WESTOW
PARISH COUNCIL

Westow Parish Council Meeting AGM – 13th May 2026 – Westow Village Hall

Attendees:
Richard Bannister (RB) Chair; Angela Fothergill (AF) Clerk; Pennie Hamer (PH Peter Siswick (PS); Helen Crews (HC); Elizabeth Shields (ES)
Two members of the public

Apologies:
John Smith (JS) Christine Smith (CS)

Annual General Meeting

Adoption of 2025 Minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 7th May 2025 were proposed by PH and seconded by HC as a correct record.

Election of Officers

RB informed the Council that he would like to stand down as Chair and also to stand down as a Councillor on the Parish Council. He said he would stay on the Council until the September meeting and in the meantime some thought would be given as to who could take on the role of Chairman. AF to put a poster on the noticeboard asking if anyone would like to become a Councillor and PH to put on the Westow Forum. AF agreed to carry on as Clerk and JS as Treasurer.

AF to put a notice on the noticeboard for new Councillors and send to PH to put on Westow Forum

Chairmans Report

It is fair to say that the 2025/26 year has been an interesting one for the Parish.

I would firstly like to thank a few people. Firstly, John Smith for his tireless work as Treasurer, which is much appreciated by all. It is a large responsibility and scrutiny is rightly involved. We appreciate the diligence John brings to the role. I would also like to thank Angela Fothergill for her help and assistance at all times and ensuring that minutes, agendas and action logs are produced in a timely fashion and for keeping all Councillors in the loop at all times. Pennie Hamer continues to bear responsibility for the parish website, no small task. I would also particularly like to mention the impact and practical action that Peter Siswick and Fiona Scarlett have provided in their first year as Councillors.

We have had some good successes, most notably in supporting a parishioner who was able to secure (after not inconsiderable effort) a sensible resolution to her child's transport to primary school. However, it is a regret that we have been unable to progress ways to make the village hall more relevant for the parish as a whole. I do believe that it can be relevant, and in a compatible way to the other facilities in Westow, namely the cricket club and the pub. Hopefully, this can move forward in 2026/7.

We have also sought to represent the villages, in a practical and clear-eyed way, in response to a variety of planning applications through the year. It has come as a personal disappointment to me that there appears to be a reluctance amongst people to engage the Parish Council prior to submitting applications to get feedback and indeed credit for undertaking consultation prior to submission. I feel that this vital step has the potential to remove conflict and enable good development and change, rather than hinder it. It is also of concern to me that a number of applications have had to be submitted retrospectively or certificate of lawful use requested, in some cases subverting the planning process almost entirely. This effectively erodes the democratic process that planning is intended to be. Specifically, the action of undertaking development or use change without consent and waiting for time to elapse, seems incongruous in such a small village. There is nothing preventing full planning consent being sought in such circumstances and allowing neighbours a proper say, but alas, this has not been the case. This is a shame.

It is also a shame that I feel I am unable to continue as Chair of the Council and indeed as a Parish Councillor. I'm afraid I have found that I am unable to give the time and attention that the job needs due to other commitments. I hope that new blood will reinvigorate the Parish Council and bring some new ideas and actions.

Richard Bannister, Chairperson Westow Parish Council

Treasurer's Report

In JS's absence the Treasurer's Report had been distributed to Councillors for their comments.

Westow Parish Council AGM May 2026 Responsible Financial Officer's Report for the Financial Year 2025/26

Parish Council account:

Income of £2576.59 comprised Precept of £2500 and recovered VAT of £76. The Non Domestic Rates of £1060.38 was offset by Small Business Rate Relief of £1060.38.

Expenditure was £3576.41 including Insurance (£732.55), Staff costs (£978), Utilities (£423) Subscription to CPRE (£36) and maintenance of the defibrillator. Maintenance of the website through the Transparency Fund has now ended: approx. £300 annual costs will, in future be borne by the Precept

The balance in the bank at the end of the year was £2640.41

Village Hall account:

Income (£385) continues to be generated through hall hire. Minor works and essentials have been met from voluntary contributions. The balance in the bank at the end of the year was £3593.92.

Known/possible calls on available funds in 2026-27:

- *Servicing of the website to comply with transparency (c.£300)*
- *Completion of essential repairs to the retaining wall at the village hall (est £1200)*
- *Reinstatement of posts at the Village Green (cost to be confirmed)*
- *Garden Waste bin subscription (£50)*
- *Maintenance of defibrillator*

J Smith, Responsible Financial Officer

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.

May Regular Meeting – 13th May 2025

Minutes of the last meeting

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

Matters Arising from Action Log

Signage Badger Bank – FS had been in contact with Tim Coyne Highway Improvement Manager and had a positive response re the pedestrian sign the Council would like at Badger Bank. He said they would need to see if there is sufficient verge to accommodate the signs and would be sending out an Engineer to do some measurements. **FS to would chase if not heard anything in the next couple of weeks.**

Posts around village green – Peter Siswick (PS) said that these would be done before the end of summer

Clerks Update

Nothing to report

Budget and Finance

As above in the AGM minutes.

Planning Applications

An email had been received regarding the Fishers Yard application for certificate of lawfulness asking if the Council could ascertain as to what the conditions of the approval are regarding this application.

RB to contact North Yorkshire planning in this regard.

Arthur and Martha Vestey The Hall Kirkham Abbey Erection of single storey extension, replacement of external floor slab, formation of lantern roof, alterations to windows and doors, removal of generator and enclosure, demolition of porch and formation of steps, formation service duct from outbuilding to main cellar, and associated works.
The Council had no objection.

Badger Bank – FS said she would have a look on the planning portal to see what the situation is with regard to the application at Badger Bank.

Tractors speeding through village

Someone had approached PS with concerns that tractors were speeding through the village often with a full trailer. After discussion it was agreed that tractors were speeding and PH to put something on Facebook on the Westow Village Forum page. It was also thought that we could contact NFU and the Young Farmers Association with our concerns and also see if any other parishes had a similar concern and possibly put up some SLOW DOWN signs.

FS to communicate with Tim Coyne re the possibility of Slow Down signs.

PH to put a note on the Westow Village Forum page

Items from the Website

PH had sent round an email regarding some Parish Workshops on the 28th May at Kirby Misperton. FS said she would like to attend**.**

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

Next Meeting – Wednesday 15th July 2026