



Tadcaster Town Council

The Ark, 33 Kirkgate, Tadcaster LS24 9AQ

01937 834113

clerk@tadcastertowncouncil.gov.uk

www.tadcastertowncouncil.gov.uk

Open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 12.30pm

MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 APRIL 2023 AT 7 PM IN THE ARK

PRESENT:	CHAIRMAN	D Bowgett
	COUNCILLORS	J Chiswick, P Emmott, D Mackay, M Middlemiss,
	CLERK	J Crowther
	DEPUTY CLERK	J Mottershead
	ALSO PRESENT	None

- AT1 APOLOGIES** – To receive and accept apologies for absence from Councillors – S Cobb, P Grasby, F Greig, C Stephenson.
- AT2 PUBLIC SESSION – DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM** - Members of the Public are welcome to speak and raise any matters relating to the town – None.
- AT3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – To receive the Chairman's Report of Council activities for the past year. D Bowgett reported the following: -

This has been very much a year of change. Much of it, we had known about beforehand. But the biggest change, and the one that ultimately came to define this council year, was one that caught us all off-guard. In May, we celebrated the platinum jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, with events that included a beacon lighting, a street market, and a service in St. Mary's Church. Less than four months later, however, we found ourselves having to say farewell to the queen. As mayor, I was incredibly proud to take part in the events marking the platinum jubilee, and of the way the whole town came together to mark such an unprecedented event, and I have absolutely no doubt that next month, we will show that same spirit of togetherness as we mark the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The other major change has been the transition from North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council to the new unitary North Yorkshire Council, which came into operation on the first of this month. This change-over still marks one of the earliest stages of what is likely to be a lengthy re-organization process, with more powers devolved to area committees, local networks, and town and parish councils. I would like to place on record my thanks to our past county and district councillors for all the work they have put in over the years, and look forward to what the future brings.

The cost-of-living crisis has affected many in the town, particularly the most vulnerable during the winter months. In June of last year, we set up a working group to address the issue of adult social care in the town. In September, the town council agreed to fund a leaflet for the working group to advise people in the town of what help is available, and the group continues its efforts in this regard.

The town council also financially supported a community arts project lead by Cllr Poskitt and David Gluck, and also gave financial assistance to The Barn's refugee support programme.

Work towards getting new flood defences in the town has continued at an encouraging pace, with the Environment Agency having a regular presence in The Ark over the last year, and drop-

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in consultation sessions recently being held on Tuesdays, in addition to regular updates being received by full council and the Emergency Planning Sub-committee.

Full council meetings have this year moved to being held on a monthly basis, generally on the third Tuesday of each month, with Environment and F&GP meetings being held on a roughly quarterly basis. This has brought down the wait for full council meetings from six weeks to four and allowed a more standardised approach to issuing payments.

A screen has been placed in the council chamber by the Environment Agency and made available for use during council meetings.

Work has continued on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, with a housing needs assessment having taken place this year. We also made our representations to the Selby District Local Plan, which going forward will be overseen by North Yorkshire Council.

After a year of holding meetings in the Boys' Sunday School, September's council meeting marked the point where we returned to having The Ark as our primary venue for town council meetings.

AT4 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: -

• Environment Committee

M Middlemiss Vice Chairman read out S Cobbs report in his absence: -

- We have been involved in the EA Plans for Flood Alleviation in the Town – we look forward to spades going into the ground in early 2024.
- We look forward to Yorkshire Water finally sorting out surface water flooding in the High Street following the flooding in January 2023
- We were delighted to unveil the new Queen's Green Canopy Plaque in the Councillor Middlemiss Allotments attended by the Deputy Lieutenant for North Yorkshire.
- We had a successful presentation to the Allotment winners in October in 21 High Street
- We look forward to the installation of a water supply in the Councillor Middlemiss Allotments which has been made possible by a contribution by Councillor Middlemiss
- We look after dog bins and benches.
- We organise an annual litter pick.
- We keep an eye on play areas.
- We support the local Walkers are Welcome group in their upkeep of local rights of way.
- We are hoping to oversee the installation of vehicle activated speed signs.
- We have been involved in plans to upgrade the Bus Station
- A subcommittee is responsible for the Christmas Illuminations
- We hope to see a proper motorway interchange between the A64 and the A162 which will reduce lorry traffic in Leeds Road
- We are pleased to see that bus services in the Town have remained.

• Finance and General Purposes

D Bowgett reported the following: -

- After many years of trying to transition our systems to make full use of online banking and payments, the town council has finally made the transition, with last month's full council meeting marking the first use of this technology. The staff, and the clerk in particular, are to be commended for the immense amount of work they put into making this possible.

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- As part of this year's budgetary process, we put the staff onto the pay scales recommended for their duties, after a previous attempt to do this over three years between 2018-2021 was disrupted by increased inflation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This should mean that, in line with Selby and Sherburn town councils, we will be paying all our staff members the Living Wage.
- The F&GP committee recommended a 5% increase in the precept, in line with the increase that North Yorkshire Council have made for the upcoming year.
- Due to a lack of applications in recent years, Grant Aid and Small Grant Aid applications will be suspended for the 2023/2024 council year. We will still be supporting the Tadcaster Treat Association with an increased grant and will aid community groups to get access to grants from other sources.
- Remembrance Sunday was another successful event. We received positive feedback on the video link and seating provided within the Riley Smith Hall and will be taking steps to promote the same facility at this year's event.
- We have continued to make improvements in the cemetery, including to the footpaths. Unfortunately, we have also seen at least two acts of vandalism on benches; one of the benches has been repaired, the other (which had been placed without permission) has been removed.
- Our administration assistant, Sara Sutcliffe, departed in July of last year. We are currently recruiting for a replacement, and hope to have one in position in the coming months.

