

CORNSAY PARISH COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Cornsay Parish Council held on Wednesday, 25th February, 2026, at 7.00pm, in Hamsteels Community Centre, Esh Winning.

Present: Councillor D Robb (in the Chair)
and Councillors R Makepeace, L McKendrick, H Pegum and A Scott
and County Councillor M Burnard

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Bottoms and County Councillor A Neil.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Councillor R Makepeace declared an interest in Minute 98 withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision thereon.

92. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

The following items were reported on by County Councillors:

- The County Council had now set its budget for the forthcoming year and would not be increasing Council Tax. The social care precept would be increased by 1.99% giving an overall increase on the County Council's precept of only 1.99%.
- As part of the budget 200 additional school places for pupils with special educational needs would be created; a new school would be built at Villa Real; £2.5m had been allocated towards disabled facilities adaptations to help people remain in their own homes; £47m for road and pothole repairs; £5m towards town and village enhancement and £20.1m for digital systems.
- Around £26,000 of s106 funding remained available for use in the area. Suggestions for projects would be welcome.
- The Local Networks funding for the current year was to be rolled over so county councillors would have additional funds to be used for projects across the villages next year.
- The various issues at Cliffords Bank had been reported to Durham County Council for action.
- TRACC had requested financial support towards their Easter Event which it was hoped could be offered from the local member's budget.

Items raised to be reported included:

- Cornsay Village Residents Association wished to carry out some litterpicking activities around the village and would appreciate support with equipment.

Resolved: *That the report be noted.*

93. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st January, 2026, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

94. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

95. FINANCIAL REPORT

(a) Agreement was given for the payment of:

- (i) £334.48 in respect of Clerk's wages for the month of February

(ii) £83.76 to HMRC in respect of PAYE for the month of February

(b) Cheques issued:

(i)	28 th Jan 2026	£	334.48	Clerk's wages	No.1421
(ii)	28 th Jan 2026	£	83.76	HMRC	No.1422

96. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Woodland Trust – details of scheme offering free trees to local communities.

Resolved: *That the information be passed to Cornsay Village Residents Association.*

97. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

DM/26/00015/FPA West Low Row, Cornsay, Durham
Two storey extension

Resolved: *That the Council has no objection to this application*

98. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Makepeace Landscapes had indicated their willingness to retain prices at the current level for the forthcoming year.

The condition of the existing planters was highlighted as some were at the end of their useful lives and it was felt that these should be assessed prior to confirming the number to be planted up with new bedding.

Resolved: *(i) That the agreement with Makepeace Landscapes be extended for further year in view of the quality of service and value for money.*

(ii) That the condition of the planters be assessed prior to the planting of the summer bedding.

99. DATA PROTECTION POLICY & ROADMAP

The Council had a Data Protection Policy in place and was registered with the Information Commissioner's Officer as a data controller however in view of the new requirements as a result of changes in assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return it was considered necessary to review and update the policy in order to better demonstrate compliance with the new requirements.

The Clerk had drafted a policy and roadmap, based on the NALC template, copies of which had been circulated.

Resolved: *That the Data Protection Policy and roadmap be approved and adopted.*

100. CORNSAY COLLIERY PARK – REPAIRS TO GATE POST

The gate post at the entrance to the park was showing signs of wear and had become loose which was also affecting operation of the gate.

Makepeace Landscapes had quotes £375 plus VAT to replace the gate post and also the adjacent post which was also in poor condition.

Resolved: *That the quotation be accepted.*

101. HAMSTEELS COMMUNITY CENTRE – REPLACEMENT OF ENTRANCE DOORS

The Clerk advised that quotations had been sought for the replacement of the entrance doors following the ongoing problems which had been reported.

All the quotations were similar in cost however not all were comparable in terms of the work included.

Resolved: *That the Clerk review the quotations prior to the matter being considered further.*

102. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was necessary for the Council to appoint an internal auditor to undertake the internal audit requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Resolved: *That the Mike Ackroyd be approached to establish if he would be willing to undertake the audit this year and that the Clerk make suitable alternative arrangements in the event that this was not possible.*

103. DURHAM HOSPITALS RADIO – FUNDING REQUEST

A request had been received from Durham Hospitals Radio for any financial support towards the operating costs of the station which offered services to patients and staff at the University Hospital of North Durham.

Details of the stations annual operating costs together with the contribution made by volunteers had been provided in support of the request.

Resolved: *That the Council make a donation of £75 under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972.*

104. CORNSAY VILLAGE GREEN (Minute 81(b) refers)

Following the decision at the last meeting to write to the person responsible for the damage to the Village Green, a letter had been sent outlining the statutory protection of the Green and requesting reinstatement. No response to the letter had been received.

While legal action was a possibility, there was an opportunity to arrange for a farmer to level the green which could then be reseeded.

Resolved: *That the ground be levelled and reseeded on this occasion to restore the Green to a suitable condition.*

105. HAMSTEELS COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE REPORT

A number of events were coming up including acoustic duo Fool's Gold, a 60/70s event and a children's K-Pop Disco.

A new carers group would be starting in March and meeting bimonthly while a first aid session aimed at those looking after babies and young children was also planned for April.

