

Whitley Parish Council

Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th May 2025 at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School.

1. **Opening Meeting:** The meeting was opened at 7.00 p.m. by Cllr K Walton
2. **Present:** Cllr K Walton, Cllr White, Cllr Cole, Cllr Humphrey, Cllr Paley, and Clerk to the Council J Hunter.
3. **Election of Chair of the Council for 2025/26:** Cllr Walton invited nominations for the role of Chair. Cllr Humphrey proposed Cllr Walton be reappointed as Chair to Whitley Parish Council for 2025/26 seconded by Cllr White, carried unanimously.

Action: Cllr Walton signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman of Whitley Parish Council for 2025/26.

4. **Election of Vice Chair of the Council for 2025/26:** Cllr Walton proposed that Cllr White be reappointed as Vice Chair to Whitley Parish Council for 2025/26 Seconded by Cllr Humphrey and Carried unanimously.

Action: Cllr White signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice Chair of Whitley Parish Council for 2025/26.

5. **Chairman's Report for 2025/26:** The Chair opened by thanking all members of the Council for their hard work over the past year. It was noticed that the Parish Council had experienced a busy year, with significant activity around parks and local amenities. A special acknowledgement was given to Cllr Cole and residents for their considerable work on the Whitley Nature Reserve, identified as a major project. Gratitude was extended to individuals and businesses alike in the village who have contributed through donations and voluntary work, particularly towards the Over 80's Christmas initiative and the development and maintenance of the nature reserve. The Chair reflected on the operational difficulties in recent years due to Covid-19 restrictions and the legal complexities surrounding the Gale Common Ash Extraction issue.

The Chair recognised the importance of community support and noted the strong foundation now in place for continuing future projects. The Chair formally closed the report with thanks to all involved, reaffirming commitment to ongoing community engagement and project development.

6. **Public Forum:** Members of the public present at the Annual Meeting made no comments or observations.
7. **Close Meeting:** There being no other business for this meeting the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.10 p.m.

Chairman of the Parish Council:

Date:

Whitley Parish Council

1.0 The meeting was opened at 7.00 pm by the Chair Cllr Walton.

2.0 Open Public Forum(OPF) 20th May 2025

2.1 Residents in attendance had no comments or matters to raise relevant to the meeting.

2.2 The Chair closed the public forum and proceeded to the conduct of the Parish meeting.

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3.0 Present: Cllr Walton (Chair), Cllr White, Cllr Humphrey, Cllr Cole, Cllr Paley, and Clerk to the Council J Hunter.

4.0 Apologies for absence:

4.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Barber.

5.0 Disclosure of interest:

5.1 There were no declarations of interest for items to be discussed during the meeting.

6.0 Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd April 2025:

6.1 It was resolved the minutes were a true record of the Whitley Parish Council meeting held on 18th March 2025.

Action: The Clerk to present to the Chair for signature.

7.0 Matters for information and action as required:

7.1 Oak Tree at Lee View Park: Cllr White reported that he and Cllr Barber had not yet had opportunity to meet with the concerned residents of Lee View regarding the condition of the Oak Tree in the Lee View Park. Cllr White summarised the contents of a draft email he proposed to send to the residents outlining the Council's response and proposed actions:

- A professional assessment had been obtained by a tree surgeon, who concluded that the tree was healthy and structurally sound.
- His recommendation was a light trim of the top branches at an estimated cost of £300.
- As a gesture of goodwill, it was proposed that the Parish Council share the cost of the work equally with the residents.

Councillors supported the response and approved the proposal to offer shared funding with residents for the recommended work on the Oak Tree.

Action: Cllr White to finalise and send the explanatory email to Lee View residents.

7.2 Community Grant: Cllr White provided an update regarding the Council's engagement with the Eggborough Power Community Fund. Two current applications are under review, being, the installation of an information board and the addition of a further bench both in the Nature Reserve. The grant operations on a quarterly funding cycle up to a maximum of £1,000 per quarter. The next opportunity for submission is at the end of June.

Councillors were encouraged to suggest further funding ideas for community benefit projects that could be suitable for the next round of funding, with the following proposals raised for consideration:

1. Installation of litter bins within the Nature Reserve, with arrangements for collection through North Yorkshire Council's waste management service.
2. Replacement of the battery and Pads for the community defibrillator, which require renewal every two to three years to maintain functionality.
3. Purchase of a strimmer to support ongoing maintenance of scrubland in the Nature Reserve by volunteers or Council contractors

Actions: Cllr White to incorporate new proposals into formal applications. Clerk to liaise with North Yorkshire Council Waste Services to establish feasibility of collections from the perimeter of the Nature Reserve.

