

Kirkby Fleetham with Fencotes Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Annual meeting – 21 May 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: C Walker (Chair), R Henderson and M Wall. Parish Clerk/RFO: N Lowe. Public in attendance: Fourteen.

1. Apologies

Cllr Lamperd, Cllr Alison and County Councillor Wilkinson. The Council accepted this apologies.

2. Minutes of the Parish Annual Meeting held on Thursday, 15 May 2025

Were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting proceedings and signed. Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Wall.

3. Chairman's Report

Once again we come to the beginning of a new parish council year and time to recap on what has happened over the last 12 months. Last May my fellow councillors were kind enough to agree to me continuing as chairman and I will continue to offer my service to this role if that remains your wish when we vote in the Annual Parish Council meeting straight after this one. This last year has been a mixture of mundane business as usual and a few more significant matters for the council's attention. I will not bore you all with the mundane stuff but will try and briefly summarise the more pertinent issues that have been addressed this last year.

We reached our full complement of 5 parish councillors last year and I am pleased that all have made it through and continue to steadfastly serve our local community, I feel very confident that we have an excellent panel of councillors all with valuable skills and enthusiasm for the year ahead.

In no special order these are some of the key matters that have been dealt with or concluded within this reporting period.

Last year I reported that we had submitted our final report and summary of expenditure for the Commemorative Garden Space National Lottery Project, including the lych gate at the Parish Cemetery. I can confirm that the Lottery authorities agreed all of our submitted reports and expenditure summaries and the entire project was signed off as complete and successful. We were subsequently encouraged to submit an application for a North Yorkshire Council Community Award for Collaborative Spirit in achieving the project, this we did with much help from the wider project team and I am pleased to tell you that we were awarded a Highly Commended Certificate for our efforts, sorry to say no financial reward though.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial if a better form of liaison between our farmers and other landowners could be established and to this end we facilitated the setting up of a WhatsApp group to provide a medium for the sharing of important information of common interest and importance to them.

Regarding St. Andrew's Church, last year we reported that the sale of the Church, with approved change of use to a dwelling house was fully complete. Since then no work has been performed. More significantly, the owner decided to not go ahead with his project and to put the Church up for sale. Its current status is somewhat unclear since there is doubt over whether it has been sold. We have endeavoured to find out more and to encourage the owner to both tidy up the site by regularly cutting the grass and by asking that the metal fence be removed until such time as it is actually needed.

We continue to maintain the grass at St Mary's Church and are happy with the work done by our contractor to date on grass, wildflower areas and yew hedging. The Church committees, with some assistance from the Parish Council, is seeking grants from various bodies to fund the significant restoration works needed to allow it to remain open.

The Solar Farm Community grant was secured from Lightsource BP, to be applied for the benefit of the communities of this parish. Grants for this financial year that have been awarded and funded are as follows: 1. £188 for a new Yorkshire Rose flag for the flagpole at the village hall, 2. £5000 toward the restoration project for St. Mary's Church.

On local transport and community support, I would like to thank John Lamperd for his tireless work in highlighting local public transport needs and campaigning for their improvement together with his promoting other support services that are available. This included setting up two separate drop in sessions in the Village hall hosted by Hambleton Action and a number of other local charities. The Fleetham & Fencotes Outings Group has been a great success and is a great credit to John. We hope someone will soon step in the take over from John in organising future events.

Following the closure of the Kirkby Fleetham Church of England school and in view of the uncertainty over the future of the building, the Parish Council sought to establish the school house and attached cottage as an Asset of Community Value. We submitted an application to North Yorkshire Council and it was approved. Sadly the legal decision is that the 1856 indenture document which includes a reversion clause has meant that the building will be returned to the descendants of the original giver and so cannot have a future role as a place of education. The Langton on Swale Educational Foundation are working hard to secure the future of the School Cottage such that their charitable work on education can continue to benefit from the property.

We were informed that, under Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return process, we are required to ensure that our documentation and communication systems meet precise new standards and that our website meets the necessary accessibility standards. This has now been achieved by successfully migrating our emails to an .org.uk address. We particularly thank Nathen for his valuable work on this which is something I suspect the rest of us may have struggled with. Particular thanks also go to Margaret Wilson for her extensive work on the website accessibility. The improved layout is excellent and appears to work very well.

