

**Little Smeaton Parish Council Meeting 15th January 2026
Community Room, Kirk Smeaton**

MINUTES

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

1. Apologies

1.1 No apologies for absence were received. All Councillors were present.

The Chairman asked all Councillors for their approval to add an emergency item at 20.2, Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for Hillside Cottage The decision on which will be made by North Yorkshire Council, Planning Department by the 4th March, the timing of which does not allow the Parish Council to discuss at the next meeting. All in favour.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 One declaration of a non-pecuniary interest not already declared under the Councils' code of conduct or members Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, was received from Councillor Ivey, as a near neighbour, with regards to item 20.2.

2.2 Following discussion, it was agreed that Councillor Ivey's application for dispensation was approved. Councillor Atkinson to chair the meeting for this item. All in favour.

3. Minutes from previous meeting

3.1 Councillors confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2025 as a true and correct record. Minutes were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

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

4.1 No members of the public were in attendance.

5. Financial Matters

5.1 Councillors heard confirmation from Councillor Hancock that the bank reconciliations as at 31 December 2025, had been checked and signed as a true and correct record

5.2 Councillors heard from Councillor Hancock with regards to the Current Internal Control Audit who confirmed that there were no issues of concern, other than one payment that requires ratifying at this meeting and is on the agenda; one payment made by Councillor Hancock that needed counter signing, which has been done by Councillor Croall, and one administrative error, that has been corrected.

5.3 The current finance sheet and budget report as at 31 December 2025 was signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record. Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, Seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

5.4 Councillors received the VAT spreadsheet as at 31 December 2025.

5.5 Councillors heard from Councillor Hancock with regards to the accuracy of the recent bank statements. The Chairman signed as confirmation.

5.6 Councillors noted and approved budget, spend and pay for:

- Up to £30 for hire of Community Room for meeting on 15th January 2026
- £8.50 for banking charges incurred for the period 10th Dec 2025 to 9th February 2026
- £4445.45 plus VAT (£5334.54) capital monies to replace the playground wet pour.
- Up to £160.00 for bulbs “in flower” for the Little Smeaton planters.

Proposed by Councillor Howdle, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour

5.7 Councillors ratified budget, spend and pay of

- A total of £179.01 on Christmas decorations and batteries. At the Parish Council meeting held on the 20th November 2025 £150.00 was approved for Christmas decorations, batteries etc and a further £50 for a Christmas tree. However as no expenditure was incurred for the tree, and after discussion with Councillor Hancock, it was decided to combine these two amounts to make sure that sufficient replacement batteries were available for the New Year.

Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour

5.8 Councillors authorised the movement of £700.00 from the unallocated budget line, to General Land Costs in the 2025/6 budget to allow for the purchase of bulbs and the likely cost of the litter bin. (£1992.78 transferred previously from the unallocated monies, £1548.08 remaining.)

Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded Councillor Howdle. All in favour

382

5.9 Councillors agreed to appointing Paul Clarke, as the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2025/6 and thanked him for agreeing again to act in this capacity. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour.

5.10 Councillors noted that Councillor Croall has been included as a signature on all accounts held with LB. However, following his appointment as Councillor with lead responsibility for banking, Councillors approved the inclusion of Councillor Croall as a signature on all bank accounts held by Little Smeaton Parish Council. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour

5.11 Councillors noted that H&R BS have, following the reduction in the Base Rate, has written to inform the Parish Council that, from 13th January 2026 the interest rate paid on the savings account will reduce from 2.90% to 2.80%.

6. Parish Precept

6.1 Councillors noted the acknowledgment from North Yorkshire Council that the precept for 2026/27 will be set at £6783.00, which represents no increase compared to the amount paid by residents in 2025/6.

