

Littlethorpe Parish

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 19:30 on Wednesday 9th April 2025 at Littlethorpe Village Hall

Attendees: Cllr G Spoons, The Clerk, 22 Members of the Public and one dog.

1. Apologies.

Apologies had been received from County Cllr Cundell-Lister and Cllr Laugher.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th April 2024
These were proposed and seconded. They were passed unanimously.

3. Report by Councillor Gerry Spoons, Chairman Littlethorpe Parish Council
Cllr Spoons gave the report. This is included as Appendix One.

4. Financial Report by Keith Pettitt, Parish Clerk and RFO, Littlethorpe Parish Council
Keith Pettitt gave the report. This is included as Appendix Two.

5. Questions from the floor
There were no questions from the floor.

6. Report from County Cllr Cundell-Lister (in absentia).
County Cllr Cundell-Lister had sent an email regarding the activities and future plans of NYC. The main points can be found by accessing the website via [Council plan | North Yorkshire Council](#) with further details under [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Full Council, 14/02/2025 10:30](#)

7. Report on Ripon City Wetlands.
Richard Tite gave a report on the activities of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. He made the following points.

The Trust has been doing quite a lot of capital improvement works over the year funded by Yorkshire Water, through an Enforcement Undertaking linked to a pollution incident. This has enabled them to create more islands, in both Canal Lagoon and Riverside Lagoon and add a second scrape between Riverside Lagoon and the Central Reedbeds. This has been very successful, and Common Terns nested on one of the new islands last Spring (though the eggs were predated - by crows probably).

To improve access and viewing, The Trust has built a new screen in the corner of the Canal Lagoon, accessed from the path that runs off the towpath. They will also be putting one halfway down the towpath where people have been pushing through the hedge to view the water.

There have sadly had a number of dead Mute Swans early in the year which died from avian flu. Hopefully, the outbreak is over, and we won't see any more dead or dying swans, which has been very distressing.

Clerk: Keith Pettitt, 1 Elm Tree Rise Bishop Monkton, HG3 3QS
E-mail: clerk.littlethorpe.pc@gmail.com Phone: 01765 677703 / 079432 11041

Littlethorpe Parish

The Trust has a project to convert the fields by the Canal Lagoon into permanent wildflower grassland. The wild bird crop will be continued but in discrete patches within the grassland. It was becoming impossible to grow the crop without adding fertiliser, which isn't something The Trust wanted to do so close to a wetland, so by switching to a permanent grassland, the problem had been avoided. Once established, they will look to extend our grazing programme on to this field.

The Trust has had a successful year grazing the Riverside lagoon area with Belted Galloway cattle and will look to do this again this summer.

A Bittern has been booming on site again this spring, which suggests the reedbeds are sufficiently mature to attract this species. All are waiting with bated breath to see if breeding occurs.

8. Report from Ripon Motorboat Club by Geoff Graham

The Commodore reported on the activities of the club which can be summarised as follows.

He noted the history of the Club, stretching back to 1931, when two intrepid boaters managed to get through Oxclose Lock. At that time the lock was in a poor state of repair, and effectively collapsed, leaving the two boaters stranded. They moored at the land adjacent to Nicholson's Bridge, to plan their next move. Dialogue ensued between the boaters and local farmers, which eventually led to the purchase of some land and the formation of Ripon Motorboat Club. The Commodore paid tribute to the Nicholson family who then, like now, were the immediate neighbours of the Club and have been supportive ever since. The Club is now one of the largest inland boating clubs in the UK.

An Open Day was held in September 2024 and a number of villagers attended. There will not be an Open Day this year; however, in 2026 there are plans afoot to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the Club with a special Open Day. Once details are finalised, dates and times will be published, and all villagers are welcome to attend.

In terms of general boating operations, the ongoing battle against weeds continues. A specialist contractor has been employed, and the work is now in progress to remove as many as possible. The Club is also campaigning with other boat clubs to get the Canal and River Trust to act on better maintaining the waterways, as the same problem is affecting the canal.

