DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2026 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mr G Batey, Mrs A Bell, Mrs M Duncan, Mr T Fenwick, Mr P Pringle and Mr D Wood
County Councillors – None
Other Attendees – Parish Clerk - Lisa Blondrage, OCA - Mrs A Batey and Mrs J Watson. Residents – Mr A Lister and Residents from Milbanke

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8 – Cllrs Fenwick and Pringle are allotment holders.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 23RD JULY 2026

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Pest Control at the Allotments

A resident who is also an allotment tenant said the Pest Controller has given up due to poor health and he would like to take over the contact. Prior to the meeting, he had sent his CV containing his work experience and qualifications to LB who had forwarded them to the PC. Cllr Wake said the PC were happy with his proposals and asked him to email a quote to LB.

Speeding on Milbanke

Four residents from Milbanke Close attended the meeting to express their concerns regarding speeding vehicles up and down Milbanke. One resident estimated that speeds could be up to 70mph in a 30 and said there have been several near misses, and due to the speeds involved, it would end up in a serious collision. The residents explained that cyclists, pedestrians including dog walkers and families use the street and there are no streetlights or Give Way signs on the junction near the bottom. A resident said they had reported a near miss with supporting evidence to the Police and a warning letter had been issued to the driver involved. Cllr Wake suggested reporting delivery drivers to their company, but residents said it is impossible to get their registration due to camera angles. Another resident added that there are also E Scooters and E Bikes travelling down at speed to evade Police.

Cllr Wood said the only way we could support is by offering to contribute financially to install traffic calming measures. He added that the Reform County Councillors withdrew the traffic calming measures planned for the main road as they do not support physical speed bumps. The CC's asked DCC to refund our financial contribution and the allocated CC funding has now gone. Cllr Wood said the PC could request speed bumps on Milbanke and ask the CC's if they would support the proposals. LB to email CCs.

Cllr Wood added that CC Quirey had attended the Urpeth meeting and said he was against building on the Green Belt.

Another resident said wheelie bins were not being return correctly. He said they are just being abandoned blocking access to drives and blocking footpaths. LB said she has reported this to DCC.

Parking around school & yellow lines – Resident 1

A resident said they were concerned about the parking in the streets around Ouston School. They are concerned that footpaths are being blocked by vehicles causing pedestrians to walk on the road. LB has forwarded the resident's concerns to DCC and requested extra visits from Parking Enforcement. LB also requested via Do It Online that the yellow road marks are reinstalled after the resurfacing works.

Footpaths on Cromarty side – Resident 2

LB received an email from a resident who lives on Ross expressing their concerns regarding the resurfacing of footpaths on Cromarty side of the road. LB reported to DCC with supporting photographs from a resident, regarding the uneven footpaths on Ross and that have not been resurfaced properly after utility works.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

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

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE – INFORMATION FROM THE BOARD

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

Mrs Batey said the Centre Manager resigned so she took over the position in a volunteer capacity and will continue to until Christmas. The Board are currently reviewing the role. Cllr Wood suggested that they should look at a partnership with Pelton Community Centre. Mrs Watson said they are attending regular meetings with other centre managers to seek advice.

Mrs Batey said they have secured 106 funding for rewiring. She added that the CC's are financially supporting the project to secure and sustain the future of the community centre. Mrs Batey said the centre will close in January to allow the works to take place. This could impact our January meeting, LB to find out the Precept date and the PC could potentially agree the 2027/28 Precept at December's meeting. Mrs Batey said they will accommodate our January meeting.

Mrs Batey said the Tuesday Coffee morning is well attended and is important for the community. She added that OCA are looking at running the Coffee morning every Tuesday and not breaking for school holidays, as the attendees have requested it.

A refurbishment of the ladies toilets and additional drainage works are planned after the rewiring has taken place.

Mrs Batey said she is in the OCA office Monday, Wednesday and Friday and there is now a mobile contact number for out of hours. Cllr Batey now has a set of OCA keys as well as LB.

LB asked Mrs Batey to check the expiry dates on the Defib battery and Defib pads.

