

LONG PRESTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
THURSDAY 6TH April 2023
MINUTES

This meeting succeeded the ordinary parish council meeting and started at 7.30 pm.

Present: Long Preston Parish Council: Councillors James Bellis (Chairman), Steve Harris, Ann Kay, Liz Palmer, and Rob Wood; Parish Council Clerk Marijke Hill; representatives from Women's Institute, Churchyard Mowers, Parish Magazine Committee, Heritage Group, Village Hall Committee, May Day Committee, and Girl Guides; and four members of the public.

1. Apologies: North Yorkshire County Councillor Simon Myers; North Yorkshire National Park Authority Area Ranger Rob Ashford; North Yorkshire Police; and Parish Councillor Katy Attewell.

2. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th June 2022
The Chairman reported that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th June 2022 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr James Bellis.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

I begin this report by reflecting upon the previous 12 months, in which the geopolitical impacts of the war in Ukraine have been felt by everyone. No one can have escaped the constant references in the daily news to the "cost of living crisis" initiated in part but not entirely by the fuel and grain supply uncertainties from that unfortunate area of Eastern Europe. In addition there remains a degree of economic and political uncertainty in the post-Covid era. Food supply, staff and resource shortages have put pressures on the economy and therefore upon daily life that have not been experienced for 40 years.

That society's resilience has been so tested is unquestioned and in Long Preston the community has continued to do its best in so many areas and the people of Long Preston are fortunate for the efforts of all of its numerous community groups and individuals.

The current Long Preston Parish Council has now been in place for 11 months.

In May 2022 seven councillors were elected at the local elections to form a fully constituted parish council which replaced the interim council in place throughout the Covid period since October 2020. We have continued to be most ably assisted by Parish Council Clerk Marijke Hill, whose experience and breadth of understanding through her work with ours and two other parish councils makes her an invaluable asset to LPPC.

At this point I must record in particular and pay tribute to, District Councillor Chris Moorby who, despite much encouragement, has decided that after 11 years' service to the parish through his work as a Craven District Councillor and a total of nearly 40 years both as a District Councillor and a Parish Councillor, most recently a further period as Parish Councillor in the last year, it is time for him to retire from public service. The depth of his local knowledge and understanding allied to his determination to "get things done" combined to his empathy for local issues will be sorely missed. There will I hope, be an opportunity in the future to thank him for his

work on behalf of the village but here we must recognise his unstinting work on the playing fields pavilion, the infuriating issue of traffic and speed on the A65 and his facilitation of so many elements of daily life in the village that are taken for granted by the village, whether it be the service and maintenance of the Christmas Lights, the VAS sign which he personally campaigned for or the maintenance of the pavilion at the playing field.

Attendance:

Councillors loyally attended meetings throughout the year, with only 7 instances of apologies for attendance.

In addition, 45 members of the public attended meetings, remarkably similar to the 48 of the previous year and we are grateful for their positive participation and support.

The new unitary authority

The new North Yorkshire Council came into being on 1st April replacing Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council. Our representative is Councillor Simon Myers and we are grateful to him for his work and guidance on behalf of Long Preston.

The business of LPPC this year falls under the following set headings:

Finance, Planning, Fabric & Maintenance, Traffic & Parking, and Parish Activities.

Finance

The annual budget was set in November, as the basis for “setting the precept”. In parallel with the well-publicised rises in cost of living there are a number of rising costs which have risen. However, it was agreed that in light of the increases in cost of living being felt by parishioners that we should only increase our Precept request from £26,000 to £26,500, an increase of only 1.8%.

The annual accounts show that from the total receipts of £33,476 there was a total expenditure of £27,840. This created a variance of plus £5,636. In the previous year the Council had to make capital expenditure of £18,807 for the procurement of various major items.

Planning

At meetings during the past year the Council saw 19 planning applications of varying scales. Controversial planning matters will occur from time to time and these need to be handled with care and sensitivity toward all interested parties. There continues to be the unanswered question of the application for 99 holiday lodges and attendant ancillary buildings at the Hellifield Flashes site. This remains a matter of economic and environmental concern to members of both Long Preston and Hellifield parishes and is a matter close to Cllr Moorby’s heart! There is also the question of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority’s new Local Plan part of its objective is to identify sufficient land to meet a target of 50 new homes every year and 850 houses by 2040! Sites in Long Preston have been identified for discussion and these will need to be represented and discussed with care.

