

Whitley Parish Council

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

2.0 Open Public Forum(OPF) 24th October 2023

2.1 A resident expressed concern about speeding issues in the village, citing instances of vehicles, including articulated lorries and tractors, exceeding speeds of 50mph. He highlighted the deteriorating road surfaces and drainage problems attributed to heavy traffic. The absence of speed monitoring devices raised questions, with a mention of 33,000 speeding incidents in a year. The resident urged the Parish Council to address the lack of secondary 30 mph signs and speed cameras in the village, emphasising the urgency for action to prevent potential disasters. The resident acknowledged the council's efforts but stressed the importance of addressing these speeding and safety issues.

Councillors expressed the view that there might be a misunderstanding by the resident about the speed monitoring sign. It was clarified that the sign belongs to the Parish Council and is currently located at the bottom of the village. Cllr White indicated that it was his intention to move it back to the top of the village. He also emphasised from analysis of the data reports from the speed camera that a significant portion of vehicles travel at speeds under 35-mph. However, it was acknowledged that a substantial number still exceed this limit. Councillors expressed the uncertainty about what the community can do, especially since North Yorkshire police, in marked contrast to both the South and West Yorkshire police forces, do not approve the use of fixed speed cameras. This presents a source of frustration given the limited options available to address speeding issues in the village.

A resident recounted a conversation with a neighbour about a police speed check deployed on Silver Street, expressing scepticism about its effectiveness due to the slowing down in the speed of passing cars. He noted oncoming cars flashing warnings, dismissing the deterrent impact of the police cameras as a complete waste of time. However, Councillors disagreed, pointing out the impact of the camera evidenced by police reports. They highlighted that 60 motorists were sent on a speed awareness course, each having to pay a fine. This suggests the police camera is having some effectiveness in enforcing speed limits and promoting safer driving practices.

Another resident highlighted hazardous conditions caused by blocked roadside water gullies in the village. Specifically, he mentioned dangerous spots near the George and Dragon, between the care homes, and at the location of a previously flooded house. The resident identified multiple blocked gullies, some causing water accumulation and flooding issues during heavy rain. He expressed concern about the danger posed to school children, citing instances where puddles reached the Northbound Carriageway. The resident provided a list of 13 blocked gullies and emphasised the need for urgent action, expressing dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of services despite paying council tax. He stressed the increasing danger, especially for school children and parents navigating the affected areas.

The Council acknowledged the residents' concerns, expressing empathy for the issues raised. They mentioned recent drain cleaning efforts but admitted it hadn't fully addressed the problem, acknowledging it as a widespread village issue. The recurring flooding near the George & Dragon was attributed to land sinking in the region, a problem previously reported. The Council also acknowledged the age of the gullies, noting past instances of collapse. The Councillors express their awareness of the challenges and a need for further action to address the persistent drainage issues in the village.

The resident pointed out that the A19, a major trunk road in the country, has historical origins installed over 200 years ago from private funding. He highlighted the design of bridges along the route, drawing attention to the fact that these roads were initially toll roads. The resident expressed frustration that North Yorkshire relies on roads that were not originally built for the current volume and type of traffic.

Action: Clerk to present North Yorkshire Council Highways Department with a detailed list of the blocked gullies, requesting inspection and appropriate cleaning.

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

**Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 24th
October 2023 at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School
Annex Building – 06/24**

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

4.0 Apologies for absence:

4.1 All Councillors were present at the meeting.

5.0 Disclosure of interest:

5.1 There were no other interests registered.

6.0 Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 19th Sept 2023:

6.1 Cllr White pointed out that a reference to Whitefield Close should be Whitley Farm Close and indicated a few typos. Subject to these amendments it was resolved the minutes were a true record of the Whitley Parish Council meeting held on 19th Sept 2023.

Action: The Clerk to deliver a copy for signature by the Chair.

7.0 Matters for information and action as required:

7.1 **Chairs Report:** The final draft of the Chair's report was approved for publication.

Action: Cllr White to liaise the print department of Tunstall Health in the organisation of a print run of the newsletter and distribute finished copies for delivery to household within the village.

7.2 **Budget for 2023-24:** The Clerk presented the preliminary budget for the upcoming financial year, outlining key expenditure components such as the clerk's salary, open space maintenance, donations, insurance, and administration, totalling £14,000. A detailed schedule of projected grass-cutting costs throughout the growing season was provided at current market prices. To illustrate the impact on household council tax, a precept level of £14,000 was highlighted, indicating a potential 33% increase in the band D rate from £25.97 to £34.62, translating to a flat rate annual increase of £8.65.

The Parish Councillors engaged in a comprehensive debate on the budget for the upcoming financial year, addressing key considerations. The primary focus was on determining the precept for the year ending March 31, 2025. Councillors expressed concerns about the proposed 33% increase, suggesting a more conservative approach.

