



Sacriston Parish Council
The Fulforth Centre
Front Street
Sacriston
Durham
DH7 6JT

clerk@sacristonparishcouncil.gov.uk

To All Members of the Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the Parish Council Meeting of Sacriston Parish Council at The Fulforth Centre on Monday, 7th September 2026, at 6.30 pm for the purpose of transacting the following business:

AGENDA

- 51. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – to consider the apologies.
- 52. Declarations of Interest** -To receive and record any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in relation to items on the agenda.
- 53. Approval of Minutes** - To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2026 (attached)
- 54. Public Participation** - Questions and comments from members of the public (maximum 5 minutes per item/per individual).
- 55. Police Matters**
- 56. Planning Applications** - to receive and consider any response to applications received.
- 57. Growing Sacriston Together in Bloom**
- 58. Parish Assets**
 - a. Bus Shelters
 - b. Village Clock
 - c. Parish Building
 - d. War Memorial
 - e. Pit Wheel
- 59. County Councillors' Reports** – to receive the information.
- 60. Reports from Group Representatives**
 - a. **Fulforth Centre** – To receive the verbal report provided.
 - b. **Allotment Association** –to note the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2026 (attached) and consider the update.
 - c. **Finance** – to note the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2026 (attached) and consider the update.
- 61. Finance Report**
 - a. To review and approve payment of invoices received (attached).
 - b. To note the bank statement (attached).
- 62. Christmas Lights** – to consider the report (attached).
- 63. Live Well Northeast Holiday Club** – to note the information (attached)
- 64. Seaside Travel** – to consider the information (attached).

65. Letters to Heaven Post box request – to consider the request (attached).

66. Code of Conduct Policy – to consider the policy (attached).

67. Local Networks funding – to consider the information (attached).

68. Fyndoune School – to consider the information from members.

69. Donation

- a. Baby and Toddler Group** – requesting funds for equipment and various activities

70. CiLCA Qualification and the General Power of Competence – to consider the report (attached).

71. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Monday, 5th October 2026 at 6:30 PM

Signed: Mrs C Dixon (Clerk to the Council)



SACRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 1st July 2026 at 6.30 pm
In The Fulforth Centre**

Present: Cllr H. Dixon (Chair), Cllr D. Robson, Cllr R. Mickle, Cllr A. Wray, Cllr R. Sharp, Cllr E. Wilson, Cllr K. Welsh, Cllr A. Turner, Cllr A. Przybysz

Item No:

37. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs E. Waldock, E. Hopkins, J. Robson and Mrs C. Dixon (Clerk)

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the apologies received.

Chair welcomed Alan Turner as our new councillor and gave him the opportunity to speak. Councillor Turner thanked the Parish and the people who voted for him in the election however, he raised concerns with regards to the campaign leaflet by the Liberal Democrats.

During his canvassing he had the opportunity to listen to resident's points raised, these being: - Three residents were unhappy with the Parish having to pay for the election and, why was someone who they believed to be outside of the Parish boundary able to stand for election.

Cllr Mickle also commented on the Lib. Dem. letter with regards to road safety as he felt the Parish have led on this problematic area which the Lib. Dem's. were now trying to take credit for.

It was at this point that Cllr Przybysz joined the meeting failing to give his apologies for lateness.

As the above points were directed at the Lib.Dem. campaign leaflet put out by Cllr. Przybysz the Chair allowed questioning on the above points raised.

Cllr. Mickle asked him to explain his road safety comments however, Cllr. Przybysz refused to comment.

Cllr. Robson explained that the Parish Council has a range of different political party members however, the Chair had previously informed him that he would not allow politics to rule the decisions of the Parish. Cllr. Przybysz felt he had the right to comments raised on his leaflet.

The Chair then challenged Cllr. Przybysz over his leaflet however, Cllr. Przybysz stated he did not wish to discuss questions raised but he had the right to put what he wanted on his leaflet. The Chair reminded him once again that he would not allow any political party to sway any decisions made from the Parish.

The Chair reminded him of meeting etiquette and that it would have been appropriate for him to apologise for his late attendance.

38. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: No declarations were received.

39. Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes from the Meeting held on 3rd June 2026 were accepted and signed as a true record.

40. Public Participation - (Questions & Comments from the public in attendance – max 5 mins per item/individual)

There were no members of the public in attendance.

