

MINUTES OF THE EAST WITTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 07 May 2025 IN THE PARISH ROOM.

Present

Mrs M Fawbert	Retiring Chair
Mr Richard Wells	Chair
Mrs M de Vaal	Vice Chair
Mr A Fullerton	Councillor
Mrs C Dent	Councillor
Ms Sarah Sayer	Clerk to the Parish Council
Dr J Brown	Elizabeth Barnett Charity
Mr T Whitbread	Resident of East Witton

Item 1 Introduction and Apologies

Apologies were received from County Cllr Karin Sedgwick and Catherine Whitbread. The reasons were due to other commitments and were accepted.

Item 2 Re-election of Councillors

The Chair presented her letter of resignation, which was accepted by Councillors and stood down from the Parish Council. Heartfelt thanks were expressed for the many years of service both as Councillor and Chair, and a presentation of flowers was made to mark the occasion.

It was then necessary to propose a new Chair. Cllr Richard Wells was proposed by Michele de Vaal, and accepted the position. This will come up for re-election in 12 months' time. Clerk to notify Democratic Services of the new Chair and the Councillor vacancy. The Chair asked the rest of the Parish Council if they would remain, and all accepted as follows:

Vice Chair – Michele de Vaal
Councillor – Christine Dent
Councillor – Alan Fullerton.

The 'acceptance of office' papers were completed by the Chair and by Councillors at the meeting and signed by persons present. Clerk to retain on file. The Declarations of Interests Forms were distributed and will need to be sent to NYC as soon as possible.

Item 2a Elect the YLCA Parish Representative.

Cllr Dent to continue in this role.

Item 3 To note any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dent declared an interest in Item 6.
Sarah Sayer (Clerk and RFO) declared an interest in Item 7 of the Annual Meeting.

Item 4 Item 3 – Public Participation

No questions received prior to the meeting and no requests to speak.

Item 5 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

Item 6 Matters arising

- Road flooding A6108.

The Browns and Mr J Hills agreed to investigate the possible cause and used a digger to uncover various sections along the route of the water channel. The cause was discovered to be a collapsed flagstone, which had cracked in half and was blocking the outlet, which had since backed up with other debris and silt. The blockage was removed and we will wait for rain to see if this has been successful. It could do with Highways flushing it out to try and move the silt along, but in time this will probably back up and block the channel again. Cllr. Dent advised that Highways would probably not take any action until Autumn, but will contact them again to see if they can do something sooner. Cllr Fullerton to push the request forward with the Highways Engineer.

- Flooding on Braithwaite Lane.
The obstructions in the culverts are still there. The Estate had contacted EWPC in response to correspondence on the matter and advised (in an email dated 07 April 2025) that they would attend the site and resolve the issue. **Clerk to chase up Peter Casey/Catherine Greenwood to see if they have a date in mind.**
- Tractor movements - dates to publicise.
Richard Wells gave background information as to how the issue was raised initially (a few years ago). Explained that the process of speaking to the Dents about dates for tractor movements had enabled a Notice to be placed on the board, to give a little bit of advance notice to villagers. R Wells explained that this had worked well for a time. At the April PC Meeting Cllr Dent queried why only one farm was being asked to provide the dates, so the PC decided to ask Waterloo Farm too, as they use contractors in a similar way. After the background was explained, Julia Brown responded. The points are summarised below.

The Browns had felt upset by the letter which came totally out of the blue and without any context. Julia raised the issue that, in her professional experience, there is a need to treat everyone equally, so all the farms in East Witton should have been contacted. To single out only two farms was not treating everyone the same.

The Browns felt that in terms of the content of the letter, it was impossible to address the issue and give dates in advance. Farming doesn't work to a set pattern of dates.

The Browns, on a normal week, only use Lowthorpe twice a week on average. They crop for silage four times a year, one day at a time and they only know a few days beforehand when this will be. It is impossible to pinpoint. The days can also be subject to last minute delays or cancellation depending on the contractor and the weather. There was also uncertainty on what the Parish Council was asking and what they needed to know.

It was queried 'what would residents do with the information?'

Cllr Dent noted that cars parked too close to the road, and in some cases double parked, which made it difficult for tractors to pass, so queried what residents would do even if they knew of dates?

Cllr de Vaal noted that it is difficult to notify residents and that East Witton is, and always has been a working village and therefore residents needed to accept this.

Mrs Fawbert gave background into farming life in the village and how cows used to be on the green and animals moved through the village regularly.

It was agreed by all that it is very difficult to resolve this. East Witton is a rural village and farming is part of that.

The issue, when raised in the past, was to do with the contractors during silaging and also when slurry tanks were going up and down the village - the early warning was intended as a neighbourly thing to do.

What can we do to come up with a more effective system? Set up a WhatsApp group? Information of East Witton Facebook page? (A Taste of East Witton)? R Wells to look at this as part of being a more proactive PC.

Cllr Dent also said that the footpaths at Town End were not being used properly and people walked willy-nilly where they wanted.

- Rotary Club Donation

Seeds for the wildflower meadow were an option, but it has now been decided to replace one of the felled trees with a new tree once the stump has been satisfactorily treated. Hopefully plant in the Autumn.

Further discussion took place about the wildflower meadow. Paul and Pauline Hardill asked if the PC could raise awareness and gather more interest? It was really started as a community project, but no-one else has come forward to assist. R Wells will look at this as part of his role as Chair.

- Information Boards – Locality Budget?

Some interest in looking into the costs of an information board, but Councillors felt the money would be better spent on mending the Noticeboard. We will need quotes for the work if we wish to apply for funding. Decide who to contact?

