

Whitley Parish Council

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

2.0 Open Public Forum(OPF) 17th June 2025

2.1 A local resident was in attendance and stated that they had no issues or concerns to raise but wished to observe the discussion relating to the planning agenda item.

2.2 Cllr J McCartney (North Yorkshire Council) raised concern regarding ongoing fly-tipping on the A19 south of the Balne crossroads. He reported that the waste had been brought to the attention of North Yorkshire Council (NYC) several weeks ago, yet it remains uncollected. He expressed disappointment at the lack of action notwithstanding his request for prompt clearance.

2.3 Cllr J McCartney informed the Council of a recent policy change by North Yorkshire Council (NYC) regarding Home to School Transport. Under the revised policy, NYC will only provide free transport to a student's nearest designated school. Pupils opting to attend a school outside this boundary, such as Brayton Academy, will no longer be eligible for funded transport if it is not the closest school. This policy change will particularly affect families in Whitley and Eggborough, where the nearest designated secondary school is De Lacy Academy in Knottingley.

As part of the transitional arrangements, students already attending an out-of-area school will continue to receive funded transport until they complete their secondary education. However, new students starting secondary school in September 2025 will only receive free transport to De Lacy Academy.

As a concession, NYC has agreed to allow parents to pay for spare seats on school buses, where available, for children attending schools beyond their designated catchment.

It was further reported that a local action group of parents from Whitley and Eggborough has made representations to NYC councillors, urging reconsideration of the policy. The group has advocated for a compromise allowing paid-for bus passes to be offered, enabling students to access existing school bus services and ensuring a safe, reliable, and practical means of transport. Without such provision, working families would be forced to pursue more challenging and less efficient alternatives for transporting their children to schools of choice.

The group has also engaged with Brayton Academy, seeking the school's support in finding a solution. In response, the Academy advised that it is not in a financial position to fund multiple route bus services directly.

Action: Clerk to email a notice of support for the parental action group forwarding this to Carl Les, David Skaith (Major of NYC) and Keir Mather MP.

2.4 Parish Councillors discussed ongoing difficulties in accessing the services of the Community Payback Scheme. Historically, Whitley has benefited from the scheme, particularly for tasks such as vegetation clearance in local parks and the nature reserve. However, councillors noted increasing problems in securing bookings due to resource constraints, particularly a shortage of administrative staff to manage and deploy teams.

It was observed that the scheme's operational limitations are restricting its availability to local communities.

Cllr J McCartney acknowledged the concerns and suggested that the issue be raised with Keith Mather MP, as it reflects a wider resourcing problem that may require parliamentary attention or intervention.

- 2.5** Cllr White reported that Eggborough Power has commenced preliminary works on the Gale Common Ash Extraction site, in accordance with the conditions set out in their granted planning permission.

Councillors noted the development but expressed cautious and optimistic views regarding the likelihood of substantial project progression in the near term. They commented on the current state of the ash products market, highlighting local, national, and international competition, which may impact the commercial viability and timeline for full-scale operations.

- 2.6** The Chair closed the open public forum.

Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 17th June 2025 at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School Building – 02/26

- 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 20th May 2025:

- 6.1** It was resolved the minutes were a true record of the Whitley Parish Council meeting held on 20th May 2025.

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

7.0 Matters for information and action as required:

- 7.1 Council Vacancy:** The Clerk confirmed that the Notice of Vacancy for Parish Councillors, issued by North Yorkshire Council, has been duly advertised for the required statutory period. As no expressions of interest or requests for a formal election were received from electors, Whitley Parish Council is now authorised to fill the vacant seats through co-option.

Actions: Cllr Humphray to promote the vacant position for Parish Councillor calling for applications on their social media pages outlining the role and responsibilities.

- 7.2 Oak Tree at Lee View Park:** Cllr White referred to recent correspondence from residents of Lee View regarding overhanging branches from the Oak Tree adjacent to their property. The residents have expressed the view that the tree should be routinely maintained by the Parish Council but, in this instance, have agreed to share the cost of the proposed works on a 50:50 basis.

