**WESTOW**

# PARISH COUNCIL

**Westow Parish Council Meeting AGM – 1ST MAY 2024 – Westow Village Hall**

**Attendees:**

Helen Crews (HC) Chair; Angela Fothergill (AF) Clerk; Pennie Hamer (PH); Elizabeth Shields (ES); John Smith (JS); Christine Smith (CS); Geraldine Burton (GB)

**Apologies:**

Neil Johnson (NJ)

**Annual General Meeting**

**Adoption of 2023 Minutes**

The minutes of the AGM held on 10th May 2023 were proposed by RB and seconded by JS as a correct record.

**Election of Officers**

HC informed the Council that she would like to stand down as Chair next year. PH nominated HC continue as Chair for this year and this was seconded by PH. GB nominated JS as Treasurer, PH seconded. AF agreed to continue as Clerk.

**Treasurer’s Report**

JS had distributed the Treasurers Report.

***Westow Parish Council  -  Responsible Financial Officer’s Report for the Financial Year 2023/24***

*£6289.47 was brought forward from financial year 2022-23 consisting of £2212.33 from the Westow Parish Council account, £3919.99 from the Westow Parish Club Commitee (Village Hall) account and £157.15 from the Village Hall Deposit account.*

*Income of £3781.39 consisted of £2500 Precept from North Yorkshire Council, £280 from village hall hire, £1000 Community Grant for refurbishment of Westow Village Hall from North Yorkshire Council and £1.39 interest.*

*NB Non Domestic Rates 2023-24 was offset by Transitional Relief and Small Business Rate Relief.*

*Expenditure amounted to £5431.56. Financing the work of the Parish Council, including the salary of the Parish Clerk and Parish insurance accounted for £1551.95. A pay rise applicable from April 2023 was agreed and has been applied. The cost of utilities (water and electricity) for the Village Hall amounted to £648. Monthly payments to e-on Next and Scottish Water have remained stable through the year. A new battery has been sourced at a cost of £150 for the defibrillator in line with the Parish Council’s obligation to maintain the equipment. Refurbishment of the Village Hall has continued. Voluntary work on the restoration of the frontage cost £67.35 for materials. Upgrading of the furniture involving new chairs and tables has been partly funded by a Community Grant from North Yorkshire Council and available funds in the Westow Parish Club Commitee account.*

*Compliance with the Transparency Code (to maintain the Parish Council website) accounted for £269.04 of spending. The balance of the initial funding received in 2017 being carried forward into 2024-25 is now £584.36.*

*The Financial Summary shows £4639.30 \* is being carried forward into 2023-24, inclusive of £853.40 Transparency Code funds and £2200.08 Parish Club Committee (Village Hall maintenance) restricted fund.*

*\*4 unpresented cheques to the value of £2933.26 have been included in the 2023/24 accounts to agree with bank reconciliation.*

*J Smith, Responsible Financial Officer*

The accounts have been circulated.

I am grateful to Robin Graham for his advice and conducting the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24.

Westow Parish Council is a ‘Smaller Authority’ with neither gross income nor gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 in the year of account ended 31st March 2023. With the Parish Council’s approval it will certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 by submission of a Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2023/24 Form 2.

Westow Parish Council acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control and to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

Westow Parish Council confirms that the authority website (westow.org.uk) is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.

The PC agreed to submit a Certificate of Exemption form a limited assurance review which was signed by the Chair.

The PC agreed to accept the Annual Governance Statement which was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

The PC approved the Accounting Statement 2023/24 which was signed by the Chair

HC thanked JS for all his hard work as Treasurer.

The PC unanimously accepted the accounts as a correct record and they will be placed on the website.

If parishioners are unable to view documents on the website they should contact the Clerk who will make the accounts available to them. A notice will be placed on the Noticeboard in this regard.