Fabric & Maintenance

The village is responsible for the maintenance of the extensive greens (all 12 of them), as well as the Playing Field, signage to protect them and for the maintenance

of the 15 benches that adorn them. We have undertaken an assessment of the benches and of the signage.

This has led to the commencement of a rolling program of bench restoration and refurbishment which will continue through this year. 3 benches have already been refurbished and the remaining benches will be completed as the lengthsmen's schedule of work allows.

Last summer, we saw the painting and reglazing of the telephone box so smartly brought up to scratch again. The final glazing panels for that were added recently and new lockable display boards are on order as I write. We look forward to the box being used by village, community groups to inform and raise interest in causes and issues that are of importance to them.

The considerable efforts of Councillors Wood and Moorby and a number of other volunteers there have continued to be significant progress made in the renovation of the playing field pavilion. We look forward to the pavilion and playing field area being a particular focus of the activity for "the Kings Big Help Out" on Bank Holiday Monday of the Coronation Weekend.

It was at the playing field in August that an incident whereby two children came into contact with stinging plants that had grown up during the unusually warm dry spells of that month. The Council made the immediate decision to close the playing field until the nature of hazard could be properly understood. The National Park Wildlife Conservation Officer and the Craven District Council Environmental Protection Officers were called in and it was confirmed that the plants in question were identified to be common hogweed. The advice immediately accepted was to trim the whole area of the surrounding margins of the playing field to remove any occurrences of any plant species that may in the unusual circumstances of such a hot dry summer, be harmful. This action was not taken lightly as much care had gone into nurturing the boundary areas of the playing field to encourage wild flora and fauna. However, our duty of care here overrode this concern. It was a useful exercise however, as it allowed the margins to be cleared out thoroughly of a quantity of scrap items in advance of the margins being allowed to grow back in a managed manner once more.

Subsequently much hard work has recently gone into the tidying of the areas around the pavilion and removing all the remaining detritus in the area of the former bonfires. I thank all the volunteers for their efforts with this work.

Lighting, Traffic & Parking

Lighting or the lack of it is an ongoing issue, in certain areas. The Council has been instrumental in funding or gaining funding for 2 new street lighting installations in recognition of public comment. The pole at the corner of the former Magna Print building was quickly erected and we await its connection by Electricity North West. Thanks to additional funding from Councillor Myers a further pole in Green Gate Lane is now in planning and will be erected soon. Further to these, the Council is looking into the feasibility of low level lighting on Todd Styles footpath to be funded in next year's budget.

All members of the village will continue to witness inappropriate behaviour by motorists passing through the village daily. The acquisition of the mobile VAS (Vehicle Activated Signage) has continued to yield revealing data which is becoming a most powerful tool in bringing pressure to bear upon, North Yorkshire Highways

and NYP in our campaign for fixed or average speed cameras on the A65. The data continues to tell us that there is a significant frequency of high speeds well in excess of the 30mph limit and that whilst the “average” may suggest differently, this data shows the average is an entirely inadequate measure to use when summarising traffic speeds. Unfortunately at this time it would seem that the policy in the county is still against fixed or average cameras but as anyone who has travelled in nearby Lancashire will attest, the restricting pressure of average speed cameras on motorist behaviour is palpable. We will continue to participate in the growing groundswell of support for this campaign along with our neighbouring parishes.

In the autumn the Council formed a working group whose purpose was to assess and report back on the question of parking in Long Preston. The group met a number of times, visiting all parts of the village and it was not surprising that whilst identifying a number of congested parking areas there is no straightforwardly defined answer. A village of mediaeval origins in a distinctly rural area dominated by agriculture and tourism as its economic activities with an arterial highway cutting right through the middle of it is not designed to accommodate the number of private cars that it is called upon to do so. Following the publication of that report a public meeting was held to discuss it and fourteen interested parties attended to air their views and share their thoughts. This was a most helpful process, and we were grateful to everyone for their input. The solutions are not obvious as restrictions of planning and land ownership are slow to overcome, but given time and some practical common sense we may at least be able to alleviate some of the pressure.