7. Finance Group

7.1 Councillors noted that the Finance Group met on the 5th January prior to the full Parish Council meeting. Councillors to receive the notes of this meeting and approve the following recommendations:

- Budget as presented to be accepted;
- That, on maturity, the RW account is rolled over with no changes;
- That £35k is, on maturity, withdrawn from the NW account and used to open a second, one year, fixed term account with Redwood paying interest on a monthly basis;
- That the remaining £22,250 continues in the NW on a six month fixed term account;
- That the UT account is reconsidered when it matures with the possibility of changing it to a six month fixed term account;
- The Banking Mandate as updated is agreed;
- The Investment Strategy as updated is agreed,

Following discussion the budget was updated to increase the amount for insurance from £700 to £900 and to reduce the budget for hanging baskets from £2000 to £1900. With these alterations the budget for 2026.7 was accepted. Proposed by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour.

All other recommendations (other than the Banking Mandate and Investment Strategy which appear later on the agenda) were accepted. Proposed by Councillor Hancock,

seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour. Thanks were offered to the Finance Group for all the hard work done.

383

8. Events Team

8.1 Councillors received a verbal report from the representatives of the Events Team, and the success of the Christmas event was noted. It was also noted that the seniors lunch was well attended, and that holding it in the pub ensured a better atmosphere, although it was a matter of regret that time constraints meant some of the entertainments planned did not take place. Councillors were informed that the next event will be the annual duck race, but no specific date has, as yet been agreed.

9. Grass Cutting Contract

9.1 Councillors considered the draft grass cutting contract and schedule (already approved) for 2026/8, and asked that the possibility of a roll over of the contract in 2028 be included. With this alteration it was agreed that the Clerk could sign it on behalf of the Parish Council and agree a Councillor to sign it on behalf of the Parish Council. Proposed by Councillor Iver, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour.

Concern was raised about the difficulties of cutting the triangle of grass at the top of Mount Pleasant which is a sight line and, as their statutory responsibility, paid for by NYC. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to NYC Highways to raise the issues, and ask for their assistance.

It was agreed that the Clerk would monitor performance against the contract and raise, if required, any issues with DC Tree Co.

10. Community Speed Watch Update

10.1 Councillor Hancock updated the meeting on the Community Speed Watch project. Only 2 sessions have been undertaken since the report in November. This has been due to the dark nights, bad weather and the availability of the volunteers in the run up to Christmas. 59 cars were checked of which 8 (or 14%) were found to be speeding, with one car doing 42mph in a 30mph zone. It was noticed that the number of cars has reduced markedly since the road works on the A1 have finished.

11. Repair of New Road following work on the A1

11.1 Councillors noted the commitment made by NY highways in January 2024 to, following completion of the A1 roadworks, repair New Road and better secure the road edges. The Clerk to write to the Head of Environmental Services and the Area Manager, (copied to Gary Lumb), who made this commitment, to remind them. At the same time the Clerk to inform them that Wakefield Council have stated that they hope to get some

funding from National Highways to cover the cost of repairs to the roads, and to suggest that North Yorkshire may wish to do the same.

12. Damage to verge on Main Street

12.1 Councillors considered the recent damage to the verges near the playground, and, following discussion, the Councillors decided to ask NYC Highways to fit black and white reflective posts on the verges in front of the playground down to where it meets the hedge,

384

to protect the edges and to better protect pedestrians (including children accessing the playground) using the verge in the absence of a footpath.

13. Printer ink

13.1 Councillors considered the most cost effective way to purchase ink for the Parish Council printer and decided to use the HP contract available for a trial period at a cost of £6.49 a month for 100 pages. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

14. Emergency plan.

14.1 Councillors noted and approved the current iteration of the, jointly with Kirk Smeaton, Emergency Plan, and authorised the Clerk to send a copy to the NYC lead officer and to the Clerk of Kirk Smeaton. The document was updated due to changes in contact details of councillors and other key persons named in the document.

14.2 Councillors also noted a recent email received from NYC, updating the information on handling any emergency, which includes the following statement:

“We are working to improve the customer experience and what is needed to be said and/or done when calling the council to let us know about an emergency or incident you are experiencing. This will be implemented early in 2026, and we will communicate the “phrase(s)” and process when it’s complete. We are working at updating the Household preparedness leaflet as our website refers individuals to the UK Government plan (which in turn needs a refresh!)”

