

Kirkby Fleetham with Fencotes Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Annual Meeting – 18 May 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: Mr Jones, Mr Walker, Mrs Herbert, Mr Lamperd and 1 Resident.

1. Apologies

Mrs Edwards-Heathcote and County Councillor Wilkinson.

2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 19 May 2022 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting proceedings and signature agreed upon.

Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Herbert.

3. Chairman's Report

I am proud to be able to present the annual report, for what has been my first term as Chairman of the Parish Council. Over the last 12 months, it has been very much business as usual, but I would like to focus my report on several key issues of interest that have been raised or concluded within this reporting period.

Parish Council

We began this term in office with just three Parish Councillors. In May of last year, at the Parish and Town Council elections, only three applicants put their names forward for our parish; Councillors Anne Herbert, Chris Walker and myself.

The composition of the Parish Council is for five councillors and a Parish Clerk / RFO. We advertised extensively for volunteers to be co-opted onto the Parish Council as councillors. Using all mediums available to us; Social Newsletter, InfoNet, notice boards and word-of-mouth. Initially, our advertisement campaign was not successful. But with the turn of a new year, our fortunes changed. In successive months we welcomed two new councillors to the Parish Council.

In February, Alison Edwards-Heathcote was received onto the council, and John Lamperd, joined in March to fill the one outstanding vacancy, so the Parish Council now has its full complement of five councillors. Alison and John, have a plethora of experience and skills that they bring to the team. I would publicly, like to extend my congratulations and a warm welcome to Alison and John to the Parish Council.

Royal Events

The last 12 months will go down as one of the most seismic in the history of the British royal family with the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II just months after she celebrated her record seventh decade as monarch. Then the recent coronation of HM King Charles III.

In February 2022, Queen Elizabeth, marked 70 years on the throne, with four days of parish celebrations following in early summer.

But there were already signs the Queen's health was failing and she only appeared for a couple of her Platinum Jubilee events. On 8 th Sept, just two days after she was pictured appointing her 15th prime minister, the only monarch most Britons had ever known - died at her Scottish home in Balmoral.

The coronation of King Charles III took place on Saturday 6 May 2023, kicking off a weekend of events and celebrations in the parish.

St Andrew's Church Sale

The sale of St Andrew's church, with the change of use to a dwelling house, has progressed in the last 12 months. Design planning applications for residential conversion of the existing church premises were granted by HDC, Planning Committee in September.

Concurrently the Parish Council received the St Andrew's Pastoral Scheme, Process Notes and Public Notice from the Church Commissioners for England. A drop-in session took place in July, in the Village

Hall at which members of the Commissioners' and Diocesan staff were available to answer any questions those attending had about the proposals. Individuals could then submit a representation to the Diocese.

In October the Bishop of Leeds published his views on the comments received within the notice period. The case was to be considered on the papers alone; with no oral representation. The Diocese's Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee considered the representations made about this draft scheme at its meeting in October. In November, the Diocese of Leeds confirmed they were satisfied that it would be right to allow the sale of St Andrew's Church and part of the annexed land for residential purposes to proceed.

The Bishop also set out his understanding that the proposal could lead to the relocation of a maximum of 35 tombstones. But that it is not proposed to disturb human remains and that the prospective purchaser had indicated the intention to mark the location of each memorial with a ground marker. In this case, the Commissioners' Case Officer has also agreed to hold a further public meeting to set out the proposals for the relocation of the tombstones when these have been confirmed.

St Andrew's Churchyard

Hambleton District Council conducted a stability test of memorials at St Andrew's in May 2022. During which 36 memorials were laid flat. The Chair of the Parish Council met with the Corporate Facilities Manager at HDC to discuss the issue. Hambleton District Council commissioned a memorial mason to help prepare a full report on the memorials that were laid flat, which supported the preparation of a recovery plan. The Parish Council were invited to contribute to the development of the Hambleton District Council approach.

All but one of the memorials have now been repaired. The final memorial stone is awaiting receipt of the replacement stone, thereafter it will be engraved and repositioned within the graveyard.

National Lottery Heritage Grant

The Parish Council have successfully been awarded a National Lottery Heritage grant for the Commemorative Garden Space at the Parish Cemetery (Includes the build of a Lychgate) to the value of £46,087. The project involves the community coming together to build upon work that has already been undertaken. The Project Lead will be Parish Councillor, Chris Walker.

Formally thank, Alison Booth and Chris Walker for their determination in applying for, and securing this grant. Now the hard work of delivering the project begins.

Vehicle Activated Speed Sign

Following on from the Speed Survey, undertaken by Highways on behalf of the Parish Council; councillors agreed to procure a Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS) for this parish. With the aim of reducing vehicle speeds and improving road safety.

It is proven that the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs is an effective tool to reduce traffic speeds, both on village entrances and Community Speed Watch areas.