7.3 Fly-tipping in Whitley: The Clerk updated the Council about the ongoing enquires regarding significant fly-tipped waste on private land along Whitefield Lane. A formal letter has been sent to Mr Bayston, owner of the woodland in question and the Gale Common Motor X site, informing him of the issue and requesting the waste be removed. A response to this communication is currently being awaited.

It was agreed that if no reply is received within a reasonable timeframe, a follow-up phone call will be made to Mr Bayston to prompt action.

Cllr White also reported new fly-tipping on land just south of Balne Crossroads, which has been officially reported to North Yorkshire Council by North Yorkshire Councillor J McCartney.

Actions: If no response is received from Mr Bayston in due course, the Clerk will follow up via telephone to expedite a resolution.

7.4 Council Vacancy: The Clerk provided an update on the procedure for managing the current councillor vacancy. Democratic Services have been formally notified, and a Notice of Vacancy had been issued. This notice will be displayed on the Parish noticeboard, with a deadline for applications set for 10th June. If no applications are received by the deadline, the Parish Council will have the authority to fill the vacancy through co-option. It was suggested that the notice also be shared on social media to help publicise the opportunity and reach a wider audience.

Actions arising:

1. The Clerk to ensure the official Notice of Vacancy is displayed on the Parish noticeboard.
2. The vacancy notice be shared via Parish Council social media.
3. If no applications are received by 10th June, begin the process of identifying and approaching suitable candidates for co-option.

7.5 Training of Councillors: Councillors discussed the variety of training courses offered by the Yorkshire Local Council Association (YLCA), which are available to all Parish Council members. Cllr White highlighted the value of a twin-track induction programme aimed at new councillors, providing a clear overview of Parish Council roles, responsibilities, and effective operational procedures. It was noted that most courses are delivered online, making them easily accessible and not overly time-consuming.

The Council agreed that regular sharing of the published training programme would help ensure members are aware of relevant opportunities.

It was recognised the cost of training for councillors will be covered from the existing Parish Council training budget allocation.

Action: Clerk to circulate the YLCA training programme to all councillors on a regular basis.

7.6 Planters: Councillors reviewed the current condition of the two planters located within the village and discussed planting plans for the upcoming season. Due to ongoing dry weather conditions, it was noted that immediate planting is not feasible. The planters have already been cleared of old vegetation, while daffodils have been retained in situ to allow for natural die-back. It was agreed that summer bedding plants will be installed when conditions permit. Arrangements are in place for regular watering, using resources available locally to each planter site.

7.7 Dog Signs: Cllr White reported that the existing dog control signs had been produced by a local resident and that they were willing to supply an additional 10 weatherproof signs. It was noted that the current signs would benefit from replacement and improved placement to maximise visibility and effectiveness. Councillors agreed to install new signs at appropriate vantage points across the village to reinforce public awareness of dog control requirements. A budget of £25 was approved to cover the cost of producing 10 new signs.

Action: Signs to be ordered and new signs positioned in high visibility areas.

8.0 Correspondence received: The Clerk summarised the details of correspondence received by email or post.

8.1 Emails and correspondence.

- 8.1..1** An email from North Yorkshire Council Public Procurement Department supplying an order for grass cutting services to be delivered by Whitley Parish Council in the grass cutting of verges within Whitley Parish at a value of £840. Noted without comment.
- 8.1..2** An email from Ray Garner a resident on Templar Close acknowledging a copy of the request for action to North Yorkshire Councillor J McCartney concerning investigation into due planning permission covering building activity and expansion of the "Truck Stop" by the rail station in Eggborough. Cllr White provided an update on the issue with confirmation from Cllr McCartney that the matter is being actioned.
- 8.1..3** An email from North Yorkshire Councillors McCartney and Jordon in response to Whitley Parish Councils request for comments about the proposed changes to Electoral Boundaries. Noted without further comment.
- 8.1..4** The clerk reported on a conversation with a member of the archive department of North Yorkshire Council. The facility is based in Northallerton is happy to receive accumulated historic documentation for inspection and evaluation. Documentation will be assessed for legal significance or historic interest to determine whether it is appropriate for retention. Following inspection, it will be either accepted for cataloguing and archive, returned or destroyed.

Action: Clerk to undertake a document review to compile and inventory and summary of all relevant historic records currently in storage. Once completed the summary to be submitted to the North Yorkshire Council Archive Department to seek approval for transfer. Following feedback from archive services arrangements to be delivered to Northallerton.

