Group hope to submit their formal planning application to DCC in late January 2026. The Clerk had outlined the community consultation undertaken in relation to the planning application for land near Beacon Avenue and Ms Culverhouse confirmed that Banks Group would be willing to hold further public drop-in sessions in the town once the planning application was open for consultation. The Clerk has also liaised with Mr Callum Harvey, DCC's Senior Planning Officer to ask if his officers would be able to undertake similar sessions in relation to this application, once open for consultation, as per their approach with that for Beacon Avenue. Mr Harvey had confirmed that typically public consultations would not be held for the size of development being proposed by Banks Group, however, he agreed to see what local interest is like during the formal consultation period which is envisaged to be February 2026. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

9.4 Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision Regarding Land At Sprucely Farm, Sedgefield Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/W/25/3365616 (plus copy of Press Release from Action Group):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all the Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision Relating Land At Sprucely Farm, Sedgefield as well as a copy of the press release from the Action Group. Cllr John Finlayson gave a recap of the key points made by the Planning Inspector during the Hearing. Cllrs expressed their thanks to Cllr Finlayson for attending and representing the Town Council. The Clerk expressed thanks to both local County Cllrs for their timely updates on this matter ensuring the Town Council was fully informed. It was agreed that this outcome reflected lots of hard work and showed the benefits of collaborative working. Cllr Finlayson said it was very good to know the grounds for the Planning Inspector's refusal.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

10. Current Planning Applications:

A schedule of the current planning application had been circulated prior to the meeting. This application was then considered, and the following comments were made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

10.1 DM/25/03493/TPO – Lime (T1) crown reduce/shape by 3-4m and prune to clear the overhead cables by 1m, 12 Dunelm Court, Sedgefield:

Cllrs did not have any objection to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on planning application 1 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.

The Clerk reported that DCC's latest list of planning applications had been published and included the following planning applications within the Electoral Ward:

DM/25/03534/LB – dormer window and replacement slate roof covering to front, Shute House, Rectory Row, Sedgefield

DM/25/03518/FPA – installation of bi-fold doors to the rear, replacement of windows and access door to front elevation, 3 Malton Terrace, Sedgefield

DM/25/03551/FPA – construction of a new electricity sub-station, Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield.

RESOLVED:

Cllrs to forward any comments/objections in relation to the above three planning applications to the Clerk by no later than 9am on Monday 19th January 2026.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.21pm.



SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the proceedings of the
JANUARY P&R MEETING of the Council
held following the Monthly meeting on
Monday 12th January 2026
in
Sedgefield Parish Hall

MINUTES

Present **Cllr. Jenny Haworth (Chairman)**
 Cllr. Allan Blakemore (Vice Chair) and
 Cllrs. Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Tony Stubbs, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman
Officers Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mel Carr and Myles Mantripp.

2. Declaration of interest:

Cllr Julie Towler declared an interest in agenda item 7.4. due to personal friendship. No other Cllrs made any Declaration of Interest.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Terrace Hill Discussion:

The Clerk and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent met on-site in Ceddesfeld Grounds with Mr Martin Lowe of Historic England on 2nd June 2023. A follow-up meeting has now taken place with DCC's Conservation Officer and Tree Officer(s) who recommend the Clerk now liaises with DCC's Head of Ecology in order that appropriate specifications and costings can be sought so a further Discussion Meeting can be scheduled with Town Cllrs. Until priority work relating to the expansion of Butterwick Road Cemetery has been completed this issue has been put on hold. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Trees in Ceddesfeld Hall Grounds:

The contractor has been informed of their awarded work and a date is now awaited for the scheduling of this work. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.3 Internal Audit Inspections 2025/26:

Cllr Julie Towler, as Chair of Sedgefield Youth Club's Management Committee to propose to the Youth Club's next Management Committee that a commitment is made during 2025/26 to work towards obtaining a Full Assurance rating. (Note: The Youth Club's next internal audit inspection to take place on 18th February 2026). Cllr Towler to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.4 Tree Works At Entrance To Butterwick Road Cemetery:

The Clerk has informed the successful contractor and requested that work is scheduled as soon as possible. The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.5 Hedging Works:

These works have now been successfully completed.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.6 Phase 2: Cemetery Expansion:

Work is underway to now obtain costings for the area to be paved within Butterwick Road allotments site. Works to make good the original cemetery entrance will be undertaken in Spring 2026 when the double gates revert back to being used only for pre-agreed large deliveries. The Estates Working Group will bring a recommendation report to a future P&R Committee meeting regarding the triangular piece of land between the allotments site and Butterwick Road.

