



January Newsletter 2021

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There's a lot of words in this month's newsletter but please try to read all of it as we believe the information contained therein is critical to protect our Parish's future wellbeing.

TRANSPORT and TRAFFIC

At the recent Harrogate and Knaresborough Constituency Meeting, David Siddans from HAPARA and I presented statements and questions to the county councillors and officers present concerning the Harrogate Transport Improvement Plan (HTIP). P&BBPC's statement is available for view on our website. From the HTIP report, it is clear that NYCC intend to do either nothing or the absolute minimum about existing (pre-Covid) congestion between the Western Arc and the A61. Any actions to tackle traffic from some 4000 homes will be limited to tinkering with junctions, despite roads towards the A61 being previous cart tracks and incapable of accepting passing vehicles wider than a passenger car.

It's clear that NYCC has been in denial about traffic problems in our particular area for many years and refuses to take any significant action to remedy the situation. Councillor Don Mackenzie repeated his request that we tell him what is wanted to alleviate the problems. One wonders why we have highly paid officers and consultants who have already been told what is wanted since 2019 yet NYCC still refuses to take action. It's not for residents or parish councils to say what is needed to resolve congestion and inadequacy; that responsibility lies totally with NYCC.

Discussions involved the Killinghall bypass which looks like being added to the list of major programmes for NYCC Highways because it is relatively easy to build with no insurmountable costs. When it was pointed out that NYCC were happy to consider new roads in Killinghall, but refused to do so in our area, Councillor Mackenzie also stated that unlike Killinghall, the A61 does not go through Pannal! The chairman of the meeting, Councillor John Mann, lives on Walton Park, Pannal so this revelation was a surprise for all. Park and Ride locations have been narrowed down to a few, two of which are near us. One is in the south-west quadrant off Buttersyke Bar roundabout and the other "near Pannal Golf Club". We have asked for more detail on the latter.

We also questioned the housing numbers creep being allowed by HBC. HM Inspector, Mr Richard Schofield insisted on more than 1000 being deleted from the local plan before it was considered acceptable. Developers are increasing numbers per site (14% on site H51 and 23% on the former Police Training College site and that's just to start with). HBC state that the figures used on site allocations are merely "indicative" rather than finite. However, all the services and school numbers are based on those "indicative" figures. Requirements for road infrastructure use even older figures so the amount of traffic generated from all the sites combined will be significantly higher, leading to even more congestion.

Members of the Western Arc Group (P&BBPC, North Rigton PC, Beckwithshaw PC, HAPARA and Hampsthwaite Action Group) have asked for help from both MPs concerned (Andrew Jones and Julian Smith), yet to date, neither NYCC nor HBC will admit they've got it wrong and refuse to provide any significant road infrastructure or deal with the increasing housing numbers. Even Wallace Sampson was unaware of what the Western Arc Cooperation Group has done to date so we have reminded him by letter! As is always the case, we'll keep on fighting.

The original Western Arc Group decided that the involvement of Zero Carbon Harrogate and Harrogate Cycle Action wasn't conducive to its primary aims and advised them accordingly, thanking them for their contribution on issues which are more national than local.

PRECEPT

Now is the time of year when we have to decide on our precept demand for the financial year 2021/2022. Both NYCC and HBC increase their proportions of council tax by a certain percentage every year. North Yorkshire Police also increase theirs by a percentage. The Parish Council however is only allowed to nominate a specific sum in Pounds. We know that HBC hasn't taken into account all of the houses on the former Dunlopillo estate despite being informed accordingly. They also used wrong figures last year and have lowered the tax base for some unknown reason. Our financial expert, Cllr Ian Birchall, has been trying for the last couple of months to get reliable data from HBC on this matter. HBC will of course pocket the council tax from all newly occupied houses. To date, NYCC have not decided on how much to increase Adult Social Care, so that may have a big impact on the mix of figures. So, when you get your council tax demand, don't be too surprised at some percentage changes.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Thanks to those of you who volunteered to help with our plan. There were seven new volunteers: welcome to the focus groups. The Steering Group will now decide on the next steps in the process and advise those new and existing volunteers accordingly.