- Social Media

8.1..1 Cllr Humphrey reported, there were comments on the social media pages concerning the reopening of the George and Dragon under new management, and a planning application appertaining to developments in Eggborough.

Cllr Humphrey provided an overview of the current Whitley Parish digital presence, including social media platforms and the Parish Council website. Three main online resources were described:

- *Whitley Public* – An open, interactive platform available to individuals, businesses, and groups for free posting and engagement. With over 10,000 subscribers the platform is largely populated by advertisers.
- *Whitley Local* – A moderated community forum focused on local issues and concerns, actively managed to prevent irrelevant or excessive advertising.
- *Whitley Community* – The Parish Council's official noticeboard, restricted to Council-generated posts only.

Councillors discussed whether the current structure remained fit for purpose. While no immediate changes were proposed, it was acknowledged that the system is currently entirely managed by Cllr Humphrey, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

The Council agreed on the need for succession planning, particularly to ensure continued access and control in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Actions: Ensure that secure, up-to-date access credentials for all social media and website platforms are made available to Parish Council officers.

9.0 Planning matters: The Clerk provided a summary of the planning applications made in the month for review and consideration by the Council.

- ZG2025/0443/ATD, Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to 2 No dwelling (Use Class C3) and associated operational development. Land Adjacent, The Firs Doncaster Road. Noted with no initial comments.

Action: Clerk to forward copies of location plans of the development to Parish Councillors.

10.0 Council Finance & Administration:

10.1 RFO Report as at 20/05/2025:

Bank/Account	Income since 1 st April 2025	Expenditure since 1 st April 2025		Current Balance	Notes/Comment
Santander Deposit	13.21			15,566.76	Interest paid monthly
Santander Current Account (Cash Book)	6,500.00	1,918.40		10,575.36	No interest
Total Bank Balances				26,142.12	
Less following funds:					
Allocated Funds		Surplus from Crossing Drainage Daffodil Field Notice Board for Templar Close		1,798.71 8,000.00 518.74	
Total Allocated funds				10,317.45	
Parish Council Bank Funds		-Future Development and facility provision –Buildings, ROS & Nature Reserve -Public Liability Insurance -Clerk Remuneration -Donations -Management costs -Repairs -Unexpected/unforeseeable expenditure.		15,824.67	
VAT due for reclaim				3,962.15	
Total Unallocated Parish Funds				19,786.82	

The Clerk presented a cash flow summary, detailing actual receipts and payments up to May 2025. Based on budget expectations and planned expenditure, the estimated year-end balance was noted to be £15,883.09 subject to the accuracy of ongoing budget assumptions.

The Clerk presented the insurance renewal quote from Clear Insurance, totalling £898.95 including insurance premium tax. A comparative quote was obtained from Zurich Insurance for £500.00., though it was noted that the level of cover was significantly lower than that offered by Clear. Councillors considered the cost vs cover of both policies. It was agreed that a revised quote should be requested from Zurich with comparable contents cover level for the purpose of fair comparison.

Action: Clerk to request an updated insurance quote from Zurich. The clerk is authorised to use discretion in selecting the preferred provider for the insurance renewal.

10.2 Accounts Payable: The following payments were approved for settlement by cheque.

Cheque No.	Payable to:	Amount: £
	G H Fillingham Contractors Ltd	1,166.40
	Clear Insurance	898.95

- 10.3 Accounts Payable retrospectively:** The following retrospective payments made by bank transfer since the last council meeting were approved.

Cheque No.	Payable to:	Amount: £

11.0 Recreational Open Space in Whitley:

- 11.1 Parks and Verges:** The following observations concerning various matters appertaining to the Open Spaces in the Village.

11.1..1 Parks & Playground Maintenance: The Clerk reported that the mole eradication work in Daffodil Park had been completed by George Fillingham who also highlighted a significant build-up of garden waste, vegetation, tree debris, and general rubbish in one area of the park. Councillors acknowledged the issue of unauthorised green waste dumping and discussed the need for improved management of Daffodil Park. The Council considered the appointment of a councillor to assume responsibility for a watching brief over the park's condition. Cllrs Humphrey and Cole agreed to visit the park to assess the extent of dumping.

The Clerk advised that the inspection of the play areas remains outstanding and will explore alternative companies to expedite the process.

Cllr White raised concerns about the state of the playground areas, citing several issues. Moss growth on the ground that presents a slip hazard. Green residue on the children's equipment together with a general need for sweeping and cleaning. Councillors discussed options including, organising a community cleaning day with volunteers. Encouraging councillors to take a more proactive ownership of regular inspections of the upkeep of public play areas.

