

SCORTON PARISH COUNCIL

The normal monthly meeting held on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Scorton War Memorial Institute.

Present: - Cllrs Rafelt, Threlfall, Richardson, Calvert, Terry & Robson, North Yorkshire Cllr Les, Mark Lillie (Environment Agency), Alan Coe (REMS), 2 MOP

- 1) Apologies. Cllr Harper, PCSO Brown, Representatives from Save Scorton Lakes & Scorton Medical Centre
- 2) Declarations of interest. None
- 3) Approval of minutes dated 23rd October. It was resolved to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.
- 4) Mark Lillie (Environment Agency) attending to discuss the care of Bridge Green. Mr Lillie attended a site meeting with Cllrs Calvert, Threlfall, Robson, Harper & Terry on 24th October, he highlights the discussions at that meeting. Scorton is not on the 'hot' list for flooding, he shares plans of the area. Re: becksides cutting, the Environment Agency would not promote the cutting of the becksides, however they understand that this may be required for aesthetics and activities, notwithstanding they highlight that tight mowing would be damaging to ecology and may lead to bare ground which can lead to invasive species taking hold. Another suggestion is rotation management, ie, mow one section, leave one section. Giant hogweeds discussed, Cllr Calvert targeted new growth last Spring, EA will put actions in place at the section further upstream to reduce spread. Seed bank can survive for up to 20 years. EA happy to remove trees/large branches from the beck, clerk to use What3Words when notifying, they will check the downstream section for fallen trees and may reduce canopies. Filming of meeting in progress, clerk asks each member of the public if they consent to being filmed. Mark Lillie discusses dredging and this is the last resort as causes more harm than good, not sustainable as requires continual work and doesn't ease flooding. Over engineered channels are poor, as they leave a sediment when flow low – staggered platforms can be a solution. Alan Coe adds that the meandering causes issues with water courses cutting into land. A permit is required for dredging but not likely to be granted at Bridge Green. Flood defences discussed, Mollie Cail park flood defence will be checked by EA. Cllr Richardson queries about public liability and the giant hogweed, the risk and the schedule of spraying. EA - the Land Owner has responsibility & clerk to check with contractor about their permit for spraying, however area seems to be managed well in relation to giant hogweeds currently. Cllr Robson asks about the willow tree, as two large branches have come away this year, we can trim these without a permit; pollarding discussed in relation to willows and this could be useful to encourage strong growth. Cllr Threlfall highlights Highways and flooding especially Scotch & A1; EA explains that they were involved with the widening of the A1 and many actions were taken to reduce flooding on A1 and Catterick village. He notes that the flooding in 2012 was a one-off event. Cllrs thank Mark Lillie for attending and he leaves.
- 5) Crime Report. October report received, keeping safe around Christmas advice – clerk to put on Facebook. Cllr Robson highlights concern about anti-social behaviour around the village, clerk has informed PCSO Brown.
- 6) Matters raised by the members of the public. MOP discusses previous incident/use of Mac Plant. He reads an email from Carl Battersby, NYC suggesting that the PC worked in a dangerous manner. He adds that the risk assessment from Mac Plant was wrongly dated and fraudulent, also the letter sent from the clerk to NYC was wrongly dated. Cllrs state that this has all been discussed at length previously and if there are problems remaining about the PC, then to contact the Monitoring Officer. MOP asks if Mac Plant will still be used, Cllrs reply that they will. MOP will return to this topic.
- 7) Updates from North Yorkshire Councillor, Tarmac representative, Save Scorton Lakes, Scorton Surgery.

Alan Coe gives his report: The reserve continues to flourish, with many visitors enjoying the site. The summer was slow to arrive and generally wetter, this has affected species numbers across the country. Site works have been kept to minimal to reduce disturbance in the wildlife areas. Archaeological reports given to PC, clerk to distribute. A positive recent meeting with NYC planning, ecology and landscape, which reviewed compliance to planning requirements and the restoration and aftercare scheme. A site visit was arranged with Nosterfield Nature Reserve, another was arranged with NYC Highways, with reference to Public Rights of Way. Many actions have taken place, and some disturbing incidents where a dog attacked sheep on the Bolton pasture, with one fatality and many injured – another attack happened shortly after; Cllr Calvert highlights that there is a small section of the fencing in that area which hasn't any barbed wire, Alan Coe will look at this. The Dexter cows were attacked by dogs on another occasion. Work planned: information boards, footpath improvements for disabled users, removal of fencing, habitat works, tree guard removal, tidy area around wind vane. Cllr Calvert asks if all the footpaths will be PROW, Alan Coe, no not all. Alan's Way is often waterlogged, unfortunately the water table is high at that point. NYC will forward a final restoration report, this will be forwarded to PC. Cllr Richardson asks if a circular walk will be provided around Scorton Water (nearest lake to the garage), Alan Coe states that this is doubtful as nearby householders were against this. Cllr Rafelt thanks for donating towards the village Christmas tree last year and asks if he would like to repeat, Alan Coe (REMS) will donate £200. Cllrs thank Alan for this and appreciate him attending PC meetings. Alan Coe leaves.