Parish Activities

The Parish Council has a role in supporting, facilitating and encouraging parish community activity in order to help the village community thrive. It is not directly the role of the Council to organise events and be responsible for them. We are fortunate in Long Preston to have a variety of well-formed and experienced village groups whose events form the stem of village life. Representatives of these groups are at the meeting tonight. My experience as a teacher tells me that when you begin to recognise the efforts of groups and individuals you run the inevitable risk of omitting another glaringly and thus causing offence when none was ever intended. However, this year it has been notable that the efforts of the village groups in supporting those in need are greatly appreciated. The Village Hall Committee is particularly important in this in providing an invaluable service to the community and the Churches in providing “Warm Spaces” should not be underestimated. We must all be grateful to them for their on-going service to the community. I should also commend the efforts of the Mayday Celebrations Committee in reviving that unique celebration of village life after two years of Covid cancellations. I fear that around the country many such important gatherings and highlights of community life have sadly fallen by the way-side since the pandemic.

During the year the Parish Council encouraged and helped to fund, the Platinum Jubilee celebrations here on the greens. The latter was a really positive and well supported occasion. We also held the Christmas tree lighting and switch on event. The council participated in the annual Remembrance Ceremony and the Falklands Conflict 40th anniversary commemoration.

Playing Fields

In addition to the above activities and maintenance projects we are pleased to report that the Playing Fields Association has been reconstituted and formed following a

number of exploratory meetings. An enthusiastic and dedicated group has begun work on planning for events to serve the village and to raise funds to take the maintenance and functional provision of our playing field forward. We look forward to hearing more of the efforts and initiatives going forward.

In conclusion; moving forward

Last year I stated that there is more that the village can do: The Playing Field group is a success story (in that it is off the ground and gaining momentum) and a clear purpose has been found for the telephone box. So now we need to re-find a sustainable group to manage and develop the village Christmas Lights to respond to new expectations adjusting to the changing demographic of the village and of course all the other existing groups must continue to be well encouraged and supported.

We must understand however, that this is a very new Council constituted of volunteers who give of their time freely for no personal gain and do so because they care about the village. We are learning the ropes and must urge a little patience as we have found that the wheels of local government grind slow, but at least they do grind.

4. Reports from County Councillor, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the Police

a. Written Report from North Yorkshire Council Councillor Simon Myers

The Chair, Cllr James Bellis, read out the NYC report.

The last year has been extremely busy both at a County and a District level. Local Government Reorganisation, whatever one thought of it, has been a huge task for all Councils involved. I would like to pay tribute to all the hard working Officers who have gone beyond the call of duty, working on both the day job of delivering services and working on LGR so that everything actually worked on 1st April. Many of them have done this whilst facing personal uncertainty as to the nature of their job on the new Authority.

I would also like to repeat my heartfelt thanks to Cllr Moorby for all his work on Craven District Council over the last 11 years not only in representing Long Preston and Hellifield but in what he has done more generally on the Council. He has made great contributions during his stints as Lead Member for a Greener Craven and as deputy Chair and Chair of Licensing for many years. Without Councillors like Chris Moorby we could not have achieved so much as a Council. I think the last Council Meeting was an emotional one and not least for the last Chair. I am aware Chris is retiring from the Parish Council and I am sure I join with you all in thanking him for his great contribution to his community over many years.

My role on the Executive of NYC last year largely involved setting up the new structures and constitutions of the new Authority's Planning services, Housing including responsibility for our 8,300 Council Houses and Housing strategy across NY and starting a review of the provision of Leisure Services across the County and the early stages of a review of Cultural services. Setting up the new Constitution of the Council and preparing it to take on the roles and responsibilities of the Districts and Boroughs has been a huge task and I think everyone breathed a sigh of relief when April came and everything (or almost everything) worked.

More specifically NY has started work on the £73 million new road which will replace the Kex Gill section of the A59, essential for residents and businesses of Craven and

beyond.

I can finally announce that we have been successful in our bid for £14.5 million as part of 'Hug 2' which will allow us to retrofit 700 existing homes across North Yorkshire. The criteria are that residents must be off the Gas Grid and have an income of less than £31,000 pa or be in a defined fuel poverty bracket. I am very keen to get this message out there and to have as much take up from my area as possible! It is a great scheme to help people cut their heating bills, insulate their homes properly and help in a small way to address the causes of Climate Change. Any residents with any queries about this please do contact me. The application process will open in June, so please don't try and apply before then as it will simply clog the system up. I will keep you posted.