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

If you know anyone who is enduring hardship or loneliness in this latest lockdown, please let them know the helpline is still in operation and the volunteers are there to help (Helpline number: 07502 984986 between the hours of 8am – 6pm every day).

Don't hesitate to ask for help; these are exceptional circumstances. The Parish Council discussed the matter at its recent meeting but, to-date, no-one has come forward with any information of people with severe problems. HBC and NYCC have provision for help but cannot act without knowing who might be in need. If you're lucky enough to have supermarket home deliveries, please check to see if any neighbours in need could benefit from adding their request to your order.

PLANNING

As you will be aware, the Parish Council made its objection to any development of Spring Lane Farm to the appeal hearing, citing the rulings made by two previous government inspectors who both agreed that any building on that land was unacceptable due to a variety of reasons.

The chairman of our planning committee met with HBC regarding the planning application for additional housing on Pannal Green. While appreciating and welcoming proposals for more social housing, the site in question (currently garages) is totally unreasonable. Suggestions for alternatives were made - the former Dunlopillo site and the former police training college being eminently more suitable.

SPEEDING

There is proof from the latest SID data that our speed signs are working. By the time you read this, signs on Burn Bridge Road and Church Lane may have been turned through 180 degrees, weather permitting. It has been proven that the signs have a substantial effect on oncoming traffic but drivers are generally unaware that their speed is being recorded in both directions.

Monitoring speed in the current pandemic circumstances is very difficult and unrepresentative of pre-Covid conditions, as is commenting on the volume of traffic. However, there seems to be a continuation of speeding on Church Lane while on Burn Bridge Road there is much more adherence to the prescribed limit. However, overall, speeds have reduced and compliance increased in our parish.

REMINDER ON "WHO DOES WHAT?"

The spate of icy and snowy weather has brought demands for increased gritting. That is the sole responsibility of NYCC Highways and the Parish Council can do nothing to influence their decisions. Our

county councillor, Cliff Trotter, has appealed each year for many years for treatment to some of the more vulnerable roads in the parish. NYCC have their list of prioritised roads and given the vast network of roads in England's biggest county, some inevitably will miss out. Once one hilly estate road is gritted, residents on all estates in the county will want the same. Yorkshire has more than its fair share of hills so unfortunately, many will be disappointed.

HBC's waste and recycling collections fell foul of the weather but again, the Parish Council can do nothing about that. HBC will try to catch up as soon as practicable so please leave your bins out until they come to empty them. The Parish Council has neither the equipment nor influence to speed up such collections. However, the fact that in some cases HBC hasn't collected household waste in our parish since 23rd December is inexcusable. Collection of recycling is equally bad in some cases.

There was a recent blockage with ivy and branches in the Clark Beck. It appears to have been caused by snow melt, excessive rain and gradual erosion of the beck sides allowing vegetation to fall into the beck. This is one for Yorkshire Water rather than the Parish Council.

The reaction from many parishioners, parish, borough and county councillors alike, is that HBC and NYCC have effectively gone into some form of hibernation in the Covid-19 pandemic. One should not tar everyone with the same brush but the borough and county councils are generally falling woefully short of their duties and one feels they all too readily use Coronavirus as an excuse. Most officers are working from home on full pay with little or no chance of being furloughed or made redundant, having internet and phone connections, yet it's almost impossible to contact anyone. With no travel involved, productivity should increase rather than fall abysmally short.

CYCLE ROUTES

There has been a lot of misinformation circulating on social media about plans for a cycle route in Pannal. This culminated in a demand that the Parish Council should ensure there will not be a live proposal for such a route in any part of the Crimble Valley. Not only can your Parish Council not dictate what HBC or NYCC can do but also cannot have any influence over what happens over the whole length of the River Crimble, which extends over several parishes.

In the HTIP it is stated that NYCC will concentrate on 4 cycle routes – Bilton to Starbeck, Bilton to Hornbeam Park via the town centre, Starbeck to Hornbeam Park and Jennyfield to Harrogate centre. In consequence, there is no plan by NYCC (that we're aware of) to make any progress on anything in our parish. Last week we received a planning application from Bellway for removal of the obligation via S106 payments of funding a cycle route that had been included in the original plans. The sum of money involved would then be added to those other routes as specified in the HTIP. We are, of course, disappointed that the money involved should go elsewhere instead of for highways improvements in our parish.

