

WESTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Westow Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 12th November 2025

Attendees:

Richard Bannister (RB); Helen Crews (HC); Angela Fothergill (Clerk); Pennie Hamer (PH); Christine Smith (CS); John Smith (JS); Fiona Scarlett(FS); Peter Siswick (PS)

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from September's meeting were proposed and seconded as a correct record.

Matters Arising and Action Log

Stone Wall – CS had received an estimate from Paddy Hill. The stone would cost in the region of £100, the cement £30 and the labour costs would be in the region of £1000 (this to be confirmed). After discussion, the PC suggested that AF contact Highways to see if they have any responsibility for the stone wall to mitigate some of the costs. It was also agreed that AF contact Zurich Insurance in this regard **AF to contact Highways & Zurich Insurance**

Bin near noticeboard AF had received an email back from North Yorkshire Street Scene re the replacement bin with some costings in the region of £200. It was agreed to keep this matter on hold to the next meeting to see if there was an increase in littering before purchasing a replacement bin.

Westow Sign – The sign going out of Westow towards Gally Gap has now been replaced. Also, Edward Green and FS had put up the sign in the Orchards. The PC thanked Edward and Fiona for all their help in this regard.

Maintenance of Village Hall – **It was agreed to purchase and fit a new toilet seat – FS to action.**

Clerks Update

Nothing to report

Budget and Finance

The Parish Council account stands at £3410.04 with the Transparency Fund standing at £178.32. Main expenditure in the period was new defibrillator pads and from the Transparency funds the computer domain registration has been paid.

Village Hall Accounts The Village Hall accounts were a current account and a savings account. Following previous agreement that the current account be closed as now attracts fees, in error Santander closed both accounts. JS has been assured that the savings account has been reinstated though he is waiting to receive a statement to show that it contains £3593.92. This amount is composed of £160.20 that was originally in this savings account, £3045.17 transferred from the Santander current account,

which was closed on 19th September, £385 which has since been paid for hire of the hall and £3.55 interest.

Planning Applications

A notice of approval had been received for The School House from Neil Johnson to fell a horse chestnut tree, the Council had no objection, but it was noted that the Council had not had a prior notification of the application.

After discussion it was agreed that FS would do some exploratory work regarding planning applications for the removal of trees to understand if any error had been made in not providing the Council the opportunity to comment. **FS to contact North Yorkshire**

Future of the Village Hall

A discussion took place regarding the future of the Village Hall and how it could be best used. RB had thought of some ideas such as bingo and games nights, book club, opening the hall on a weekend for bikers/walkers, house and display collected local history, and a “free at the point of use shop”. FS said that she would be happy to hold a bread making course and HC thought a gardening club would be a good idea.

JS said that at the moment there is no toilet in the Church (they are fundraising for one) and it could be useful if the Hall could be open for toilet facilities in the event of weddings, funerals etc. in the intervening period.

It was agreed that using the Village Hall more was not to be in competition with other facilities such as the cricket pavilion but rather to operate alongside them. It was agreed that the village hall could be an asset to the community.

A Village Hall Committee has previously been formed, but has not been active for a while. It was agreed to re-establish the Committee to follow up on these ideas. RB & FS would be happy to join and RB thought others in the village could be interested. CS confirmed she would be happy to continue as Secretary and PH is happy to remain on the committee. It was agreed to organise a meeting of the Village Hall Committee after Christmas and seek willing volunteers within the village to support.

Community Governance Review 2025/2026

A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a review carried out by a principal council and is used to consider whether parish council arrangements in an area should be changed.

A community governance review looks at the whole or part of an area to consider:

- the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- the electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, wards, and numbers of councillors
- the grouping or de-grouping of parishes

Parish Councillors had completed the review individually. At the moment Welburn does not have a Parish Council and there was consensus that they would probably be best merging with Bulmer Parish Council.

Items from the Website

Nothing to report

The meeting ended at 8 p.m

Next meeting 21st January 2026

POST MEETING NOTE – As the Council meeting was brought to order a parishioner joined, expressing a wish to observe the meeting. RB informed the parishioner that to attend the meeting, advance notice was required, but that he was happy to listen to any matter they wanted to raise. The parishioner then left the meeting. Following a review of Parish Council meeting regulations RB's comments were found to be incorrect and the parishioner was fully entitled to attend the meeting, as an observer. It is the act of speaking or raising an issue at the meeting that requires consent or advance notice respectively. RB has subsequently contacted the parishioner to explain the error and apologise for the mistake.