Actions arising:

- Cllrs Cole and Humphrey to carry out a visual inspection of green waste issues at Daffodil Park.
- Clerk to source alternative providers to undertake the overdue park inspection.
- Councillors to explore the organisation of a community clean-up event with promotion through Parish communication channels.

11.1..2 Nature Reserve: Cllr Cole provided an update on the current condition and maintenance efforts at the Nature Reserve, Brambles, dog roses, bracken, and grass are regrowing vigorously. She and a local resident conducted a walkthrough and clearing session, cutting back vegetation and uncovering two trees of concern, one tree is dead and presents a potential safety risk, especially to children tempted to climb it.

Councillors debated whether the situation justified engaging a tree surgeon, noting the balance between safety and the natural character of the reserve.

Cllr Cole agreed to consult a tree surgeon for a professional assessment.

The Council debated the intended character and purpose of the reserve; should it be wild and natural with minimal intervention, or a manicured walking area?

Councillors noted that unmanaged growth could eventually overwhelm the site. There is uncertainty around Monaghan Mushrooms' ongoing involvement, and a strategy for long-term management is needed.

Several management suggestions were put forward:

- Seek expert advice from organisations such as the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.
- Consider engaging professional contractors or seeking help from local farmers equipped with flail mowers or tractors.
- Acknowledged that budgeting for ongoing maintenance would be necessary, but funding sources are unclear.

Councillors recognised and expressed appreciation for the efforts made to date in the management of the nature reserve. It was agreed that the reserve needs a clear management plan, including defined objectives (e.g. nature conservation, community use, flower meadow). Sustainable maintenance practices should be adopted with the identification of budgets and clear funding sources.

Concerns were raised regarding encroachment of public footpaths within the reserve. It was noted any issues related to this should be reported to

Actions:

1. Cllr Cole to consult a tree surgeon regarding the dead and possibly hazardous tree.
2. Consideration be given to placing a waste bin at the perimeter of the reserve.
3. Expert advice to be sought from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust,
4. Councillors to develop a clear management strategy, including the possible use of contractors or local farmers for vegetation control.
5. Any footpath encroachment concerns to be reported to the North Yorkshire Council's Public Rights of Way Department.

11.1..3 Community Payback Team: Cllr White updated the Council on progress with engaging the Community Payback scheme to assist with local maintenance tasks, particularly at the Daffodil Park. The York-based team is currently unable to assist due to staffing issues. As an alternative, Cllr White has contacted the Doncaster Community Payback team, who have agreed to attend an on-site meeting to assess the scope of work required. However, a condition of their involvement is the provision of access to the public liability insurance documentation.

11.1..4 Verge cutting: The verge cutting has been commenced for completion every fortnight.

11.2 Other issues or matters to report: There were no further issues or matters to discuss.

12.0 A19 Safety:

Cllr White advised that recently he has had little opportunity to download data from the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the A19. Questions were posed concerning the utility of VAS data with the recognition that its intended purpose was to support lobbying efforts with highways authorities and law enforcement on speeding and road safety issues.

A resident on Gravel Hill Lane raised concerns about vehicle speeds in that area. The Clerk relayed the response from North Yorkshire Council Highways, indicating the speed bumps are a possible solution, though cost details are unclear.

It was confirmed that no roundabout would be constructed at the Balne Crossing.

Councillors noted that the crash barrier near Templar Close has been damaged and expressed frustration with the slow pace of Highways Department repairs and general responsiveness regarding A19 signage and infrastructure maintenance.

13.0 A.O.B.

13.1 Cllr White commented on his recent visit to the recently re-opened George and Dragon public house and met the newly appointed manager, who will reside on-site and cover the role of chef. Cllr White conveyed the Council's support and best wishes to the new landlord and his team. The defibrillator and small Christmas tree at the site were discussed. The news of upcoming community events at the pub such as a dart night was welcomed. It was suggested that a group visit by councillors be organised as a gesture of goodwill and support with an open invitation to be extended to the manager and landlord to engage with the Parish Council at any time.

13.2 Cllr White commended the contribution of the Eggborough Power team for their support in the location of the new notice board on Templar Close. Cllr Humphry agreed to take responsibility for the removal and disposal of the old notice board.

13.3 The Council noted the lack of engagement with Harron Homes. The Council discussed the idea of the Parish Council directly contracting the family who own the land designated for donation with a proposition that a more strategic portion of the land be transferred. In particular, the land intended for residential development by Harron Homes which as an alternative could potentially be let to local farmers to generate ongoing income from the Parish.

14.0 Confirm the date, time and place of next meeting: Next Parish Council Meeting:
Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 7pm at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School.

Closure of meeting: 09:35 pm