



August Newsletter 2020

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While some things have gone quiet in this very strange pandemic-affected holiday period, some of your councillors have been extremely busy trying to get the best for our parish.

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE UNITARY AUTHORITY**

The government is trying to devolve power to the regions rather than centralise it. However, this comes with strings attached. Instead of our current system with a county council and several borough/district councils, the possibility of having one super-council is being investigated. NYCC claim it will be more efficient and cost-effective while HBC feel they would be downgraded to the status of a parish council (although parish councils are some of the most efficient local authorities and councillors are not paid!)

We will participate in an online seminar on August 19<sup>th</sup> when NYCC will explain their view on how their plan will evolve. Please provide us with your views so we may ask questions on that day or follow up in writing. I don't want to pre-empt too many topics but.... What would you think of planning matters being decided at county rather than HBC level? Would education, housing and highways be better if coordinated by one body? Would it cost less? Please email Jane with your comments and questions at [parishclerk@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk)

## **HBC PARAMETERS PLAN**

At the Local Plan examination, HBC were instructed to have stakeholder consultation on developments on the Western Arc of Harrogate. HBC have taken this, in effect, to mean - engage with the developers and tell NYCC Highways what's happening. We, along with HAPARA and others have tried to have inputs but our efforts appear to have been blocked all along the way. They still fail to understand the full effects that the traffic resulting from some 4000 houses would have on our parish without some significant changes to infrastructure. A western bypass (which is not what residents asked for) has been all but kicked into touch by NYCC. I've asked for our MP's involvement; as he was so vociferous campaigning against the Nidd Gorge proposals, we asked if he could turn his attentions to our plight. He has agreed to meet with senior officers, our borough councillor, Jane and myself.

## **PLANNING MEETING**

Although we decided not to hold an August Parish Council meeting as usual, we have to respond to planning requests, so held a meeting on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August. One of the topics was the planning application for more housing on Whinney Lane. It's not in our parish but as the impact of traffic from another 270 homes certainly will be, we were included in the planning application process. It appears to be a sneaky way of increasing numbers over that specified as necessary in the adopted Local Plan. This is only one site; we're certain others will follow. Hence, we objected to the application and will cite the cumulative effect of others. We can only hope HBC will concur.

## **SPEED INDICATOR SIGNS**

There has been a bit of a delay in the supply, not of the signs but of the poles on which they're mounted, and as a result, the time slot for contractors passed. All being well you should see one soon on Church Lane and not long after on Main Street. We'll be moving signs around so that 1) they give optimum coverage and 2) they're not permanent (which could infringe planning regulations). They've been configured so that up to 20 or 30MPH (as the case might be), they'll show a green smiley face and the speed and for up to 4 or 5MPH above those limits a red unpleasant face and beyond that TOO FAST. This last setting negates NYCC's argument about boy-racers trying to set a high speed. One thing you won't see - but which is recorded and downloaded - is the speed and quantities of vehicles travelling in both directions. This will be invaluable for traffic planning and policing. Several police forces prosecute speeders in 20MPH zones. Why won't ours?

## **PANNAL POND**

At our last meeting we invited representatives from the Pannal Pond Association to attend. The Parish Council responded to their requests for help by stating that, for various reasons, public money could not be spent on what is entirely a property under private ownership. Since then, social media has been awash with all sorts of speculative comments. As social media is totally unregulated with respect to content (unless such content crosses borderlines of racism, sexism, indecency and the like) much "fake news" has been posted. We don't seek to enter a protracted debate on any of these social media sites but feel that, as the Parish Council was being blamed for inaction, we need to put the record straight. Therefore, the following was sent to the Pond Association and is now included to all recipients of our newsletter, as below:

*"Dear Pannal Pond owners*

*We have received various inputs from parishioners expressing concerns over misleading information regarding your pond and inferred criticism of the Parish Council. Although we would prefer to have these statements removed from electronic communications, we're aware that while beneficial in many cases, some social media appears to be a forum for opinion, fake/false information and so on, rather than fact.*

*Being made aware of such misleading information from whatever source, we merely seek to ensure that facts are in the public domain rather than misinformed opinion. Hence, we have listed the following points (which we will also mention in our forthcoming Parish Council newsletter) so that all our parishioners can be up to date with the facts.*

*It is unfortunate that the Covid 19 Facebook page, set up to help those affected in the pandemic, has also been used as a vehicle for communication on this subject.*

