



A routine meeting of the Danby Group Parish Council took place on **Wednesday 12th July 2023** in Castleton Village Hall.

Present : Councillors: J. Day Chairman, D Murrell, S Medd, R Rudsdale, G Thompson, E Watson, County Cllr Chance, one member of the public throughout the meeting and J Preston (Clerk).

Minutes of the Meeting

1. **Apologies for absence** Received from Cllr's Findlay, Dodsworth & Stonehouse.

2. **Declarations of interest** None declared

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th June 2023 were accepted by resolution as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising from the meeting held 17th May 2023

Highways update:

- a) Hob Hole – road surface in poor condition as you descend into the valley coming from the direction of Westerdale. Highways have identified the need to initiate repairs. On the ascent out of the valley towards Kildale overhanging gorse bushes are an issue. A works order has been issued by highways to cut back the gorse.
- b) Sandhill Bank, Comondale. The top section of the road on the approach to the junction is considered to be in a poor state of repair. Highways are aware and a patching scheme is to be implemented. In addition at one of the passing points an HGV has gone off road and caused some deep ruts. No update available.
- c) Church Street, Castleton near the junction with Ainthorpe Lane on the right side of the road (out of Castleton) near the stone 'Castleton' sign – blocked drain. Will be addressed as part of the scheduled gully cleaning.
- d) Toad Beck – Brook Lane / Ainthorpe Lane broken railings. No update available
- e) Dibble Bridge Bank (Castleton end almost opposite the garth) – blocked roadside gutter and pipe under road causing flooding (not a blocked gully as stated by highways previously). The Highways Officer has attended and has cleaned the pipe ends and grips, he will continue to monitor the situation.

5. **External Reports** County Cllr Chance reported the transition to the new North Yorkshire Council had gone fairly smoothly with only a few difficulties mainly around communication, which was improving. All the Officers of the Council are now in place and going forward it is hoped all vacant posts will be filled within the next six months. The Parish Charter, which has been out for consultation will shortly be signed off by the Executive.

The Model Agreement arrangements will continue for the foreseeable future.

The SLA between the DGPC and SBC regarding Castleton toilet cleaning will be honoured.

6. **Planning Applications** Members considered the following Planning Application.

6.1 NYM/2023/0380 Application for construction of replacement single storey rear extension at The Pastures, Main Street, Westerdale. Resolved – no objection

6.2 NYM/2023/0411 Application for erection of replacement livestock building at Forest Farm, Castleton. Resolved – no objection

Signed as a true record:(Chair) Date:

6.3 NYM/2023/0425 Application for the removal of condition 4 of planning approval NYM/2017/0407/F/CU to allow unrestricted occupancy and sale of the residential units at 4 High Street, Castleton. Members considered the 2017 approval noting the conditions imposed by NYMNPA stated "The occupation of the accommodation units hereby permitted shall be limited to either: i For holiday letting purposes, or ii For local occupancy letting purposes for a qualifying person etc etc. The owners of the property (2 units) now want to have the restrictions lifted prior to sale of the property / properties on the open market. There was a very lengthy debate in relation to this application and subsequently members resolved to support the application in part i.e. support was given to the lifting of the holiday letting restriction but members were of the view a restriction should be in place regarding local occupancy or principal residence. The most recent local housing needs survey identified a need in the area.

6.4 NYM/2023/0434 Application to demolish an existing link extension and construct a replacement link at Old Mill, Commondale. Resolved – no objection

7. Accounts / Financial

Members considered the statement of accounts for the preceding month and by resolution authorised payment of outstanding invoices.

8. Correspondence (to note receipt / respond)

a) NYMNPA – invitation to attend a planning training session at Helmsley on the evening of Thursday 10th October. Members to be reminded at a later date.

b) Grass cutting

The Parish Council use the services of a local man hereafter referred to as the Village Caretaker. He is self-employed, paid by the Parish Council and is charged with keeping the Parish in general as tidy as he can. To this end he cleans gutters, picks up litter etc. etc. In the growing season he spends a great deal of his time cutting grass and dealing with problem weeds on sometimes very rough ground.

The caretaker only works inside the 30mph limits. By way of a contractual arrangement with North Yorkshire Council the Caretaker is required to cut grass at visibility splays (i.e. at road junctions where grass etc. could hinder visibility for road users). The Parish Council / Caretaker are not obliged / required to cut grass anywhere else. The Parish Council / Caretaker cut grass elsewhere to try to have the Parish looking presentable.

It is an irrefutable fact that there are now far less sheep wandering freely around the villages within the Parish, which consequently means grass grows more than it has previously, meaning there is more to cut. Subsequent to representation being made by members of the public, the Parish Council agreed to embark upon a scheme whereby it was hoped to encourage the reintroduction of wild flowers in certain areas. Advice was obtained from the NYMNPA ecologist and a local expert / enthusiast. The Caretaker was briefed / consulted and areas where the experiment would be trailed were identified.

For the experiment to be successful a number of things needed to line up including the ability / availability of the Caretaker to cut grass at the right time (weather dependant) and importantly the ability / availability of volunteers to rake up the grass cuttings – there had to be a cut very early season and a second cut late season after wild flower seeds has set and after both cuts clippings had to be removed. To reiterate, the Caretaker is a 'one man band' and there isn't a flood of people rushing to help with cutting grass or raking up grass cuttings. Rome wasn't built in a day and if this experiment is going to show any signs of success it will potentially take many years.

A number of complaints have been received about grass cutting, there have been complaints about the grass not being cut and complaints about it being cut too much and / or at the wrong time. It is impossible to keep both camps happy.

The time of the Caretaker is limited as is the Parish Council budget. The Parish Council cannot afford or justify spending public money to obtain expert advice about wild flower habitats or on extra labour needed to create / enhance existing habitat.

9. Items reported by Councillors

The following issues / concerns were reported

1. Castleton roadside gullies are blocked – when is the next scheduled cleaning?
2. The Footpath from the War Memorial down over the moor which emerges on to Church Street is badly overgrown – to report to NYMNPA.

10. Next meeting

September 20th (No meeting in August) 7pm, Castleton Village Hall.