

SCORTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 in the Scorton War Memorial Institute at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Rafelt, Calvert, Richardson & Threlfall, North Yorkshire Cllr Les, Frank Broughton & Keith Thomas (Save Our Swale), MOP x 1, Alan Coe (REMS) later

1. Apologies for absence: PCSO Brown, SOS Group
2. Election of Officers. Cllr Rafelt elected as Chairman, stating that he will resign as Chairman in 2025. It was resolved to not elect a Vice Chairman this year.
3. Chairman's report. It's been a year of improvement jobs around the village; repainting of the bus shelter, some drainage works on bridge green and maintenance and improvements to play-parks – in Mollie Cail new climbing walls and repairs to climbing treads on the embankment slide and repairs to bench - the latter two carried out by Cllrs. And in Jubilee Green enhanced contour play area which was supported by Locality funding and our thanks go to Cllr Les for the financial support. Further improvements to the cemetery - finalising the extension by completing the tarmac paths and general tidying. The new noticeboard looks very smart. Again, our thanks to Cllr Les for providing Locality funding towards both the extension and noticeboard. Communication has improved further with the updating of the website, updating the contact number on the village signs and a new sign to Typhoon Close Park, which is now under the control of the PC.

A few additional things to mention:

- Work has commenced on layby restriction and parking around the school generally after full consultation with the school and highways agency.
- A successful coronation party was organised, and commemorative mugs were available for all children.
- A new footbridge has been delivered and will soon be installed on Bridge Green.
- And thanks to Ian for the rolling programme of Bench maintenance.

There have been many changes in the wider political sphere, changes in our interactions with the local authority, especially some challenges with engagement with the planning system – as was expected with a move to NYC – a change from the local focus of Richmondshire and something we will have to manage. And we've had a Mayoral election; David Skaith being elected as the first Mayor of York & North Yorkshire. Finally, I would like to mention the Scorton Lakes – a huge amount of constant improvement works around the lakes and the abundant nature that this attracts; and our sincere thanks to Alan & the REMS team for all they do. It has been a pleasure to welcome Alan Coe to our monthly meetings, it's been great to start the meetings with so much positivity; long may it continue.

4. Financial report

External audit – approval of Annual Governance Statement 23/24. Cllrs resolved to approve the statement.

Appointment of Internal Auditor. It was resolved to retain Margaret Goldie.

Adoption of the accounts for year ending 31st March 2024. The Bank reconciliation and year's accounts were distributed to councillors, and it was resolved to adopt the year's accounts. The combined balances at 31/3/24 = £13,473.48

Summary of Accounts for 2023/2024

Income

Funding/donations 5600
Precept 16000
VAT refund/waiveaves 3700
Urban grasscutting 1100

Outgoing

Insurance 900
Donations 1300
Grass cutting 7500
General maintenance 3600
Projects (Coronation, cemetery extension, bollards, noticeboard, website, bridge, signs) 9400

Admin (Wages, S&D Times, PC phone, training, audits, defib replacements, computer, service charge & subs)
8000

Broadband 500

5. Parish Council documents annual review. Council has been working through updating the Financial Standing Orders, however NALC have released an update, clerk reviewing with Cllrs comments. New document for review is Asset register – to incorporate costings.
6. Bolton on Swale School Governors' report. The school is full to capacity with 109 children. Weekly newsletters continue to be emailed to parents. Keeping children safe takes priority with regular updates, also an annual NSPCC programme. Parent teacher consultations continue, as do class assemblies. Many annual events have taken place this year. A varied programme of extra-curricular clubs is enjoyed, and the school is represented by many sports. Eco excellence continues and working towards the school's 6th Green Flag award, recycling crisp packets, tin foil, batteries and ink cartridges. Fundraising for various national and international causes. The Church School inspection highlighted a nurturing, caring school with exceptional politeness and behaviour. The school has appreciated the support of the PC in relation to parking in the lay by, safety at road junctions and speed of traffic outside school.
7. Trustee Michael Sydall Representatives' report. North Yorkshire Cllr Les gives the report, both he and Cllr Threlfall are Trustees. The Trust is in limbo currently as a Law firm has been commissioned to carry out some research about this educational trust and currently awaiting some clarity. The fund continues to retain their obligations to MS School, with financial assistance to school swimming lessons and insurance. Alan Coe arrives.
8. Save Our Swale Group report. Frank Broughton & Keith Thomas give their report. SoS started monthly monitoring of water quality in the River Swale in September 2023. The group are sampling a total of nine sites from Grinton down to Brompton on Swale. Samples are analysed to determine electrical conductivity, turbidity, nitrate, phosphate and ammonia levels and counts of total bacteria and coliforms. The data show disturbingly high levels of chemical pollution at Brompton. Microbiological analysis also confirms that bacteria levels are significantly higher than further upstream and are many times above levels considered acceptable for bathing waters. The group have posted a warning on the Brompton Facebook Page advising parents to ensure that if their children paddle or swim in the river at Brompton, they do not swallow any water and have a thorough wash when they get home, and asked the Parish Council if they can erect warning signs at key points on the riverbank with the same message. SoS aims to continue its monitoring effort to create a robust evidence base that we can present to both Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency. We intend to keep up the pressure on both organisations until they commit to the actions necessary to restore the River Swale to a healthy state for both people and wildlife. SoS gratefully acknowledges the support received from a range of local organisations, including Scorton and Brompton Parish Councils, Richmond Town Council and North Yorkshire and York Unitary Authority. Questions/discussions follow. Public meeting 8th June, clerk to post notices and place on website and Facebook page.
9. Parish Council Representatives for YLCA x 2, Scorton War Memorial Institute Committee. Clerk & Cllr Threlfall elected as YLCA reps, SWMI – Cllr Harper.
Meeting closed at 7.45pm