

Littlethorpe Parish

**Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 19:30
on Tuesday 14th April 2026 held at Littlethorpe Village Hall**

Attendees: Cllr Orme (Chair), The Clerk and 8 members of the public

1. Apologies.

Apologies had been received from Jackie Laughher, County Cllr Cunliffe-Lister, Robert Ankcorn and Jonathan Leadley

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th April 2025

These were unanimously adopted and signed by the Chair,

3. Report by Councillor Christopher Orme, Chairman Littlethorpe Parish Council.

Cllr Orme reported as follows.

“Welcome to Littlethorpe’s Annual Parish Meeting which gives an opportunity for the Parish Council and other organisations and clubs to give presentations about their activities. We will start with a brief report about what the Parish Council has been up to over the last 12 months

All agendas and minutes of our meetings can be viewed by logging onto the new Parish Council website, the Village website or the North Yorkshire Website as well as being posted on the notice board at the Village Hall.

We have met regularly on 6 occasions with one additional extraordinary meeting to discuss a particular planning matter. The Councillors are in regular contact with each other and the clerk using the newly introduced Council email called Zoho mail – which I am finally coming to terms with, having found it I.T. challenging, unlike my fellow Councillors.

I was elected Chairman at the AGM in May in succession to Gerry Spoors who retired as a Parish Councillor later in the year due to ill health. Chris Winterburn also retired earlier in the year as a Parish Councillor again due to her health. Both Gerry and Chris gave up a great deal of their time and served the village with distinction, and we are very grateful to them both

Neil Robinson became a Councillor last year and Kirstin Wood has agreed to become a Councillor to fill the vacancies – both bringing youthful energy to the council

We have commented on several planning applications to the NYC notably 1 Railway cottages when it appeared the applicant wanted to create an additional dwelling and the conversion of buildings at Bellwood Farm to dwellings amongst many others. The 5 new dwellings beside Littlethorpe Lane commented upon last year are nearing completion

We continue to raise concerns about potholes, blocked gullies and other safety matters. With the considerable help of County Councillor Cunliffe-Lister we finally got some resurfacing done by Appletrees Nursery and by West View, but the condition of the roads generally continues to deteriorate.

Speed surveys of traffic in the village were carried out by NYC with a result that a 20mph speed limit is due to be introduced soon. We have also voiced concern about speeding through Daffodil bends – additional signage has been erected

The Triathlon is due to come through the village again on the 11/12 July – Councillor Robinson is negotiating with the organisers to try and prevent the disruption caused to some residents last year. This year it is a European qualifying event

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We have a very efficient Parish Clerk who keeps the wheels well oiled. I am completely deaf to his mutterings about retirement – we do not want to lose him. Richard Tite, our resident naturalist, keeps us well briefed on the activities of the Ripon wetlands and we have representatives on the Village Hall and Entertainments Committees. We are not currently actively involved with the Alderman Spence Committee (Quarry Moor) as this has been handled by Ripon City Council – I am pleased to report at long last positive action is being taken to restore Quarry Moor. Councillor Luck has taken over responsibility for the Community Resilience Plan and is currently updating it.

The Councillors organise two litter picks a year and two of us empty the various dog waste bins throughout the village every fortnight.”

4. Financial Report by Keith Pettitt, Parish Clerk and RFO, Littlethorpe Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that the books were currently with the Internal Auditor in preparation for sign off by 7th May. He ran through the draft accounts which are attached under Appendix 1. The balance at year end was £6,111.34, an increase of £175.39 on the opening balance.

5. Questions from the floor

There were no questions from the floor.

6. Report from County Cllr Cunliffe-Lister.

The Clerk read out County Cllr Cunliffe-Lister’s report in her absence. It is included under Appendix 2.

7. Report on Ripon City Wetlands.

In the absence of Jonathan Leadley, Richard Tite gave the Ripon City Wetlands Report.

“Apologies for my absence, caused by unforeseen events. Many thanks to Richard for reading these notes in my absence and to Littlethorpe Parish Council for inviting Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to attend.

