



10th March 2026

Dear Councillor,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of **Peterlee Town Council** on
Monday 16th March 2026 In the **Council Chamber, Shotton Hall,**
Peterlee, SR8 2PH, at 6.30pm

Mr I Hall
Town Clerk

Members of the public are very welcome to attend our meetings. We have a limited number of designated public seating in our Council Chamber and so any members of the public wishing to attend to observe the meeting are advised to contact the Council in advance so that we can reserve a seat for you: council@peterlee.gov.uk or (0191) 5862491.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. To receive declarations of interest

Members are reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. Please seek advice from the Town Clerk **prior to the meeting** if in doubt. Members are reminded that they can check their published declaration of interests here: <https://bit.ly/2wVyeLA>

3. Public Participation

Members of the public will have an opportunity to put questions to the Council. This item of business to last no more than 15 minutes, as per Council Standing Orders.

4. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the following meeting:-

- a. Council Meeting held on 2nd March 2026 (Copy attached)

5. Durham Community Action Presentation

To enable Members to ask questions and consider the options available for Hill Rigg House.

6. Filming Request – Shotton Hall

A report of the Town Clerk (Attached)

7. Exclusion of the Press & Public

To resolve that in view of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the committee pass the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 & the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, Part 1, paragraphs 11.

8. Events Support 2026

A report of the Events Officer (Attached)

9. Shotton Hall Sale Update

A report of the Town Clerk (Attached)

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 2nd March 2026** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Present: Councillor R. Moore (Mayor) and Councillors P. Brown, D Burrell, M A Cartwright, P Cartwright, B. Fishwick, M-L Franklin, S Franklin, K. Hawley, D. Howarth, A. Laing, D. Meadows, H. Pygall, I. Pygall, E. Sanders, L. Sanders, M. Sanderson, S. Simpson, and D. Wright.

Also Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk), Deborah Woodhall (Resources Manager) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant).

C.190/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Black and D. Hawley

RESOLVED: That the apologies be noted.

C.191/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared

C.192/26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of public were present.

C.193/26 MONTHLY UPDATES FOR DURHAM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor, Steven Franklin informed Members of Peterlee Strategic Plan's Consultation taking place on Saturday 21 March 2026 between the hours of 10.30am and 1pm. They will be on Burnhope Way (near the subway to Lidl) and encouraged them to approach the team and provide their views on what they want for the town and its future.

RESOLVED: That the updated be noted.

C.194/26 MINUTES

a. Council Meeting held on 16th February 2026

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be approved.

C.195/26 HILL RIGG HOUSE OUTCOME OF MEETING WITH DURHAM COMMUNITY ACTION

Detailed consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to update Members on the outcome of the meeting held with Durham Community Action (DCA) regarding the potential establishment of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to operate Hill Rigg House as a community building, and to seek direction from Council on the preferred governance model moving forward.

During discussion, Members noted that attendance at the recent meeting with DCA had been limited and expressed concern that not all Members had therefore had the opportunity to fully explore or understand the options available. It was felt that, given the significance of the decision and the potential long-term implications for the operation and governance of Hill Rigg House, all Members should have the opportunity to hear directly from DCA, ask questions, and seek clarification before any formal decision is taken.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk invite Durham Community Action to attend a future meeting of the Council in order to present the available governance options and respond to Members' questions, enabling Council to make a fully informed decision.

C.196/26 PAVILION OFFICE CONVERSION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to update Members following the resolution of Council on 19th January 2026 and to seek approval of a capital budget of £150,000 to convert four existing changing rooms at The Pavilion into office accommodation, and to agree the appointment and associated fee from Durham County Council Procurement Services to manage the compliant tender process, and to formally note the position in relation to existing Sport England grant funding.

During discussion, Members asked whether they could meet with Sport England when representatives attend to inspect the Pavilion. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would arrange an online meeting via Microsoft Teams to enable interested Members to speak with them directly.

Members also queried whether National Lottery funding may be available to support a future expansion of the building, allowing for changing rooms to be reinstated if required.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update following the 19th January 2026 resolution be noted.
2. That the estimated annual saving of approximately £90,000, arising from the sale of Shotton Hall and consolidation into a single civic building, be noted.
3. That the position regarding the two live Sport England grants (£100,000 and £28,000) running until October 2028, be noted.
4. That Sport England's indication of their willingness to send an architect to review the proposed internal changes be noted.
5. That the potential clawback risk, should formal approval not be secured, be acknowledged.
6. That the Town Clerk investigate the availability of funding from the National Lottery
7. That a capital budget of £150,000 for the conversion works be approved.