41. Police Matters

No Police presence or report received. Cllr. Turner expressed disappointment at lack of Police presence at meetings. Several residents have concerns about the lack of Police seen within the village. The Chair had been made aware that there had been a PACT meeting which had not been advertised. The Chair reported cars illegally parked on grassed area on Plawsworth Road restricting views of cars leaving Springside.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the comments.

42. Planning Applications

DM/26/01381/FPA -North East Learning Trust, Sacriston Academy, Witton Road, Sacriston, Durham - Removal of existing pitched roof with replacement flat roof and associated works.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there were no comments regarding the application.

43. Growing Sacriston Together in Bloom

The Chair and Cllr. Robson have acquired plants for the raised planters to further enhance the village in bloom. He was concerned that four of the nine hanging baskets had been stolen from the three cruiks on Durham Road. The Police were informed of this.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the information.

44. Parish Assets

a. Bus Shelters

Cllr. Turner raised the issue with the seat at the bus stop at Daisy Hill which had been damaged and has raised this issue with the County Councillors.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the information.

b. Village Clock

RESOLVED: Nothing to report.

Parish Building

RESOLVED: Nothing to report.

c. War Memorial

RESOLVED: Nothing to report.

d. Pit Wheel

RESOLVED: Nothing to report.

45. County Councillor Report

No report received and neither County Councillors in attendance at the meeting. Cllr. Wilson asked about the Community Fund available to Parish Wards via the County Councillors which is believed to be approximately £35,000 and, if the Parish could secure some of this funding to continue with project work within the Parish.

A discussion also took place with regards to the Parish rooms and whether it was feasible to have the electricity supply re-instated to allow our meetings to be conducted there.

RESOLVED: To **DELEGATE** Cllr Wilson to investigate whether this was feasible and to report back to the Council.

46. Reports from Group Representatives

a. Fulforth Centre – The Fulforth Centre meeting including the AGM is planned for Tuesday the 6th of July.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the information provided by Cllr Dixon.

b. Sacriston Allotment Association Meeting

Cllr. Mickle informed the meeting that a disclaimer was now in place for any person wishing to use our equipment. There are currently two vacant plots at Cross Lanes, none at Daisy Hill. There has also been a complaint raised with regards to dog fouling on the site.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the report and the information provided by Cllr Mickle and to **APPROVE** the clerk to erect a sign regarding dog fouling.

47. Finance Report

a. To review and approve payment of invoices received.

RESOLVED: to **APPROVE** payment of the invoices.

b. To receive the bank statement.

RESOLVED: To **RECEIVE** the information.

48. Christmas Lights

The meeting considered the attached update from the clerk

RESOLVED: to **DELEGATE** the Chair to follow this up with LITE however, before any lights can be installed, we are required to have the lamp posts stress tested for compliance. Cllr. Turner asked if the cost of the stress testing could be met by the County Councillors.

49. Miners Gala

The meeting considered the attached update from the clerk.

RESOLVED: It was **APPROVED** to pay £2,500 for the band with one-members abstention. Cllrs. Wilson and Robson explained that this was part of our villages culture and heritage. The Chair then explained the agenda for the Miners Gala and the role of

the Marshall. All agreed that the route to be taken into Durham would be from the waterside (Framwellgate).

50. Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 2nd September 2026, at 6.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 19.24pm.

Agreed and signed by Chair of Sacriston Parish Council

Date

Planning Applications were forwarded to members via email.

Week ending 10th July 2026

DM/26/01714/OUT Land To The South Of Edgewood Court, Sacriston, DH7 6XH

Outline application for 2 no. dwelling houses with associated gardens & parking with all matters reserved except access, layout and scale

Week ending 23rd July 2026

DM/26/01796/FPA - 3 Melbourne Terrace, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6BQ

Demolition of existing garage and erection of replacement garage to rear



SACRISTON PARISH ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2026 at 6.30 pm The Fulforth Centre

Present: Cllr E Waldock (Chair), Cllr H. Dixon, Cllr G Ludlow, Cllr D Robson, Cllr A Page, Cllr B Mickle (Allotment Rep for Cross Lane), Cllr R Sharp (Allotment Rep for Daisy Hill) and Mrs C. Dixon (Clerk)

Item No:

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** - The Chair opened the meeting at 6.30 pm and welcomed everyone.
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there were no apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there were no declarations of interest.
- 3. Public Participation**
RESOLVED: There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 as a true and accurate record, and for the Chair to sign them accordingly.
- 5. Gates/Boundary Fencing**
Cllr Page confirmed that there had been a complaint regarding the fence near to Parkside.
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** Cllr Mickle and Cllr Dixon to inspect the fence.
- 6. Treasurer's Report**
RESOLVED: Bank Account Balance: £4691.59
Cash in Hand: £110.84
Gate Key Deposit Allocation: £720.00
Total Available Funds: £3971.59
(Note: Gate Key Deposit is allocated and not available for general use)
- 7. Tenancy Agreements**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the update provided by the clerk.
- 8. Annual Rent**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the update.
- 9. Water Rates**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the update.