This is our seventh year of running the nature reserve and things are settling down well, although we are continually trying to improve the access for visitors and the habitats for wildlife. We have undertaken a variety of work over the past year as follows:

We have welcomed many visitors over the year and are pleased that there are negligible reports of anti-social behaviour or vandalism coming from the reserve. Most people adhere to the rules of no dogs, and visitors can enjoy a tranquil and calm place to visit. To improve facilities, we are planning a ramp to overlook the central reedbed where the starlings roost in the winter. This will formalise the desired line of people standing on top of the bank to watch the spectacle. We will put in a ramp to give access to all, with a flat top where people can sit or stand to watch the murmuration, or indeed to birdwatch at other times of the year.

During the year, Matt installed a new viewing screen overlooking the northwest corner of the Canal Reedbed. This overlooks a new island we have put in, which has

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provided a resting place for swans and other wildfowl.

Habitat wise, our work on the reedbed continues, removing lots of invasive willow trees during the winter months. We also trialed cutting a section of reedbed in front of the Canal Hide to introduce a variety of ages into the reedbed and to open up the views from the hide. This seems to have been successful, and we will do more of this in coming winters. The reedbed hosted a booming male Bittern last spring and there have been reports that it has returned this year.

We have put more islands into Riverside Lagoon to provide habitat for nesting waders and resting places for wildfowl and have more planned for late summer this year. A pair of Common Terns successfully bred on one of the floating rafts in the Canal Reedbed last year. We have maintained the rafts and hope they will return this year.

Our conversion of the land surrounding Canal Reedbed into a permanent wildflower meadow is going in the right direction but not helped by very dry conditions last spring and summer. We are hopeful to get this grassland established and then graze it with cattle to increase the range of wildflowers present.

We are grateful to the support of our local volunteers for all the help they have given during the year, and for local naturalists and birdwatchers for helping monitor the wildlife of the site.

Interesting species recorded over the past year, have included Otters, Tundra Bean Goose, Crane, Avocets, Marsh Harriers and Spotted Redshank.”

Richard concluded by thanking everyone, on behalf of Jonathan, for their support.

8. Report from Ripon Motorboat Club

The Commodore reported as follows.

“ I am Geoffrey Graham and present commodore of Ripon Motorboat Club, thank-you for inviting me for the third time to your meeting. Ripon Motorboat Club is 95 years old this year and still maintains its position as one of the largest private boating clubs in the UK with approx 253 members and 143 berths for boats and on 16 of those can accommodate narrow boats up to 57ft although the majority of boats are still cruisers.

Boating was very challenging last year with the good weather bringing a water shortage requiring the Canal and River Trust to close Oxclose Lock this stopped the boats transiting the canal which led to the weed problem coming back.

A meeting with senior personnel from C A R T was arranged, one of whom was a member of their environmental management team to discuss the problem who informed us we have eight types of weeds in the marina and canal the names of which I will not try and pronounce. They advised us the best solution was to cut, cut and cut again. A suggestion to chemically control the weeds was met with raised eyebrows and a reply that it was possible but not preferable.

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With this in mind RMBC has invested several thousand pound in a specialist weed cutting machine which showed good resultant after a trial in our marina, so this will be put into operation shortly.

A firm call Geoterra launched a specialist boat equipped with underwater radar to survey the canal bed 100metres either side of Oxclose Lock but the weed was so dense the radar had problems seeing through it and the results were inconclusive, a CART representative was on site and he indicated their specialist weed cutting boat could be sent down the canal to clear weeds but this has not appeared yet.

Now for the bright side as we are 95 yrs old this year (about the same age as most of our members) and we will be having a party this year as well as an open day the details of which I will put on your notice board.

Last year before the lock closure I managed to get away with two boats down the tidal Trent for an enjoyable visit to Lincoln, Newark and Nottingham which I thoroughly enjoyed. 6 boats from Burton Waters marina near Lincoln are now coming to visit us this year, but only 3 will be of a suitable size to make it to the canal basin.

On a final note we are continuing with our rewilding of the marina with lots more land being set aside and out of the clutches of the grass cutting team.

