

CORNSAY PARISH COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Cornsay Parish Council held on Wednesday, 29th October, 2025, at 7.00pm, in Hamsteels Community Centre, Esh Winning.

Present: Councillor D Robb (in the Chair)
and Councillors D Bottoms, R Makepeace, H Pegum and A Scott

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L McKendrick.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest of requests for dispensations.

54. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

There were no County Councillors present at the meeting or reports received.

55. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24th September, 2025, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

57. FINANCIAL REPORT

(a) Agreement was given for the payment of:

- (i) £334.48 in respect of Clerk's wages for the month of October
- (ii) £93.67 to HMRC in respect of PAYE for the month of September and October
- (iii) £859.20 (including VAT of £143.20) to Makepeace Landscapes in respect of grounds maintenance, grass cutting and planters
- (iv) Audit fees to Mazars LLP
- (v) £478.55 (including VAT of £79.76) and £453.55 (including VAT of £75.56) – totalling £931.90 – to Names.co.uk in respect of website, hosting and email for a 2 year period

(b) Cheques issued:

(i)	24 th Sep 2025	£	386.48	Clerk's wages	No.1407
(ii)	24 th Sep 2025	£	96.00	HMRC	No.1408
(iii)	24 th Sep 2025	£	200.00	Clerk (work from home)	No.1409
(iv)	24 th Sep 2025	£	1,148.40	Makepeace Landscapes	No.1410

58. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Durham Community Action – invitation to 90th Birthday celebration

Resolved: *That Councillor Pegum attend the event on behalf of the Council*

(b) Wag & Co – update on the charity's activities over the last year following financial support of £50 being provided

Resolved: *That a donation of £50 be made under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972*

- (c) NHS Family Peer Support Worker – letter received regarding the Time Together baby & toddler group held in the community centre and request for financial assistance towards the cost of venue hire.

Resolved: *That Members be minded to offer a contribution towards the cost of venue hire, the amount to be determined following discussion with Hamsteels Community Hall Association*

- (d) Woodland Trust – information received regarding restoration of Ragpath Wood, Esh Winning.

Resolved: *That the correspondence be noted.*

59. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

DM/25/02751 – 30A Commercial Street, Cornsay Colliery
Change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3) to a care home (C2) for three children with external alterations

Resolved: *That the Council considers that insufficient information is available to form a view at the present time due to the responses of other consultees not being available.*

60. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL - PROPOSALS TO BALANCE BUDGET

Durham County Council were consulting on proposals to balance their budget, seeking views on how savings could be found and outlining options for raising Council Tax.

Details of the consultation and supporting information had been circulated.

Resolver: *That this Council had no comments to make on the consultation*

61. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The NALC Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had previously been circulated with a view to adoption by the Council.

The Clerk had populated the relevant sections with information based on the Council's current documents and various queries and suggestions had been made by Members over the summer.

Resolved: *That the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations be approved and adopted, subject to the amendments agreed being made.*

62. HAMSTEELS COMMUNITY CENTRE

(a) Additional grounds maintenance

A neighbour had reported that the bushes and shrubs along side the community centre were overgrowing her boundary and asked if they could be cut back to prevent this. A quote had been sought and received from Makepeace Landscapes in the sum of £504 including VAT for these works.

Resolved: *That the quote be accepted.*

(b) Update report

A number of events were coming up including the Halloween Disco on 31st October and Country & Western night in November. A programme of Christmas events and activities was also planned.

The recent LGBT+ coffee morning had not been well attended however additional marketing had been taking place to raise awareness of the sessions and it was hoped numbers would start to increase in time.

Resolved: *That the report be noted*

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed as a correct record:

Chairperson

Date

Clerk

Date

CORNSAY PARISH COUNCIL

26 November 2025

REPORT OF THE CLERK

FINANCIAL REPORT

(a) Accounts for Payment

	<u>Goods/Service</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>VAT</u>
(i)	Clerk's wages	November	334.48	
(ii)	HMRC	November/December	167.52	
(iii)	Clerk's wages	December	334.48	
(iv)	Makepeace Landscapes	Grounds maintenance		

(b) Receipts & Payments

ACCOUNT	Virgin Money	Barclays Current	Barclays Saving	Petty Cash
Balance B/F	13,031.43	60.00	26.77	22.21
<i>add Receipts</i>	20,700.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>less Payments</i>	14,375.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
(uncleared payments)	2,219.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
CASH AT BANK	21,575.64	60.00	26.77	22.21
TOTAL CASH AT BANK	21,662.41			
Add PETTY CASH	22.21			
TOTAL CASH	21,684.62			
RECEIPTS	20,700.36		PAYMENTS	14,375.40
			Petty cash payments	0.00
			<i>Less uncleared payments</i>	2,219.25
<i>Less transfers</i>	0.00		<i>Less transfers</i>	0.00
TOTAL	20,700.36		TOTAL	12,156.15
Add B/F cash at bank	13,118.20		Add cash at bank	21,662.41
Add B/F petty cash	22.21		Add petty cash	22.21
BALANCE	33,840.77			33,840.77

PRECEPT & BUDGET SETTING

(a) Withdrawal of the LCTRS Grant by Durham County Council

The Local Council Tax Reduction scheme grant has been passed on by Durham County Council for many years. The amount received is based on the number of homes within the parish in receipt of Council Tax reductions under DCC's support scheme.

A phased reduction in the amount to be passed on to town and parish councils had been agreed to cover the period to 2026/2027, however DCC were now proposing to cease these payments entirely in a significant shift in approach.

Public consultation was running from 21 November until 4 January, however DCC had advised that town and parish councils plan on the basis of this grant being removed.

(b) Precept

This Council has generally agreed the precept for the forthcoming year each November. Information on the Tax Base is required in order to calculate the precept, this information being received from Durham County Council.

This year, DCC have been consulting on changes to the LCTRS which will be considered at a meeting of the County Council on 10 December 2025. Until that point, however, the information provided is described as 'indicative'.

With the uncertainty surrounding the LCTRS Grant and potential for changes to the Tax Base figures, it would be sensible to defer agreeing the precept until such time as this Council is in receipt of confirmed figures.

Notwithstanding the circumstances, DCC require the Precept request to be submitted by 23 January 2026 in any event.

HAMSTEELS COMMUNITY CENTRE – LEASE TO HAMSTEELS COMMUNITY HALL ASSOCIATION

The Community Centre is owned by the Parish Council and leased to Hamsteels Community Hall Association (a registered charity) which runs it on a day to day basis.

As a result of the way the new building was funded in 2015, the Parish Council is unable to operate the building itself without facing VAT liability. At that time, the leasing of the building to the Community Hall Association was agreed as being the most appropriate option at that time and moving forward.

The current lease was drawn up by a local firm of solicitors to meet the needs of the Council and Community Hall Association and in line with the requirements of the organisations that funded the new building. The lease was for a term of 7 years and is due to expire in January 2026.

In order to be able to access various funding sources, the Community Hall Association requires a lease for the building. Having a lease in place also ensures that the Parish Council's position is protected and the obligations of both parties are clearly set out and agreed.

The Association would enter into a further lease on the same terms as the existing should the Parish Council be agreeable.