10. Matters Arising

Inspections required carrying out.

RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the dates of inspections as being 13th June 2026. Daisy Hill Inspections at 9.30am and Cross Lane at 10.30am.

11. Vacant Allotments

Vacant Plots Cross Lane: P7, P17, P18

Daisy Hill: DH11

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the vacant plots.

12. Waiting Lists

Currently, there are 2 applicants on the waiting list for Cross Lane.

There are 0 applicants on the list for Daisy Hill.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the number of applicants on the waiting list.

13. Orchard

RESOLVED: Cllr Sharp has moved the asbestos away from the fence of DH5. To **APPROVE** the clerk to obtain quotations for its removal.

14. Representative Reports

Cross Lane – Tap needs fitting in row C. D8 has been provided with a verbal warning from Cllr Mickle. The bottom gate lock has now been changed as rubbish was being tipped. Only Cllr Mickle and Cllr Dixon have a key.

Daisy Hill – Cllr Sharp provided a gate key to DH12. DH11 has been covered with tarpaulin due to it being vacant.

New Hill – The clerk is unaware of Chair of New Hills details.

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the information.

15. Application for Buildings

RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there was nothing to report.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the allotment meeting to be held on Monday 7th September at 6.30 pm

Meeting Closed at 18.59 pm

Agreed and signed by Chair of Allotment Association.....

Date



SACRISTON PARISH COUNCIL
Finance Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2026 at 7.00 pm
The Fulforth Centre

Present: Cllr A Przybysz (Chair), Cllr H. Dixon, Cllr G Ludlow, Cllr A. Page, Cllr D. Robson, Cllr E Waldock, Cllr B Mickle, Cllr R Sharp, and Mrs C. Dixon (Clerk)

Item No:

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** - The Chair opened the meeting at 7 pm and welcomed everyone.
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there were no apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** there were no declarations of interest.
- 3. Public Participation**
RESOLVED: There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 as a true and accurate record, and for the Chair to sign them accordingly.
- 5. Finance Report**
The clerk confirmed the current bank account balance as £98,106.55.
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the bank account balance.
- 6. Invoices**
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the invoices.
- 7. Budget 2025/2026**
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the budget.
- 8. Budget 2026/2027**
RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the budget with no amendments.
- 9. Internal Auditors Report**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the internal auditors report. There were no comments from members.
- 10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026**
RESOLVED: To **NOTE** the information.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: To **APPROVE** the meeting to be held on Monday, 7th September 2026 at 7 pm

Meeting closed at 19.26 pm.

Agreed and signed by Chair of HR and Finance

Date

Agenda Item 61a

Sep-26							
Name	Description	CREDIT	NET	VAT	TOTAL	Paid	Invoice
Harry Robson	Grass Cutting				£270.00	15/07/2026	✓
Durham Miners Gala	Brochure - Advert				£200.00	30/07/2026	✓
Salary	Jul-26				£1,055.78	26/07/2026	✓
Sacriston Community Association	Finance Officer				£1,456.00	30/07/2026	✓
The National Allotment Society	Membership Renewal		£70.00	£14.00	£84.00	30/07/2026	✓
Stage Truck NE	Deposit for stage for Christmas Extravaganza				£500.00	30/07/2026	✓
Scribe	Allotment Database		£18.00	£3.60	£21.60	01/07/2026	✓
Durham Miners Association	Payment for Hade Edge Band for miners gala				£2,500.00	20/07/2026	✓
HP Ink	Printer Ink - July		11.24	2.25	£13.49	23/07/2026	✓
Post Office	1 x book of first class stamps				£14.40	15/07/2026	✓
Valda Energy Costs	Electricity Costs for Festive lights		£15.50	£0.78	£16.28	09/07/2026	✓
Shincliffe Nursery	Plants				£104.60	01/07/2026	✓
Shincliffe Nursery	Plants				£131.00	10/07/2026	✓
HP Ink	Printer Ink - June		£22.49	£4.50	£26.99	23/06/2026	✓
Turners Funfair	Rides for Christmas Extravaganza				£3,200.00		✓
Scribe - August	Allotment Database		£18.00	£3.60	£21.60	03/08/2026	✓
Anglian Water	Cross Lane site				£213.00	03/08/2026	✓
Kevin Greathead	Repair leaking taps and pipes at Cross Lane Allotments			£436.00			✓
Durham County Council	Election Costs 25/06/2026			£8,515.32			✓
HP Ink	Printer Ink - August		£11.24	£2.25	£13.49		✓
Salary	Aug-26				£1,055.78	26/08/2026	✓
Scribe	Sep-26		£18.00	£3.60	£21.60		✓
James Fletcher Marquee	Marquee for Christmas Extravaganza		709.14	£141.83	850.97		✓