9. Report from Entertainments Committee

Cllr Orme reported as follows on behalf of Robert Ankcorn.

He made the point that the Entertainments Committee had been going for a long period of time, with the same people involved. The group had not been as active this year as in previous years. They had held "Moonlight Melodies", an event based around music of the 60's, 70's and 80's, but it was disappointing to report that the majority of attendees were from outside the village. Attempts had been made to ask residents to suggest events going forward. He ended with a plea for villagers to join the group and to come forward with ideas.

10. Report from Village Hall Committee

Cllr Orme reported on behalf of Jackie Laughler as follows.

The Hall continues to be used by several organisations such as Pilates, Yoga, Bowls, Archery, Art and Boogie Bounce as well as for receptions and parties. We manage to make a small profit every year

The Hall has been redecorated internally last year with new fire doors installed – happily the substantial cost was covered by Commuted sums allocated to the Hall by NYC from developments in the Parish

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

Cllr Orme reported as follows.

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We continue to have a happy, regular congregation, many of whom help as a team with the running of the Church. Sadly, our numbers decreased last year as there have been three funerals with no new members joining us. 2028 will be the 150th Anniversary of the Church and we are planning a series of celebrations which will be well advertised in the hope many people from the village will join in. We are having to carry out some structural repairs this year which will not help our very unsatisfactory financial situation – we are looking for financial support.

12. Report from Littlethorpe Website Editor

Sandra Roberts reported as follows.

Our village website continues to receive about the same number of visits which is heartening with the three top performing pages being 'News', 'Village Hall' and 'St. Michael's'. The 'Parish Council' page has dropped right down – I presume that people now visit the parish council's own site which is good news. I must thank Liz Tite and our parish clerk, Keith, for continuing to send information for me to publish.

We have had some successful and memorable moments in the last year:

- In July last year, a charity fete was held in the village hall to raise money for Leeds Adult Transplant Games Team and Dementia Forward.
- There was the regular quiz night along with litter picks.
- Greencroft and Littlethorpe Manor were open as part of the National Garden Scheme.
- Following the resignations of Chris Winterburn and Gerry Spoor from the parish council, Neil Robinson and Kirstin Wood have been co-opted.
- The parish council set up its very own website.
- Along with its regular special services, St. Michael's Church held its first Pet Blessing Service.
- Pottery Lane (by Green Lane) was finally fully resurfaced – definitely a memorable moment!
- In February, Jack and Anthony continued their winning ways with a bronze medal in the World Aquatics Diving World Cup synchronised diving competition in Montreal, Canada.

Following the parish council's new website going live, Keith and I have been in discussion as to the way forward for the posting of parish council information on the village website. We have agreed that the 'Parish Council' pages will remain and I will continue to post agendas, minutes and general information but will direct people to their site for further documentation e.g. financial information – the 'Finance' page has been removed.

13. Reports from Organisations using the Village Hall

There were no reports from any other organisations.

14. Date of next meeting: between 1st March – 1st June 2027

The date would be published closer to the time.

The meeting closed at 20:20.

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Appendix 1 Draft Accounts 2025-2026

Littlethorpe Parish Council				
Total Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31/03/2026				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Previous year
Receipts				
Precept	4,619.00	-	4,619.00	4,390.00
Bank Interest	-	-	-	
NYCC	-	-	-	
HBC	-	-	-	
VAT Refund	117.93	-	117.93	88.94
Commuted Sums/CIL	-	-	-	
0	-	-	-	
0	-	-	-	
Other	2.30	-	2.30	2.30
Donation	-	-	-	
Total receipts	4,739.23	-	4,739.23	4,481.24
Payments				
Salary and related costs	2,896.16	-	2,896.16	2,801.79
Office expenses	344.27	-	344.27	397.41
Audit Fees	65.00	-	65.00	60.00
Training	13.70	-	13.70	
Membership/Subscriptions	241.00	-	241.00	232.00
Insurance	214.00	-	214.00	214.00
IT	304.99	-	304.99	36.00
Room Hire	84.00	-	84.00	117.00
Grasscutting	-	-	-	-
Community	-	-	-	-
Misc	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
Defibrillator	400.72	-	400.72	
S137	-	-	-	
Grants	-	-	-	
Reserves	-	-	-	
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
0	-	-	-	-
Payment - spare 24	-	-	-	
0	-	-	-	
Total payments	4,563.84	-	4,563.84	3,858.20
Net receipts / (payments)	175.39	-	175.39	623.04
Transfer	-	-	-	
Balance brought forward	5,935.95	-	5,935.95	-
Balance carried forward	6,111.34	-	6,111.34	623.04
Made up of:				
Virgin Money	6,111.34			
Score deposits held	-			
Cash float	-			
Spare	-			
	6,111.34			-