Most of the planning applications which have come to us for comments have been uncontroversial and dealt with in a straightforward manner. The most significant application has been the detailed plans for the Black Horse development including additional rooms, service buildings and lodge accommodation. The developer hosted a public exhibition in the Village Hall at the end of July. Parish Councillors attended and endeavoured to learn as much about the plans as possible and also to gauge the strength of public feeling. It was soon very evident that there is a strong body of concern at the impact it will have on the community and so we facilitated a public meeting in August to listen to the views, both of opposition and support from the significant number of attendees. At the beginning of April, the full application became public and a very large number of people have since shared their views with us directly and also by submissions to the North Yorkshire Planning Office. The Parish Council has submitted its own detailed response and we now await news from the planners to confirm our request that the matter be dealt with in a meeting of the full planning committee.

The other potentially controversial application is for a plan to construct a Battery Energy Storage facility on land north of Fencedike lane. The land actually sits within both our parish and Scruton's and

so both parishes will be submitting responses with a fair amount of inter-parish liaison. This plan has not yet been formally submitted but the developer did host a drop in exhibition in Scruton Village hall in October which was well attended by public and councillors from both parishes. We will ensure that the community are made aware of the detailed plans as soon as they are made public.

In a moment Nathen, as Responsible Financial Officer, will outline the Parish Council finances for 2025/26 in some detail. But firstly, I would like to briefly mention the issue of the parish precept. Other than grants for bespoke projects, the precept is the only means by which this Parish Council can raise funds. In the last financial year our expenses and income levels were very closely aligned. Recognising the fact that we assessed that we should have sufficient income from the current precept it was agreed that we do not need to seek any increase and so it remains at £8400 for the 2026-27 financial year.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of our Councillors, Alison, John, Michael and Richard and of course Nathen for the support and commitment you have provided to me during this past year. Thank you all.

4. Financial Report

Income

The main source of income continued to be the annual precept. Additional income was received from bank interest, VAT refund and minor receipts. The Parish Council received a grant from North Yorkshire Council towards the costs for the defibrillator in Little Fencote. Overall income was consistent with the previous financial year minus the money received from the National Lottery for the Heritage project.

Expenditure

Expenditure primarily related to routine operating costs, including the Clerk's salary, HMRC payments, insurance, loan repayments and maintenance of parish assets such as grass cutting and Parish Cemetery. There were no significant unexpected costs.

Financial Position

Parish Council:

Income (less grants)	£9,998
Expenditure	£9,062
Surplus	£936
Closing Balance	£11,127

The Burial Authority started the year with a balance of £12,308 and closed with a balance of £11,431, resulting in a deficit of £876 for the year.

The Council's reserves remain at a satisfactory level and are considered appropriate to support future commitments and contingencies.

Governance and Controls

Financial records have been maintained throughout the year and regularly reported to the Council. Bank reconciliations have been completed and verified. The accounts have been prepared and agreed upon ready for submission as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Outlook

Looking ahead, the Council expects costs to remain broadly stable, although ongoing commitments such as maintenance and service agreements will continue to be monitored. The current level of

reserves is considered sufficient, and no immediate financial concerns have been identified which is why the Parish Council took the decision not to increase the Parish Precept.

5. Open Discussion

Black Horse Planning Application

A member of the public read out a correspondence from a resident that wasn't at the meeting. In reference to the Parish Council April 2026 meeting minutes "In line with many objections raised, we agree that the development might be less unacceptable to the community if it was made smaller by a meaningful reduction in the number of lodges. The group have agreed that it is the whole of the development we object to. Not a scaled down version".

It was highlighted that the object figure is incorrect on the planning portal. A lot of the emailed objections don't appear to be added to the figure. It was thought this might be because of the planning portal being down over the last bank holiday weekend.

Residents feel like the Parish Council have let them down in the handling of the planning application and feel that the Parish Council should formally support them in opposing the development.

The Parish Council will look at submitting a supplementary response to North Yorkshire Council emphasising the very substantial level of opposition and urging the planners to take it into account and to particularly look more critically at a number of issues including the highways, drainage and padel noise.

Grass cutting

The grass cutting contractors were commended for the good job they are doing.

Slurry Tankers

A resident raised the concern of the number of slurry tankers travelling through the villages, specifically on a night. The Parish Council confirmed they would look into the issue.

30 MPH Sign, Lumley Lane

A resident asked if the 30-mph sign on Lumley Lane, Kirkby Fleetham, could be relocated further outside the village boundary to help reduce the speed of traffic into the village.

The Councillors confirmed that they have already tried requesting this in the past but agreed for the Clerk to contact Highways and again request the relocation.

The meeting closed at 7:53 pm.