We have also received an additional £6.5 million as part of the recent Budget to help with addressing potholes across the County road network. Hopefully this will see some road works brought forward from their place in the queue!

It is not all good news though. We have had to close a number of Village Schools, very reluctantly, but we have no option when like Hovingham School recently, you are presented with a School that has no pupils. It simply emphasises the problems we face with unaffordable housing and the development of second and holiday homes, particularly in the National Parks. I am delighted that we have begun to address this by passing a doubling of Council Tax on second homes across North Yorkshire. We estimate this will raise £12 million a year which can be utilised to improve and build Social Housing for those most in need. More needs to be done and I have spoken to NY MPs about the need for Government to change the Planning Classes so that those who wish to change residential accommodation into holiday lets or Airbnb will have to apply for Planning Permission to do so. This will give a degree of local control particularly where there is an acute problem as in our own area. This has already happened in Scotland and in Wales.

I continue to try and chivvy NYC Highways about making improvements to the A65 and other roads in our area and am a keen advocate of fixed speed cameras (along with Cllr Chris Moorby) and have raised the issue with Zoë Metcalfe. There is currently a County wide review going on regarding speed on our roads, both at North Yorkshire Council and by the Police Crime and Fire Commissioner. I have been feeding into that and will continue to do so.

The new Localities Grant Scheme is now open, and I welcome submissions. If any funding is required for events to mark the Coronation, then please do let me know. I hope my small contribution in the last financial year will help in bringing some new street lighting. I am aware of the other proposal and we can work on that when we have a clearer picture of what is required and the costs.

I have now been appointed to the National Park Authority so hopefully I will be able to feedback from Long Preston residents with matters of concern. Having avoided being on a Planning Committee for 12 years, I now find myself on one at the Park.

I look forward to working with you in the future. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any issues. Don't feel it has to wait for a Parish Council Meeting.

b. There was no Report from Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Area Ranger Rob Ashford.

c. Written Report from North Yorkshire Police

The Chair, Cllr James Bellis, reported that an annual incidents report has been received and that the North Yorkshire Police PCSO continues to provide a written monthly incidents report to the Parish Council at its meetings, usually all minor.

5. Reports from Community organisations

a. Long Preston Women's Institute

On behalf of the Long Preston Women's Institute, Jacquie Morley reported the following.

Last September we celebrated our 90th anniversary with a party held in the Village Hall, attended by members past and present, also invited guests from Craven Group of WI's and representatives from North Yorkshire West Federation of WI's. After singing 'Jerusalem', a minute silence was observed in respect of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who sadly passed away the previous week.

Several of our members using their various crafting skills produced a wall hanging to commemorate our 90 years which has pride of place on our notice board in the Village Hall.

In November Joan Townson was re-elected as president for her final year.

We have been very supportive of village events including May Day and the village Christmas fair along with various events held by Craven Group and North Yorkshire West Federation.

This year we are looking forward to a programme of varied speakers, the annual event in June and walk in August with supper, along with supporting village events.

The WI meet on the second Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm, we currently have 20 members and look forward to new members joining us.

b. Church Yard Mowers

On behalf of the Church Yard Mowing team, Tim Palmer reported that the mowing started every Saturday in April of last year and continued until the end of October. Tim thanked all 26 volunteers who mow the Church Yard in a group of 5 on a rota.

Three coffee mornings have been organised in the winter, raising £1,292. There have also been some extra donations throughout the year. The Team has received a kind donation of two new strimmers.

c. Parish Magazine Committee

Tim thanked all volunteers who help out with the Parish Magazine: Jacquie Morley for all the necessary editing; Katherine Harrison-Walker for organising and delivering of the Magazine to each household in Long Preston; Samantha Glossop and Liz Palmer. Also Marijke for helping with the finance administration. The Committee noted an advertising income in 2022 of £2,359 and an expenditure of £2,276, creating a modest surplus of £83.

So far this year the advert from Howarth Accountancy is lost and the new landlord at the Boars Head will be approached when in business again, to consider placing an advert.

d. The Long Preston Heritage Group

The Chair of the Long Preston Heritage Group reported that the development, achievements, past projects and publications of the Heritage Group over the past 15 years can be viewed on the 'Long Preston Heritage and Village' website at www.longpreston.info. The Heritage Group continues to update its archives on the website. At present the LPHG has an eight person committee which meets three times per year with additional focus group meetings, as and when required.