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Appendix 2 County Concillor's Report

Connectivity

With the assistance of Julian Smith MP, I have established a system to help residents report issues where they don't have a connection for their smart meter. This is where the radio signal is too weak. I have raised this as an issue and been advised that the long term plan is for connections to move over to mobile where available. With phones moving to VOIP which do not work in a power cut, and issues with lack of mobile connectivity impacting residents in more rural areas, I have lobbied for more Home Office masts to be installed will continue to do so. Whilst there is national geographic mobile coverage of 95%, this division has significantly less. The delivery of broadband fibre to the door under the Gigabit scheme is on track, with most projects completing this year. This will leave some residents behind as the "hard to reach", for whom I will be lobbying. I have lobbied the NYC executive to deliver public wi-fi in Masham, I am waiting for this to be assessed.

Transport & Active Travel

I have written to the Mayor to ask for various routes to be introduced or improved. This includes a more regular service between Ripon and Thirsk train station, improved services to help 16-18yr olds to get to school or college, and better links between Ripon, Boroughbridge, Masham and Bedale. This has been acknowledged, recognising the importance of these services but there is no funding currently available.

I met the Active Travel Commissioner to discuss the Nidderdale Greenway, and the ambition to extend it to Pateley Bridge. Further meetings on this with the various stakeholders are planned. I have urged NYC and the Mayor to consider the status of the Ripley car park and the risk that this may be lost to development - as yet neither have engaged further on this. I am in correspondence with Ripley Estate regarding the Sustrans route which is a permissive path and the status of the public toilets (in terms of title, maintenance obligations etc).

Environment

I continue to support Stop Ure Pollution, and natural flood management measures that also help improve biodiversity and water quality. I am looking forward to the Ousewem report, to see how these measures can be promoted further.

Local Plan & Housing

I am on the working group and have attended several seminars on this. I have lobbied for adequate provision to be made to assist Community Led Housing and community energy schemes. I have also lobbied at a national level for the national guidelines to be improved regarding community led housing. I have helped form a Community Led Housing trust, and a bid has been submitted for a derelict school outside Masham. I am also reviewing three redundant garage sites in Masham (owned by NYC) with a view to developing these with modular housing as pilot projects for other sites in the county.

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Home to School transport

I am continuing to support local families who are appealing decisions on home to school transport. A LibDem motion to accelerate the review of the policy was defeated, I have attended the scrutiny committee to require that the review fully assesses the impact of the additional journeys this policy might have created.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

I have just become a member of the Board (and have resigned from the Audit Committee)

Clotherholme Development

I have attended several consultations with Homes England, to establish what the development is going to deliver in way of Social Value. I had hoped that a Skills Village for construction skills would be on offer, but not at this stage. There are however opportunities for contractors to support local causes such as the wetlands, Quarry Moor and the LCWAIP Ripon to Fountains bike route. I have liaised with the various groups to ensure their interests are put forward.

Quarry Moor

I have attended several meetings as a non-voting member. Progress is being made, and I have used some of my Locality Budget to fund some benches.

Uredale Partnership

I have attended several meetings this year and chaired the Transport & Connectivity Working Group. Several projects are making good progress, such as the community transport provision in Masham and the completion of the report assessing the viability of a cycle route from Ripon to Fountains.