**Chairmans Report**

***Chair’s report – AGM 1 May 2024***

*This year has been quite busy for the Parish Council (PC) and I have attached our very recent newsletter which pulls together the achievements of the last twelve months or so. None of this would have been possible without the volunteers who form the PC so my thanks to all of them for their work and support. In addition help from villagers has been invaluable as has contact with colleagues who form Crambe and Whitwell PC. Both PCs take a close interest in the shared responsibilities around Kirkham Bridge. Finally my thanks to our Clerk Angela Fothergill who supports us all and keeps us on track!*

*Helen Crews, Chair*

***WESTOW & FIRBY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES - SPRING 2024***

*Welcome to a short summary of some of the issues and successes that the PC have been working on over the past year or so since our last notes which related to Covid!*

*Hopefully folk can access the Parish Council website https://westow.org.uk where minutes of PC meetings are placed as well as documents relating to accounts, village notices and events etc. Thanks to Pennie Hamer for looking after our website which has a link to the Westow Facebook Forum.*

*This Newsletter will appear on the Parish Council website and there will be some paper copies by the Westow village notice board for anyone who does not have access to the website.*

*Parish Council Precept*

*Parish councils may raise a ‘precept’ on the council tax bills produced by their local billing authority (North Yorkshire Council). This is essentially a request for a sum to be collected through the council tax system. Council taxpayers cannot refuse to pay it, and the billing authority cannot refuse to levy it. It is the only source of tax revenue available to parish councils and is used for things like dog bins, grit, defibrillator maintenance and utility charges for the Village Hall. Westow PC has not increased the precept for three years now and it actually appears on Council Tax correspondence as a small reduction on last year because more households are sharing the charge.*

*Village Hall*

*The PC is responsible for the upkeep of the Village Hall (VH) which was donated to Westow just after the First World War. It would have been obvious to anyone who visited the hall in previous years that it needed to some work and its facilities refreshed. Some funds were raised prior to the building of Westow Cricket Club Pavilion in 2016 which were to be used specifically for the upkeep of the hall. After much hard work and perseverance by Clive Staples we eventually received the restricted funds from the bank. Clive was the chair of the original fund raising committee and many thanks to him for pursuing the release of the money (just over £3700).*

*Work had begun to improve the VH in a modest way a couple of years ago. Volunteers had helped to remove vegetation from the outside of the hall and generally tidy up the outskirts. Those of you who have been inside the hall more recently will have noticed that there is a new floor and refreshed paintwork. New curtains were donated by kind members of the parish. Externally there is a new side door, the woodwork has been checked and repaired where necessary and the door facing the road has been painted. Most of this work has been done by volunteers and our thanks go particularly to Tim Saxby and John Smith.*

*Most recently, a small VH Committee chaired by Geraldine Burton successfully bid for funds (£1000) from the NY Council Community Grant Scheme. This money will be used together with VH funds to replace the very old and damaged chairs and tables.*

*Work still needs to be done to refurbish the small kitchen and toilet facilities. We would also welcome ideas for improving the small area in front of the hall. If anyone would like to volunteer to help with these aspects these please contact Angela, our Clerk or email info@westow.org.uk.*

*Once we have new furniture more events can be held. Details will be published as available but meanwhile, offers to hold events are very welcome. The hall is available for a very modest sum.*

*For more information contact Tim Saxby on 01653 618064 or email timsaxb003@yahoo.com.*

*War Memorial*

*The PC is also responsible for the upkeep of the War Memorial and we thank Peter Burton who has power washed the War Memorial and Jaynie Pateraki for offering to look after it and paint the surrounding railings.*

*Kirkham Bridge*

*At long last the weight limit for vehicles crossing Kirkham Bridge has been reduced and is now active. Angela Fothergill has been a star in chasing this issue for many months and credit must go to her for it finally happening. Additionally signage at Eddlethorpe and Gally Gap has been updated. Most recently we have been notified that the bridge will close for 4 weeks from 2 April 2024 to allow the much needed repairs to be carried out.*

*Parking*

*It won’t have escaped anyone’s notice that there are more cars about than there used to be. On the whole people park carefully. This is a plea for us all to be as considerate as possible when we park along the streets. In particular, if parking on both sides of a road cannot be avoided then there must be space between cars for emergency vehicles to gain access if needed. Simply put, and based on advice from the emergency services, this means that a fire engine should be able to get through. If that can be done then an ambulance can also pass. We are lucky to live in an agricultural area and this means that occasionally large tractors and horse boxes come through both Westow and Firby. They too need reasonable access and so considerate street parking is essential. Thank you for your help with this.*

*More Thanks*

*Finally, a thank you to all those who contribute to our community. The Westow Playing Field has been further developed and maintained due to the hard work of Steve Tetlow, Chris Defty and colleagues. There has been a lot of praise for the Christmas tree that has been erected by The Blacksmiths Arms for the last few years and for Ruth and Mike Smith’s brass band and carols event. The Westow Cricket Pavilion regularly hosts events organised by Julie Price. Many thanks to them and to all the volunteers who help keep our villages interesting.*

CS on behalf of the Council thanked HC for her hard work as Chair.

