



September 2023 Newsletter

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The month of August was not as quiet as one would have imagined as far as PC business was concerned. However, there are a number of things under consideration that affect us all.

LITTER PICK

Now that the majority of verges have been trimmed, more rubbish is visible, enabling volunteers to pick up the detritus deposited mainly by passing motorists. The date fixed for this is Saturday 14th October and the usual start time is 10.00 a.m. Long-handled pickers plus plastic rubbish bags will be provided when we meet in Saint Robert's church car park. Please turn up in large numbers as many hands make light work. This litter pick has always been very successful; please ensure it continues to be so. Our thanks and appreciation are again expressed to Mrs Liz Brown for her organisation of this event.

LICENCE FOR CRIMPLE

As those of you who read the Parish Council's Facebook page will know, the NYC's Licensing sub-committee approved the change in licensing hours to 2am at Crimple on weekends. There was no consultation whatsoever with any residents – unless they read notices on-site at Crimple itself or bought a newspaper and scanned the notices column. Virtually no-one reads those things these days but Crimple conformed to the archaic rules. Their own submission had errors in it which were corrected by officers. Unfortunately, there is no will with civil servants to make any changes to legislation which belongs more to the 19th than 21st century.

Strangely, there is no formal requirement to consult parish councils on licensing matters – the very people who would know of any potential problems. We only found out about the application by accident. Evidence that another local venue had to jump through hoops to obtain their licence but Crimple did not have the same constraints imposed, was deemed inadmissible at the hearing. Despite three written objections, the extension was granted.

One thing became clear at the hearing. If there are any infringements regarding noise disturbance, then the person in charge of controls at the venue can be called - even at 2a.m. or 3 a.m. (there will be a long period when clients can leave after 2a.m.). We have that telephone number and will give it to any concerned residents affected by noise. We decided not to publish it generally to deter false alarms, malicious or mendacious calls. If there is no response from the authorised Crimple contact then the chairman of the sub-committee (a former West Yorkshire police officer) can be contacted. Our parish clerk has the telephone number details, should you need them (not at 2.a.m. please!!). Given all these conditions and if Crimple adheres to them, all should be well. However, if the conditions are broken then revocation of the extended licensing hours could be ordered.

WESTERN ARC INFRASTRUCTURE – LACK OF IT

After many months of requesting a face-to-face meeting with NYC to discuss the numerous concerns expressed by residents about junction modifications and the total lack of any new roadways, we were afforded only one hour at County Hall, Northallerton, because an officer had another meeting to attend after ours – indicative perhaps of their lack of concern and/or opposition to challenge. We attended along with heads of HAPARA (Harlow and Pannal Ash Residents Association) and our local County Councillor John Mann. We also represented the views of Beckwithshaw and North Rigton Parish Councils who have similar worries about safety, congestion and lack of public transport provision. County Councillor Keane Duncan,

NYC's cabinet member for highways, was also present. He stated that there have only been two face-to-face meetings with parish councils from nearly 800 parish councils in North Yorkshire and ours was one of them.

Some of our questions were partially answered but about half of them were deferred to a drop-in session (for invitees only) later this month at the Civic Centre. This is where the site promoters (developers) hope to answer those missed questions IF they have the results of a cumulative traffic assessment available.

We eventually managed to get agreement that there are some 4000 houses and several hectares of business development forthcoming on the Western Arc, rather than just 2000 or so from the sites mentioned in the West of Harrogate Parameters Plan. Most of the traffic from those houses, shops, schools, offices, etc will undoubtedly traverse our and neighbouring parishes via existing former cart tracks. Park and Ride was also excluded from NYC's Western Arc plans. Apparently, these will form part of an overall Harrogate transport strategy. We also asked if the money destined for the Station Gateway project could be diverted to provide better roads for traffic (including public transport) from Buttersyke roundabout to the Cardale area but were told the decision to go ahead with Station gateway was rescinded – interpreted as not totally cancelled for the future.

NYC stated that the objective is to get people to cycle or get a bus into Harrogate town from the Western Arc and then get another bus/train to Leeds or elsewhere in West Yorkshire, hence they appear not to have any intention to create new or improved roads. For peak hour traffic, most people believe this is a pipe dream. Ask any resident on the Western Arc for confirmation. We will, of course, report on the outcome of the drop-in session so that all our residents get a balanced view of measures to mitigate our existing - and future - safety and congestion issues.

Once again, space here does not permit inclusion of the minutes of that meeting taken by our parish clerk which, together with the questions and some responses, are available on our website. As previously mentioned, members of HAPARA also attended the meeting. Please find below their own notes produced as a consequence of the meeting:

“1. On the housing numbers we seem to have a grudging acceptance that the actual number we are dealing with is 3500 - 4000. The only problem is that 2500 is being covered by the WHPP whilst the rest is being dealt with by all the other work. The impression that we got was that there is no document you can go to that actually pulls the two chunks together. We were not at all convinced by, or fully understand, an explanation that it will all come together in the end.

2. Forget it when it comes to any substantial uplift in public transport. We will be stuck with what we have now, assuming that the financial picture does not worsen, and any expansion will not happen until the major developments are well on the way. To all intents and purposes, we are where we are for the best part of the next decade, so nothing to really get traffic off the roads.