Clerk's Report – Festive Lighting 2026

1. Background

The Clerk has contacted three festive lighting suppliers to obtain quotations for the installation of the Parish Council's existing festive lighting scheme.

Of the three contractors contacted:

- Two contractors have provided quotations.
- One contractor has advised that they are unable to provide a quotation for the installation of the existing festive lighting.

The quotations received are set out below for Members' consideration.

2. Quote A

Quote A includes the following festive lighting and installation works:

Item	Quantity
1.5m "Aura" column motifs	9
1.5m "Dancing Star" column motifs	9
Multi-colour column braids	18
Column brackets	36
MaxiLED small globe column wraps	3
20m lengths of small globe multi-colour lights for Christmas tree	8

Total cost for the above works: £4,130 + VAT

Quote A also offers attendance at a switch-on event, including two operatives and a cherry picker, at an additional cost of: **£800 + VAT**

The contractor has also advised that storage, testing and maintenance of the festive lights can be discussed and a further quotation provided if required.

3. Quote B

Quote B provides the following costs:

Item	Cost
9 x 1.5m "Aura" column motifs	£900
9 x 1.5m "Dancing Star" column motifs	£900
18 x Multi-colour column braids	£600
36 x Column brackets	£0
3 x MaxiLED small globe column wraps	Customer owned
8 x 20m small globe multi-colour Christmas tree lights	Customer owned

Product cost: £2,400 + VAT

Installation/removal: £5,000 + VAT

Storage and maintenance: £0

Total cost for 2026: £7,400 + VAT

4. Structural Testing

Before the festive lights can be installed, the relevant columns will need to undergo structural/stress testing.

The clerk has spoken with Durham County Council and has been advised that, in order to obtain the necessary permission/licence, the Council will also need to complete and return the relevant Indemnity Form and Application Form, together with the structural testing certificate.

Durham County Council has advised that the previous supplier may be able to undertake the structural testing.

The Clerk has contacted a company, who has provided a quotation of: **£2,100 + VAT**

The quotation is based on testing 18 columns and takes into account the following festive decoration specification:

- 9 x 1.5m “Aura” column displays – 6.6kg each, 21W
- 9 x 1.5m “Dancing Star” column displays – 5.5kg each, 20W
- 18 x MiniLED braids – 1kg each, 18W each
-

The quotation states that the load calculations will allow for any existing loadings and that the comments and recommendations contained within the structural testing report should be reviewed before installation takes place.

A further company has been contacted, and the clerk is awaiting the quote.

5. Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the quotations received and:

1. Note that structural/stress testing of the 18 columns is required before the festive lighting can be installed.
2. Note the quotation of £2,100 + VAT for the required structural testing and consider the Quote A and B.
3. Consider the quotations from Quote A and Quote B and determine which contractor, if any, the Council wishes to appoint.

4. Authorise the Clerk to progress the necessary structural testing, application and indemnity documentation and obtain the required permission/licence before installation.
5. Authorise the Clerk to liaise with the appointed contractor and arrange installation once all necessary requirements have been satisfied.

Live Well North East Holiday Club.

We just wanted to send you a mini report following our funding we received from yourselves, The Parish Council. **A huge thank you from us.**

Our holiday club ran for 4 weeks over the Summer holidays from The Fulforth centre and your grant has helped us pay for the venue hire costs.

We have had 30 children attend every morning whilst the 'Fun and food' sessions have been running and over 20 on an afternoon.

Over the four weeks we have supported 600 children and families.

We have had great fun using the Fulforth outdoor area as well as the indoor space. Children have enjoyed a visit from Animal encounters, Creative Allsorts dance workshops, Bee Enchanted circus skills workshop and Chartwells cooking workshops.

