

**Little Smeaton Annual Open Parish Meeting at 7.00pm on the 14
May 2025, Community Rooms, Kirk Smeaton.**

MINUTES

Present: Cllr G Ivey (Chair), Cllr C Atkinson (Vice Chair), Cllr A Hancock, Cllr J Howdle, R. Brown (Clerk)

1. As all Councillors were present, there were no apologies.

2. Annual Report 2021/22

2.1 The Annual Report was received. Cllr Ivey read out the annual report for 2024/2025. She thanked the Councillors and Clerk for the hard work carried out during the year, and paid tribute to our colleague Iain Carpenter who sadly passed away on 20th April. The sympathy and condolences of the Parish Council were offered to Iain's family. See Appendix 1.

3. Public Forum. Questions and concerns raised by the public.

3.1 Two members of the public were in attendance. Five concerns were raised.

- a) Councillors were asked whether there was an update on the possible completion of the work on Wentedge Bridge. This remains as the end of June, but no recent information has been received from National Highways. Having looked at the work recently, Councillors doubted whether this deadline would be met.
- b) Councillors were asked about the North Yorkshire Council Plan. A briefing by NYC is to be held next week when, it is understood, the process for consultation on the plan will be outlined. Two Little Smeaton Councillors will be attending as well as the Clerk. They will be informing all residents of the process and will seek to facilitate views being heard, including the possibility of holding a public meeting.
- c) A member of the public expressed considerable concern that no consultation was undertaken by LSPC prior to the erection of the fence on Crosshills. Currently, the resident feels, the fence makes access by her tenant to the adjacent field impossible. However it was pointed out that her tenant has accessed her field through our gate on several occasions which proves access is possible.
- d) The Councillors explained that the decision to erect the fence had had to be made quickly to access the work which could be done by the A1 contractors at no

cost to the village or the parish council. A retrospective application to the Secretary of State will be made by the Parish Council shortly and all residents will be informed. The resident asked to be present at any meeting with the Secretary of State but the Councillors explained that, in their understanding this will be a paper exercise. However the resident will be invited to express her concerns. The resident stated that she did not want the fence to be removed but, as outlined in the recent letter from her son she would like the line of the fence altered. Councillors explained that this would be discussed later that evening as it is an agenda item on the main meeting.

- e) Concern was raised about grass cuttings being left, including in the River Went. Councillors share this concern but it is not known who is responsible.
- f) The lack of small houses in the village was raised, and the possibility that this may be addressed by the North Yorkshire Plan.

Little Smeaton Parish Council Annual Report for 2024-5

Another year has gone by in a flash and I would again like to start by commending my fellow councillors - Colin Atkinson, Angela Hancock, and Joanne Howdle for all their hard work throughout the year; to say a big Thank You to them all; and to our Clerk Roz Brown.

I also want to pay tribute here to our colleague Iain Carpenter who carried out his duties as a parish councillor with vigour and enthusiasm throughout most of the year despite serious health issues, but sadly passed away on April 20th. He is, and will be, much missed by us all.

We offer our sympathy and condolences to Iain's family.

Councillors have carried out all their usual tasks during the past year:

- Planting up the village sign planters and promoting wildflower areas
- Putting up new Christmas Lighting on the lamp posts, also erected the Christmas Tree and decorating it.
- Annual moss removal at the playground.
- Regular inspection of all play equipment and carrying out of any minor repairs.
- Keeping the poo bag dispensers filled
- Keeping the Website and Facebook pages up to date
- Lobbying Highways to fill potholes

Little Smeaton & Kirk Smeaton Parish Councils also continue to work together on a number of projects affecting both villages...