The Club is continuing with their efforts to re-wild the marina, reducing grass areas to allow wildflowers to cultivate. There has been a small outbreak of hogweed, however, and the Club has taken professional advice on combating this invasive species.

The recently completed slip field, for the removal and replacement of boats (up to 55 feet in length) is now operational. This was constructed on land beyond the original boundary of the Club, which purchased from farming neighbours. The Club was very honoured to have Mrs Elizabeth Nicholson unveil a plinth naming it the Nicholson Slip Field in honour of her and her family.

Littlethorpe Parish

9. Report from Entertainments Committee

Christine Winterburn gave the report for the Entertainments Committee. There had been a couple of quizzes, and the band, Cooler King, had performed in the hall to excellent reviews. They were booked to return on April 12th and again in October. On 24th May there was to be a Quiz and sharing supper. One very successful event that had been held was a talk entitled "Unyielding Floods" by Peter Caton, who is an international award-winning photographer.

10. Report from Village Hall Committee

Christopher Orme reported that Village Hall was flourishing, with the facility being used for such varying activities and events as parties, drumming, bowls, archery, boogie bounce and baby ballet. The aim of the Village Hall Committee was to break even over the year. The main expense was electricity. The hall was in good condition and had recently benefited from the fitting of 3 new fire doors. It was planned to redecorate the inside in 2025 and the exterior in 2026.

11. Report from St Michael's and All Angels Church

Christopher Orme reported that the Church was a happy community, with a service every Sunday, although the numbers of the congregation were dwindling. The Quinquennial Inspection had revealed some settlement in the chancel. This would involve sourcing funds to fix; in general, the Church was in good condition.

12. Report from Littlethorpe Website Editor

Sandra Roberts, Website Editor reported as follows.

The website continues to have around the same number of visits as in past years. After the UK, visitors from the USA are the most regular, followed by Canada and Australia. The most visited pages after the home 'News' page, are the 'Village Hall' and 'What's On, What's Gone'. Although, not as often, all other pages on the site are visited. Sandra continues to receive 'Guestbook' comments asking for information about ancestors who lived or worked in the village, and she tries to help as much as she can with some success.

The site will be 10 years old on 1st September. Before this, a different site was published and run by Mo Fay. When Sandra took over, she created a new site in September 2015 which was hosted by "SiteBuilder". Five years later, in January 2020 and after consultation with the parish council, it was changed again to become hosted by Google as it was felt that the layout of the current site is more attractive and easier to navigate.

As always, I must thank Chris Winterburn for information about the Entertainments Committee events, Keith Pettitt who regularly updates me on parish council news and Liz Tite who sends me general news items. Very little has come from villagers but thanks to those who have contributed. One of the things which really cheered me up was a recently received comment about St. Michael's churchyard, available on the 'Guestbook' page, and, if you haven't already seen it, from someone who doesn't live in the village. It is good to know that others appreciate our village and are prepared to take the time to let us know.

Clerk: Keith Pettitt, 1 Elm Tree Rise Bishop Monkton, HG3 3QS

E-mail: clerk.littlethorpe.pc@gmail.com Phone: 01765 677703 / 079432 11041

Littlethorpe Parish

13. Reports from Organisations using the Village Hall

A very enthusiastic demonstration was given by Sarah from Drum2Fitness. She explained that this was an excellent activity to improve cardiovascular activity, and she had space for any potential new members to join the group.

Two members of the Greyhound Trust addressed the meeting, along with their greyhound, who proved popular with attendees and very inquisitive! The organisation promotes greyhounds as pets. They book the hall every three weeks on a Sunday, walking greyhounds. This is an opportunity for potential greyhound owners to meet and discuss the breed with people who have adopted the breed. They expressed their gratitude to the Parish Council for replacing the bin at the end of the canal.