Councillors agreed to proceed with commissioning the tree works, subject to ensuring that the residents are fully informed of the scope and extent of the work to be undertaken. It was further agreed that Parish Councillors will be present on site when the tree surgeon carries out the work to ensure it meets the expectations of the resident.

Action: The Clerk to liaise with the appointed tree surgeon to arrange the works and co-ordinate an onsite meeting involving Parish Councils and the resident during the visit.

7.3 Fly-tipping in Whitley: The Clerk reported that, following written engagement with the landowner on whose land the fly-tipped waste is located, an acknowledgement of the concern has been received. The landowner has given undertakings to address the issue.

At this time, no further update on progress has been received.

Action: The Clerk to continue monitoring the situation and follow up with the landowner as necessary to ensure the waste is removed.

7.4 Parish Council Digital Security: The Clerk provided a summary of the current protocols and practices in place for the secure management of digital information relating to Parish Council administration. This was prompted by a recent issue experienced in accessing his own laptop and intended to reassure councillors about data protection and recovery measures.

Key points reported by the Clerk included:

- All digital files and records relating to Parish Council matters are stored exclusively on an external hard drive. No Council data is held on the internal storage of any laptop or desktop device.
- The external hard drive is backed up in full monthly to a second external drive to ensure data security and recovery.
- The laptop used for Council administration is protected by up-to-date antivirus and security software to guard against data corruption through malware or other threats.

The Clerk also confirmed that Cllr Humphray has provided the user ID and password for the Parish Council's social media accounts, ensuring continued access and management of the pages.

Additionally, it was noted that the Parish Council website is hosted by Vision ICT, a provider specialising in parish council websites. Vision ICT offers dedicated customer support, along with access to online training and guidance for uploading content to the structured pages of the Whitley Parish Council site.

Councillors acknowledged that the **Whitley Councillors' WhatsApp Group** constitutes a digital record of communication between members and, as such, could be subject to investigation or audit should inquiries into the affairs of the Parish Council ever arise.

It was noted that messages shared within the WhatsApp group are protected by end-to-end encryption in accordance with the platform's security protocols. While the platform is primarily used for informal or general chat, councillors agreed that care must be taken regarding the nature of information shared.

Councillors were reminded to avoid using WhatsApp for the transmission of sensitive or confidential Parish Council matters and to always remain mindful of data protection responsibilities.

7.5 Parish Council Records: The Clerk and Cllr Walton reported on the recent receipt and review of historical Parish Council documentation handed over from the archive of former

Parish Clerk Keith Leppingwell. Several boxes of records were examined and sorted to determine their relevance and the need for retention.

It was noted that over 80% of the documents comprised hard copy planning applications and related material originally provided by the North Yorkshire Planning Department for consultation purposes. As these records are now publicly available on the North Yorkshire Council's online planning portal, the hard copies are no longer required and will be securely destroyed.

The remaining documents, which include historical financial records, meeting minutes, and general correspondence, will be collated and transferred to the North Yorkshire Archives in Northallerton. These records will be catalogued and stored in perpetuity in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Clerk also tabled a draft **Records Management and Retention Policy** for consideration by the Council. The policy outlines a structured approach to managing Parish Council records, including responsibilities, scope, and the retention schedule for various categories of documents.

Actions:

- The Clerk to arrange the secure destruction of obsolete planning records.
- The Clerk to coordinate the transfer of historical records to the North Yorkshire Archives.
- Councillors to review the draft Records Management and Retention Policy for adoption at a future meeting.

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 PC Sarah Ward attaching the North Yorkshire Police newsletter for June 2025 covering the Osgoldcross Ward. The number of incidents in Whitley were noted and the pending retirement of PC Ward to be replaced by Inspector Campbell who will take over the management of the newsletter.
- 8.1..2** An email from the Communications Manager of Yorkshire and North East Highways providing an update on the A1 Wentbridge Viaduct and Wentedge Road Bridge scheme. Advising of a new completion date of December 2025 delayed from September 2025.
- 8.1..3** A complaint from a concerned resident who commented on the state of the playground prompting Cllr Paley and Cllr Barber to attend and undertake some cleaning.