The Clerk to keep Cllrs updated on these matters.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information.

3.7 Parish Hall Grant Funding:

The bar area has now been re-stained and walls decorated.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.8 Code of Our Values, Behaviours and Conduct:

The recently adopted Code is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and close this matter.

3.9 Parish Hall Lift:

In-house training is now being scheduled to show Cllrs Allan Blakemore, Helen Cunningham, John Finlayson and Mavis Wayman how to use the new platform lift in the Parish Hall.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.10 Publication Scheme:

The recently adopted Schedule is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.11 Council Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy:

The recently adopted Policy is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.12 Social Media Policy;

The recently adopted Policy is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.13 Councillor and Staff Working Protocol:

The recently adopted Protocol is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.14 Information and Data Protection Policy:

The recently adopted Policy is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.15 Retention and Disposal Policy:

The recently adopted Policy is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.16 Corporate Risk Management Schedule:

The recently adopted Schedule is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.17 External Grant funding Policy & Procedures:

The recently adopted Policy & Procedures is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.18 Confidential Reporting Code including Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy:

The recently adopted Policy is now displayed on the Town Council's website.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

3.19 SCA – Mediaeval Fayre:

The Clerk has written to Ms Sarah Guest giving the SCA permission to use the village greens and Ceddesfeld Hall grounds for the next Mediaeval Fayre on Saturday 16th May 2026.

RESOLVED:

To receive the information and to close this matter.

4. Public Participation:

The Chair, Cllr Jenny Haworth, closed the meeting for the public to give views and comments.

County Cllr Ian Catchpole, referring to planning discussions in the last Council meeting, spoke about the “tilted average” and explained that as DCC no longer have five years worth of land identified for housing supply this does mean the Local Planning Authority has to look more favourably towards developers and their planning applications. Cllr Haworth asked what DCC were doing to address not having such a supply. County Cllr Catchpole said that around the Ward lots of developers were looking at more land, especially in the north. County Cllr Catchpole said DCC are already going through a consultation process in relation to this matter. County Cllr Catchpole said he is aware of potentially a further 4000 homes at Wynyard plus three further developments north of Sedgefield, all of which will have a significant cumulative impact upon the Ward’s infrastructure and amenities. Developers using the current situation to actively seek land.

County Cllr Chris Lines, whilst not aware of the term “tilted average” reiterated DCC’s five year housing land supply has expired and work is underway to develop a new SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). County Cllr Lines reminded all that in the existing DCC SHLAA the site now being considered by Banks Group is classified as “deliverable” so the site is unlikely to go from being such to “non-deliverable” in any future iteration. The current situation reflects why developers are circling around the County.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

5.1 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Update Report by Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Report which detailed the latest position regarding the Town Council’s capital project and the remaining works to be undertaken, i.e. installation of bollards, installation of taps and installation of noticeboards. The Clerk confirmed that all on-site planting has now been completed. The next Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group meeting is scheduled for 13th January 2026 at which more information will be given regarding release of retention monies and timescale for remaining works. The Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this project.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.2 Cemetery Lodge Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an update report regarding the Cemetery Lodge and confirmed the property has now been let.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Dates and Times of Council Meetings 2026/27 Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Dates and Times of Council Meetings 2026/27 report which was accompanied by the timetable which is to be retained by Cllrs to ensure their attendance at future meetings and also be displayed on the Town Council's website and noticeboards.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.4 Headstone Safety Testing 2025/26 Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Headstone Safety Testing 2025/26 Update Report which confirmed all testing has now taken place, results are being collated and findings will be presented at the February 2025 P&R Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.5 Code of Conduct Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Code of Conduct Update Report which made Cllrs aware of additional wording included by DCC in their Code of Conduct. This additional wording had been considered by CDALC's Larger and Smaller Council Forums as well as its Executive Committee with agreement that the additional wording is unnecessary and that CDALC continues to recommend DCC's substantive Code of Conduct (i.e. that which the Town Council currently uses). This was discussed and it was agreed the Town Council would continue to operate its existing Code of Conduct as the Town Council has no political affiliation and wishes to keep an emphasis upon polite robust debate.

RESOLVED:

The Town Council's Code of Conduct to remain as is.

Note: Reports related to information exempt from the public are considered under agenda item 8.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 Invoices for payment by cheques for approval after 8th December 2025:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all details of cheques for approval after 8th December 2025 numbered 111323 to 111333. The Clerk circulated to all an updated list which also included cheques numbered 111334 to 111338. Cllrs confirmed their support for the authorization of all cheques.