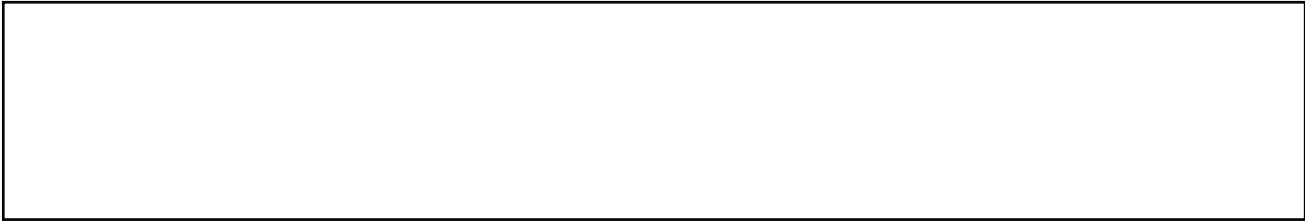
This has benefitted Sacriston as we have been able to offer more free or subsidised places, reaching more families in our community and making holiday clubs affordable and accessible for all children and families. These activities have been engaging and enriching and for some children new experiences.

The feedback from children and parents has been fantastic.

One child said "this is the best day ever" when meeting all the animals.

A parent said, "I am so happy that my child has found a safe place where they are included and have so much fun."

Another child noted that staff are so good with children who are looked after and with a foster carer.



Hi, I hope you're well.

I wanted to introduce myself as the new Senior Community & Events Manager at Seaside Travel.

Seaside Travel is an independent, award-winning travel agency that has been helping customers create memorable holidays for more than 23 years. We're proud of our history and are keen to strengthen our connections within the local community. We have a branch in Sacriston who are very keen to get involved.

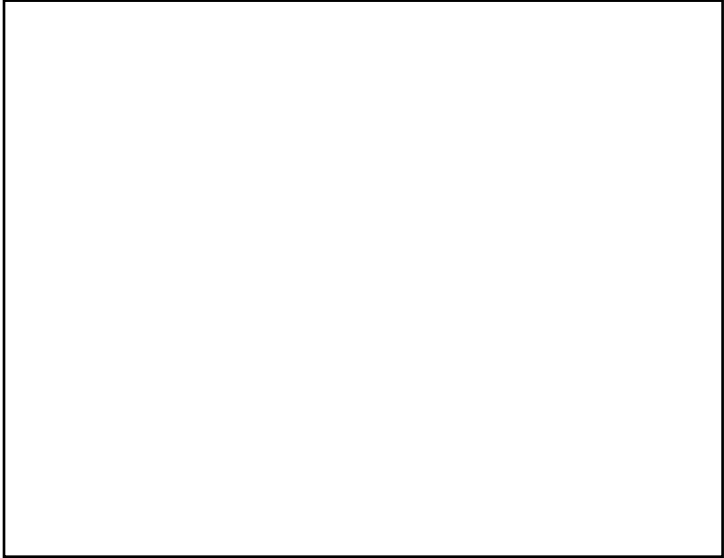
We're currently exploring opportunities to become more involved, whether through supporting local initiatives, attending events or collaborating with other organisations.

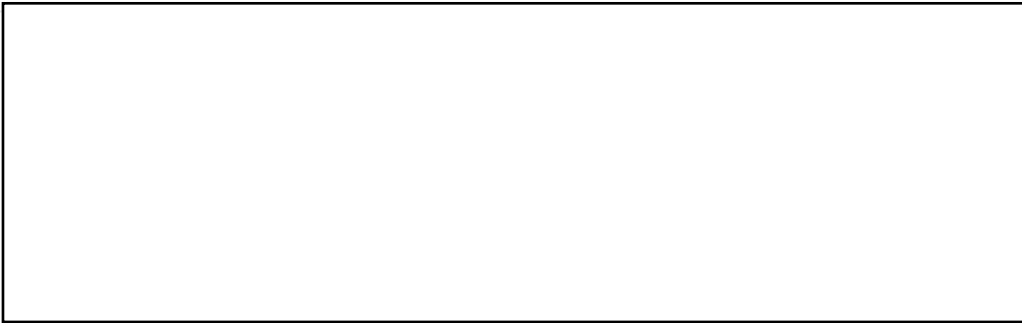
If you have a calendar of upcoming events that you wouldn't mind sharing with us, I'd be very grateful. We'd love to learn more about what's happening locally and where we may be able to participate or offer our support.