Councillors undertook a thorough examination of the budget proposals, actively considering ways to balance financial responsibility with community needs and expectations.

The key points discussed included:

Reviewing Expenditure Items: Councillors debated the necessity of certain expenditures, such as £500 donations and Christmas parcels for the over 80's, questioning the obligation to allocate annual funds in these areas.

Cost Sharing for Tree Management: The idea of negotiating cost-sharing for tree management with residents whose properties are directly impacted was discussed. Councillors considered whether it was fair for the Parish Council to bear the full cost without seeking contributions.

Seeking Sponsorship for Expenses: There was a suggestion to explore alternative funding sources, such as seeking sponsorship or donations for specific items like Christmas parcels for the over 80's rather than allocating a fixed budget.

Reducing Budget for Tree Management: The proposal to reduce the budget for tree management by negotiating costs and seeking contributions from affected residents was discussed as a potential cost-saving measure.

Challenging the 33% Increase: Concerns were raised about the substantial 33% increase, and councillors proposed mitigating measures, such as removing donations and reducing expenses, to bring the increase to a more acceptable level and justifying each budget item to residents.

Incremental Approach to Budget Increases: Some councillors suggested considering incremental increases in subsequent years rather than a significant jump, allowing for a more gradual adjustment and easing potential burden on residents.

Balancing Service Quality with Financial Restraints: The councillors acknowledged the need to balance service quality, such as verge cutting, with financial constraints. The discussion touched upon residents' perceptions of service quality and the council's responsibility in financial management.

Exploring Additional Funding Sources: The idea of exploring additional funding sources, including reaching out to local businesses for sponsorship, was suggested to alleviate the financial burden on the Parish Council.

Consideration of Alternative Proposals: Various councillors presented alternative proposals, including reducing the precept increase to 24% by revisiting certain budget items, such as removing donations and trimming tree management costs.

It was agreed that Councillors would reflect upon the budget proposals and the points discussed prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council in preparation for finalisation of the budget for 2024-25.

7.3 Vacancy for Parish Councillor: Mrs Maureen (Mo) Thompson a resident of Whitley Farm Close expressed her interest in serving as a Parish Councillor. Having been a member of the village for over five years, Mrs Thompson fulfils the qualification criteria required to assume the responsibilities of a Councillor for the Parish.

The Clerk informed the Council that, in accordance with the published notice for the vacancy of a Parish Council position, and in the absence of other candidates, the Parish Council is duly authorised to co-opt suitably qualified individuals from the community onto the Parish Council.

It was resolved that Mrs Maureen Thompson be co-opted as a member of the Parish Council.

In welcoming Mrs Thompson to the Parish Council, the Councillors expressed their appreciation for her willingness to serve and all look forward to her valued contribution to the conduct of the business of the Parish Council.

7.4 Remembrance Sunday: Councillors deliberated on the arrangements for the Remembrance Sunday event which is set to commence on 12th November at 11.00am at the War Memorial in Daffodil Park. It was decided that Cllr Cole will lead the event, taking charge of managing the PA system. This system will facilitate the listening of the radio broadcast from the Cenotaph in London. A commemorative wreath will be procured to be laid at the memorial during the event.

7.5 Memorial Bench: The Clerk informed the Council that the memorial bench has been ordered and will be delivered to the home of Cllr Walton. There is currently an 8 week delay to the anticipated date of delivery.

7.6 Trees in Daffodil Park & Lee View: Councillors discussed issues relating to the management of specific trees located in Daffodil Park. A proposal involving the removal of two small ash trees and the pollarding of three willow trees, at a cost of £700, was considered with comments and contributions offered by residents affected by these trees. Concerns were raised regarding the current state of the trees, including the safety risk of dropping branches and the effectiveness of pollarding given the likelihood of the trees regrowing within a few years. Councillors discussed the option of removing all the trees involved acknowledging the financial implications.

The Council considered various scenarios in meeting the cost of the tree management including seeking contributions from the residents affected by way of 50:50 split of costs. Residents present at the meeting expressed receptiveness to making a financial contribution with some reservation about whether all the residents involved could afford to contribute.

The need for a long-term plan for managing trees with the parish was emphasised with Councillors recognising the importance of not only addressing the current situation but also planning management of tree growth in the future.

Councillors and residents agreed to seek additional quotes for the removal of all the trees as a basis for comparison.

Action: Clerk to seek further quotes for the complete removal of all the trees concerned for review at the next Parish Council meeting in November.

Cllr White provided an update on the hazel thicket overgrowth issue affecting a property on Lee View. His communication with the property owner revealed that the required cutting back is not as extensive as the tree management in Daffodil Park and could

feasibly be managed by the property owner. Cllr White explored the potential of utilisation of the Community Payback Team for the task, although progress in securing their assistance has been difficult. Alternatively, obtaining a quotation from George Fillingham was suggested.