RESOLVED:

- i) All cheques and invoices were approved for payment.**
- ii) Cllrs Allan Blakemore and Jenny Haworth plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques numbered 111323 to 111338.**

6.2 Financial Budget Comparison (as at 5th January 2026):

RESOLVED:

To receive the Financial Budget Comparison as at 5th January 2026.

6.3 Debtors List as at 5th January 2026:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Debtors List as at 5th January 2026.

6.4 Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1st – 31st December 2025:

RESOLVED:

To receive the Direct Debits and Debit Card List for 1st – 31st December 2025.

6.5 November and December 2025 Bank Reconciliations Plus November and December 2025 Imprest Account and October and November 2025 Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation Report by Town Clerk:

The Clerk circulated to all the bank reconciliations for November and December 2025 relating to accounts held at Barclays and Imprest plus bank reconciliations for October and November 2025 relating to the Public Sector Deposit Fund.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.6 Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Funding Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion Funding Update Report which detailed the current position regarding spending on this capital project. The Clerk confirmed that all planting works have now been completed and confirmation received that retention monies for such should be held for 24 months compared to 12 months for all other on-site works. The next Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group meeting is scheduled for 13th January 2026.

RESOLVED:

i) To receive this information.

ii) The initial transfer of £79,622.09 from the Public Sector Deposit Fund now to be returned to the Fund as all Section 106 monies have been reclaimed in full.

6.7 Internal Audit 2025/26 – Update Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an Internal Audit 2025/26 Update Report which was accompanied by internal audit findings reports relating to payroll audit and accounts payable. Cllrs noted Full Assurance ratings were obtained in both inspection areas. Cllr Jenny Haworth expressed her thanks to Town Council staff for their hard work in achieving such assurance levels, levels which should not be taken for granted. Thanks were also expressed to the internal auditor for his continuing scrutiny work. The Clerk confirmed Terms of Reference for the next internal audit inspections on 18th/19th February 2026 would be shared in due course. The next Sedgefield Youth Club internal audit has been scheduled for 18th February 2026 and Cllrs Julie Towler and Kelly Dickerson will attend.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

6.8 2026/27 Budget and Precept Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a 2026/27 Budget and Precept Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group. Cllr Jenny Haworth explained this comprehensive report, along with Appendix 1 (proposed article for next Sedgefield Extra) and Appendix 2 (proposed headline income and expenditure budget for 2026/27) reflected lots of work undertaken by the Finance Working Group from October to December 2025 trying to achieve a balance of keeping the

Town Council's precept increase as low as possible whilst acknowledging lots of cost pressures and issues need to be addressed in 2026/27 with aim that in 2027/28 the precept increase can be in-line with inflation. Cllrs Mark Cant and Kelly Dickerson thanked the Finance Working Group for a job well done in producing such comprehensive information. In relation to the income and expenditure budget, Cllr Peter Hinde sought clarification on workings and purpose of several budget headings which the Clerk duly provided. Cllr Tony Stubbs requested some background information regarding the Parish Hall income and expenditure which the Clerk duly provided.

RESOLVED:

- i) **Sedgefield Town Council increases its precept for 2026/27 by 5% thereby requesting from DCC £537,121.70 (i.e. an increase of £25,301.20 plus the yield of £5,796.49 totalling £31,097.69). Note: This increase in precept will be shown on Council Tax billing information as a 5% increase on a Band D tax.**
- ii) **The proposed article in Appendix 1 be included in the next edition of the Sedgefield Extra and displayed on the Town Council's website.**
- iii) **The Income and Expenditure budget for 2026/27 in Appendix B be accepted.**
- iv) **The Clerk to submit all required 2026/27 precept request documentation to DCC.**

6.9 Review of Fees and Charges For 2026/27 Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Review of Fees and Charges For 2026/27 Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group. This report was carefully considered and debated.

