



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 22ND JANUARY 2026 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mr G Batey, Mrs M Duncan, Mr T Fenwick, Mr P Pringle and Mr D Wood

County Councillors – None

Other Attendees – Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk, Mrs C Marshall – OCA, Mr K Young - Heritage 100, Mr R James – Triage and Residents – Mr A Lister, Clare Todd & Garden Competition Winner

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Cllr A Bell

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8 – Cllrs Fenwick and Pringle are allotment holders.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 18TH DECEMBER 2025

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND GARDEN COMPETITION

Christmas Lights Winner – 8 Milbanke Close

Christmas Lights Runner Up – 8 Byron Close

Garden Winner – 63 Cromarty

Garden Runner Up – 9 Cromarty

Cllr Duncan congratulated residents and thanked them for their efforts.

LB thanked Josh Watson who arranged the lights on our Parish Christmas Trees at short notice.

6. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Lister said he had spoken to Cllr Bell about an overgrown tree. LB said she had spoken to Cllr Bell and reported the tree on Abingdon as it is overgrown, and it needs thinning out before 1st March. LB has reported it via Do It Online.

Mr Young from Heritage 100 said he would like to create a walk in Ouston. He said his group creates circular, collectable walks in the local area and planned to create one to include our Parish. He said the walks are funded by Crowd Funding and sponsorships and each walk has a volunteer custodian. The nearest walk is in Beamish, and it has been very popular. He estimates that approximately 8000 people have walked the route in 4 years. When the Ouston walk is installed, Mr Young will hold the launch at OCA. Mr Young said it costs £350 to sponsor the walk for three years and it costs £900 to install the walk. Mr Young said the walk will benefit local residents / walkers and local businesses. The PC will discuss making a financial contribution and LB to liaise with Mr Young.

Rob James from a charity called Triage attended to discuss how they help people in the local area, who have physical or mental health barriers, to help get them into work or to support them to remain in work. It was formally known as Working Health and is funded by the North East Combined Authority (NECA). Mr James said the OCA centre manager was sent the information. Cllr Duncan said if Mr James sent LB the information we would include it in our Newsletter.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

The CC's did not attend and there was no written report submitted from them.

8. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE – INFORMATION FROM THE BOARD

Mrs Marshall said they have one of the OPC Poppy Curtains in the centre. Cllr Batey said he will collect it. Mrs Marshall said the silhouette's are also in the centre, they will continue to store them.

LB asked if they still had the PA system from Christmas and she said yes, it's in the storeroom.

Mrs Marshall said two sets of the OPC tree lights are storm damaged and the other two sets are in the storeroom.

Mrs Marshall said the centre needs a rewire. An estimated cost to carry out the work is £100,000. The board are currently looking at funding sources. Clare Todd said she will speak to Mrs Marshall separately. Cllr Duncan suggested OCA contact the CC's. She replied they have.

Mrs Marshall added that OCA need volunteers to help with events. Staff roles and responsibilities are still being reviewed by the board. She added that due to lack of volunteers, the OCA will have to scale back events this year. The board will compile a schedule of events depending on the number of volunteers. Cllr Duncan suggested OCA contact young people taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award. Clare Todd suggested contacting the Air & Sea Cadets who need to volunteer as part of their DoE.

There will be a children's Easter event held on 31st March which will include art & crafts and Easter egg hunt. Mrs Marshall asked for a £30 contribution from the PC to purchase eggs.

Mrs Marshall said OCA had mixed feedback regarding their Christmas events. They are going to send out evaluation forms to attendees for feedback. LB said she did not attend the events but thought it was a great idea holding two events, one for adults and one for children.

Mrs Marshall asked for the PC to feedback any suggestions by email. She also asked about 106 funding and was advised to contact the CC's.

Cllr Wood suggested that the OCA speak to Pelton Community Centre for advice and guidance and Clare Todd suggested speaking to Lumley Community Centre.

A QR code is in their noticeboard, please scan for events information. Please contact the OCA for more information.