*As the ways of local government aren't always easy to follow - and to assist clarification, we, the Parish Council, thought it would be helpful to outline some facts to our parishioners. We hope you will all find this beneficial:*

- *The Pond is private land owned by 5 surrounding properties; its proximity to a public footpath does not turn it into a community or village asset. It is fenced and, as such, is inaccessible to the public.*
- *There has recently been doubt cast upon the historical treatment of the pond owners by the Parish Council. Please note: the Parish Council has only been in existence since May 2016 and will not, therefore, have been involved in any of the previous problems, contamination or maintenance issues those several years ago.*
- *The first communication with the Pond Association was at the end of June 2020.*
- *The responsibility for both household waste and recycling lies with Harrogate Borough Council. The Parish Council is not involved in this service.*
- *The Ringway (and, indeed, all footpaths) lie within the responsibility of North Yorkshire County Council's Paths department. Frequently, the Parish Council alerts the County Council to issues on footpaths so the latter may take action.*
- *When the recent repairs were taking place to the bank alongside the Ringway footpath earlier this year, the Parish Council alerted the County Council to joggers and walkers trespassing on private land adjacent to the pond.*
- *The Parish Council confirms that it has never benefited from any S106 monies allocated from the development on the former Dunlopillo site.*

- *Parish Councils are, in fact, prohibited from spending public money on an individual's private property.*
- *The Parish Council confirms it does not own land in Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish (nor anywhere else) and never has, and as such, has no responsibility for any public or private land.*
- *Parish Councillors, unlike Borough and County Councillors, are volunteers and not remunerated. It was at the request of residents that the Parish Council was formed, with due Governance procedures followed and elections held. Up to the present, parishioners have been complimentary of its actions and this particularly in regard to the effective "protection" of the Parish from over-development.*
- *Government and environmental agencies are striving to increase woodland, rather than transform such areas into play or community recreation sites with any such efforts being contrary to the aims of the Woodland Trust and the creation of a Northern Forest.*
- *Recently - and a little further upstream on the Crimple Beck - a homeowner has had to shore up the bank of the river to ensure there is no subsidence to her/his property. Such expense is borne by the owner, not any Council.*
- *Deed and covenant searches will, or at least should, show that ownership near or on a water course, carries risks and responsibilities associated with this element.*
- *As stated, therefore, the Parish Council cannot intervene in private property affairs.*

*We trust the aforementioned clarifies the situation."*

Further details are contained in the minutes of the last PC meeting.

## **REPORTING**

Some people report various matters to the Parish Council over which we have no control. This only leads to delays in the matter being dealt with by the appropriate authority. We'll try to come up with a more comprehensive list in the future but for now, if it's:

Anything to do with roads, pavements, footpaths, bridleways and the like it's NYCC; Waste collection, it's HBC; Rivers, streams etc, it's the Environment Agency, except for flooding emergencies when it's 999 - the fire service; speeding, it's the police; Street lights and potholes, it's NYCC. Most of these have websites to simplify the reporting process.

## **BENCHES**

You may have noticed that a couple of the benches in the village have been repaired/painted. It was as a result of Parish Council pressure that HBC finally agreed to maintain these benches after years of neglect. The three benches on Pannal Green have been taken under the responsibility of the Parish Council. It has been suggested they be turned through 180 degrees to face the Green, the trees and the church, rather than parked cars. There will be a cost to change this but we believe the result would be a distinct improvement.

## **FLY-TIPPING**

There has been a significant build-up of grass, branches and rubbish in the corner of the field adjacent to the houses on Pannal Green, just outside the churchyard. This is not a dump for garden waste or for any other unwanted items. Prosecution for dumping is likely if perpetrators are identified and penalties can be substantial. Although the Environment team at HBC have washed their hands of the issue, the responsibility for clearing it is now with the waste department at HBC.

## **PLANTERS**

We had hoped to have had the planters in position by now but have had to wait on decisions from NYCC/HBC and they aren't always as quick as one might hope. They should be planted and in place soon.

## **NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

We're still uncertain as to whether our next official meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> will be held at our usual "home" at the village hall or remotely. Safety of those involved is paramount so we will leave our decision as to venue as late as possible.

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/>

Best wishes

Howard West, Chairman, [howard.west@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk](mailto:howard.west@pannalandburnbridge-pc.gov.uk)

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