14. Date of next meeting: it was planned that this would be sometime during April 2026.

The meeting closed with the serving of refreshments.

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Littlethorpe Parish

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report – Annual Parish Meeting 2025

Welcome to Littlethorpe's Annual Parish Meeting, which is not a Parish Council Meeting as such but an opportunity for the Council and various other organisations and clubs to give presentations about their activities. That being said we'll kick off with a brief report about the Parish council and what it's been up to over the last 12 months.

Parish Council

All Parish Council Meeting agendas and minutes can be viewed by logging on to the Village Website, NYC's website and the Village Hall noticeboard. In addition, Councillors and the Parish Clerk are also regularly in touch by email.

- Since the last Annual Parish Meeting the Parish Council has met regularly on 6 occasions. There have also been extra meetings whenever an urgent matter needed to be discussed.
- As well as many other matters, the Council has commented on several planning applications lodged with NYC, ranging from house extensions and the like to a building development of 5 detached houses. We have also expressed concern on many occasions about the state of the roads, particularly potholes and poor drainage, and un-cut hedges.
- Building Developments – There are two major developments within the Parish at present: the first is of 5 detached houses along Littlethorpe Lane; the other is of **360 houses in the West Lane and Whitcliffe Lane** area. This is probably the biggest building development in the history of Littlethorpe Parish and could eventually increase the population by around 1,000 or even more – not to mention the increase in road traffic.
- Our Parish Clerk is excellent and has been super-efficient as ever, ensuring that we comply with target dates for various submissions. This also includes our requirement to comply with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which we revise and review as necessary.
- The Council has representation on the following bodies:
 - Village Hall Committee
 - Entertainments Committee
 - Alderman Spence Committee - for Quarry Moor.

Also, through one of our residents, naturalist Richard Tite, we have very close contact with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, which manages Ripon City Wetlands.

Litter Picking – Councillors and other volunteers took part in two litter picks. Coffee, tea and sausage sandwiches were provided by Christine, as usual, and to whom we are always thankful.

Dog-waste bins – Three Councillors continue to empty several dog-waste bins that are dotted around the village, every week or two.

Training – Where appropriate, the Clerk (and Councillors if necessary) have attended relevant training courses.

Community Resilience Plan – the Community Resilience Plan has been updated by Christine Winterburn, Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.

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Appendix Two Draft Accounts for 2024-25

Littlethorpe Parish Council				
Total Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31/03/2025				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Previous year
Receipts				
Precept	4,390.00	-	4,390.00	4,000.00
Bank Interest	-	-	-	-
NYCC	-	-	-	-
HBC	-	-	-	-
VAT Refund	88.94	-	88.94	-
Commuted Sums/CIL	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-
Other	2.30	-	2.30	2.30
Total receipts	4,481.24	-	4,481.24	4,002.30
Payments				
Salary and related costs	2,801.79	-	2,801.79	2,672.22
Office expenses	397.41	-	397.41	393.96
Audit Fees	60.00	-	60.00	60.00
Training	-	-	-	-
Membership/Subscriptions	232.00	-	232.00	222.00
Insurance	214.00	-	214.00	214.00
IT	36.00	-	36.00	180.00
Room Hire	117.00	-	117.00	145.00
Grasscutting	-	-	-	110.00
Community	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-
Misc.	-	-	-	-
Defibrillator	-	-	-	-
Donation	-	-	-	-
Christmas Lights	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-
VAS	-	-	-	-
Total payments	3,858.20	-	3,858.20	3,997.18
Net receipts / (payments)	623.04	-	623.04	5.12
Transfer	-	-	-	-
Balance brought forward	5,312.91	-	5,312.91	5,307.79
Balance carried forward	5,935.95	-	5,935.95	5,312.91
Made up of:				
Virgin Money	5,935.95			
Score deposits held	-			
Cash float	-			
Spare	-			
	5,935.95			-