9. ALLOTMENTS

Dog fouling onsite is an ongoing problem.

Rents will be collected on Saturday 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March. All rents to be paid by Wednesday 1st April 2026.

LB sent a hedge trimming reminder email to tenants on 11th January – works to be completed by 1st March. LB will also display a notice on site.

10. CLERKS REPORT

Traffic Calming Scheme – LB informed the PC that we have received the refunded £8,000 OPC contribution (due to the Reform CC's removing the speed bump element from the Traffic Calming Scheme) from Highways. LB emailed Highways to ask for a remittance.

Neighbourhood Warden - Cllr Wood suggested using some of the refunded £8000 to fund Neighbourhood Warden hours in our Parish for 1 year. He said if we paid for the hours, the NHW would attend our PC meetings and provide a written report detailing their findings when patrolling our Parish. Cllr Wood added Pelton PC pay £6000 for 4 hours per week.

LB to contact North Lodge PC to ask about their Christmas tree's power source.

Cllr Pringle said the Shop Keeper at Cooks Corner reported to him that a delivery driver was cutting over the grass when delivering stock. The Shop Keeper spoke to the delivery company and asked them to pass on to their drivers, that they are not to cut over the grass in their vehicles. To be monitored.

Ouston PACT Meeting

The PACT meeting was held in the Community Centre on 21st January at 6.30pm. Residents were encouraged to attend to raise any concerns they may have such as parking and antisocial behaviour but only Cllr Duncan and Mr Lister attended.

Cllr Duncan said the PCSO's who attended the meeting were very proactive and informative, and added that they knew the area. Cllr Duncan added Erin was our main PCSO and the main issues in our area were shop lifting and car crime. The Police carried out Operation Hawkeye where they checked to see if vehicles are locked. 8 vehicles were found to be unlocked in Ouston and the officers knocked on owner's doors to inform them. The Police also arrested and charged the man who broke into Ouston Petrol Station.

Cllr Duncan suggested including no cold caller signs in our newsletter for residents to cut out and put on their doors.

Cllr Duncan said the PCSOs are carrying out regular patrols round the two Primary schools to monitor parking.

The PCSOs said staff are going to be trained to use drones as they are useful to monitor areas instead of the helicopter.

Cllr Duncan said the PCSOs would like to attend our March meeting but can only attend on the 19th not 26th. The PC said if the room was available, we could reschedule our meeting to the 19th of March at 6.30. LB to check with the centre manager and invite the PCSOs.

Do It Online – Reported by OPC

- Path at Turnberry bus stop – Resurfaced in front of bus stop by DCC
- LB emailed DCC building control with supporting photos regarding derelict garages. Building control advised LB to report it to Environmental Health as there is vermin living amongst the fly-tipping.
- LB reported the intrusive tree on Abingdon.
- LB to report broken school sign on main road.

Majority covered in other agenda items.

11. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

11.1 Monthly Accounts & January Invoices

The expenditure for January 2026 was reviewed by the PCs.

11.2 3rd Quarterly Bank Reconciliation

The 3rd Quarterly Bank Reconciliation was reviewed by the PC. Cllr Batey said there are some underspends under some cost centres, LB said we are still waiting for some invoices such as the flowerbeds which is at least £5000.00.

11.3 Agree and Sign off Budget / Precept 2026-27

Precept was set at £38,240 which is the agreed 4% increase.

12. ITEMS TO FOLLOW UP FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The February Monthly meeting agenda will include:

- 2026 Events
- Agree Budget – 2026-27

**The Parish Monthly Meeting will be held on 26th February at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.
The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.10pm hours.**

APPENDIX ONE: JANUARY 2026

Chq No	Paid to	Description
102339	L Blondrage	January pay 5 weeks
102340	L Blondrage	Home working allowance
102341	D Johnston	January pay 5 weeks
102342	HMRC	January PAYE 5 weeks
102343	DTE Landscapes	Lights and trees
102344	Kevin Walker Pest Control Services	Pest Control - Allotments