Item 7

Grass Cutting Contract

To consider and approve the grass cutting contract for 2025/26 - GCH Garden Maintenance. (last year's costs - 01 Apr 2024 – 31 March 2025 was 15 x £160 = £2400. We can claim back VAT of £399.98, therefore annual sum is £133.34 per cut). There has been no notification that prices will increase for 2025/26.

It was resolved that we would continue as we are and the costs were noted. The Clerk has already asked the Contactor to stick to a maximum of 13 to 14 cuts per year. He is going to try and do that this year. And drop an October cut.

Item 8

Planning

- a. To consider planning applications received (Appendix 1) - NONE
- b. To consider any other planning related issue.

Cllr De Vaal raised an issue with a wooden storage box for wheelie bins outside No.31 and multiple cars are parked outside the property.

It was also raised that there are other items springing up outside houses, such as stones and logs demarcating property frontages and stones defining the curtilage of semi-detached houses.

This led to a query about ownership of historic areas of village green and liability.

Clerk to check the 25-year Lease maps and to contact the Estate to see if they own roadside verges/frontages or would encroachment of items onto the highway be a matter for NYC.

It was felt that a village-wide mailshot containing useful information could be sent out. R Wells advised waiting until after the Parish Room meeting, as some more suggestions may come out of that.

Item 9

Accounts

- a. To approve payments as detailed in Appendix 2
Resolved to approve the accounts as presented.
- b. To approve payments and receipts as detailed in Appendix 2
Resolved to approve the payments as presented.

Appendix 2		Sum
Payments since last papers	<u>Payments 2024/25</u>	
17/03/25	SL Sayer (Clerks Salary)	£274.86
17/03/25	HMRC	£68.60
02/04/25	TP Jones & Co LLP	£80.52
02/04/24	East Witton Parish Room	£48.00
05/04/25	Curtis Web Design & Hosting	£190.00
		<u>£661.98</u>
	<u>Payments 2025/26</u>	
07/04/25	Strutt & Parker - RENT	£1.00
07/04/25	YLCA annual subs	£148.00
07/04/25	GCH Garden Maintenance	£160.01
12/04/25	Zurich	£277.00
27/04/25	S Sayer - Web Domain DD	£9.59
		<u>£595.60</u>
2025/26	<u>Receipts</u>	
	Parish Precept	<u>£4250.00</u>

C - To note current budget situation as detailed in Appendix 3
Resolved to note the current budget situation as presented.

Appendix 3 - On-going 2025/26	Budget Situation
Income to date (£4250.00) plus balance b/f from 2024/25 of £963.39	£5,213.39
Expenditure to date 2025/26	£595.60
Balance	£4617.79

Item 10

Correspondence

a. To note correspondence received.

Clerk to reply to Cllr Sedgwick about the Street Lights still being on during the night.

Correspondence noted.

Correspondence received from 22/02/25 to 27/04/25

From	Description	Action
Nick, Julia, Michael & Stephen Brown	Emails regarding the PC letter relating to tractor movements	Circulated and Clerk responded.
Strutt & Parker	Braithwaite Lane – response to letter about blocked drainage channels.	Circulated
CPRE	Recruitment of new Trustees	Circulated
James Smith – Event Co-ordinator	A Foot in Two Dales 50 mile walk. Advance Notice of walk to take place on 19/20 July	Circulated
Electrical Safety First	Safety of Lithium-ion Batteries Campaign	Circulated
Neighbourhood Watch	5 Year Strategy ending Dec 2025. Survey to inform new strategy.	Circulated
YDNPA	Trees & Woodlands weekly updates	Circulated
YDNPA	Spring Parish Forum invitation	Circulated – R Wells to attend
YDNPA	Election of Parish Member to YDNPA – changes to eligibility criteria	Circulated
YDNPA	YDNPA Management Plan consultation	Circulated
Speed Cameras North Yorkshire	57 NY Councils signed up.	Circulated
Leyburn Police	Monthly crime reports	Circulated
Community Support Officer NY Police	Sign up to Community Alerts	Cllrs signed up
NYC Highways	Urban Grass cutting	Clerk replied to say we will cut our approaches again this year.
NYC Democratic Services	Richmondshire Area Committee Meeting 17 March 2025	Papers circulated
NYC	Parish Liaison Climate Change Webinar 30/04/25	Circulated
NYC	Consultation on Boundary review – Draft recommendations	Circulated
NYC	Sports Facilities research questionnaire	Clerk completed.
NYC	NY Parish Liaison Easter Holiday Activities	Circulated
YLCA	Training Bulletins	Circulated
YLCA	Civility & Respect Newsletters	Circulated
YLCA	Chief Executives Bulletins	Circulated
YLCA	White Rose Bulletins	Circulated
YLCA	Law & Governance Bulletin	Circulated
YLCA	Revised Standing Orders	Circulated

b. Correspondence sent from 22/02/25 to 27/03/25

Recipient	Description	Comments
Strutt & Parker	Clerk sent letter regarding the blocked drainage channels.	05/04/25

Brown, Waterloo Farm & Dent, Low Newstead	Clerk sent letter regarding potential known dates for tractor movements	05/04/25
GCH Garden Maintenance	Clerk sent email regarding number of cuts per year and to thank contractors for care of the VG over the past year.	02/04/25
Richmond Rotary	Email to advise that the village is not participating this year.	13/03/25

- Item 11 To note matters for information and items for next meeting agenda
- A6108
 - Braithwaite Lane
 - Review of Parish Council Functions – R Wells to prepare a paper.

- Item 12 To confirm date and time of next meeting
10th September 2025 at 7.30pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY PUBLIC QUESTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE CLERK AT LEAST 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING.

Signature.....

Date.....