



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY PARISH MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 26th FEBRUARY 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 and Mr P Pringle

County Councillors – None

Other Attendees – Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk and Residents – Mr B Howlett, Mr A Lister and Mr D Mole

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Cllr D Wood

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8 – Cllrs Fenwick and Pringle are allotment holders.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 22ND JANUARY 2026

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Howlett said in May 2024, he had reported a damaged sign in Byron Close. He said the sign had been pulled off the wall and was dangerous. He said he had a notification that it would be repaired within 3 months and then within 5 months. He informed the PC, it had still not been repaired to date. LB to follow up.

Cllr Bell said the school sign had been repaired but was now out of position again. LB to report again and ask DCC to tighten the bracket.

Mr Howlett said there are overgrown hedges / bushes in the cuts between the streets. He asked for a reminder to be put in the newsletter, to ask residents to keep their hedges / bushes cut back.

Mr Lister said the bus stop gully opposite the Red Lion is blocked again. LB to report.

Mr Mole said due to the ongoing issue of the Turnberry bus top surface, which the PC reported several times over a couple of years, he contacted CC Biggs to ask why it had not been resolved. Mr Mole said a small area was resurfaced, but a larger area is still an ongoing issue as it is still uneven and unsafe. He contacted CC Biggs again but has not responded to date.

Mr Mole said the Cooks Corner bus stop glass had been damaged and he tried to report it to the Police via 101. The call handler said they would report it to DCC. Mr Mole explained that it was criminal damage and that is why he rang 101. He asked them to check Cook's Corner CCTV but they said they will report it to DCC. Cllr Wake suggested that Mr Mole attend the next PACT meeting on the 19th March at 6.30.

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

No board members present

7.2 Easter Event Donation

LB said at the last meeting the OCA board asked for a £30.00 donation to purchase chocolate eggs for their children's Easter event. The PC discussed and agreed to the £30.00 donation.

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

8. **ALLOTMENTS**

LB said rents will be collected on Saturday 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March. All rents are to be paid by Wednesday 1st April 2026. LB said the rule needs to be changed to enable a stricter deadline for rent payment and a shorter eviction notice period for non-payment. LB said as it stands, we cannot re-let plots until mid-May.

Cllr Batey said there are still at least 10 plots on site where the hedges are overgrown, he will send LB plot numbers.

Cllr Batey said dog fouling on site has improved. Cllr Batey said the rules need to be revised to allow unscheduled inspections as when notice is given, some plots improve to pass the inspection and then are neglected again. This will allow early intervention, and more support can be given to the tenants to prevent plots falling into extreme states of disrepair.

The PC said the OAA is not fully functioning and there are no monthly meetings being held currently. The Chair continues to let plots and is running the OAA shop.

9. **CLERKS REPORT**

OPC Easter Event

The PC's agreed to hold a Parish Easter Egg hunt over Easter weekend as previously held by the former CC's. Cllr Batey said plastic eggs will be located round Ouston Parish, and they can be taken by the finder to a location to trade for a prize such as chocolate or sweets. The PC agreed to the project and Cllr Batey said he would organise it. The PC allocated at £50 budget to purchase items for the project. Cllr Batey to hand receipts to LB who will raise a cheque to cover the costs.

Ouston PACT Meeting

LB said she invited the PCSO to our rescheduled meeting on the 19th March and they have confirmed they will be there from 6.30pm. The PC confirmed that the PACT will begin at 6.30 with PC's in attendance and our meeting will follow on from the end of the PACT.

Road Safety

LB said a pedestrian was hit by a vehicle travelling through Ouston village outside of the Petrol station. The pedestrian was taken to the RVI hospital, where they were stable but needed surgery. This accident happened in a part of the village where there are traffic calming measures (speed bumps), which helps reduce speed. In the South of the village there are no calming measures, and this could result in a fatality if a pedestrian is hit at a greater speed.

Invoice

LB said despite contacting DCC several times since last August she is still waiting for the 2025-26 Flower bed invoice. LB to continue to chase.

Do It Online – Reported by OPC

- Broken Sign Ouston School – closed by DCC work carried out 05/02/2026, LB to report again.
- Abingdon Tree - closed by DCC work carried out 06/02/2026, Cllr Bell to check.
- Arcadia garage – emailed EH on 25th January FS791322353 – the NHW rang to say she was contacting the landlord / property management company to ask them to resolve this.
- LB said she was contacted by Cllr Wood on behalf of a resident who asked for the removal of a speed bump Cromarty / Fairisle as it was difficult to drive over going up the bank when it is icy, and it had caused damage to their vehicle. LB emailed Highways and they replied stating that the speed bump would not be removed as it complied with Government guidelines and is part of a wider scheme. LB sent information to Cllr Wood to feedback to resident. Cllr Pringle added he, Cllr Wood and Luke Akehurst MP walked round Ouston visiting residents to ask for feedback on any local concerns or issues. He said residents expressed that they did not like speed humps but understood why they were there. Cllr Pringle will take photographs and send locations of overgrown bushes.

Majority covered in other agenda items.

10. **FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL**

10.1 Monthly Accounts & February Invoices

The expenditure for February 2026 was reviewed by the PC

10.2 Agree and Sign off Budget 2026-27

At the last meeting, Cllr Wood suggested using some of the refunded £8000 to fund Neighbourhood Warden hours in our Parish for 1 year. He added, Pelton PC pay £6000 for 4.5 hours per week including the use of a DCC van. Cllr Pringle said it has been useful in Pelton as there has been issues of Antisocial behaviour. Cllr Batey said he was worried about how we would fund the NHW next financial year and said we would have to increase the Precept by 16% to continue. The PC agreed this was not sustainable and agreed not to go ahead with the service level agreement.

Cllr Fenwick suggested using some of the £8k for the Memorial Garden improvements to make it lower maintenance.

Cllr Bell suggested only one Christmas tree on the grassed area of Cooks Corner with an electric box. LB to ask Karbon Homes for permission to site the tree and the box on the grass. Cllr Bell added that the battery powered trees are not value for money as they are not visible due to the dim battery powered lighting.

The PC agreed to donate the £613.00 of unallocated community project money held in an earmarked reserve to the Heritage 100 project. LB to contact Keiron Young to inform him.

11. ITEMS TO FOLLOW UP FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The March Monthly meeting agenda will include:

- OPC Easter Event
- Cook's Corner Tree

The Parish Monthly Meeting and PACT meeting will be held on 19th March from 6.30pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.17pm hours.

APPENDIX ONE: FEBRUARY 2026

Chq No		Paid to	Description
102345		L Blondrage	February pay
102346		L Blondrage	February HWA
102347		D Johnston	February pay
102348		HMRC	February PAYE
102349		OCA	Easter event donation
102350		CDALC	Budget Training
102351		Mazars	AGAR 2024-25