Please feel free to get in touch, I'd love to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Dominic Graydon
Senior Community & Events Manager





To the Members of Sacriston Parish Council,

Over the past few years, especially since Covid, our village has experienced a number of losses, many of them sudden, and many of them among Sacriston's finest and most loved residents.

These deaths have had a profound and lasting effect on our community.

In Sacriston, nobody is ever truly a stranger: every person we lose is someone's relative, someone's neighbour, someone we grew up alongside, or someone we went to school with. Each loss touches every street, every family, and every generation.

As a village with deep roots and strong bonds, we have always supported one another through difficult times. But the scale and nature of recent bereavements have created a real need for gentle, meaningful ways for people to express grief, remembrance, and love. Many residents, including younger people, have spoken about wanting somewhere quiet and personal to "talk" to those they've lost, especially when the loss has been sudden or when they feel they never had the chance to say goodbye.

Recently, I was contacted by _____ the life partner of (_____ , who passed away suddenly. _____ has asked for help in bringing a Letters to Heaven post box to Sacriston Cemetery. She is already in contact with Durham County Council to request permission for the box to be placed within the cemetery grounds, and she has asked me to approach the Parish Council to request that the council consider using the parish precept to purchase the box.

With the purchase of the letter box there needs to be an agreement that the Parish Council would manage the safe, respectful, and confidential composting of the letters, following the same model used successfully by other councils across the UK.

In these schemes, letters are never opened or read; they are shredded and composted in a dignified, environmentally friendly way, returning them to the earth within the cemetery or other quiet green spaces.

Letters to Heaven boxes have already been introduced by several parish and town councils — including St Stephen-in-Brannel Parish Council, Hockliffe Parish Council, Markfield Parish Council, and Great Aycliffe Town Council — and have become cherished features of their cemeteries. They offer comfort, connection, and a safe outlet for grief, and they have been welcomed by residents of all ages.

Given the losses Sacriston has endured, and the strength of feeling within our community, a Letters to Heaven box would be a compassionate and thoughtful addition to our cemetery. It would give residents a private space to express what is on their

hearts, to feel connected to those they miss, and to honour the people who have shaped our village.

I hope the Parish Council will consider support this could bring to Sacriston.

request and recognise the comfort and

Yours sincerely,



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Sacriston Parish Council has adopted the following code, which came into effect from 01st October 2021 and will be reviewed every four years, or sooner, if necessary. The Code sets out the conduct that is expected of elected and co-opted Councillors of the Council when they are acting in that capacity.
2. This means the code applies whenever you:
 - (a) conduct the business of the Council (including the business of your office as an elected councillor or co-opted councillor); or
 - (b) act, claim to act or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Council.
3. 'Co-opted councillor' means any person who is a member of any committee or subcommittee of the Council with a right to vote but is not one of its elected councillors.

Part 1 – General Conduct

4. Councillors and co-opted Councillors of Sacriston Parish Council are expected to undertake their duties as follows:
 - 4.1 Represent the community and work constructively with employees and partner organisations to ensure the area is a safer place to live, work and visit.
 - 4.2 Behave in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve the best value for residents and maintain public confidence in the Council:
 - (a) **Selflessness:** act solely in terms of the public interest and not act in such a way as to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or friends;
 - (b) **Integrity:** not placing themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties;

- (c) **Objectivity:** make choices on merit, in carrying out public business, including when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits;
- (d) **Accountability:** be accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office;
- (e) **Openness:** be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take, and give reasons for decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest or the law clearly demands;
- (f) **Honesty:** declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- (g) **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

4.3 Act in accordance with the principles in paragraph 4.2 and, in particular:

- (a) Champion the needs of residents - the whole community and all constituents, including those who did not vote for them - and put the public interest first;
- (b) Deal with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially;
- (c) Not allow other pressures, including the financial interests of themselves or others connected to them, to deter them from pursuing the interests of the Council or the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.
- (d) Exercise independent judgement and not compromise their position by placing themselves under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way they perform their duties as a Councillor / Co-opted Councillor of the Council;
- (e) Listen to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, take all relevant information into consideration, remain objective and make decisions on merit;
- (f) Be accountable for decisions and co-operate when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents;
- (g) Contribute to making the Councils decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to ensure residents understand the reasoning behind those decisions and are informed when holding the Council to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it;