- Continued development and review of the [joint] Village Emergency Plan.
- Both Parish Councils send representatives to the Quarry Liaison Committee meetings which are held every six months, with the operators and North Yorkshire Planning Officers in attendance. Monitoring of dust, and of HGV traffic, is reported at each meeting. Good to note there have been no complaints from residents in the past year, although some do want to know when the new bridleway will be open.
- Crime. Both Councils have been pleased to observe a de-escalation of burglary and crime generally in the Smeaton villages, but continue to lobby our MP and to hold our local police officers to account. At least one parish councillor [and often several] regularly attend the Police Surgery held bi-monthly at the Shoulder. Indeed we have been there – across the road – tonight, before coming here.
- Annual Act of Remembrance in November. Parish councillors from both villages lead a civic act of remembrance on Remembrance Sunday, organising readings and laying poppy wreaths. In 2024, for the first time, the Last Post was also played. Numbers of people joining in seems to increase each year.
- Village Events. The Events Team consists of parish councillors from both villages, other enthusiastic volunteers and representatives of pub, church & magazine. In the past year the team has organised not only the Fete + Treasure Hunt in September; the 'Carols round the tree' family event in December, and a Christmas Tea for our more Senior residents.... But in addition, Events Team members planned the Commemoration

of the 80th Anniversary of the D Day Landings, which comprised Lighting of the Beacon for a third time, plus the Duck Race and Village picnic which Little Smeaton was pleased to host.

- The Picnic and Duck Race are anticipated to become an Annual Event – this year on June 7th
- The Beacon was lit for a fourth time just last week to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Please note that parish councillors personally give their time planning and helping at events, but **no parish council monies are used**; events are self-funding.

Investments: All monies received from the cottage sale have been very carefully invested, and the interest received will continue to support the work undertaken in the village – as the rental income did previously.

The accounts are audited on an annual basis and will be available for viewing as usual in July.

The Precept: has again not been raised this year and the total amount remains the same as it has been for the past 2 year.

National Highways: We have all been troubled by another year of the huge additional volume of traffic using New Road, Main Street by the playground and Willowbridge Road.

Initially this was mainly vehicles rat-running to avoid the southbound delays on the A1, but it wasn't long before this became a steady stream of vehicles in both directions.

Having established that no funds for road repairs would be forthcoming from National Highways; Little Smeaton Parish Councillors joined with counterparts from Kirk Smeaton, Stapleton, Darrington and Norton to lobby our respective MP's and Councils for a better standard of repairs than the poor quality of patching which was initially being carried out.

Our emails to the Leaders of Council were successful and both Doncaster and North Yorkshire did carry out more extensive repairs which have been longer lasting, though are now again breaking up in places.

The North Yorkshire Highways Engineer suggested recently that he was looking at plans for a more extensive repair and resurfacing project, once the A1 is fully open again and the volume of traffic reduces. It should be noted that this is **not** confirmed, but that we will continue to press for this.

Highways: Following an accident at the junction of Main Street with Willowbridge Road, councillors met with the same North Yorkshire Highways Officer to ask for better signage at the junction, a narrow bridge sign and an extension to the 30mph limit. All requests were agreed to and actioned within 3 months, so the 30mph limit now extends fully as far as Willow Bridge.

Social Amenity Support: In an attempt to soften the blow to residents of the increased volume of traffic I've already mentioned, National Highways offered both Smeaton parish councils some practical support for village projects – in the form of work which could be done by the A1 contractors at no cost to the village or the parish council[s]

Kirk Smeaton had work done in the cemetery. In Little Smeaton we put forward 4 projects, of which 2 were agreed; beingpaving under the Beacon to reduce fire riskand a fence [with gate for access] across the open edge of the Beacon area to deter scramble and quad bikes which have plagued both villages over the past 12 months.

Whilst the fence seems to have been successful in deterring unauthorised access and has been mostly supported by residents, the Parish Council is now undertaking a retrospective application for permission, which should have been done at the time of agreeing the project.

I apologise for this oversight.

Grass cutting. The contract was awarded to Daniel Curnow for the summer of 2024, and now 2025, and we thank him and Sam for doing a great job in keeping the village looking neat and tidy, also for their help with the Christmas Tree each year.

The agreed grass cutting plan allows spring flowers to die back naturally/come back stronger each year; part of the bank at the playing field is deliberately left uncut in order to encourage wildflowers, and as a result the cowslips have been fantastic this year.

Thank you: to councillors and residents for the seasonal planting around the village signs, & especially for the constant watering required to keep them in good shape.

To Jo and Bracken at the Brotherhood for their kind donation of the Christmas Tree.

To everyone who helped putting up, and taking down, the Christmas lights, and also the festive anniversary flags – all much appreciated.

Gillian Ivey. Chairman 14.05.2025.