Resolved: *That the report be noted*

The Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed as a correct record:

Chairperson Date

Clerk Date

25 March 2026

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	March		334.48	
(ii) HMRC	March		83.76	

(b) Receipts & Payments

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>Virgin Money</u>	<u>Barclays Current</u>	<u>Barclays Saving</u>	<u>Petty Cash</u>
Balance B/F	13,031.43	60.00	26.77	22.21
<i>add Receipts</i>	20,806.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>less Payments</i>	18,270.53	0.00	0.00	0.00
(uncleared payments)	493.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
CASH AT BANK	16,060.84	60.00	26.77	22.21
TOTAL CASH AT BANK	16,147.61			
Add PETTY CASH	22.21			
TOTAL CASH	16,169.82			
RECEIPTS	20,806.70		PAYMENTS	18,270.53
			Petty cash payments	0.00
			<i>Less uncleared payments</i>	493.24
<i>Less transfers</i>	0.00		<i>Less transfers</i>	0.00
TOTAL	20,806.70		TOTAL	17,777.29
Add B/F cash at bank	13,118.20		Add cash at bank	16,147.61
Add B/F petty cash	22.21		Add petty cash	22.21
BALANCE	33,947.11			33,947.11

CORNSAY PARISH COUNCIL

IT & Information Security Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cornsay Parish Council recognises the importance of secure and effective use of information technology in supporting council business.
 - 1.2 This policy sets out the arrangements in place to protect council data, systems and communications and to ensure compliance with:
 - UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - Local Government transparency requirements
 - 1.3 This policy supports the Council's Data Protection Policy and forms part of its overall governance framework.
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2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - The Clerk and all other employees
 - All Councillors
 - Any contractor or person acting on behalf of the Council
 - 2.2 It covers:
 - Personal devices used for council business
 - Email systems
 - Dropbox file storage
 - Website management (names.co.uk)
 - Data access and remote working
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3. IT

- 3.1 The Council does not own IT equipment. Council business is conducted using personal devices.
 - 3.2 The Council uses:
 - A .org.uk domain email account (Clerk)
 - A generic council email account
 - Dropbox for electronic document storage
 - names.co.uk for website hosting
 - 3.3 The Clerk is responsible for administration of these systems.
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4. Acceptable Use

- 4.1 IT systems and email accounts must be used for official council business only.
- 4.2 The designated council email address should be used for council correspondence wherever possible.
- 4.3 Council information must not be stored on unapproved platforms or shared via personal messaging apps unless unavoidable and subsequently recorded appropriately.
- 4.4 Users must not access, store, or transmit inappropriate, unlawful or offensive material using council systems.

5. Personal Devices (Bring Your Own Device – BYOD)

As the Council does not provide devices:

- 5.1 Any personal device used for council business must:
 - Be protected by a strong password or biometric lock
 - Have up-to-date operating system and security updates installed
 - Have antivirus software where appropriate
 - Automatically lock when not in use
- 5.2 Council data stored temporarily on personal devices must be transferred as soon as practicable.
- 5.3 Council data must be deleted from personal devices when no longer required.
- 5.4 When a councillor leaves office, they must permanently delete all council data from personal devices and confirm this to the Clerk.

6. Passwords and Account Security

- 6.1 Passwords must be strong and unique.
- 6.2 Passwords must not be shared with unauthorised persons.
- 6.3 Where available, two-factor authentication (2FA) must be enabled.
- 6.4 The Clerk will maintain secure administrative control of council email and Dropbox accounts.

7. Data Storage and Backup

- 7.1 Dropbox is the Council's primary electronic storage system.
- 7.2 Access permissions will be restricted to authorised users only.
- 7.3 The Clerk will ensure:
 - Appropriate folder structure
 - Controlled access rights
 - Regular checks of user access
- 7.4 Dropbox's built-in version history provides document recovery capability.
- 7.5 Important financial and governance documents should also be retained in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

8. Email Security

- 8.1 Council email accounts must be used professionally and respectfully.
- 8.2 Users must:
- Be vigilant against phishing emails
 - Avoid opening suspicious attachments or links
 - Verify unusual financial requests independently
- 8.3 Sensitive personal data should only be sent by email where necessary and with appropriate care (e.g., password-protected attachments).
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9. Website Management

- 9.1 The Council website is hosted by names.co.uk.
- 9.2 Access to website administration must be password-protected and restricted to authorised persons.
- 9.3 The website must comply with:
- Accessibility regulations
 - Transparency Code requirements
 - Data protection legislation
- 9.4 Personal data must not be published unless lawful to do so.
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10. Data Breaches and Security Incidents

- 10.1 Any suspected data breach, cyber incident, or loss of council data must be reported immediately to the Clerk.
- 10.2 The Clerk will assess the incident and, where required, report it to:
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
 - The Council's insurer
- 10.3 All breaches will be documented in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.
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11. Remote Working

As council business is conducted remotely:

- 11.1 Users must ensure devices are not visible to unauthorised persons.
- 11.2 Public Wi-Fi should be avoided for accessing sensitive information unless a secure connection is used.
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12. Retention and Disposal

- 12.1 Electronic records will be retained in line with the Council's Document Retention Policy.
- 12.2 When accounts are closed or access removed, data will be securely transferred or deleted.
- 12.3 Password access will be changed when personnel change.
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13. Training and Awareness

- 13.1 Councillors should be aware of:

- Basic cyber security principles
- Phishing awareness
- Their responsibilities under data protection law

13.2 The Clerk will keep up to date with sector guidance (e.g., NALC, SLCC).

14. Monitoring and Compliance

14.1 The Council reserves the right to review its IT systems to ensure compliance with this policy and legal obligations.

14.2 Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Withdrawal of access to council systems
 - Referral under the Members' Code of Conduct where appropriate
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15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant change in technology, legislation or council structure.