

PATRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Councillor Mrs H Murphy

Clerk: Mrs Diane Chapman

Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting of Patrington Parish Council

Held in Village Hall, Church Lane, Patrington

On Thursday 9th April 2026 at 7.00pm

COUNCILLOR PRESENT: Mrs H Murphy(Chair), Mr T Bearpark ,Mr J Edmunds, Mr M Heap, Mrs K Mckinley, Mrs C Lythe, Mrs J Ralph, Mr D Snaith, Mr M Theaker and Mr C Tuplin

Guests: Mrs E Sansam and Mrs P West

171) **PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS:** Mrs E Sansam thanked the Parish Council for taking the storm damaged tree down on Westgate Manor and asked the meeting who owned the Land that the tree was on as there are two more trees that need attention. The Clerk said the land belonged to the Crown. Mrs Sansam asked if we have any contact details and the Clerk will try to find this information and will send a letter to her with the details.

172) **APOLOGIES :** Cllr R Snaith

173) **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREDJUDICIAL INTERESTS :** NONE

174) **WESTGATE MANOR – Removal of trees.**

The Chair read out a report of what had happened on the evening of Thursday 12th March.

On the evening of Thursday 12th March I was advised by Mark Sansam that a tree on westgate Manor had blown down in gales and just missed his house.

He had contacted ERYC who said it wasn't their responsibility and contact the Parish Council. He telephone Diane and Adam said she was on holiday so he contacted me.

Mr Sansam had called Ally at the fire brigade who said they wouldn't come out.

I went down to see how bad it was and Mark (Cllr Theaker) offered to come down too. I must say I was disappointed with the lack of reaction on the WhastApp group.

The tree had fallen and had landed on another tree which was much bigger than the other and if that had gone down it would have gone into Mrs Sansams house where his daughter sleeps.

I did think about asking local farmers to come and clear it but I wanst sure about liability. It was unsure who the land belonged to at this time.

Mark(Cllr Theaker) knew James Farmerys phoned number so called him.

He came from Easington where he was working. I told him to make it safe as I felt – as a parish Council- we had a responsibility to keep our resdients safe.

I thought the price he quoted was a little expensive however I consultated with Mark and in the circumstances agreed to get a professional at short notice.

Mark(Cllr Theaker) and I Meet Yorkshire Tree Surgery at 8am the following morning who said the remaining tree was also rotten they would remove that too.

Signed D Snaith Date 11/5/2026

I then called Jonas Carter in York who manage Crown estate land. They said it doesn't belong to the Crown. I then searched land registry etc. but kept drawing blanks. I called into Frank Hill and son although I knew Ralph was off sick but James overheard me telling the receptionist the issue. He was helpful and he explained that if a land owner dies in intestate any land they own will revert to the state. This is not the case on Westgate Manor. It is owned by James Roberts Management Limited who went into liquidation many years ago. One of the partners passed away and the other Roy Cromie lives in New Zealand. This makes this piece of land no mans land. Therefore I don't think there is the possibility of recouping any of the money.

As you all know I am usually very aware that this is tax payers money but felt a responsibility to our residents and their safety so I stand by mine and Marks decision.

The meeting discussed Cllr Murphys statement. The Parish Council understand they were concerned for the safety of the residents but it was on private land and financial and standing orders have to be followed. Cllr Murphy explained she had to make a quick decision and was concerned for the safety of the residents.

The Clerk read out a report ;

She had been on holiday but had seen the WhatsApp message that Cllr Murphy had put on the Councillors WhatsApp group a 17.22pm (messages in Italic)

We have a a big tree that has fallen down westgate manor almost onto my house it currently resting against a much bigger tree which is also looking very unsafe and leaning towards our house . Iv rang the council and they said the land doesn't belong to them and to get in touch with pattrington parish council. As they will know who the land belongs too

I've just had this from mark Sansam

Does anyone know who the land belongs to please to?

I had replied to Cllr Murphy via Facebook messenger at 18.29pm and said

Hi Helen I am not putting it on the group chat but Westgate manor has nothing to do with us either. It's an ongoing problem with residents who live or there. The Land wasn't adopted by ERYC and is private land so Parish do not have to do anything. ERYC always say contact Parish. The owners of the land went bankrupt so really the crown owns it. The Parish does not have the right or funds to remove the tree and Mark Sansam and other residents on Westgate manor will have to pay for the removal or the tree or get someone to do it for free for the firewood xx

Cllr Murphy replied

James Farmery and Cllr Theaker have looked and I have give the go ahead and we will foot the bill. Its dangerous sorry but I had to make a decision.

We exchanged a few more messages and then I told her to tell the other Parish councillors what she had done which she did at 18.42 with this message.

Signed D Snaith Date 11/5/2026

The tree that has come down, I'm sorry if I've made the wrong decision but I've told James farmery to take it down. It's really dangerous ,Nobody owns the land but I just want to keep our parishioners safe,It's £1500 plus the vat which we can claim back.

The Chair interrupted the Clerk and read out her letter of resignation stating my working relationship with our Parish Clerk has become untenable. Cllr Murphy left the room at 7.20pm and said send the bill to me.

Cllr Edmunds took over as Chair at 7.21pm.

The Clerk then continued with her verbal report;

Cllr Murphy and Cllr Theaker have authorised work on private land. Patrington Parish Council are not responsible for trees on private land/property and the Clerk informed Cllr Murphy of this. They have not shown due diligence.

They have spent public money and not followed the correct procedure. They instructed Mr James farmer verbally to remove the trees and have no authority to do this. The Financial regulation and Standing Orders clearly state this and the Chair advised Cllr Murphy of this.

Financial regulations

5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.

5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

Standing order 25 a (i) and (ii)

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
 - i inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

The only time a payment can be authorised without a meeting is by the Clerk and it would be in accordance with 5.18 of Financial regulations.

5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter. The trees were not on Council premises and no risk to council services. The cost of the removal of the trees is 3% of the Parish council precept.

At no time did either Cllr Murphy or Cllr Theaker ask the Councillors on the WhatsApp group if they should make the decision or tell them that both trees had been taken down. The Clerk knew both trees had been taken down by a post on Facebook and then received an invoice for payment on 16/3/2026.

The Clerk had spoken to Cllr Murphy on Thursday 31st March with Cllr J Edmunds present and explained to Cllr Murphy that she was concerned that they had not followed procedure. Cllr Murphy said she would do everything again and did not have time to follow procedure and she had to make a decision. The meeting discussed what should have happened and how this can be resolved.

Signed D Snaith Date 11/5/2026

It was unanimously agreed the Clerk would get further advice from SLCC regarding payment of the invoice. We are a small community and the parish council do not want to have to make James wait for payment. The meeting understand that they were thinking of the safety of one house and the four residents. Councillor Theaker and Cllr Murphy did not follow the correct procedure and policy. The Parish Council have to be transparent when spending public money. The invoice is on the April Parish Meeting Agenda for payment for approval. If this did not happened, we would have to speak to James Farmery.

The meeting agreed it was a shame Cllr Murphy had resigned and she had being a good chair and done a lot for the village.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.40 pm.

Signed D Snaith (Chair)

Date 11/5/2026