RESOLVED:

- i) **The price of a pack of dog bags continue to be charged at 80p per pack as from 1st April 2026 with this slight subsidy being promoted to customers.**
- ii) **From 1st April 2026 hire fees for a half allotment plot be charged at £41 and for a full allotment plot at £51.**
- iii) **From 1st April 2026 the Town Council charges for photocopying are frozen and remain as those for 2025/26, i.e.**
 - a) **To regular groups – 35p per page black and white copying and 40p per page colour copying**
 - b) **To private individuals – 45p per page black and white copying and 50p per page colour copying.**

(Note: these charges are for single sided copies. Double sided copies would be charged at double the price)

- iv) To increase all Parish Hall hire fees by 25% in 2026/27 as Year 2 of the three year agreed schedule resolved in January 2025 and to increase all Parish Hall hire fees in-line with inflation in 2027/28 (Year 3) with reviews to take place in the Autumn of each financial year in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations and budget setting process to ensure the Town Council's aim of reducing the gap between Parish Hall income and expenditure when compared to the level of difference between both in 2024/25 (with comprehensive review in May 2027).
- v) From 1st April 2026, half-sized cupboards in the small meeting room of the Parish Hall (which range from 0.25-0.3m3) will be charged at £62.50 each and full-sized cupboards in the small meeting room in the Parish Hall (which are 0.5m3) will be charged at £125 each.
- vi) From 1st April 2026, Sedgefield Players to be charged £125 for the area on the stage where their flats are stored on a permanent basis.
- vii) From 1st April 2026, with regards to the four marked temporary storage areas (area upstairs in front of 3 phase box, area upstairs beside Christmas cupboard, backstage in the wing beside amps and backstage behind back curtain but excluding the flats and the stage extensions), Sedgefield Players to continue to have permission to utilize these areas for free in the two weeks leading up to a performance, including the performance dates and ending on the Sunday immediately after the last performance. For each of the four marked temporary areas that still contain any items outside of these agreed pre/post-performance weeks, there will be a charge of £31.25 per week levied, i.e. £125 if all four temporary storage areas were still in use after the post-show Sunday booking.
- viii) For 2026/27 for any items belonging to Sedgefield Players left in areas of the Parish Hall not already identified in recommendations vi) and vii) above, including the keyboard to the left of the stage, are to be charged at £62.50 per week.
- ix) PRS/PPL will not review their fees until February 2026 therefore the Town Council's current PRS/PPL charges will only increase from 1st April 2026 if PRS/PPL increase their charges, i.e. the Town Council will continue to ensure such charges are paid for by the user which incurs them and not subsidised by the Town Council.
- x) All cemetery fees increase by 2% with digging for interment of minor to reflect charge incurred by Town Council.
- xi) The Clerk to undertake necessary work to promote these planned

price increases.

xii) When the new area of Butterwick Road Cemetery is operational and grave plots can be pre-purchased, and the Town Council reviews the Butterwick Road Cemetery Rules and Regulations, consideration is given to reviewing the charges levied for someone who has had to go into a care home and move away from Sedgefield.

6.10 Medium Term Financial Plan Recommendation Report by Finance Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Medium Term Financial Plan Recommendation Report by the Finance Working Group which was accompanied by a plan covering the time period 2025/26 – 2027/28.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Medium Term Financial Plan with immediate effect.

7. Correspondence:

7.1. CDALC Elections For Executive Committee (email from CDALC dated 7th November 2025):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a CDALC Elections For Executive Committee email from CDALC dated 7th November 2025 which was seeking nominations for positions to their new Executive Committee structure. Cllr Jenny Haworth proposed that Cllr Allan Blakemore be nominated for one of the Larger Council positions, this proposal was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to inform CDALC of Cllr Allan Blakemore's nomination for one of the Larger Council positions.

7.2 Skylight Center Briefing (email and attachments from Mr Paul Taylor, Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy dated 20th November 2025):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all information from Mr Paul Taylor of Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy dated 20th November 2025 providing a briefing note on their Skylight Centre and its purpose, i.e. a purpose built extension of the school designed to enhance inclusive education for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to provide a blend of play-based, sensory, and structured learning spaces to support pupils' academic, social and emotional development.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

7.3 Lord Lieutenant Celebration Event and Royal Garden Party Nomination Sought (email from CDALC dated 9th December 2025):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Lord Lieutenant Celebration Event and Royal Garden Party Nomination Sought email from CDALC dated 9th December 2025. The Clerk reported that since the issuing of this email the proposed Lord Lieutenant Celebration event had been cancelled, however, nomination was sought for the Royal Garden Party ballot. Cllr Jenny Haworth proposed that Cllr Allan Blakemore be entered into the ballot on behalf of Sedgefield Town Council as our longest serving Cllr. This proposal was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to inform CDALC that Sedgefield Town Council's nomination for the Royal Garden Party ballot is Cllr Allan Blakemore.

