



December 2023 Newsletter

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Welcome to our final newsletter for 2023 and indeed my 76th and final version as scribe.

You may not be aware of the way each newsletter is concocted but, in essence, the chairman writes the first draft and then comments are sought from all parish councillors for any corrections and/or omissions. Then Jane, our clerk, may choose to temper some of the wording in the script so that the chance of someone in the principal authority taking offence by the way the truth is expressed - or criticism is levelled - is minimised. It will be up to the council how they wish to proceed with a newsletter after my wife and I have moved away from the parish to be nearer to family.

We follow the Nolan principles of public office and do not criticise individual officers by name however much we disagree with some of their curve ball decisions. We try to give a balanced view of events but when overwhelmed by a consensus of views from parishioners and councillors alike on some subjects, we believe our residents should know the facts. Hence, you get a sanitised factual version rather than a “warts and all” document.

There are many requests to include bits of news or appeals on behalf of good causes to be included in this newsletter, *but* there has to be some involvement with the Parish Council. Just to confirm, this newsletter is not a parish magazine nor a replacement for the Advertiser’s abandoned Neighbourhood News column but an information document for parishioners about Parish Council business.

(Clerk’s note: Howard’s newsletters have proved interesting and informative over the years. Councillors ask for your patience and accommodation as future newsletters are necessarily adjusted to being compiled using a slightly different approach.)

We would like to confirm that, as a group of volunteer councillors supported by a part-time parish clerk on limited hours per week, we aim to give the optimum service to our parishioners. However, none of us of course are incessantly accessing our “gov.uk” email addresses. Should an *urgent* situation arise, however - such as failed traffic lights at the A61 junction – then please don’t hesitate in notifying the clerk. Hence there are times when one might not get a response for several days, or even weeks if we have to refer to other organisations. We don’t have a manned switchboard as does NYC, so we ask parishioners to bear with us while we attend to our everyday activities before turning to Parish Council business.

CAROLS ON THE GREEN

There was yet another successful celebration of carols superbly led by Mr Iain Ward-Campbell and the Tewit Silver Band. Our grateful thanks are extended to them for their enjoyed contribution as well as to Mrs Jane Turner, headteacher of Pannal School, for once again allowing us to distribute mulled wine and mince pies for adults and something of a softer nature for our younger singers from within the school. A fantastic sum of £303.18 was raised through the collection: our appreciation and thanks to you all for your attendance and generosity. This will be supplemented by a contribution from the Parish Council with the recipient this year being St Robert’s Church. Thanks also to Cathy Burrell for her organisation of the collection.

Thanks too to our parish councillors, El and Steve (with Pat, his wife), and Jane, our clerk, together with her husband, Graham, for their endeavours in organising and distributing the goodies in school. It is quite a challenge to serve around 200 people all queueing at the same time for mulled wine!

CRIMPLE MEADOWS PATH AND DRAINAGE

After what seems an eternity since we first asked Harrogate Borough Council (yes, it was very much pre-North Yorkshire Council) for drainage to remove the quagmire at the entrance to the recreation ground, work finally started on 4th December. We wait to see the effects once the ground heals over after the excavations have been completed. The path should enable people to gain access to the play area without having to wear wellies and to cross the inevitable bog that has been present for many years without having protective footwear.



Digger and dumper on Crimple Meadows

SPORTS PITCHES OFF THIRKHILL DRIVE

We received an update from the County Council relating to the play area and football pitches. It's a little long for this newsletter and is as far as we can see, still inconclusive, so we have posted the email details on our website (within the Newsletters section).

More recently received – and which was considered at a Planning Committee meeting – was a proposal for PSJFC's draft Community Use Agreement for the use and management of the sports pitches and car park area. This consultation (application ZC23/04322/DISCON) concludes on 25th December, but should you wish to review the documents and submit your comments then please follow this link:

<https://uniformonline.harrogate.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=S4UCQNHYY800>.