In that same application there is a request that final provision of playing spaces on the former Dunlopillo site should now be postponed until occupation of the 110th property on the site. This is yet another delaying ploy by Bellway, having already renegotiated the terms of the original S106 commitment for the village hall's improvement fund from the 60th to 96th property occupation without telling the recipient. That's why major work has stopped at the village hall; they were relying on committed funds from Bellway who have delayed their build programme.

"WELCOME TO PANNAL" SIGNBOARD

The illustrated panel, donated by the former Pannal Village Society came adrift from its mounting over the festive season. A new surround has been installed, courtesy of the Parish Council.

SAFETY

Please remember that the new variant of the Covid-19 virus is more easily transmitted than the original. While transmission is more rapid indoors, still keep at least 2 metres apart, preferably more, when you're outside. If that means waiting until a footpath, bridleway, pavement or ginnel is clear before you enter into a narrow or confined space, then that is a small price to pay for the continued wellbeing of everyone.

Please find, below, information supplied directly from North Yorkshire CCG which you may find of interest:

“Vaccination Programme

We are making really good progress both nationally and locally with the vaccination programme. Vaccines are being administered at twelve local sites and three hospital hubs spread across North Yorkshire and York, additional sites being considered in future weeks.

Currently the COVID vaccine is being offered to people most at risk from coronavirus. This includes care home residents, people over 80 and health and social care staff. These are the groups most at risk from the virus. People aged 75 and over and then all those who are 70 and over, together with clinically extremely vulnerable patients will follow.

We would like to remind patients and once again ask that you can share this message and assure people that there is no need to get in touch with your GP practice about the vaccine, they will get in touch with you at the appropriate time when it is your turn.

As you will understand GP practices are currently taking a high volume of calls about the vaccine and we would like to assure people they will get in touch with you and you will not miss out, your help to share this message would be greatly appreciated.

Information on the latest Covid-19 fraud incidents

You may be aware of recent reports of fraud and deception which are arising in relation to the vaccination programme. We want to assure people that:

- The vaccine is free of charge, and everyone will be offered one by the NHS*
- The NHS will never ask for banking details, account numbers, pins or passwords, or for copies of personal documents such as a drivers' licence, passport or pay slip*
- The NHS will never arrive unannounced at a person's home offering a vaccination, particularly in exchange for payment*

There have been reports of a new scam where a person receives a text saying they need to book a vaccination appointment and it takes them to a fake NHS form which then asks for their bank details to prove their identity. If you aren't familiar with text message cons, please be warned about this latest coronavirus scam which is designed to trick people into handing over their credit card details to secure a vaccination appointment.

Once again, please share this information, anything you can do to help get these messages to people so they can better protect themselves against fraud would be welcome.

We have been given some background information: when the three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) merged in April last year to form North Yorkshire CCG, local GP practices were grouped together to form Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Leeds Road was grouped with Moss and Partners in Kings Road, Church Avenue in Bilton and Kingswood on Wetherby Road. Whilst they remain individual practices (and businesses) they do share - and provide - more specialised services. Heart of Harrogate PCN (which it is named) will be organizing the roll out of the Covid 19 vaccinations which – for the most part - will be at the Great Yorkshire showground and will be by invitation only. It appears that patients will need to make their own travel arrangements.

Vaccinations are progressing with the cautionary advice that it needs to be borne in mind that until the second, or follow up, dose is administered that protection from the virus *cannot* be relied upon. The first jab is not a licence to revert back to a normal lifestyle; it just helps to prevent one getting Covid-19 seriously. The booster injection is essential for a high degree of protection. Until then, continue to social distance of at least 2 metres and continue to wash your hands frequently and follow the rules. Generally speaking, the process is satisfactory. Many have expressed concerns that following some problems with delivery of flu jabs this year that the same problems might occur with the Covid jabs. Please don't contact your surgery about the jabs as this will only add to their workload.

Best wishes and a belated Happy New Year

Howard West, Chairman, howard.west@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk

and Dave Oswin, Deputy Chairman, and Councillors Cathy Burrell, Ian Birchall, Steve Cobb and Ryan Dall

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/>