7.4 Section 106 Application – Sedgefield Cricket Club – Replacement of Outdoor Fixed Training Net Facilities at Sedgefield Cricket Club (email and attachments from Mr Stephen Reed, DCC dated 15th December 2025):

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all an email and attachments from Mr Stephen Reed of DCC dated 15th December 2025 seeking the Town Council's comments on a Section 106 application submitted by Sedgefield Cricket Club for replacement of outdoor fixed training net facilities at their ground. Cllr Jenny Haworth gave the background to this application and highlighted from the documentation supplied the amendments to the original project and reasons for such as the replacement of the outdoor nets has now become a priority. It was confirmed that the allocation of Section 106 funding had previously been granted by DCC and the Cricket Club are now in a position to be able to claim partial funds from that headline allocation. Cllr Kelly Dickerson said she welcomed the ambition of the Club's project and for Sedgefield to benefit from such funding, but expressed her personal concern that the Cricket Club's finances did not appear to her to be robust enough to cover on-going maintenance costs for any new outdoor fixed training nets. Cllr Dickerson requested her concerns be noted in the minutes for future reference. Cllr Dave Jasper said the Cricket Club, which had been present in Sedgefield since 1840, has grown and continues to thrive going from strength to strength and questioned how anyone could feel this project was not sustainable? Cllr Peter Hinde proposed the Town Council write a letter to DCC to support the Cricket Club's Section 106 funding application. Cllr Mark Cant agreed and said the Club was a valuable asset to Sedgefield, he supported the process they had undertaken to seek Section 106 funding and said the Town Council should support this project.

RESOLVED:

The Town Council to submit to Mr Stephen Reed of DCC a letter of support for Sedgefield Cricket Club's Section 106 funding application for replacement of outdoor fixed training net facilities.

At this point in the agenda the Committee were to consider reports that were exempt from the public so it was **RESOLVED to close the meeting to allow the members of the public present to observe/participate as they wished in the Environment Committee and Community Development & Engagement Committee meeting before then re-opening the P&R Committee meeting to consider Reports Exempt From The Public.** The meeting closed at 8.23pm.

The Chair, Cllr Jenny Haworth, re-opened the meeting at 8.41pm. The Chair explained that due to the confidential nature of the following items these would be discussed under Exempt Information and requested the member of the public attendance leave the meeting at this point (Section 1 Sub-Section (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

8. Consideration of Reports Exempt from Public:

(Cllr Peter Hinde had left the meeting by this point)

8.1 Village Greens Update Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Village Greens Update Report which was duly considered and way forward agreed.

8.2 Bus Shelter Recommendation Report by Estates Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Bus Shelter Recommendation Report by the Estates Working Group. This was duly considered and way forward agreed.

8.3 Sedgefield Town Council's Annual Fireworks Display Update Report by Fireworks Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Sedgefield Town Council's Annual Fireworks Display Update Report by the Fireworks Working Group. This report was carefully considered and way forward agreed.

(Cllrs Julie Towler and Kelly Dickerson left the meeting at this point)

8.4 Community Events Working Group Recommendation by Fireworks Working Group:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Community Events Working

Group Recommendation by Fireworks Working Group which was considered and was forward agreed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.11pm.

DRAFT

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT



Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY**
ENVIRONMENT of the **Council** held following the **P&R**
in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on
Monday 12th January 2026

MINUTES

Present	Cllr. Mark Cant (Chairman) Cllr. John Finlayson (Vice Chairman) and Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Ciaran Butterworth, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, Jenny Haworth, Peter Hinde, Dave Jasper, Tony Stubbs, Julie Towler and Mavis Wayman
Officer	Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mel Carr and Myles Mantripp.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

3.1 Ponds – Ceddesfeld Hall Grounds and Wykes Close:

Since the production of these papers, the Clerk confirmed that information has been received from Ms Victoria Raitt, Senior Ecologist at DCC regarding this matter. The Clerk confirmed this will be considered at the next Estates Working Group meeting and future updates will be brought back to the Environment Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

3.2 Heritage Boards:

Funding is not available for this project via DCC. This matter to be reconsidered when the Town Council's 2026/27 budget setting process commences although there may be a possibility that funding could be sourced as part of the Active Travel Group's work to rebrand and republish all walking information within the Sedgefield Electoral Ward. The Finance Working Group to keep Cllrs updated on this matter.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive the information.

4. Public Participation:

The Chairman, Cllr Mark Cant, closed the meeting for the public to give their views.

County Cllr Ian Catchpole said that he endorsed Sedgefield Cricket Club's Section 106 application, considered at the previous Committee meeting, but had voiced his concerns regarding funding, accounts and on-going maintenance costs for the project.