3. There was an awful lot of `this is being looked at` stated. After all the years that has gone by since we as a group got involved you would have expected the framework of an infrastructure mitigation package to be in place. Sure, it will always be evolving, but one would expect some clear markers to have been put down by now. It struck us that a process that takes on average seven years to complete, involves consultants galore, national policy guidances by the dozens, that is not understood by that many people, does not have a lot going for it.

4. There is a significant disjoint between ourselves and NYC officers when it comes to communications. Their whole approach is a tick box one, and not a listening one. When we raised the matter about all of this work being carried out to mitigate against the effects of the West Harrogate urban expansion, and not make things worse, we got the impression that they thought we were being sarcastic. When what we were trying to get from them was a confirmation that all of this work was being carried out to make things better, and to help overcome problems that the councils themselves identified more than a decade ago when this whole process started.

5. NYC confirmed that the whole of the junction mitigation package will be funded by S106 payments and that the cost had now risen to £30M and was likely to rise further. However, this was all about making the existing infrastructure flow more smoothly and nothing really new. Our feeling was that the congestion that we have will probably get worse once the large developments get built.

6. P&R is yet another one of those things that `is being looked at` in the background as part of the Harrogate Transport Plan. How many P&R studies have there been, two or three to our knowledge and they must all broadly say the same thing? We seem to remember an Arup study on this subject 15 years ago, that cost six figures - presumably collecting dust somewhere.

7. All of this work is contained within countless documents and studies, but there is no summary you can go to that lays out defined objectives and the clear benefits that will arise from the proposed actions. It may be an old school way of looking at things, but unless you can summarise what all this work is about on two to three sheets of paper, then process just takes over. Our feeling is that this really is something that the councillors need to address and to start applying pressure on the officers over.

8. We were promised answers to Questions 5 - 12, at the drop-in session on 26th September. It will be interesting to see what we get, given that each of the developers will be dealing with their entity and from our meeting one gets the impression that NYC are taking something of a hands-off approach to the West Harrogate work.

Time and time again we keep asking ourselves, `so what is the strategy`? Comes back to Point 7."

CRIMPLE MEADOWS FOOTPATH & DRAINAGE

NYC have shown us the quotations they have received for the works but, as yet, at the time of writing, they haven't engaged any contractor to put a shovel in the ground. Autumn, along with its inherent wet conditions, is already upon us so we can only hope they will start soon before the annual quagmire forms. The Parish Council will make a contribution towards the footpath *if* the works are completed in 2023. The drainage however, should be the sole responsibility of NYC.

PANNAL GREEN

Many residents have complained about the disgraceful state of the grass bordering Main Street. Only this past week has NYC cut back grass to an acceptable level. The daffodils have long turned yellow/brown (the time when it is safe to cut them back) but NYC refused to cut back the grass stating it was a haven for wildlife. Under the walnut tree at the junction of Pannal Green road and Main Street, the grass and saplings were so high that it presented a block to the visibility splay for emerging traffic. Please let us know your views before we approach NYC parks people again.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

If you have seen a lady moving around the parish with a notebook in hand, it most probably will have been the examiner for our plan. She is due to report back with her findings around the end of this month / beginning of October. The Steering Group, along with our consultant, will review those findings during the second week of October. We're getting closer to final stages when our referendum will be held.

NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR

In response to the statutory notice displayed, we have received one request for co-option onto the Parish Council, which will bring us up to the full complement of seven. The matter was discussed as an agenda item at the last meeting but will be confirmed at our October meeting, when the applicant will be able to attend.

LEAP (PLAY AREA OFF THE FORMER DUNLOPILLO SITE)

You will recall that NYC's enforcement people have taken legal action to ensure both the LEAP and the two football pitches are available without delay. It seems that this is taking longer than expected. Both Pannal Sports Junior Football Club and the Parish Council have refused to take over the LEAP's maintenance. For PSJFC it is impossible within their charter and for the Parish Council there are no funds available to take over an additional responsibility that was accepted by FI/Bellway in the planning application that was granted.

LEAFLETS

The new housing areas off Thirkill Drive are now almost totally occupied. This amounts to approximately a 10% increase in the parish's population. We had a leaflet drop there when about half of the houses were

built. In the very near future, we'll do another drop with a copy of this newsletter and GDPR consent form for electronic distribution attached. Everyone in the parish should be informed of what's going on and this newsletter does just that. Our own Facebook output gives factual information with occasional posts but doesn't contain the full detail as expressed here or in the minutes of our Parish Council meetings. We'll need another co-option to the Parish Council in the not-too-distant future, so maybe someone from the Thirkill area might be interested. (That doesn't preclude anyone from another area of the parish of course!)

CAROLS ON THE GREEN

This will be held on Monday 11th December – and thank you to Mrs Jane Turner, Headteacher of the school, for facilitating their hall as premises for the usual mulled wine and mince pies. Let's make this one even bigger and better than the successful ones we've had over the past few years. On that happy note, get ready to clear up the leaves that have already started to fall and be aware that usually, the last green bin collections will be before the end of November.

Best wishes

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

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/>