8. ALLOTMENTS

July Inspections

Cllr Batey said he carried out the allotment inspections in July. He said most of the plots who were struggling to maintain their plot and achieve 50% cultivation have given up their plot voluntarily.

Chapel gate lock

The OAA Chair suggested taking the lock from the gate at the top of the track and transfer it to replace broken lock on the Chapel gate. He suggested installing a new lock on the top gate as it will only affect 6 tenants who live in Coquet, Tweed & Lyne Close. All other tenants could use the bottom two gates either end of Institute Terrace. The PC agreed this was the best option. LB to contact the OAA Chair and let him know the outcome.

9. MEMORIAL GARDEN

LB said the Cherrytree Handyman will refurbish the Memorial Garden by the end of October.

10. EVENTS AUTUMN / WINTER 2026

10.1 GARDEN COMPETITION

The PC thanked Cllr Fenwick for his time and the PC will look at the Photos of contenders and choose a winner and runner up.

10.2 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

LB will draft the Orders of Service and has ordered the PC wreath with 10 wooden crosses from the RBL. LB will arrange for the Bugler to attend. Cllr Batey will look at the RBL guidance for the length of time wreaths are to be left on the War Memorial.

LB has contacted DCC regarding permission to display the PC Lamppost Poppies and the Poppies will be displayed by volunteers on the weekend of the 24th October 2026.

10.3 CHRISTMAS TREES

The PC agreed that we will light two temporary trees at Cooks Corner and the top of Ouston Bank plus the living tree at the memorial garden. LB to buy new lights and order the trees. LB is waiting on the DCC quote for the mains box at Cooks Corner.

11. CLERKS REPORT

11.1 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

LB asked if the PC were going ahead with the registration of the Asset of Community Value regarding the fields behind Ross, Turnberry and Abernethy. Cllr Wood said he would explain to the PC at the next meeting how Pelton PC went through the process.

11.2 ADDITIONAL BENCH REQUEST

Cllr Bell said she would like to site another bench in Ouston village and will look for a location.

Do It Online

Overgrown trees – Red Lion Bus Stop – now cleared
Abandoned car – St Benets Car Park – Ongoing Neighbourhood Warden investigating
Road Markings Arisaig School road – waiting for works
Footpath on Ross – Awaiting response
Graffiti Pelton Underpass – reported and resolved
Caravan issue – Ongoing Neighbourhood Warden Investigating

LB reported an overgrown tree on behalf of a resident in Ardrossan. Clean and Green sent an email said they will carry out an inspection within 7 days – dated 20th July. LB is still awaiting a response from DCC.

LB said the NE Mayor is carrying out a bus consultation ending on 28th September. Details on our website

Other points covered in other agenda items.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Monthly Accounts for September Invoices

The expenditure for September 2026 was reviewed by the PC.

12.2 NALC Pay Award

April 2026-March 2027 was agreed at 3%.

12.3 Precept Letter – Ripley Close and Pickering Walk

From 2017, DCC made an error and incorrectly charged a Precept for Ouston Parish to 47 properties in Pickering Walk & Ripley Close in Urpeth Parish. It was incorrectly added to our tax base but should have been added to Urpeth's. Therefore, if we wish to keep our £38,240 Precept the same for 2027/28 our band D rate will increase from £43.18 to £45.34 which equates to an increase of £2.16 or 5%. DCC went on to say that figures are likely to change when our 2027/28 tax base is recalculated.

13. ITEMS TO FOLLOW UP FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Parish Monthly Meeting will be held on 22nd October from 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

- **Memorial Garden – update**
- **Asset of Community Value**
- **Allotments**
- **Autumn / Winter events**

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.31pm hours.

APPENDIX ONE: SEPTEMBER 2026

Chq No		Paid to	Description
102388		L Blondrage	September pay 4 weeks plus back pay
102389		L Blondrage	September HWA
102390		D Johnston	September pay 4 weeks
102391		HMRC	September PAYE 4 weeks
102392		D Kennedy	Allotment cylinder lock and keys