AT5 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES SERVING ON OTHER BODIES: -

- **Yorkshire Local Councils Association (Selby)** - Councillor D Mackay

D Mackay reported that meeting had not been held for 2 years it was hoped that a meeting would be held in the next 3 months.

- **Swimming Pool Users Committee** - Councillor S Cobb

D Bowgett read out the report received from Tadcaster Swimming Pool as follows: -

In 2022 the Trust had a successful year as we returned to a fully operational facility since the COVID closures and restrictions.

All Primary schools returned, and we could deliver our Learn to Swim programme to 1200 pupils per week.

Attendances were fantastic throughout all the activities, and we broke the highest attendance record since 1994. This was because customers stayed local and did not travel abroad.

We employed three Sports Apprentices, all from Tadcaster and have started to rebuild our volunteer work force.

We invested £250,000 in the replacement of our Boiler System, Air Handling Unit and Building Management System. The old system was not very energy efficient and was 28 years old. It was causing numerous issues with breakdowns etc, and this planned investment was meant to take place in 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID pandemic.

I'm sure you are well aware of the challenges the Trust faces with the increased utility costs.

Since October 2022 our Electricity is out of its long-term contract and we have been faced with significant energy costs. An example of this is we would normal pay £4000 per month and this increased to £12,000 per month.

Although the cost of electricity has reduced, we are still paying double what we were paying in September 2022.

The Trust has taken measures to reduce this cost where possible, however we face another challenge as the Gas contract expires from a long-term deal in October 2023 and this is set to double or triple the cost.

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We are facing a loss of £50k in 2023 and this could be increased in 2024 if there is no major reduction in Utility costs.

We have written to Selby District and North Yorkshire County Council to seek some short-term financial support.

We have also worked with Sport England and Swim England to identify funding.

Sport England have just released a £63m fund, which sounds great, but we are waiting for more information on what this will look like, what it can be used for and how much money we could receive.

An early indication is that the funding will go to NYCC and then will be distributed to Pools across the county.

We will continue to offer a great service to the community and work through these issues.

- **Dawson & Oglethorpe Trust - Councillors** – Councillor D Bowgett reported the following: - Due to personal circumstances, Cllr Bowgett was not able to attend either of this year's meetings. However, at last May's meeting the trust agreed an increase in its hardship fund, in order to further help with the cost-of-living crisis.

- **Tadcaster Twinning Association Committee** - Councillors D Bowgett & S Cobb
D Bowgett reported the following: -

The Twinning Association has held events to promote itself and attract new members, such as at The Barn's third birthday party. Their hope is for twinning visits to resume this year, as none have taken place since before the pandemic.

- **Selby District AVS** - Councillor D Bowgett reported: -

The AVS has spent much of the previous year restructuring its operations, as the result of the change to the unitary council. In July, the AVS held an event to support carers throughout the Selby District; Cllr Bowgett attended this and subsequently passed on the information gathered to Cllr Poskitt, and their hope is to support carers in the town, the number of which has increased due to an ageing population, and those suffering long-term health complications from COVID.

As of the start of last month, the AVS has rebranded as Up for Yorkshire, and looks forward to expanding the reach of its operations within the area.

P Emmott asked how the Care in the Community Council Tax element of North Yorkshire Council charges were to be spent?

ACTION – Clerk to contact Councillor K Poskitt to request information regarding the above.

- **Tadcaster Community Library** - Councillor D Bowgett & F Greig
D Bowgett reported the following: -

The library has enjoyed a positive level of engagement with the community and is currently operating a service to deliver and collect books from residents. Its main challenge going forward will be energy costs, due to the age of the building and difficulty in insulating it.

- **Tadcaster Medical Centre Patient Participation Group** – J Chiswick reported that she had not received an invitation to any meetings.

ACTION – Clerk to contact Tadcaster Medical Centre to ascertain if meetings were being held.

P Emmott asked if the Health Centre was being utilised.

The Clerk reported that the facility was being used for office space by District Nurses and was no longer an open facility.

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The Clerk read out an email regarding the facility received in 2017,

ACTION – Clerk to contact NHS to ask for an update of the uses of the Health Centre.

- **Environment Agency – Tadcaster Flood Alleviation Client Group** – Councillors S Cobb
D Bowgett reported that the Council had received regular updates of Tadcaster Flood Alleviation Group at Council meetings.
- **Rural Market Towns** – P Emmott reported he had attended online meetings, the main topics had included the Keeping the Vulnerable Warm initiative, which the Town Council had also initiated ahead of the curve, and the levelling up of Rural areas. He encouraged members to read the bulletins and suggested that a small group be formed to discuss small grants mentioned in the bulletins.

AT6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- P Emmott reported that there was an unacceptable amount of graffiti in The Bus Station.

ACTION – Clerk to report to NYC.

- P Emmott reported that he had received information that barriers were to be included in the plans.

The Clerk reported that she was awaiting updated plans for the Bus Station.

ACTION – Clerk to contact NYC to chase an update of The Bus Station Plans.

- Members noted that The Halifax, the last remaining bank in the town was due to close, leaving the 2 Post Office sites in the town for banking access. Other facilities i.e. Libraries had been used in some town for Banking access.

AT7 CLOSE OF MEETING