

WEST WITTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Friday 16 May 2025 at 7.00pm

Present Cllr Dave Brown (Chair) Cllr Christine Donovan-Brown. Cllr John Hunter

In attendance

Alyson Jones (Clerk)

Members of public: 2

1 Election of Chairman

1.1 New Chair to sign his/her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

RESOLVED: Cllr John Hunter proposed Cllr Dave Brown to continue as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Christine Donovan-Brown. Cllr Dave Brown signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2 Apologies for absence

To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

RESOLVED: None

3 Declarations of interests

To receive any declarations of interest not already declared under the Council's Code of Conduct or members Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

RESOLVED: None

4 Minutes of the Last Annual Parish Meeting

To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2024 as a true and correct record and to sign them as such.

RESOLVED: The Council approved the minutes of the last Annual Parish meeting held on 21 May 2024 as a true and proper record and were signed by the Chairman

5 Presentation on the activities of West Witton Parish Council 2024/2025

To receive an update on the activities of West Witton Parish Council for the year 2024/2025 by Cllr Brown.

RESOLVED: An update of activities of West Witton Parish Council for the past year was presented by the Chair. This included the following information: In 2024/25, the precept was raised by 10% to offset rising costs, including grass cutting. The Remembrance Garden was completed with the help of a Locality Budget Grant of £400. Burial prices at the cemetery have remained the same. The 80th Anniversary of VE-Day was commemorated in the village with signs, flags and the Tommy statue. Mill Dam had a 'tidy up' day with 12 volunteers and 6 dumpy bags were removed by D Harker. Mill Dam Trees were heavily pruned and edges trimmed. New gravel was laid. All costs were paid for by Smorthwaite Trust and a £200 donation from the Wensleydale Heifer. The Remembrance Service in November was again well-attended. Ongoing Highways issues were raised with the result of 4 of the 5 issues being resolved, including Keep Clear signs outside the Wensleydale Heiffer, verge marker posts were placed in the grass verge at the junction of Flats lane and Church Bank to prevent ongoing issues with lorries and large vehicle damage, and Nanny Well was cleared out. The edges of Green Hill still need to be done. New pads and battery for the village defibrillator were replaced at a cost of £500. Croquet continues to be played on Mill Dam and the rota for clearing of the Dam is still being used. The Dog warden has been contacted re appropriate signage. Unfortunately dog bag dispensers are being stolen from the Dam so a solution is needed. The Chair also acknowledged the loss of up-to-date information re the village of Swinithwaite following the resignation of Cllr Bottley.

6 Finances (Review of finances for 2024/2025)

To receive an update on the finances of West Witton Parish Council for the year 2024/2025 by the Clerk.

RESOLVED: Finances (Review of finances for 2024/2025)

Opening Balance: £4,354.86

Payments: £5,994.85

Receipts: £6,070.00

Closing Balance: £4,430.01

7 Public Participation (Open discussion by electors on affairs concerning the Parish (as ruled by the chairman) for the attention of the Parish Meeting or to be brought to the attention of West Witton Parish Council.

RESOLVED: No issues for open discussion by electors on affairs concerning the Parish.

8 Close (Closure of meeting by the Chairman at 7.15 pm).

WEST WITTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Friday 16 May 2025 at 7.30pm

1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

1.1 To confirm the Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 24 March 2025 as a true and correct record and to sign them as such.

RESOLVED: That the Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 24 March 2025 as a true and proper record and were signed by the Chairman.

2 Co-option of new Councillor

2.1 To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy.

RESOLVED: The Council voted unanimously for former Cllr Neil Dutton to be co-opted as new Councillor on to the Parish Council

ACTION: The Parish Clerk will forward West Witton Parish Council Code of Conduct and Financial regulations to Cllr Dutton and will adjust the Standing Orders. Cllr Donovan-Brown agreed to contact the bank to include Cllr Dutton for cheque signing.

2.2 To receive an update on the co-option of a new Councillor following the resignation of Cllr Graham Bottley.

RESOLVED: Neil Dutton will be co-opted as a new Councillor for West Witton following the resignation of Cllr Graham Bottley.

Cllr John Hunter will resign from West Witton Parish Council after 12 years of service. Cllrs accepted John Hunter's resignation and thanked him for all his valuable years of service.

ACTION: The Parish Clerk will put in process the co-option of a new Councillor for West Witton following the resignation of Cllr John Hunter.

3 Financial Matters

3.1 To approve Receipts and Payments (see Appendix 1).

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the Receipts and Payments as follows:

	MAY 2025			
PAID				
DETAILS	TO	AMOUNT	DATE PAID	P NUMBER
Lawnmower Kit	Winstanley Ltd	£449.00	16/04/2025	

Cemetery grass cutting April	DCN Fencing & Landscaping	£180.00	30/04/2025	
Yorkshire Local Councils Association Membership 2025-2026	YLCA	161.00	30/04/2025	
Annual receipts and payments book	Parish Clerk: Alyson Jones	£26.34		
RECEIVED				
DETAILS	FROM	AMOUNT	DATE RECEIVED	R NUMBER
Outstray grazing rights	R Sunter	£50	28/04/25	
Precept	North Yorkshire Council	£4,750	30/04/25	
Lyncot Garden Rent	J Jackson	£45	12/05/25	
Pen Cottage garden rent	D Clarke	£85	06/05/25	

3.2 To receive the latest bank balances and sign statements.

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the latest bank balances and signed statements.