- (h) Behave in accordance with all legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within the Council's policies, protocols and procedures, including the use of the Council's resources;
- (i) Value colleagues and staff and engage with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect that is essential to good local government;
- (j) Always treat people with respect, including the organisations and public they engage with and work alongside;

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. Members should express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. Members must not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

Members should treat members of the public politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in Members. Members equally have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidating or threatening, Members may stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow Members, where appropriate action could then be taken under the Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's relevant protocols;

- (k) Provide leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this Authority;
- (l) Not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone or information acquired, which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, without express authority and/or unless the law requires it.
- (m) Not to bully or harass any person (including specifically any council employee) and you must not intimidate or improperly influence, or attempt to intimidate or improperly influence, any person who is involved in any complaint about any alleged breach of the code of conduct.

Bullying may be characterised as: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; or an abuse or misuse of power in a way that intends to undermine, humiliate, criticise unfairly or injure someone.

Harassment may be characterised as unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual.

Bullying and/or harassment may take many forms, it could include but is not limited to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, sex and/or sexual orientation.

- (n) Not to bring the role of a Councillor or the local authority into disrepute and be aware that the actions and behaviour of a Councillor are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public;
 - (o) To hold the local authority and fellow Councillors to account and constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the Council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.
- 4.4 It is expected that Councillors will at all times comply requests as part of Code of Conduct investigations and any arising outcomes. Councillors will not submit malicious or trivial complaints.
- 4.5 Where it is alleged that a Councillor has failed to act in accordance with the Code, a complaint will be presented to the Monitoring Officer for consideration in accordance with the Local Assessment Procedure and, where necessary, the Local Determination Procedure.

Part 2 - Registration of interests

5. Register of Interests

- 5.1 Councillors must:
- (a) register and, where appropriate, disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests that they are obliged to declare under the Localism Act and associated regulations; and
 - (b) register any body of which they are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council; and
 - (c) register details of their membership of any organisation or body whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation or body. This could arise by reason of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation or body. Such organisations or bodies may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect; and

- (d) register details of my membership of any trade union within the meaning of Section 1 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

5.2 Registration of interests shall be completed by provision of details upon a signed prescribed form which is submitted to the Monitoring Officer at Durham County Council. Members must ensure they keep the register updated and acknowledge that its contents will be published on the Authority's website and will be open to the public to inspect.

6. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Entered on the Register

If Councillors are present at a meeting of the Parish Council and:

- (a) they are aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; and
- (b) the interest is entered in the Council's minutes they may not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which they have such an interest; and they must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion and or voting takes place.

7. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests NOT Entered on the Minutes

7.1 If Councillors are present at a meeting of the Parish Council and:

- (a) aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; **and**
- (b) the interest is not entered in the Parish Council's minutes; they must disclose the interest to the meeting. Furthermore, they may not participate or further participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting or participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting and must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion and or voting takes place.

7.2 If an interest referred to in 5.1(a) above is not entered on the Parish Council's minutes and is not the subject of a pending registration, Councillors must notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the date of the disclosure.

7.3 Councillors with the power to discharge an Authority function acting alone will have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be dealt with or being dealt with by them in the course of discharging that function:

- (a) they may not take any steps, or any further steps, in relation to the matter (except for the purpose of enabling the matter to be dealt with otherwise than by them); **and**

- (b) if the interest is not entered on the Council's register and is not the subject of a pending registration, they must notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of becoming aware of the interest.

8. Sensitive Interests

- 8.1 This applies to a situation where a Councillor considers that the disclosure of the details of your interest – including that of your spouse or partner – could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation.
- 8.2 In such circumstances you should share your concerns with the Council's Monitoring Officer. If the Monitoring Officer agrees with you, then the details of the interest will not be included in the Council's published Register of Interests, but the Register may state that you had registered an interest, the details of which had been withheld under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 8.3 If the Monitoring Officer has accepted that you have a sensitive interest under Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011, you should declare the existence of the interest at any meeting at which you are present, but you need not declare the details of the interest.
- 8.4 If circumstances change and the information excluded from the Register on the grounds of sensitivity is no longer sensitive information, the Councillor must notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

9. Other Relevant Interests

- 9.1 Councillors may have an Other Relevant Interest (which is not a disclosable pecuniary interest) in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting) where:
 - (a) a decision in relation to that matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of them or a member of their family or a person with whom they have a close association, or an organisation or body under paragraph 5.1(b), 5.1(c) or 5.1(d) above, to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which they have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area; **and**
 - (b) the interest is one that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest.
- 9.2 Councillors with an Other Relevant Interest as described in 9.1. above:
 - (a) must make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent; **and**

