

**SOWERBY PARISH COUNCIL.**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015.**  
**In the Annexe of Thirsk and Sowerby Town Hall at 7pm.**

Present. Councillors: W. Austin, P. Bardon, D. Bentley, P. Chapman, G. France, S. Hoyland, M. Robson and E. Storm. County Councillor Bob Baker.  
One member of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr. P. Beadle, Cllr. A. Turner and Cllr. C. Ungley.
2. **The minutes of the previous meeting** held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were approved and signed.
3. There were no **Matters Arising**.
4. **Presentation of Reports.**  
Please see attached reports.
5. **To discuss any other business**, including questions from members of the electorate.  
None.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.**  
**Cllr. Bill Austin**

Village Matters.

Continued improvements have been made to the roads and greens and maintenance has been carried out to the lime trees on Front Street.

Following further damage to Blakey Bridge, causing severe inconvenience and disruption, temporary width restrictions have been constructed to limit the width of vehicles able to access the bridge. Signage and 30mph speed limits have also been installed.  
A review of these measures will take place in order to preserve the bridge and its usage.

The extra care housing off Gravel Hole Lane is progressing well.

Sowerby Sports Village is progressing and completion of legal matters is ongoing. This will be an enormous benefit to residents of both Sowerby and Thirsk when completed.

Library Consultation. Proposals to move the library to Meadowfields and to change it into a community library run by volunteers have met with opposition. Councillors have asked that this library be made a hybrid, staffed with librarians as well as volunteers. The result of this consultation is awaited.

Issues concerning the removal of local bus subsidies by the County Council are still ongoing. This Parish Council is doing all it can in order to retain a local bus service.

The WW1 Remembrance Service held in August with 'Churches Together' and Thirsk Town Council was well attended; likewise the Annual Remembrance Service and the Carol Service. Many thanks to all those concerned who work hard to make these events a success.

New CCTV equipment has been installed in the play area. A programme of servicing and maintenance continues in order that all the facilities are safe and in order. The play area is very popular and well used. However there is a problem with litter despite numerous bins and on occasions adults using the equipment. Please respect this amenity.

The precept for 2015 / 2016 has been held for the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

#### Planning Matters.

Sowerby Gateway is progressing. As a result of liaison with the contractors involved, disruption has been kept at a minimum. Concerns have been made about the delays of the proposed slip road to the A168. Hambleton District Council are dealing with this issue.

A new sewerage system via Back Lane has been completed without major disruption.

#### Finally.

I should like to thank my Vice Chairman, Peter Bardon, Clerk, Iris de Wet, County Councillor Bob Baker and all members of the Council who work tirelessly and give of their time for the benefit of the Parish and its residents.

### **HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL** **Cllr. Mark Robson**

For the fifth year in succession Hambleton District Council tax is frozen and there will be no increase in fees or charges. We intend to enhance the services we provide and not reduce them in any way or form. Unlike surrounding areas, Hambleton will not charge for green waste and indeed is working towards the extension of types of recycling in 2016.

- £200,000 has been spent on Thirsk cobbles
- Through prudent restructure across all Management levels, savings of £511,000 year on year will be made on staff costs

- During 2014 £5m was invested into an Economic Development Fund to enhance e growth across the District, with a further £5m being invested from the Council's financial strategy
- Over £1m has been invested in the 4 District leisure centres
- £100,000 has been invested in CCTV, ensuring that Hambleton is one of the safest and enjoyable places to live
- Planning approval has been granted for the Sowerby Sports Village development and this £4m project will soon be underway

I express my concern over the non-delivery of the infrastructure at Sowerby Gateway and, despite various rumours and concerns expressed by many, I can assure all residents that things have moved on and the delivery of the multi-junction will commence in late Autumn this year.

**Cllr Mark Robson**  
**Leader**  
**Hambleton District Council**

**HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Cllr. Peter Bardon**

For the fifth year in succession there is no increase in the Council Tax for 2015/2106. Hambleton residents pay the third lowest Council Tax in the Country.

The Parish Liaison Meetings, to which all Parish Councils are invited, continue to be a useful vehicle for information, with input from the Police & Crime Commissioner and the N.Y.C.C. Highways.

As a result of the Boundary Commission Review the number of District Councillors will reduce to 28 with effect from May 2015.

Dog fouling continues to be a nuisance in the village, but with the employment of a Hambleton District Council Dog Warden we hope that the situation will improve.

Several successful prosecutions have been undertaken during the year against individuals who have made fraudulent claims for financial assistance.

It is anticipated that the range of items collected from door steps/kerb side for recycling will be increased when the contract is renewed in 2016.

During the year I have served on the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee.

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**County Councillor Bob Baker**

This is my second year as your County Councillor. Thank you for the welcome and support from the Council.

Blakey Bridge is probably the biggest issue we have dealt with over the last year. The bridge narrowing scheme is working well with the damage to the bridge much reduced and the number of road closure days greatly reduced. There is an ongoing problem with the removal of barriers and signage which necessitates the bridge being inspected on a daily basis. The scheme in place seems to be the best solution for the situation.

On-going road repairs have been dealt with on the whole quickly and are almost up to date with the exception of the ones notified over the last two days.