Update on existing projects

- Archiving digital records. Some progress has been made on scanning and re-cataloguing documents since April 2022. Some of the archived information will be on the website in due course. Still months of work ahead but this is an ongoing project.

- Archiving the Robert Slater collection. Work has re-commenced. The collection has now been sorted plus some additional information has been loaded onto the 'Capturing the Past' website. There is still further work to be done on this.

- Graveyard project. Not much progress over the past 12 months. Still continue going through the archives and contributing information to Sarah Lister regarding the Settle Graveyard Project to bring ancestors to life and provide information for her research. Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) is a method of photography that captures shape variations on a surface which is then enhanced through computer software to enable lost detail to be seen by the eye. However, the intension is to load the completed RTI photos onto the website and make progress on the capture of further gravestones.

The group is also looking into providing the images to support the 'Findagrave' website which will further assist people researching family history in the area.

- Photography project (in conjunction with the North Craven Building Preservation Trust) to show changes in buildings 50 years on. All the photos have been taken but the group is still awaiting advice from the NCBPT regarding the best way to record them digitally. A discussion is ongoing how these photos, comparing buildings from the early 1970s with those taken 50 years later, should be best used. These photos may be used by the group to produce a booklet showing the changes and possibly a calendar for 2024.

- Newspaper cuttings. Ongoing project taking cuttings from past editions are being categorised by date and subject.

- Platinum Jubilee / Coronation. Consideration was given to a specific project such as the provision of a new Information Panel on Main Green or possibly the planting of a tree to mark the events.

2023-2024

The ongoing projects will be progressed subject to the continued availability of members and are the continued interaction with North Craven Heritage Trust; and

investigate the potential and ways of encouraging increased participation from village residents and involvement on new projects, possibly through the school and the younger generation.

e. Village Hall Committee

On behalf of the Long Preston Village Hall Committee, Liz Palmer thanked all committee members for their continued support. Three members have left the committee this year and four have joined.

The Village Hall is held in trust to benefit any groups wishing to use the hall and its facilities in a safe, financial manner. Many village groups and private parties hire the hall and all proceeds from rents go to the upkeep and maintenance and for the benefit of the hall. Coffee mornings are held with a view to raising funds for various local groups.

The committee has received a grant of £1,400 from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust for the repair and upgrading of the Snooker Room foyer. The Snooker Club membership procedure has been formalised, but its membership dropped to 12 persons. The Light Box revenue increased and this currently covers the costs, thus ensuring that the snooker room continues to be open for use. The committee is exploring how to make the snooker club more viable in the future.

This year the committee completed the fire alarm and electrical certificates; compiled and adopted the GDPR policy; compiled and adopted the group hirer policy and booking forms; and upgraded the bookings procedure. Two more policies, reserves and safeguarding, are in progress.

The committee restarted the 200 Club in October 2022, which achieved revenue of £1,400. Prize money paid in 2022 was £200 and the total of £850 will go into funds once all prizes are given out in September 2023.

f. May Day Committee

Michelle Scholes reported that after the two year break it took a bit of momentum to get the plans going again. It was a very successful day with a lot of new families joining to watch and celebrate. It was the first year we selected both a king and queen. It was nice to give something back to the village and celebrate with live music in the evening.

We have some new committee members with lots of fresh ideas for fundraising and are looking forward to this year's May Day on Sunday 7th May. Some of the other federation children will be joining in the traditional county dancing.

g. Girls' Guides

Helen Cressey had sent a written report.

Guides has been running for many years, Brownies 7-10 years, Brownies numbers have increased steadily over the last 12 months and Rainbow unit 5-7 years will shortly be celebrating its first birthday since restarting and has reached capacity.

All the units follow the program devised by the Girl Guide Association, this program is aimed to develop new skills and give the girls confidence, while still focusing on environmental and social factors. We are in the process of planning our summer

term, which will include canoeing, archery, bush craft and more, many of the girls are going to a County camp in Stainforth this August.

On the environmental program we have yet to decide what the plans are for 2023 as the girls chose.

We are still working with the Woodland Trust regarding tree planting, we have now found a site we can plant the trees (minimum quantity is 15) but this will now not be until November 2023.

6. Parishioners' concerns and comments

There were no parishioners' concerns and comments.

Cllr Bellis closed the meeting by thanking all for their attendance at 8.45 pm.