North Yorkshire Cllr Les report. Traffic lights at Gatherley Road will be fixed soon. Housing targets increased, the provisional figures for North Yorkshire = 4350/year, NYC has stated that this is not possible and may incur fines if target not reached. Local Plan review, currently at call for sites, 1500 sites have come forward so far. PC will be consulted on the draft Local Plan. Boundary Consultation, Cllr Les suggests that our boundary may change, to include part of Richmond, Gilling West, Middleton Tyas, Easby, Brompton, Ellerton, Uckerby, Bolton, Brough St Giles. The name may change to Richmond & Gilling West, Cllrs felt this was not representative of the area and clerk to add this comment to the consultation. Heritage streetlamp on Hospital Road, this is missing and presumed blew off in high wind. Clerk reported, temporary lamp put on column, checked with Ian Dawson (NYC) and a replacement will cost £500. Cllr Les happy to provide a grant from his Locality funding, clerk to order and ask for checks on all the heritage lamps in Scorton to assure stability. Cllr Les leaves.

- 8) Updates from previous meetings. Dog fouling - Jubilee green. Clerk spoke with Dog Warden; he suggested a letter drop to whole of Glebe Meadows or maybe ban dogs from area by gating other entrance. Cllr Threlfall is uncomfortable targeting specific households; we could put in the next S&D Times. Cllr Robson asks if we could request signs explaining about the specific health dangers of dog fouling, a resident asks if these signs could be placed on Bridge Green and also down the lane by the hospital. Clerk to discuss with Dog Warden and place an article in the S&D Times.

9) Accounts

Balance at 27/11/24 £24,248.45 (Internal controls checked by Cllrs)

Outgoing:

- Tesco (Mobile phone contract) £7.50
- V Raven (Wages November) £707.21
- British Legion (Donation) £150.00
- BT (Broadband) £45.19
- YLCA (Training) £140.40
- Defib Warehouse (Defib pads) £77.82
- Unity Bank (Charges) £11.40

Quote for grass cutting 2025. Quote for 2025 (single year contract) £6737.23 + VAT. Three year contract 2025 £6602.49, 2026 £6866.59, 2027 £7141.25, it was resolved to accept the three year contract.

Discussion about becksides cut not being carried out as our tender requirements, Cllr Richardson suggests specific dates for these to be cut, to be discussed before grass cutting starts again.

NALC Local Government Pay agreement. 1/4/24 – 31/03/25, Clerk on Scale 20, was 15.75/hour, with pay agreement 16.37/hour. It was resolved to accept this pay agreement.

Donation for British Legion. It was resolved to increase the donation to £150 this year.

Precept decision & Forecast 25/26. Forecast distributed to Cllrs, discussion about potential projects for next year, some could be delayed, also discussed the new NI contributions required by employers from April 25. It was decided to increase the precept to cover all the projects – clerk to send request for £18,500 for 25/26. This will increase the precept for a Band D property by 6% or £54.23/annually. This information to be included in the next S&D Times.

10) Planning items

- Certificate of Lawfulness proposed for alterations to kitchen & bathroom to form an enlarged kitchen and conversion of garage to form a bedroom/shower room, including installation of window in place of garage door and new pitched roof at St Clares View, High Row. No objections.

11) To discuss communications within the Parish Council & ideas for Scorton & District Times. Cllr Robson suggests using an app such as WhatsApp for some PC communications, some issues discussed. Are we doubling up communications? Cllr Robson to research for discussion at January meeting.

Some ideas for S&D Times, Precept decision, dog fouling, Curlew rides, maybe information about British Legion collection from service, defib at Bolton, WI, What3Words, introduction of new Cllrs, Christmas tree donation.

12) Safety review

- RDC – play equipment inspection. No new items.

13) Feedback from meetings attended by Councillors/Clerk. Cllr Threlfall attended YLCA Branch meeting, 2 speakers: NYC Parish Liaison & Anchor Organisation from Leyburn, who discussed Emergency planning. The Joint Executive Board meeting resolved to reduce branch meetings from 3/year to one and also for Richmond branch to join with Hambleton. Richmondshire Branch are questioning this and feel that one meeting per year is inadequate, PCs need this independent support and branch meetings are a great way to keep up to date and share problems and solutions.

14) Report relating to minor parish issues since last meeting. Fly tipping at gravel heap, a resident reported and now cleared. Cllr Threlfall & Calvert reports pots holes around accesses, both Northside & Southside, contractors to action. Facebook blocked the agenda this time, reported back but waiting to hear.

15) Correspondence. NYC – Parish Liaison feedback & Locality funding success. Cllrs Robson, Terry, Harper, Threlfall & clerk attended the drop in for the Parish Liaison group, this new group is evolving and hopefully will be a good advocate for PCs. Locality funding of £300 for replacement of the bins in Mollie Cail park & the dog bin on Brompton Road. Boundary Commission – consultation. Discussed in item 7. The Parish of Easby, Skeeby, Brompton on Swale & Bolton on Swale – Christmas Tree Festival. It was resolved not to partake this year. YLCA – VE Day 8th May 2025. Clerk to add to forward planner - April

16) Date of next meeting – 29th January

Meeting closed: 22.30