

**The Monthly Meeting of Hawthorn Parish Council was held at 7p.m. on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in the Hawthorn Community Centre.**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Cllr Sheila Irving (Chair)

Cllrs George Vest (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs Alan Askew, Barry Curran, Robert Adcock- Forster, Sheila Wilson, Carolyn Winter

Lesley Swinbank (Parish Clerk)

**Members of the Public : None**

**1 Notice of Meeting**

The Chairman, Cllr Sheila Irving welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that Public Notice of the Meeting has been given in accordance with Sch 12 paragraph 10(2) of the LGA 1972

**2 Apologies**

None

**3 Declarations of Interest**

None

**4 Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**To approve the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**5 Matters of Information**

**5.1 Cars parking on footpath outside of the Stapylton Arms**

**RESOLVED**

**To bring up at the PACT meeting**

**5.2 The 'Give Way' and 'Slow' Road signs need refreshing at the junction at the Stapylton Arms.**

DCC and Police are aware.

**RESOLVED**

**To bring up at the PACT meeting**

**6 Reports**

**6.1 DCC**

No report

**6.2 Police**

No report

**6.3 Community Centre**

Cllr. Sheila Wilson gave the report which included details of the AGM and also the forthcoming coffee morning when the PCSO will be attending.

In addition, Cllr Sheila Wilson informed members that the Community Centre have now been in touch with Mr. Stephen Rowe from the East Durham Trust to explore his offer of working with a group in Hawthorn to provide information and advice – which he outlined when he attended the Council meeting in January.

**RESOLVED**

**To receive the information.**

**6.4 Annual Report 2026**

This had been circulated to all.

**RESOLVED**

**To approve**

**6.5 Any other reports**

Members raised a number of open space issues including: -  
Increased dog poo on Western Park and also on Watery Lane.

**RESOLVED**

- a. **To include in the next Round Up**
- b. **To replace the signs using the stencils / paint**

**7 Public Participation**

None

**8 Correspondence / e mails**

**8.1 Information from CDALC**

Information from CDALC re their meetings/ training had been circulated.

**RESOLVED**

**To receive the information**

**8.2 Western Park: Unadopted land.**

An e mail has been received from a resident on Western Park regarding shrubbery between their house and the play area. There has been some dispute as to the ownership /maintenance of this area although it now appears from documents provided by the Western Park Management company that the land is owned by DCC.

The resident seeks support from the Parish Council in. requesting DCC now take over and fulfill their responsibilities.

The Clerk confirmed she had responded to the resident and suggested how they now contact DCC.

**RESOLVED**

To confirm the parish council's support and write to DCC with this once photos etc have been forwarded from the resident on the area in question.

**8.3 West Lane Issues**

Further e mail correspondence has been received from a resident on West Lane regarding issues raised previously re parking / speeding etc.

RESOLVED

As the Clerk was on holiday at the time – the Chairman, Cllr Sheila Irving had responded.

**RESOLVED**

- a. To receive the information
- b. To bring this up at the PACT meeting.

**9 Financial:**

**9.1 To endorse the monies paid by the Clerk since the last meeting / Bank reconciliation.**

Direct	21/01/2026	Ian Smith	Work Play area project	£860.00
Direct	25/01/2026	Amazon	paper, files toner	£50.70
Direct	25/01/2026	C Winter	Plants	£53.00

Business	£3,241.64	
Current	£723.03	
Total	£3,964.67	
<b>Receipts To date</b>	<b>£18,610.98</b>	
<b>Payments to date</b>	<b>£10,907.38</b>	
<b>Unpresented</b>	<b>£5,548.65</b>	
<b>Closing balances</b>		<b>£17,216.92</b>
Business	£10,144.62	
Current	£7,072.30	
Total	£17,216.92	
Less u/p to date	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£17,216.92</b>

**9.2 Donation request Durham Hospital**

**RESOLVED**

**Not to give a donation at this time.**

**10 Training: To consider all current training events**

All training events had been circulated.

**RESOLVED**

**To receive the information**

## **11 Planning**

### **11.1 Current Planning applications**

No substantial applications have been received.

### **11.2 Update on solar applications.**

The Chairman, Cllr Sheila Irving gave a brief progress report.

DCC have not made any decisions on the current applications to date.

#### **RESOLVED**

**To receive the information**

## **12 Boundary Change**

The Clerk had circulated a comprehensive report.

The addition of the Garden Village into Hawthorn Parish will result in an overwhelming increase in the number of 'Hawthorn' residents and who will subsequently have democratic rights in electing Hawthorn Parish Council members.

Parish boundaries can be altered through a Community Governance Review (CGR) carried out by the principal authority. Parish councils *cannot* change their own boundaries, but they *can formally request* a review.

Steps Hawthorn Parish Council Can Take:- HPC would need to pass a clear resolution asking DCC to conduct a Community Governance Review.

The resolution usually states:

- Why the boundary change is needed
- What area should be removed or reallocated
- What evidence supports the request.

In addition, concerns have been raised over reports that Seaham Town Council have now been in touch with DCC re Seaham extending their Parish boundary to include the garden Village, but without any prior consultation with Hawthorn.

#### **RESOLVED**

**To contact DCC and request information on the above and how to take this forward.**

## **13 Date of the next meeting:**

### **13.1 Annual Parish Meeting Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

### **13.2 March Monthly Meeting following the Annual Parish Meeting. The Clerk gave copies of the Annual Report ready for this meeting.**

## **14 Exclusion of press and public**

#### **RESOLVED**

**To resolve to exclude members of the public and press due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

**14.1 Vacancy for new clerk: Update**

The Clerk updated members on the situation re applications for a new Parish Clerk. In addition, the Chairman and Vice Chairman gave details of who had contacted them directly.

The closing date is Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February and interviews to be held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

**RESOLVED**

**To receive the information.**

**14.2 Community Recognition Award**

Details of all nominated had been circulated.

**RESOLVED**

- a. **To present Lesa Blenkinsopp with the Award – the Clerk to inform Mrs. Blenkinsopp and those who nominated her and invite all to come along to the presentation on March 16<sup>th</sup>.**
- b. **A £25 voucher for the Stapylton Arms to be purchased and also presented.**

**14.3 Open Spaces: To consider quotation for open spaces work**

One quotation has been received for the above.

**RESOLVED**

**To seek a further 2 tenders – the Chairman to forward suggested contractors to the Clerk.**

**15 Final words**

The Chairman, Cllr Sheila Irving, on behalf of the Parish Council, presented the Clerk Lesley Swinbank (Parish Clerk) with a bouquet and thanked her for her time, work and commitment over the last 12 years.

The Clerk thanked members and said she had really enjoyed the last 12 years working with everyone. She said it feels like the end of an era for her after being a clerk for 46 years – starting back in Sedgefield in 1980 and followed by Hawthorn in 2014.

Mrs. Swinbank wished the council every success going forward.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9 pm.