- (b) must not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which they have an Other Relevant Interest at any meeting at which they are present and will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

10. Gifts and Hospitality

- 10.1 Councillors must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which they have been offered as a member from any person or body other than the Authority, whether the offer is accepted or declined.
- 10.2 The Monitoring Officer will place any notification received under paragraph 10.1 on a public register of gifts and hospitality.
- 10.3 The duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality has been approved by the Authority for this purpose.

Agenda Item 67

Dear Forum Member,

Groups invited to apply for funding

County Durham community groups can now access an additional £1.2m of funding as part of our scheme that brings together residents, councillors, businesses and partner organisations to improve community life.

We run 12 Local Networks across the county that drive community participation and support community-led projects, encouraging engagement and bringing improvements to these areas.

The key function of these networks is to establish new Local Network Action Plans (LNAPs), which will encourage wider locality working and more effective co-ordination and delivery of our activity and partnership activity, as well as influencing how Local Network funding is spent.

Bigger impact

The grants are coming from the Local Network Fund and hopes to help groups make a bigger impact with community projects. Applicants can apply for between £5,000 and £10,000, which can be used to support local groups and community projects.

The Local Networks are looking for applications that deliver projects that meet one or more of the following themes:

- Community safety
- Employment, jobs and skills
- Health and wellbeing
- Environment and natural spaces
- Education and training
- Housing and physical infrastructure
- Culture, heritage and events

Our Local Networks will be open to applications until Wednesday 30 September, giving schools and organisations time to prepare and submit bids after the summer holidays.

Interested parties can request further information and an application pack by emailing chesterlestreetLN@durham.gov.uk

'Fantastic opportunity'

Cllr Dawn Bellingham, our Cabinet member for communities and civic resilience, said:
"This extra funding is a fantastic opportunity for local groups and those looking to improve their community. We're looking for applications that bring improved community safety, health and wellbeing, education and training, and more.

"This is a one-off process, and we'll only be inviting applications for a limited time, so we'd encourage people to apply as soon as possible."

Overall, Local Networks will be making up to £1.2 million of funding available, £100,000 per Local Network, to groups and organisations across County Durham to help those who need it most.

Kind regards,

CiLCA Qualification

I am pleased to report that the Clerk has now successfully completed and passed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification.

CiLCA is a nationally recognised qualification for local council officers and demonstrates that the Clerk has achieved the required level of knowledge and understanding to effectively administer and support the governance of a local council.

The successful completion of CiLCA also means that the Clerk now meets the qualified Clerk criterion for the purposes of the Council's eligibility to exercise the General Power of Competence (GPC).

General Power of Competence

The General Power of Competence is provided under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. For an eligible local council, it provides a broad power to do anything that an individual generally may do, subject to any restrictions imposed by other legislation.

The power is intended to give eligible councils greater freedom and flexibility to act on behalf of their communities. It can allow a council to undertake activities, provide services, work with other organisations and pursue opportunities without necessarily having to identify a specific statutory power for each individual action.

However, the Council must meet **both** of the prescribed eligibility criteria before it can adopt and use the General Power of Competence:

- The Clerk must hold the required sector-specific qualification; and
- At least two-thirds of the Council's total seats must be held by Councillors elected at the most recent ordinary election or a subsequent by-election.

Although the Clerk now satisfies the qualification requirement, the Council does not currently meet the second criterion.

The Council has 8 duly elected Councillors out of a total of 15 seats. To meet the two-thirds requirement, the Council would need 10 elected Councillors. Therefore, the Council currently falls two elected Councillors short of the required threshold.

As a result, the Council cannot currently resolve to adopt the General Power of Competence. The successful completion of CiLCA means that the Clerk requirement is now satisfied, and the Council will be in a position to consider adopting GPC once the elected-member criterion is also met.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note and record that the Clerk has successfully completed and passed the CiLCA qualification.
2. Note that the Clerk now meets the qualification requirement for the General Power of Competence.
3. Note that the Council currently has 8 elected Councillors out of 15 seats and therefore does not meet the required two-thirds elected-member criterion.
4. Note that the Council will be able to reconsider its eligibility for the General Power of Competence should the number of elected Councillors increase to the required 10 members.