15. Litter Bin

15.1 Councillors noted that an application for “street furniture” has been successfully agreed with NYC Highways department, and signed by the Clerk, on behalf of the Parish Council and signed by NYC Project Engineer. A quote of £450.00 has been obtained from Carl’s Property Services to supply and fit the litter bin chosen from the Bin Shop. Budget, spend and pay of £450.00 was, therefore, approved. Councillors also approved budget, spend and pay of up to £30.00 for the purchase of a box of bin liners. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour.

15.2 Budget, spend and pay was also approved for up to £500 to move and secure the bench, previously purchased by the Parish Council, once Councillor Atkinson confirms

that there is sufficient room near the playground. In view of this it was proposed that the amount to be transferred from unallocated monies, previously agreed at agenda item 5.8 should be increased from £700.00 to £1200.00. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

16. Playground

16.1 Councillor Atkinson reported that, as yet it has not proved possible to install the two new platforms. The delay to this update to the playground does not pose any risk as the existing platforms, whilst in need of replacement, are currently safe to use and were not identified as a potential risk by ROSPA.

385

16.2 Councillor Atkinson reported on enquires made into the installation of a basketball court. The probable cost of installing such a court is likely to be in the region of £40,000 and Councillors, after discussion, decided that they did not wish to proceed with this project, as the small number of residents likely to use it means it does not offer value for money.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that, in view of the way the monies are invested, there are only a few opportunities to withdraw monies, so any capital expenditure needs to be planned well in ahead. In addition any large Capital expenditure will reduce the income of the Council and may result in a need to increase the precept.

Instead Councillors agreed to explore the possibility of improving the ground surface of the existing football pitch which currently has an uneven surface and would require a proper base and reseeding. Clerk to inform the resident of Kirk Smeaton of this decision with a copy to the Kirk Smeaton Clerk. The possibility of a grant was discussed. To be placed on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting, to allow the possibility of a grant to be explored.

16.3 Councillors noted that RTC are scheduled to resurface the wet pour under both set of swings on 19th January.

17. Large Poppies for November 2026

17.1 At the November Parish Council meeting it was agreed that enquiries would be made as to whether more lamppost poppies at a discounted price might be available from the British Legion. However, following a phone call, it now appears that there is no fixed price as previously understood, but that donations of either £4.00 or £5.00 per poppy are expected. This year LSPC offered a £4.00 donation which was accepted.

Councillors agreed to purchase in October 2026 an additional 21 poppies and to offer a donation of £100. Budget, spend and pay of £100 was approved. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Croall. All in favour.

18. Policy and Procedure Reviews

18.1 Councillors approved the updated:

- Investment Strategy. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.
- Banking Mandate. Proposed by Councillor Hancock, seconded by Councillor Atkinson. All in favour
- Vexatious complaints policy. Proposed by Councillor Ivey, seconded by Councillor Howdle. All in favour.

386

19. Cross Hills

19.1 Councillors noted the planning application by the owner of the field next door to Cross Hills to create a separate entrance that would remove the necessity for farm equipment to access the field through Cross Hills.

19.2 Councillors agreed that, once the planning application decision has been made, they wished to proceed to completing the retrospective application for permission for the fence on Cross Hills.

20. To receive any planning applications and note any comments sent.

20.1 Application received for installation of an agricultural entrance over grass verge into field on Mount Pleasant. Supported by the Parish Council.

At this point Councillor Ivey retired from the Chair and Vice Chair Councillor Atkinson chaired the following emergency agenda item.

20.2 Following advice previously given by the Parish Council, the owners of Hillside Cottage have applied for a Lawful Development Certificate. If granted this would allow further development of the cottage without the need for additional planning permission. Following discussion, Councillors agreed to write to NYC planning department, reminding them that the cottage is in a conservation area and asking if there are any Article 4 constraints, and attaching a copy of the Planning Officers previous report.

21. Correspondence Received

21.1 At the meeting the Chair was handed a letter of resignation from Councillor Howdle. Regret at this decision was expressed by all Councillors and thanks offered to Councillor Howdle for all her hard work and important contribution to the Council. Clerk to inform NYC Democratic Services. Councillor Howdle handed the Clerk her finance card.

22. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 19th March 2026.