The Parish Council have felt frustration on behalf of the community – and particularly local residents – that it has taken so many years to be reaching a point of possible agreement. Although it is a positive step forward, it has called for further clarification and particularly regarding the care and maintenance of the surrounding areas around the pitches which will be outside the jurisdiction of PSJFC / ensuring residents' access for casual use outside PSJFC's allocated times and pressing for action regarding the still unresolved children's play park.

NOTICEBOARD

We are very pleased to confirm that the new parish noticeboard will be installed on Tuesday – in the original position at the entrance to St Robert's church carpark. Board space will be shared between the council and St Robert's church.

NORTH YORKSHIRE'S NEW LOCAL PLAN

It didn't seem so long ago that we were fighting some of the over-zealous housing plans (according to the government inspector) put forward by Harrogate Borough Council in their draft local plan. Now we have received the following from NYC:

Public Engagement in Planning - Consulting on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement
I am writing to you as you have asked to receive updates on the North Yorkshire Local Plan. The first stage of the process involves setting out how and when the council will engage with communities and other organisations. This is set out in what is called the Statement of Community Involvement.

We are therefore seeking your views on how the community can be effectively involved in local planning.

*The draft Statement of Community Involvement is available until **22 December**:*

<https://northyorks-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/37703>

If the link appears to be broken, please try copying the entire link into the address bar on your web browser.

The Parish Council discussed this at our most recent Parish Council meeting and will be making its submission. If there is anything you would like to add before the deadline, please let Jane know.

NYC CONSULTATION REGARDING HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES

As residents of the parish, NYC is seeking your feedback: *“To help address increasing costs (which could potentially generate savings of approximately £140,000 / year) and improve the service it provides, the council is looking at various options for HWRCs and is asking people to share their views about changes to the following services:*

- *Restricting the use to North Yorkshire residents only.*
- *Limiting access for commercial-like vehicles.*
- *Changes to commercial waste.*

The consultation is open until **31st January 2024** and you are invited to upload your thoughts into this link www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/consultations-and-engagement/current-consultations/changes-household-waste-recycling-centres. Councillors did express their thoughts as to how any changes might be monitored and implemented.

WESTERN ARC HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE

You will recall that we had a meeting at County Hall in early September to ascertain what NYC is proposing to alleviate the existing and worsened congestion in our parish which is inevitable when some 4000 houses and commercial enterprises are built on Harrogate's Western Arc. Only parts of our pre-submitted questions were answered, in that very much curtailed meeting, with a promise of answers to the remaining questions being available at a drop-in session at the council offices in Harrogate on 26th September.

Some answers were provided there, mostly not to our liking nor to the benefit of our residents. There were still outstanding questions that supposedly need a consolidated traffic plan that consultants seem to have been preparing for an aeon already.

Not unreasonably, we asked the executive member for highways at NYC for a progress report on 17th November with a reminder sent on 3rd December and no response received at 14th December. Remember, it was the government inspector at the local plan hearings who asked for answers to the lack of road infrastructure provision and how long ago was that? It is difficult to present a balanced view of matters when faced with such interminable delays and still no answers.

In response to pleas from many residents, our local county councillor John Mann asked NYC to consider a relief road for the worsening congestion at their latest executive meeting. With a new mayor for York and North Yorkshire soon to be elected with an increased income expected into the county, one might have expected a positive response. It was turned down immediately, so one wonders upon what NYC intends to spend its “mayoral funds” and share of monies coming from the abandoned northern leg of HS2. The response from the executive member for highways was, according to the minutes of the meeting, as follows:

In response Councillor Keane Duncan confirmed the overwhelming feedback from the Harrogate Congestion Study showed that rather than a bypass or inner relief road, residents wanted improved sustainable transport options and demand management solutions. He also confirmed the Council was still progressing its Harrogate Transport Improvement Programme and a report was expected in spring 2024. Other traffic mitigation measures were also being considered as well as a potential Park & Ride.