8. That additional expenditure of £5,237.00 plus VAT for Durham County Council Procurement Services be approved.
9. That authority be delegated to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to submit the Bespoke Procurement Request Form and commence the procurement process.
10. That, following tender evaluation and written confirmation from Sport England, a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

C.197/26 THORNTREE GILL LEISURE GARDENS

Detailed Consideration was given to a report of the Neighbourhood Services Manager, which had previously been circulated, to seek Council approval to submit a Section 106 funding application to undertake remedial and compliance works to the solar photovoltaic (PV) power supply system at the Thorntree Gill Amenity Building.

Members noted that the available Section 106 funding had been generated from a development within the Eden Hill Ward and recalled the Council's previous intention that such monies should, wherever possible, be spent in the area from which they arose.

Following discussion, a vote was taken on whether the Section 106 funding should be applied for and utilised within the Eden Hill Ward.

| For | Against | Abstained |
|------------|----------------|------------------|
| 18 Members | - | 1 Member |

Members also indicated that alternative funding sources, including approaching the relevant County Councillors for support through their Neighbourhood Budgets, should be explored in respect of the proposed works at Thorntree Gill.

RESOLVED:

1. That the available Section 106 funding be applied for and used within the Eden Hill Ward, being the area in which the funding was generated.
2. That alternative funding sources, including approaching the relevant County Councillors to seek support through their Neighbourhood Budgets, be explored in respect of the proposed works at Thorntree Gill.

C.198/26 STRATEGIC PLACE PLAN (SPP) AND PRIDE IN PLACE PETERLEE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to inform Members of formal engagement requests from Durham County Council in relation to the development of the Peterlee Strategic Place Plan (SPP) and the Government's Pride in Place programme for East Peterlee, and to seek agreement on the Council's structured approach to participation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the engagement request from Urban Foresight in relation to the Strategic Place Plan be noted.
2. That Urban Foresight be invited to attend the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 7 April 2026 to facilitate a short focus group session prior to the formal meeting.
3. That Councillor Rob Moore be Peterlee Town Council's nominated representative on the Pride in Place Committee, noting that he put his name forward following the Council update of 2nd February 2026 (Minute C.165/25 refers).
4. That authority be delegated to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to coordinate engagement arrangements.

Report to: Peterlee Town Council

Date of Meeting: 16th March 2026

Subject: **Hill Rigg House – Outcome of Meeting with Durham Community Action and Governance Options**

Report of: Ian Hall Chief Officer & Town Clerk

Report Purpose: To update Members on the outcome of the meeting held with Durham Community Action (DCA) regarding the potential establishment of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to operate Hill Rigg House as a community building, and to seek direction from Council on the preferred governance model moving forward.

Background: At its meeting held on 2nd February 2026, Council resolved to explore the use of Hill Rigg House as a community building and to seek advice from Durham Community Action on establishing a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) structure.

A meeting was subsequently held on 17th February 2026 with representatives from Durham Community Action. The purpose of the meeting was to outline potential governance models and to provide Members with an understanding of the practical, legal and governance implications of each option.

At the Council meeting held on 2nd March 2026, Members considered the initial report but noted that attendance at the earlier meeting with Durham Community Action had been limited. Members expressed the view that all Councillors should have the opportunity to hear directly from Durham Community Action and ask questions before any decision was taken.

Council therefore resolved that Durham Community Action be invited to attend a future meeting of the Council to present the available governance options and respond to Members' questions.

In accordance with this resolution, Tracy Emery from Durham Community Action will attend the Council meeting scheduled for 16th March 2026 to provide Members with further explanation of the potential governance models and to answer any questions Members may have.

Details:**Governance Models Considered**

Durham Community Action outlined four potential models:

Option 1 - All Councillors as Trustees (Sole Trustee Model)

Under this model, all 22 elected Members would act as charity trustees.

DCA advised that whilst this provides maximum democratic accountability and strategic alignment, it presents significant governance challenges. The dual role of Councillor and Charity Trustee must remain strictly separate in law, and the risk of conflicts of interest would require robust management.

In addition, a trustee board of 22 members may prove operationally unwieldy, with slower decision-making and increased administrative burden. Trustees would carry personal legal responsibilities under charity law.

Option 2 - Mixed Trustee Board (Councillors and Independent Members)

This model would establish a smaller trustee board (typically 5–7 individuals), combining a number of Councillors with independent community trustees.

DCA advised this is generally the preferred governance model in similar circumstances. It retains democratic linkage whilst introducing independence, skills-based recruitment and improved credibility with funders.