A grant of £2,000 was secured from NYCC to go towards the cost of the sign and its installation. The VAS was installed in Great Fencote in January of this year. The data from passing traffic will be downloaded periodically and analysed, with a view to informing other road safety management initiatives.

Solar Farm Community Grant

The Solar Farm Community grant, secured from Lightsource BP, is a one-off payment made to the Parish Council to be applied for the benefit of the communities of this parish. With payments being made to approved projects agreed upon by a meeting of the parish councillors. Grants for this financial year that have been awarded and funded are as follows:

1. £250 – Book printing of St Mary's Church monumental inscriptions and their stories
2. £472 – 4x Portable Display Boards for the History Group

3. £2015 – 2x Goalposts and Nets, Village Green

Formally awarded (yet to receive funding):

4. £6000 – Lychgate, Parish Cemetery
5. £5000 – Groundworks St Mary's church parking
6. £3000 – History Room Extension, Village Hall
7. £3000 – External Decoration, Village Hall
8. £2317 – Vehicle Activated Speed Sign

Funds Remaining; circa £28,000

Playground

The establishment of outdoor play equipment for use by children of early years and primary school ages in Kirkby Fleetham remains a priority of the Parish Council.

Community play areas provide great opportunities for parents and grandparents to bond with children in a physically engaging way that indoor activities can't. Good play spaces can give children the freedom to play creatively together; allowing them to experience risk, challenge, excitement and fun.

Securing appropriate leased real estate or the explicit permission of landowners to host the play equipment, is an obstacle that we are yet to overcome. But do be assured, this goal will remain a high priority for this council.

Unitary Authority

On 1 April 2023 a new unitary council, North Yorkshire Council, was launched for North Yorkshire. This new council replaces the seven former district and borough councils.

North Yorkshire Council have developed a Draft Parish Charter, defining the relationship between the new North Yorkshire Council and the parish sector, setting out how North Yorkshire Council and parishes will work together in partnership. This Parish Council provided detailed feedback on the draft charter, during its consultation phase.

The development of the parish charter will be a staged process. Once the initial version is adopted it will be reviewed and updated after six months and thereafter on an annual basis.

With the demise of Hambleton District Council; District Councillor Brian Phillips took this opportunity to retire. Brian's contribution to Hambleton District Council was outstanding, his 23 years of public service is a remarkable achievement. His retirement is a huge loss to this council and we shall miss his sage advice and good counsel.

Finance

In a moment the RFO will outline the Parish Council finances for 2022/23 in some detail. But I would like to briefly raise the issue of the parish precept. Which has increased by £400 in each of the previous two years; 2022/23 and 2023/24. With the precept now standing at £7800.

Other than grants for bespoke projects, the precept is the only means by which this Parish Council can raise funds. In the last two financial years, we have run a deficit, whereby our expenses are greater than the income levels. The projection, with inflation, interest rate rises and cost of living would suggest that going forward, for this financial year that this trend is going to be repeated. We do have a small reserve, but using the reserve each year is not sustainable. Further precept increases will almost certainly be required in the medium term.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of our Councillors and our Parish Clerk for the support and commitment they have afforded me during this past year.

4. Financial Report

Parish Council Account

The starting balance at the beginning of the financial year 2022/23 was £7,570, excluding the Solar Farm Community Fund. During the year, £8,765 was spent on the Parish, this included maintenance costs, grass cutting, hedge cutting, wages, village hall rental, insurance and election expenses etc.

The Parish received a Precept of £7,400, a £2,000 grant, and a further £671 income. £605 of that income was monies owed to the Burial Authority and was subsequently transferred in the following financial year.

Income (less grants)	£8,071
Expenditure	£8,765
Surplus / Deficit	£ -694

At the end of 2022/23, £8,875 (excluding the Solar Farm Community Fund) was carried forward in the Parish Council Account.

Burial Authority Account

The starting balance at the beginning of the financial year 2022/23 was £15,652.

The Burial Authority received £2,650 in income and spent £2,320 this included maintenance costs, grass cutting, hedge cutting and loan costs. At the end of 2022/23, £15,982 was carried forward in the Burial Authority Account.

Summary

That leaves a total surplus in both accounts of £22,252. In 2012 councillors agreed to hold a contingency fund of £3,000 for unforeseen expenditures. This leaves a balance of £19,252 between the two accounts available for future developments or improvements.

6. Open Discussion

St Andrew's Churchyard

The local History Group requested could the Parish Council contact the Church Commissioners' Office for an official update on the moving of headstones and the proposed public meeting. The Councillors agreed and Cllr Jones will draft a letter.

Highways

A resident has written to the Council to request that the Council notify Highways that the broken white lines at the end of the green near Lowfields House are faded and in need of repainting, as motorists are not giving way to traffic approaching the village green. There is also no giveaway sign approaching the junction. There has been a spate of recent near misses at the junction. The Clerk is to notify Highways, North Yorkshire Council.

The meeting closed at 7:30 pm.