**May Regular Meeting –1ST MAY 2024**

**Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the March meeting were proposed as a correct record.

**Matters Arising from Action Log**

**Village Hall –** 42 new chairs and 8 tables had been purchased from the Grant monies together with a stacking trolley. Most of the old chairs had been taken down to the stables at The Hall where they will be kept for use within the village. Dave Skilbeck is to take the old tables. GB to put the old padded green chairs on Freegle to see if anyone would like them. Thanks were given to Elaine and Steve Pinkney for their help with storing the old chairs. Thanks were also given to JS, CS and GB for all their work regarding the Grant and purchasing the new chairs and tables.

**Life Buoy -** HC and AF had both had further discussion with Martin Walker (MW) re a life buoy at Kirkham. MW said that Whitwell and Crambe Parish Council had no objection to a life buoy being there but did not want to fund it. After discussion it was decided that as there had not been a life buoy there for over 20 years and there could be a liability issue this would not be taken any further. HC to speak to MW in this regard.(post meeting note, HC has updated MW)

**Village Hall Green -** Thanks were given to the parishioner who has been cutting the village green.

**Clerks Update**

AF had reported various potholes etc and is was noted that some had been repaired. There still seemed to be a drainage issue from Firby corner to Church Farm Kennels AF had already reported this on the Portal but would do so again. AF to put on Parish Portal.

AF had had communication from North Yorkshire re Councillors on Westow Parish Council. AF had checked that all the information was correct but it was noted that a few of the Councillors had not filled in the Register of Interest form. AF emailed them to ask them to fill in as it is required by law.

**Budget and Finance**

The PC had received the Precept of £2500 which was now received in one amount. Going into the new financial year the account stands at £4770.68 (£584.36 being the transparency fund). The Village Hall account stands at £2200.08

**Planning Applications**

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| An Application had been received from Paul and Margaret Thompson Firby Hall regarding replacing the tiles on the garage roof. HC had replied to say the Council had no objection.  **A64 Concern**  HC reported that Danny Beckett was concerned that if the A64 was dualled between the Hopgrove roundabout and Barton hill then there would be a bottleneck at Welburn crossroads and traffic will turn off the A64 to avoid it hence going over Kirkham bridge. HC has since had a talk with Martin Walker from Kirkham who informed her that the concern has been registered with Highways.  **Items from the Website**  PH had received an email from a Georgina Bell of Yorkshire Water who said that they had started some works in Westow and whilst they were here would like to see if that was any good that they could do within the community especially if this had an educational or environmental benefit. CS had replied to PH to say that we could possibly have the toilet in the village hall upgraded/replaced. PH said that Georgina Bell would be getting back to her.  **Kirkham Bridge** – The bridge has now been repaired. CS had noticed that there was a large dome like object at one side of the bridge and was concerned that this could be hit when driving over the bridge especially in the dark. HC had spoken to Martin Walker of Kirkham who had informed her that the structure is in fact a modern day version of what used to be domed stones particularly at corners to guide traffic.  **Village Hall** – It was mentioned that children were playing at the front of the village hall and there was concern that as the wall is not stable this was dangerous in case they fell. After discussion it was decided that PH would put something on the Westow Forum asking that they do not play there. **PH to put on Westow Forum**  Also regarding the village hall there was some discussion as to who actually owned the Hall and the land. CS said she would talk to Dennis Cook to see if he could throw any light on its origins. CS has since sent an email out after speaking with Dennis Cook who informed her that the Hall was gifted to the village by the Langton Estate. Dennis’ father built the foundations and platform and it was used by many in days gone by for playing billiards, darts and card games. He said that he Langton Estate owned a lot of property and land within the village and thought that the village green land was also probably gifted to the village. |

**The meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.**

**Next Meeting – Wednesday 17th July**