The Chairman thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

None.

6. Correspondence:

6.1. Sedgefield In Bloom (minutes of meeting held 12th November 2025):

The Clerk circulated to all copies of the minutes of the Sedgefield In Bloom group meeting held on 12th November 2025. Thanks had been conveyed to the Bloom group for continuing to share such information.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.



SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT



Minutes of the proceedings of the **JANUARY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the **Council** held following the **Environment Committee** in the **Parish Hall**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 12th January 2026**

MINUTES

Present **Cllr. Mavis Wayman (Chairman) and**
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Ciaran Butterworth, Mark Cant, Helen Cunningham, Kelly Dickerson, John Finlayson, Jenny Haworth, Dave Jasper, Tony Stubbs and Julie Towler.

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies:

Cllrs Mel Carr, Peter Hinde and Myles Mantripp.

2. Declaration of interest:

None.

3. Matters of Information:

None.

4. Public Participation:

The Chair, Cllr Mavis Wayman, closed the meeting for the public to give their views. No members of the public present wished to speak. The Chair re-opened the meeting.

5. Reports:

5.1 York Coach Trip Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a York Coach Trip report which reviewed the trip that had taken place on Thursday 20th November 2025. This trip had resulted in a small deficit. Cllrs Mavis Wayman and Dave Jasper were thanked for acting at the Town Council's representatives on this trip.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) To receive this information.
- ii) From 2026 onwards the winter coach trip, like those of the spring and summer trips, will be for one coach only.

5.2 Snow Party 2025 Report by Town Clerk:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a Snow Party Update Report which gave the background to a very successful 2025 Snow Party event held on Saturday 29th November 2025. The report reminded all of the timings and array of activities as part of this community event, the key facts, feedback received following the event (from those working the event as well as members of the public who attended), the event's income and expenditure breakdown (excluding festive lighting costs). A series of recommendations were contained within this report with the intention of enhancing the 2026 Snow Party event to fill the void that will be left as there will not be a Christmas Tree Festival this year.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) The 2026 Snow Party to take place on Saturday 28th November 2026 (Note: as there will not be a Christmas Tree Festival then no craft activities will be planned in primary schools prior to the day).
- ii) From 2026 onwards the Santa's grotto should run from the reduced time of 12.30pm to 3.10pm (final appointment finishing 3.12pm). This should make it easier for those people who work in the grotto and also allow them to finish in such a way that there is time to get themselves ready for going over to the church.
- iii) Chi Taekwondo to be invited to attend the 2026 Snow Party along with face painter and bouncy castle provider to deliver activities in the Parish Hall.
- iv) An approach be made to the SCA to see if the traditional craft fayre in Ceddesfeld Hall could be extended into a bigger event to attract more visitors and fill the void left with no Christmas Tree Festival (if not, then an approach could be made to St Edmund's Church to see if they would like to participate in some way above and beyond the carol service).
- v) Discussions to take place to look at additional festive lighting features for the central village green area and for this to be delegated to the Estates Working Group for investigation with recommendation coming back to the P&R Committee once prepared.
- vi) Alternative all-weather snowmen/similar illuminated item to be purchased so as to ensure a parade of some sort can be held in future years at the Turning Circle regardless of the weather.
- vii) The Town Council continue to offer local groups the chance to have a bake sale in the Parish Hall and provide refreshments at Ceddesfeld Hall as part of

this event to raise funds for their own causes.

viii) Costings be sought and discussions to be held with SCA regarding the possibility of hiring a photographer with winter/festive backdrop so children/family photos can be professionally taken/sold.

5.3 Sedgefield Extra 2026 Dates Report by Projects & Media Co-ordinator:

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated to all a Sedgefield Extra 2026 Dates Report by the Projects & Media Co-ordinator. This confirmed that from 2026 editions of the Sedgefield Extra would revert to their traditional schedule of February, June, September and November.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

6. Correspondence:

6.1. Many Thanks For Your Tree Festival Financial Support (email and letter from Mr and Mrs Rowsby, 2025 Christmas Tree Festival dated 7th January 2026):

The Clerk circulated to all an email and attached letter from Mr and Mrs Rowsby, on behalf of the 2025 St Edmund's Christmas Tree Festival, thanking the Town Council for their support at their recent event. The letter detailed the money raised and donation made to the nominated charity, St Cuthbert's Hospice Durham.

RECOMMENDED:

To receive this information.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.40pm.