

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Burnhope Parish held on Thursday 14th May, 2026 in Burnhope Community Centre at 6.00 p.m.

Present

Councillor D Coates (Chair)

Councillors L. Clarke, S. McCormick, I. McKeag, C. Metcalf, D. Metcalf, L. Million, J. Stewart, H. Wilson, County Councillor A. Gray and Alderman O. Johnson.

Apologies for Absence

Councillors T. Barras, G. Smith and PCSO P. Hart.

Chairs Parish Remarks

The Chairman opened his remarks with thanks to the following :-

- Parish Clerk Susan Gettings for the astronomical tasks she has undertaken since taking over the role of Clerk. She has tackled the huge workload and has basically made (as is still making) the Parish Council a more professional body as I know all Members agree. As well as the workload as Clerk, Susan has also been my P.A./ Business manager and Networker for which I am so grateful as there have been times over the past 13yrs as Chair when I've been left to sort things out by myself, believe me it could be a very lonely place at times.
- Vice Chair Cllr Sarah McCormick who is a first call to some residents (and pushes me about when needed), then either sorts out any issue or passes on the good News! Then we can try to sort out problems or questions prior to our meetings, thank you Sarah.
- All Burnhope Parish Councillors who over the past year have created a "fresh look" Parish Council. It had been great to see. Thank you Councillors for your input, comments and for taking on tasks to help within the Council and outside within our Parish. If there was a job needed doing or help each and every one of them would be there to assist and just turn up.
- County Councillor Alison Grey, was thanked for her help over the past year and for being so helpful and supportive. The Chair acknowledged that it had been a busy and difficult year for her as she was expected to be at everyone's beck and call at the first request despite her now being the only County Councillor in the Lanchester Burnhope Division, when previously there had always been two.
- Alderman Ossie Johnson for the help and guidance given personally over many years and for his input at our meetings.
- Police Beat Team for their reports when unable to attend our meetings.

Councillor Coates then made the following comments on events affecting the Parish.

- BP LIGHTSOURCE had won the appeal against Keep it Green despite over 400 objections from people within the Parish. This means that the huge site, once developed, will be there for 40 years. Cllr Coates' message to future Burnhope Parish Councillors was to make sure that the residents of Burnhope get payback from the monstrosity of a development.
- There were issues within the village which were out of the Parish Council's remit but hopefully Durham Constabulary has alleviated the problems.

- The Coal Tubs at the Pit Wheel were damaged by a vehicle driven by an uninsured driver. They have been repaired and County Councillor Gray helped the Parish with the repair costs for which we are extremely grateful.
- The white fencing at the village entrance had been damaged when we had the first storm with strong winds. The replacement PVC parts were sourced and the fence repaired by Cllr Gordon Smith.
- Regulations have been introduced concerning our Parish Council Cemetery. Options to help reduce maintenance costs are being introduced and others explored.
- We had to increase the Parish precept for the new financial year to bring us in line, or start to, with other Parish Councils.
- For the first time ever, Burnhope Parish Council won the Ballot and received an invite to the Royal Garden Party. Cllr Caroline Metcalfe and guest were our representatives.
- The VJ Day celebrations were held on the Picnic Area. The Event was well attended with Lanchester Brass band, a Piper and the Glendale Choir providing the musical accompaniments. Prayers were said by the Reverent Lesley Sutherland and the Beacon was lit. This event was held in partnership with Lanchester Parish Council which we thank and hope more joint projects might happen.
- Historic Parish documents are now stored at "The Story" at Mount Oswald Durham.
- Our Grade two listed War Memorial is now being cared for by our team of Councillors along with the Flower Planters from the Pit Wheel and through the village.
- Durham County Council agreed to reinstate an historic footpath running from Holmside Lane down to the road on Fellside View. At the request of users of the play area, the Parish Council provided a link footpath to the play area. As luck would have it, because of the venue change for the Burnhope Miners Gala Centenary celebration event, the newly created path will help visitors access the new site.

Councillor Coates ended his remarks by thanking everyone for attending meetings and being part of Burnhope Parish Council. He hoped that they would all continue to help keep the Village and the Parish moving forward the best way possible. He stated that we can remember the past but encouraged them to keep moving forward.

Alderman Johnson then thanked Councillor Coates for the work he had carried out on behalf of the Parish Council over the last year. He had personally known Councillor Coates for many years and believed that Cnllr Coates' experience and knowledge was an asset in the guidance of the Parish Council.

Signed 

Date 04/06/20.....