

**Minutes of Hart Parish Council Monthly Meeting
held at 6.45pm on Monday 20th April 2026 in Hart Village Hall**

Present: Councillors Tom Britcliffe, Stuart Brookes, Frank Lancaster, John Wilson

In Attendance: Clerk - Fiona Ford, Members of the Public x 5, Ward Councillor Darby

1. Police Report

The March police was circulated - The overall picture is positive. In March 2026 there were 40 recorded crimes, which is down from 58 in March 2025, representing a reduction of 18 incidents year-on-year. Comparing March to February, crime has increased from 22 incidents to 40.

There were two burglaries in March, compared to five in February, showing a month-on-month reduction, and slightly fewer than March last year. There is no trend suggesting an increase in residential burglary.

Criminal damage remains consistent, with two incidents recorded in March, the same as March last year and slightly up from the ideal of zero in February. This suggests isolated incidents rather than any ongoing pattern.

Theft offences show the most encouraging trend overall. There were 18 thefts in March, which is down significantly from 38 in March last year, and broadly in line with recent months. This confirms a longer-term downward trend, particularly compared to last summer.

Violence against the person recorded 12 incidents in March, compared to six in February and 11 in March last year. While this is an increase month-on-month, it remains consistent year-on-year and does not indicate any sustained upward trend. These incidents continue to be spread across the ward with no particular hotspots.

Overall, while March saw more crime than February, the wider trend remains stable and positive, especially when compared to last year, with reductions in key volume crime types and no significant areas of concern.

There were 19 ASB incidents, compared to 10 incidents in March 2025, meaning ASB is up year on year. When comparing month on month, ASB has increased from 12 incidents in February. This directly reflects the offroad bike activity and youth related issues that will be addressed through patrols, engagement, and enforcement activity.

Looking at the longer term trend, ASB levels fluctuate month to month but do not show a sustained upward trajectory. Instead, they appear to be seasonal and location specific, with known areas such as Hartfields Park and surrounding green spaces generating the majority of calls.

2. Public Forum

A general discussion took place around the village and how good it is looking, however there are a few issues that need addressing:

- Fly tipping at Millview – it was reported to HBC, but how can people be prosecuted.
- Green bag full of cement on Front Street
- Railings along Front Street both sides – concrete coming away and railings need addressing
- Parish Benches and planters - volunteers requested to undertake the work and Parish Council reimburse the cost of the materials
- Drain outside the Raby Arms needs a cover on – need to report
- Community Garden in the Church

- Weed killing to be undertaken on front street
- Ongoing issues on A179, it was noted that HBC are exploring options to install an extra lane on the Sheraton Junction, however, HBC need to liaise with Durham County Council as the area is in their ownership.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Littlefair and Quarmby and Brown.

4. Declarations of Interest

None.

5. Minutes of the Meetings held on 9th March 2026

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

6. Matters Arising

- CCTV** – The Village Hall committee have confirmed they would not support the installation of CCTV on the Hall, as they the Village Hall could become a target.
- Car Park Gate** – Still awaiting the decision. Clerk to chase.
- A179** – A meeting has been organised with HBC and DCC re next steps.

7. Chairman's Report

Councillor Britcliffe provided an update from the highways issued raised. Concerns were also raised around the Chare Wall which need to be explored.

8. Ward Councillor's Report

Councillors Darby provided an update on fly tipping and the process surrounding prosecution.

9. Financial Report

The following cheques were signed:

100989	F Ford wages (March 2026)	£253.16
100990	HMRC (March 2026)	£63.40
100991	Affordable Landscapes	£500.22
		£816.78

10. South View Car Parking

A proposal for the works was submitted by HBC at a cost of £27,000. £15,000 can be funded from S106 monies and the remainder will need to be funded by the Parish Council. A discussion took place and it was agreed to contribute £12,000 towards the scheme.

11. Maintenance Committee Report

Councillor Brookes to complete the user agreement and undertake the training to enable reporting via the Portal.

12. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to discuss.

13. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications to comment on.

14. Matters of Concern to Councillors

The following items were noted:

- Street Light out - Opposite Glebe Farm
- Issues with trees near the Bungalow behind Mill View. Speak to Councillor Littlefair to approach the resident
- Issues with car parking outside the school and blocking the road
- Website – It was noted there was an issue with zooming in and losing focus. Clerk to look into issue. It was then agreed to advertise the new website.

15. Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11th May at 6.45 pm in the Village Hall.

Signature _____