Action: Clerk to request a quote from George Fillingham for the hazel thicket cut back of the hazel thicket in Lee View for consideration at the next Parish Council meeting in November.

7.7 Drainage in Daffodil Park: Cllr White informed the Council that he will be meeting with Sweetings, the drainage contractor, and the farmer who owns the adjoining field to discuss the drainage project. The primary objective is to provide the farmer with a comprehensive understanding of the water engineering measures necessary for diverting floodwater from the Daffodil Park Field into the drainage network of the surrounding fields, ultimately directing the excess water into the canal and river system. This meeting aims to address any concerns the farmer may have regarding the potential impact of the drainage system on his fields and to ensure transparency about the project's implications.

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

8.1 Emails and postage.

8.1.1 Clerk presented the following details of emails or correspondence by mail relevant to the affairs of Whitley Parish Council:

8.1.1.1 An email from the Pageant Master providing further update on the plans and ambitions for the national commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landing on 6th Jun 2024. Noted

8.1.1.2 An email from Sarah Ward PC of the North Yorkshire Police Neighbourhood Policing Team sharing a copy of the October monthly newsletter for circulation among the community. Noted

8.1.1.3 An email from North Yorkshire Council presenting a policy document advising that the cost of the organisation and delivery of unscheduled by-elections of a Parish Council will be recharged with effect from 1st January 2024. Noted

8.1.1.4 An email from the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners Office promoting the launch of a video campaign entitled "Just a Kiss" aimed at 16- to 24-year-olds warning of the dangers and signs of stalking within the community. Noted

8.1.1.5 An email from Citizens Advice Bureau summarising their activities during the year and the support offered to 14 residents in Whitley. Noted

8.1.1.6 An email from North Yorkshire Council Legal & Democratic Services notifying of a proposal for an Amendment Order restricting parking on at the exit junction of Silver Street onto the A19. Noted

8.2 Social Media

8.2.1.1 Cllr Humphrey advised that the Whitley Community page on Facebook has been temporarily blocked on the ground of a breach of community rules. At present items cannot be posted onto the pages. In the absence of a reinstatement of access a new community facebook page will need to be created.

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

- 9.1.1 ZG2023/0968/COU:** The Chase Doncaster Road, change of use from agricultural barn to general storage (retrospective). Technically this is outside of the Whitley Parish. No comments
- 9.1.2 ZG2023/0966/HPA:** The Chase Doncaster Road, Erection of new garage. Technically this is outside of the Whitley Parish. No comments
- 9.1.3 ZG2023/0913/MAN2:** The Chase, Doncaster Road, non-material amendment of 2019/0665/HPA proposed extensions and renovation including new roof and re render in pebble dash. Technically this is outside of the Whitley Parish.
- 9.1.4 ZG2023/0858/HPA:** Cherry Tree Farm, Templar Close. Removal of existing outbuildings to accommodate a new single storey, hip roof side extension and internal alteration works to existing dwellings. Refused. No comments
- 9.1.5 2023/0051/FUL:** 2 Whitefield Lane, erection of bungalow. Following the refusal of the application an appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol deadlines for representations about which must be made by 31st October 2023. Noted without comment.

10.0 Council Finance & Administration:

10.1 RFO Report as at 24/10/2023:

Bank/Account	Income since 1st April 2023	Expenditure since 1st April 2023	Current Balance	Notes/Comment
Santander Deposit	72.27		15,325.77	Interest paid monthly
Santander Current Account (Cash Book)	11,702.00	8,285.12	8,488.06	No interest
Total Bank Balances			23,813.83	
Less following funds:				
Allocated Funds		Surplus from Crossing Drainage Daffodil Field	1,798.71 12,230.00	
Total Allocated funds			14,028.71	
Parish Council Bank Funds		Legal Action and Complaints against the Council. Future Development and Facility Provision –Buildings. Future Development and Facility Provision – ROS. Future Development and Facility Provision -Nature Reserve. Unexpected/unforeseeable expenditure.	9,785.12	

VAT due for reclaim			1,951.70	
Total Unallocated Parish Funds			11,736.82	

The Clerk presented a cash flow summary analysing month by month the actual receipts and payments up to October 2023, with a forecast of income and expenditure for the remainder of the year to March 2024. Income to date is £11,702 including the second tranche of precept received in October 2023 and the proceeds of sale of the jet wash for £90. Total expenditure up to 31st March 2024 is anticipated to amount to £29,928.82 that compares with total income of precept and rent flowing into the bank for the year of £15,149.49. The balance of reserves carried forward at the end of the year is forecast to be £5,682.62.