- **Social Media**

- 8.1..1** Cllr Humphrey reported, there were comments on the social media pages concerning the Home to School policy to be adopted by North Yorkshire Council and the problem of fly-tipping.

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. A local resident, whose property is adjacent to the site, attended and outlined the background to the proposal. The resident also identified several inaccuracies in the application documentation.

It was noted that this application (Part One) concerns the conversion of an existing grain barn into two residential dwellings, with an additional future application anticipated for a further two units on the site. A key issue raised was the inadequacy of the existing and proposed site access in terms of highway sight lines. To address this, the developers have approached the resident with a proposal to purchase part of their front garden to improve visibility.

The resident expressed a general acceptance of the proposed development but sought the Parish Council's view, particularly in relation to the potential impact on the character and layout of the village.

Following discussion, councillors concluded that the **Parish Council has no objection to the development.**

The discussion then broadened to a general consideration of the long-term implications of future housing development within Whitley, particularly in the context of the **Local Plan** and **national housing policy objectives**. Councillors noted the importance of balancing the need to expand housing stock with the preservation of green belt land and maintaining the rural character of the village.

10.0 Council Finance & Administration:

10.1 RFO Report as at 17/06/2025:

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	6,500.00	3,988.45		8,505.31	No interest
Total Bank Balances				24,072.07	
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		13,754.62	

		-Management costs -Repairs -Unexpected/unforeseeable expenditure.		
VAT due for reclaim			4,059.35	
Total Unallocated Parish Funds			17,813.97	

The Clerk presented a cash flow summary, detailing actual receipts and payments up to June 2025. Based on budget expectations and planned expenditure, the estimated year-end balance was noted to be £15,618.24 subject to the accuracy of ongoing budget assumptions.

Actual income to date includes the first tranche of precept received from North Yorkshire Council of £6,500 and rental income received from the Allotment Association of £363.00

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

Cheque No.	Payable to:	Amount: £
	G H Fillingham Contractors Ltd	583.20
	J R Hunter – Clerks Salary quarter to June 2025 month 3 2025/26	494.30
	HMRC – PAYE quarter to June 2025 month 3 2025/26	123.60
	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: £

10.4 Annual Governance and Accountability Reports (AGAR) 2024/25

- 10.4..1 Certificate of Exemption AGAR 2024/25 Form 2.** It was resolved that Whitley Parish Council approve the Certificate of Exemption AGAR 2024/25 Form 2.

Action: The Certificate of Exemption to be signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer for publication on the Whitley Parish Council website and submission to the External Auditors PKF Littlejohn.

- 10.4..2 Approval of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.** It is resolved that Whitley Parish Council approve section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 for Whitley Parish Council on page 5 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

Action: The Annual Governance Statement to be signed by the Chair and the Clerk and a copy of the Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement is published on the Whitley Parish Council website.

- 10.4..3 Approval of Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25.** It is resolved that Whitley Parish Council approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for Whitley Parish Council on page 6 of the

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25. Carried unanimously.

Action: The Accounting Statement 2024/25 to be signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer with insertion of the minute reference and a copy published on the Whitley Parish Council website

10.4..4 Approval of the publication of documents required by Accounts and Audit Regulations; It is resolved that, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, SI 2020/404 The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, Whitley Parish Council will publish the following documents on a public website.

- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 page 6

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: Cllr Humphray provided a report following his recent inspection of **Daffodil Park**. Key observations and actions discussed were as follows:

- **Vegetation and Debris:** Some scattered branches and vegetation have been dumped in the park area. The grass cutting contractor has mown around the debris, but the area requires clearing, which is estimated to take approximately 1–2 hours. Once cleared, the area can be properly mowed and tidied.
- **Compost Pile:** In one corner of the park, there is a build-up of loose compost-like material, likely from historic pruning of dogwoods and other shrubbery. While unsightly, it is largely out of view and not considered an immediate concern. Councillors agreed that, although it may pose a potential rodent risk if unmanaged, the pile should be left in place for now given the potential cost of removal.
- **Mole Activity:** There continues to be noticeable mole activity in the area. Councillors discussed whether a repeat of the previous mole eradication efforts is needed, pending further monitoring.
- **Play Area:** The play area requires strimming and could benefit from a jet wash to improve cleanliness and appearance. Some debris in the area also needs to be removed.
- **Hedge Cutting:** It was noted that full maintenance of the front hedge cannot be completed until after the end of the bird nesting season in **October**.

Cllr White reported that parents of children using the **Blackthorn Close Play Area** have raised concerns about the need for general **clearing and tidying** of the surrounding area, like that required at Daffodil Park.

Cllr Walton suggested exploring the idea of establishing a **volunteer group**, potentially involving local parents, to assist with the upkeep of the play areas. A concept such as a “*Friends of the Play Area*” *WhatsApp Group* was discussed as a possible platform for community engagement and coordination.

However, councillors recognised that while voluntary help is welcomed, there is an increasing need for the Parish Council to establish a **dedicated budget** for the ongoing care and management of the village’s play areas. In previous years, maintenance support was partially fulfilled through the **Community Payback team**, but access to this resource has become unreliable due to staffing shortages.

It was agreed that the Council should **budget annually** for a formal clear-up and maintenance of park areas. The Clerk is to seek quotations for **jet washing**, with a view to commissioning work this year if cost allows.

It was also noted that the **trees within the Blackthorn Close Play Area** have grown significantly and may now require professional **cutting back**. Quotations will be obtained for this work.

Finally, the Council discussed the **outstanding safety inspection** of the play areas and reaffirmed the importance of sourcing and completing this inspection as a priority. Ensuring compliance with health and safety best practices is a key responsibility of the Parish Council.

Actions:

- Grass cutting contractor to be requested to carry out strimming of the Play Area
- Quotations for jet wash to be received for consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council
- Monitoring of mole activity to be continued to determine if further control is needed.
- Hedge cutting in Daffodil Park to be scheduled post October.
- Quotations to be obtained for tree management in Blackthorn Close.
- Scheduling of the required play area safety inspection to be pursued.

11.1..2 Nature Reserve: Cllr Cole provided an update on the ongoing management of the Whitley Nature Reserve. Contact has been made with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and an on-site inspection is to be arranged. Following the inspection, the Trust will provide recommendations for the long-term care and management of the common land.

A local tree surgeon has assessed the condition of the trees within the reserve. It was reported that:

- Two trees are dead and require removal, one of which is affected by Dutch Elm Disease.

- Trees around the open-air bench will be selectively thinned, creating a more open and usable seating area.
- Overhanging branches along pathways will be pruned to improve public access and safety.

A quotation of £600 has been received for the proposed work.

Action: A further quote be obtained for comparison for the tree work in the Nature Reserve and Blackthorn Close.

11.1..3 Community Payback Team: Cllr White advised that there was nothing further to report under this agenda item.

11.1..4 Verge cutting: It was noted that there are two specific areas along the A19 where verge cutting has not been carried out. These omissions were highlighted for attention.

Action: The Clerk to liaise with the contractor to ensure the omitted sections are located and cut as soon as practicable.

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

12.0 A19 Safety:

Cllr White reported that there will be more wide loads expected to pass through the village along the A19 in forthcoming months.

13.0 A.O.B.

13.1 Cllr White reported that he and Cllr Humphray had met with the new landlord of the George and Dragon pub to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Parish Council. It was a positive and constructive meeting. Two pointes emerged.

- The defibrillator will remain in place and continue to be supported.
- The pub intends to plant its own Christmas Tree going forward.

14.0 Confirm the date, time and place of next meeting: Next Parish Council Meeting:
Tuesday 15th July 2025 at 7pm at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School.

Closure of meeting: 09:35 pm