One would question the statement that residents wanted improved sustainable transport rather than any form of bypass. It is a widely held view that many of the inputs to the study were from well-organised large self-interest groups (mainly in the town itself) who are not representative of the populace of the district as a whole. The same was said to apply to the Station Gateway consultation. Gridlock will happen on the Western Arc due to many years of highway neglect; a golden opportunity to look at a solution has been missed. Two or three decades ago they said that if a western bypass were built, all one would get would be increased housing. Now we have the increased housing but no suitable roads.

Suggestions that we should adopt the Dutch system of peaceful coexistence of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars/lorries are to be welcomed. However, to enable the Dutch regional areas (provinces in their language) to engineer these solutions, first on the agenda is provision of bypasses/ring roads and dual carriageway links to carry the lorries, buses and what will be electric and autonomous cars. How do we

know about this? I lived in a new urban extension in the Netherlands, not dissimilar to our Western Arc for four years and cycled/drove to work along a brand-new dual carriageway with underpasses/bridges and traffic lights and dedicated, separated lanes for cyclists and pedestrians and cars. Vehicles not needing to access the town itself were using purpose-built bypass links. Population density in the Netherlands is much higher than in the UK but they prioritise taking land to enable construction of roads so that ALL users can benefit from creative road engineering.

Taking the huge and ever-increasing volume of traffic off our existing former cart tracks onto decent roads would allow scope for Active Travel. As Leeds now has the second highest salary levels in the country, more people will want to live in our area and commute to that city. Buses, bicycles and trains can only cater for part of daily people movements. Cars and delivery vans/lorries/buses are an integral part of a traffic plan so NYC must cater for them too rather than stick its collective head in the sand concentrating mainly on pedestrians and cyclists because of reliance on a flawed survey. That is a sure-fire way to lose business opportunities and, importantly, income to other areas where highway infrastructure and easy connectivity is provided.

BUS COMPANY

You may recall that the bottom end of Brackenthwaite Lane and Burn Bridge Lane suffer regularly with congestion, toxic fumes, intolerable hold-ups in the hazardous bends, destruction of verges and danger to pedestrians and cyclists caused by buses operated by A & A Coach Travel operated from Spring House farm on Rudding Lane in North Rigton parish. NYC has placed an enforcement order on the company to quit but they have appealed. At our recent Parish Council meeting, we resolved to support North Rigton Parish Council's submission to the enquiry with our own submission. It is no longer a pleasure to walk on Brackenthwaite Lane because of the aforementioned problems caused by the bus company. The appearance of a bus company at the horse riding and language school without any planning permission caused a furore in North Rigton and adversely affects traffic in our parish.

NOTICE OF COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Please note that this is now posted on the Parish Council noticeboard and also on the website in which we invite your interest to join the council.

NOTE TO PARISHIONERS

Much to my surprise, I received, as you did, a newsletter from our parish clerk, where comments on my tenure as chairman of P&BBPC were made. While being extremely grateful for the plaudits expressed within, I feel those compliments should extend to our parish councillors and the three excellent clerks with whom I have worked since our inception in 2016. Without the dedication of our clerks and support of our councillors, much of what has been achieved would not have been possible. The tolerance and forbearance of Jill, my wife, has enabled me to spend the requisite time in supporting our residents.

I've received numerous emails, WhatsApps and phone calls thanking and wishing us well. Thank you for your kind comments but I've only tried to accomplish, along with co-councillors, what is best for our community.

It only remains for all members of P&BBPC to wish all of you a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Best wishes

Howard West, Chairman, howard.west@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk
and Cathy Burrell, Deputy Chairman, and Councillors Cliff Trotter, Steve Cobb, Andrew Farrar, Neil Permain and Elatia Sharkey

For reference, the most recent newsletter is always posted on the Village Notice Board (at the Village Hall) and all newsletters are posted on the website here: <http://www.pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk/Documents.aspx>

Also, if you use Facebook, please join our group where you'll get any breaking news more quickly than through these periodic newsletters:

<https://www.facebook.com/Pannal-and-Burn-Bridge-Parish-Council-1655335551445518/>