4 AGAR Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024-2025

4.1 To approve the Accounting Statements 2024-2025.

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the Accounting Statements 2024-2025.

4.2 To note the report of the internal auditor.

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the report of the internal auditor.

4.3 To confirm the Audit information including year-end accounts, asset register and explanation of variances.

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the Audit information including year-end accounts, asset register and explanation of variances.

5 Grass Cutting

5.1 To receive an update on grass cutting and to consider process upon retirement of Anthony Gouldthorpe

Cllr Donovan-Brown gave an update on grass cutting since the retirement of Anthony Gouldthorpe. Dan from Leyburn has been doing work on the cemetery and will cut the grass every month as necessary over the key grass growing months. He will also provide a cost for cutting Green Hill.

Mill Dam will continue to be cut by 8 volunteers on a weekly rota to allow the croquet to be played. A new mower was purchased by the Smorthwaite Trust at a cost of £500 which will be kept at the Chair's house and will be used by the volunteer grass cutters for Mill Dam. In Swinithwaite, Thornberry are currently cutting/maintaining the grass.

RESOLVED: Cllrs approved the new costs for Dan to cut the grass in West Witton and requested that thanks be minuted on behalf of West Witton Parish Council to all the volunteers who enable the Parish Council to save money on things like grass cutting and maintenance on areas such as Mill Dam. The Parish Council also wanted to thank the Smorthwaite Trust for their kind donation towards the new lawnmower for use on Mill Dam.

6 Cemetery

6.1 To receive an update on any cemetery matters

Cllr Brown gave an update on the Cemetery. The dead cherry tree was inspected by a tree surgeon and a bat and bird survey done to ascertain when would be a good time to remove the dead tree. It was agreed that rather than replace it with another at the entrance to the cemetery (where the current one has done damage to the wall and is a health and safety hazard) three other cherry trees which will be placed in safe places in the cemetery to avoid any further problems. These will be planted in the autumn when it is a good time to plant new trees.

The Clerk raised an issue with one of the graves in the cemetery which had been brought to her attention by Rosanna James. Cllrs Brown and Donovan-Brown agreed to meet her at the cemetery to talk through her concerns.

RESOLVED: Cllrs agreed final costs to remove the cherry tree and the costs to plant 3 new trees in the autumn in the cemetery.

ACTION: Cllrs Brown and Donovan-Brown to meet Rosanna James at the cemetery to talk through concerns re Eric and Cordelia James's grave.

7 Highways update

7.1 To consider any highway matters.

No new highway matters were raised other than the outstanding edges of Green Hill which still needs to be done. Also a request for additional footway at the West end of the village has been added to Highways list for future consideration.

RESOLVED: None

8 Planning Applications and Decisions

8.1 To consider any recent/current Planning Applications.

RESOLVED: The following Planning Applications had been considered by the Parish Council with no objections raised:

4 April - R/91/72B/LB - Listed building consent for removal of natural stone slate roof over rear lean-to and replace with new roof covering of Indian sandstone slates; replacement of rotten timber beam with new timber beam and insertion of one Velux roof-light at Bolton Dene, Main Street, West Witton, Leyburn, DL8 4LS - R/91/72B/LB

1 April - R/91/189 - Householder planning permission for erection of wrap round single storey extension, connected to existing single storey extension at Beech Cottage, Swinithwaite, Leyburn, DL8 4UH - R/91/189

RESOLVED: No other Planning Applications or Decisions were raised.

9 Swinithwaite News/Matters

9.1 To consider process upon resignation of Cllr Graham Bottley of Swinithwaite

RESOLVED: Following the resignation of Cllr Bottley, it was agreed that the Clerk should approach the Estate Office in Swinithwaite to see if they could provide an update of another issues or news from the village for the Parish Council Meetings

ACTION: Parish Clerk to contact the Estate Office in Swinithwaite.

10 Agenda items for future meetings

10.1 To notify the Clerk of matters for inclusion on the Agenda for the next meeting.

The following issues were raised by Cllrs for inclusion in future meetings:

- * suggestion to liaise with the other Councils in the village for updates
- * agreement to run down and close the Smorthwaite Trust
- * suggestion to repair Caroline seat. Cllr Brown to speak to Caroline about this
- * suggestion to approve work on bus shelter in village

RESOLVED: Clerk noted the above agenda items for future meetings.

11 Date and time of next meeting

11.1 To confirm the date and venue of the next meeting.

RESOLVED: Cllrs agreed that the next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 8 Sept in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Meeting ended: 8.20pm