Payments for the month include the settlement of the fee payable to PKF Littlejohn following the successful completion of the external audit. The audit is a statutory requirement for all Parish Councils whose total income or expenditure during a financial year exceeds £25,000.

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

Cheque No.	Payable to:	Amount: £
22551	PKF Littlejohn	252.00
22552	J White – cutting of Daffodil Park hedge	50.00
22552	J White – plants for War Memorial	14.00

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:

11.1.1 Parks & Playground Maintenance: Councillors considered various items in connection with maintenance within the park and playgrounds. Cllr White provided an update on the successful completion of hedge trimming at the front of Daffodil Park. He commented on the existence of other hedges within the village that have received minimal or no attention that may require future management. The discussion also touched upon the hedge along the side and rear of Daffodil Park, with consideration of potential approaches being made to incorporate this section into future maintenance plans.

The Clerk advised that we are awaiting details of the report following the inspection of the playgrounds in Daffodil Park, Blackthorn Close and Lee View. Cllr White highlighted the quotation he obtained for the jet wash of all play surface across the village’s play areas. In response to feedback from a resident, the council sought a quote from a local contractor. However, the

received quote at £500 was deemed to be prohibitively expensive, especially considering the council's constrained financial resources.

Council members engaged in a discussion regarding the procurement of a new Christmas Tree to replace the current plant. The proprietors of the George & Dragon express their willingness to facilitate the new tree but recommending digging a deeper hole to accommodate a taller tree, which would also require proper staking. A range of views were voiced during the debate, with some expressing concerns about the associated costs of digging the hole and questioning the necessity of replacing the current smaller but growing tree. It was agreed Cllr White would conduct an on-site inspection to evaluate the requirements for planning a new tree.

11.1.2 Community Payback Scheme: Cllr White provided an update, stating that the Parish are currently awaiting a decision from the Governors of Whitley & Eggborough Community Primary School regarding the approval of the use of school facilities by members of the Community Payback Team. Previously, the team utilised the toilet facilities in the school annex. However, due to the annex now being used by external contractors for the provision of pre and post school catering, access has been restricted. Cllr White advised that under statutory obligations we must provide facilities for community payback team members. In the absence of such provision, the parish risks losing access to the valuable resources provided by the team.

11.1.3 Gas Tank Enclosure: Cllr White advised that the operators of the facility Norther Energy have been approached about the state of the management of the enclosure. Hedges are significantly overgrown and impede the passage of public using the pathways by the entrance to the park. He noted that he has been informed that a team from Northern Energy will be attending the site to carry out ground maintenance.

11.1.4 Verge Cutting: There was nothing to report or discuss about verge cutting.

12.0 A19 Safety:

12.1 Speeding on A19: Cllr White reported that he continues to pull speeding data and publish the information on social media. He advised that the speeding sign has not been moved for some time resulting in issues with the mechanism. Consequently, he has arranged for the suppliers to attend to inspect the sign that was acquired under extended warranty until 2025. Once repaired the sign will be relocated to the top of the village.

13.0 A.O.B.

13.1 Cllr White commented on the absence of any progress towards the sale of the Church.

13.2 Cllr White provided a summary of this discussions with the landlords of the George & Dragon, seeking their perspective on the possibility of any interested village group registering the pub as an Asset of Community Value. The landlords remained non-committal but questioned whether such an option was applicable to public houses.

Councillors debated the merits of registering the pub as an asset of community value. The designation would mean that if the pub owners ever intended to sell, the sale must be temporarily halted for six months, allowing the community time to gather funding for the collective acquisition of the asset for the benefit of the whole community.

13.3 Cllr Cole reported on her unsuccessful attempts to secure sponsorship or grant funding for the Christmas lights installation project in the village. It was noted the Parish Newsletter introduced the idea of Christmas lighting which detailed the magnitude of the expenses involved including a one-off cost of £350 per lamppost for structural alternations to accommodate necessary fittings, followed by annual charges for the hire of each light fitting starting at £150. The total cost for decoration of 10 lampposts would be expensive at £3,500 one off cost and £1,500 per annum thereafter. Given the costs involved Councillors considered that any decision to embark on such a project would hinge on the level of interest from residents and consideration should be given to conducting a community poll to gauge support.

13.4 Cllr White proposed reinitiating communication with Eggborough Power regarding the Gale Common Ash Extraction project, noting that it has been some time since the last update. He suggested engaging with the team to obtain current information on the progress of the project and gain some insights into their future plans.

13.5 Cllr White raised the question of whether there were additional items of equipment or assets owned by the Parish Council that could be sold. He specifically mentioned such items as the projector, the PA system and the speed gun currently utilised by the Eggborough Community.

14.0 Confirm the date, time and place of next meeting:

Next Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 21st November ; 2023 at 7pm at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School.

Closure of meeting: 9:35 pm