Whilst conflicts of interest for Councillor trustees would still require management, a smaller board would be more agile and operationally effective. This model is often viewed more favourably by external funders due to its community-led approach.

Option 3 - Independent Charity with Lease from Council

Under this arrangement, the Town Council would retain ownership of Hill Rigg House but grant a lease to an entirely independent charity, which would assume day-to-day operational responsibility.

This model provides a clear separation of roles, with the Council acting solely as landlord and the charity as tenant. It reduces Councillor workload and transfers operational risk (subject to lease terms).

However, Council control would be limited to lease provisions and landlord oversight. Lease negotiations would require careful drafting to protect the asset, including repair obligations, permitted use, compliance and termination provisions.

Option 4 – Disposal of the Asset

For completeness, DCA confirmed that disposal of the property remains an option, generating capital receipt for reinvestment. However, this would result in the permanent loss of a community asset. Based on discussions, this does not appear to be the favoured route.

Option 5 – Direct Council Management

Under this model, Hill Rigg House would remain fully operated and managed directly by Peterlee Town Council rather than being transferred into a charitable structure.

The Council would retain full control of the building, including governance, programming, financial management and operational oversight.

Staffing would be provided directly by the Council, utilising existing employees where appropriate or appointing additional staff where required.

This option avoids the governance complexities associated with establishing and managing a charitable organisation and ensures clear accountability through the Council's existing governance framework.

Durham Community Action indicated that, in their experience:

- Option 2 (mixed trustee board) offers the most balanced governance approach where the Council wishes to retain strategic influence but benefit from independent skills and community leadership; or
- Option 3 (independent charity with lease) is appropriate where Council wishes to retain ownership but not be directly involved in day-to-day strategic management.

DCA further advised that if Option 1 were to be pursued, it would effectively be an "all or nothing" model, requiring all Councillors to accept trustee responsibilities and associated legal duties. Under Options 1 and 2, it was clearly stated that all paid employees of Peterlee Town Council are entirely separate from the charitable entity and could not be used to deliver services, undertake operational duties, or provide administrative support on behalf of the charity. Any staffing required to operate the building would need to be appointed and managed directly by the CIO in its own legal capacity.

Legal and Governance Considerations

Members are reminded that charity trustees must act solely in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries. This is distinct from a Councillor's role under the Local Government Act 1972.

Any overlap between Council decision-making and charity governance must be carefully structured to avoid:

- Conflicts of interest
- Perceived or actual loss of independence
- Reputational risk
- Breach of charity law duties

Robust governance documentation, including a constitution, trustee code of conduct, conflicts of interest register and delegation framework, would be required under any CIO model.

Recommendation: Members are requested to:

1. Note the outcome of the meeting with Durham Community Action.
2. Consider the governance options available for the future operation of Hill Rigg House:
 - Option 1 – All Councillors as Trustees
 - Option 2 – Mixed Trustee Board
 - Option 3 – Independent Charity with Lease
 - Option 4 – Disposal
 - Option 5 – Direct Council Management
3. Following discussion and the presentation from Durham Community Action, indicate which option Members would wish the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to explore further and bring back to Council in a detailed implementation report.

Appendix 1: Implications

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Implication</u> |
|--|---|
| Finance: | No financial commitment is sought at this stage. |
| Staffing: | No direct implications. |
| Risk: | <p>Governance risk is most significant under Option 1 due to the dual role of Councillor and Trustee and the scale of a 22-member trustee board. Clear separation of decision-making roles would be essential.</p> <p>Options 2 and 3 reduce governance risk through clearer structural separation and/or smaller boards. There is reputational risk should conflict of interest not be properly managed under any trustee model. There is asset risk under a leasing model if repairing obligations and compliance responsibilities are not clearly defined.</p> <p>Disposal carries strategic risk through permanent loss of a community asset.</p> |
| Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration: | No direct implications. |
| Crime and Disorder: | No direct implications. |
| Consultation & Communication: | <p>Further engagement will be required with Members to determine appetite for trustee roles.</p> <p>Should a mixed or independent trustee model be preferred, a transparent recruitment process and wider community communication strategy will be required.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement will be important to maintain public confidence in the chosen governance route.</p> |
| Procurement: | No direct implications. |

Legal:

Any CIO structure must comply with charity law and Charity Commission requirements.

Councillors acting as trustees must understand the legal distinction between their statutory role under the Local Government Act 1972 and their duties as charity trustees.

Any lease or disposal must comply with local government legislation relating to land transactions and best consideration requirements.

Appropriate data protection arrangements would need to be established for any new charitable entity.