The issue of speeding and the collation with street lights on Topcliffe Road is being looked at and is on-going.

The Energy from Waste and Recycling Plant at Allerton Park, which is a joint venture with the City of York, was given the final go ahead and work has started. This investment will save a considerable amount of money over the next 25 years and allow us to meet recycling and other environmental friendly figures and produce a lot of green energy.

The new extra care facility and library building work is on time and looking well. There is one problem with the County insisting on calling it Thirsk and not Sowerby and Thirsk, I will continue to try and educate the officers and my fellow county councillors on their errors.

**THIRSK AND SOWERBY TOWN HALL REPORT**  
**Cllr Graham France**

The Town Hall Committee meets monthly every second Monday.

This year is the turn of Sowerby P.C. to nominate the Chair.

This year has seen an increase in usage of the Town Hall Facility, and funds remain stable. The normal running costs are met from the income generated. Some long established users have increased their hours.

The Main Hall has had new curtains fitted to the stage.

The main structural improvement planned for this year is the replacement of windows. Funding has been achieved through grants, and the contract has been placed with a local firm. It is hoped work will commence in the near future.

At the February meeting it was agreed to increase the hire charges for the premises by 1.5%.

The Parish is jointly responsible with Thirsk Town Council for the external fabric of the buildings and certain costs have to be considered in the annual accounts. Ongoing maintenance, and Insurances being the main expense for the Parish.

**THE LAMBERT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
LEAGUE OF FRIENDS  
Cllr. Peter Bardon.**

The League of Friends continues to provide equipment for the benefit of patients and staff of the hospital.

During the year they have replaced televisions in two of the side wards.

The hanging baskets during the summer months are much appreciated as well as the daily newspapers and daily tea round(s).

The efforts of the tea ladies serving refreshments to both patients and visitors is much appreciated. There was a suggestion that they should be replaced with a vending machine!

Gifts, donations and legacies are our main forms of income.

The League of Friends continues to provide a much needed and much appreciated support structure in our community.

**THIRSK SWIMMING POOL AND LEISURE CENTRE.**

No Report.

**YLCA  
Cllr Steve Hoyland**

The YLCA offers excellent support. A presentation about fracking had been given at the AGM.

**THIRSK COMMUNITY CARE ASSOCIATION.**

**Cllr. Patricia Beadle.**

No Report

**THIRSK SKATE PARK**

**Cllr. Graham France.**

This has been a good year for the Skate Park.

Successful "Skate Jams" were held and close working relationships with Thirsk Clock have continued to bear fruit.

Financial help has been received from various outside agencies, with the District Council once again proving a much appreciated source. Volunteers have held cake stalls in the Market Place and these have been well supported.

## **Landscaping**

A major improvement to the facility has been the construction of steps at the entrance end to the skate park. These are constructed from old railway sleepers. The result has been that users can now access the first top level without clambering up the slope and causing it to erode.

A strimmer has been purchased and it is hoped that more regular maintenance of the site will be possible.

## **Usage**

The park is well used and obviously as spring and summer approach the usage increases. To this end it was realised that some way of involving users in safety and care in using the park was required.

## **Financial**

As with all activities, this is a major concern for the committee. Fundraising events have taken place throughout the year. Annual running costs are in excess of £1,500 excluding events, and as there is no "membership" to call upon, this falls largely upon the Management Committee.

## **FLATTS TRUST**

### **Cllr. Mark Robson**

The work of the Flatts Trust Committee ticks over successfully from year to year. The land behind the Pool is to be ploughed and reseeded to provide a new football pitch at the expense of the users. A brick surround is to be built around the air vents.

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## **THIRSK & SOWERBY RELIEF in NEED Charity (TSRiNC)**

### **Cllr. Pat Chapman**

### **Cllr. Ellen Storm**

Thirsk and Sowerby Relief in Need Charity (TSRiNC), evolved into its present form in 1993. It was formed by combining a number of older charities, one of which dated as far back as 1684. For a number of reasons, the TSRiN Charity has now become less suitable for its initial purpose; has rarely been used in recent years and has only a small fund, so it has become more or less defunct. These days there are other wealthier charities better able financially to cover many more needs in Thirsk, Sowerby and surrounding communities.

It was agreed, therefore, by the TSRiNC sub-committee to begin the process of closing this Charity and move the funds to where they would be more useful and accessible for the whole community. A possible suitable organization for this purpose was identified as the Rotary Club of Thirsk Benevolent Fund Charity.

Apparently a very short, last minute, meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 (EU Election Day), when the letter to the Charity Commission was discussed (Cllr. Chapman and I were unable to attend because of prior engagements).

A letter was submitted to the Charity Commission (22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2014) to request approval for this transfer of funds and also for the removal of TSRiNC from the Register. Approval

was effective from 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2014, and confirmation of approval was sent by the Charity Commission on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2014. The current balance and remaining assets could then be transferred to the Rotary Club of Thirsk Benevolent Fund Charity.

TSRiNC may now be closed and withdrawn from the Charity Commission list, as soon as the transfer has been completed.

To date, the transfer of funds from TSRiNC has not yet been made to the recipient Charity, Rotary Club of Thirsk Benevolent Fund Charity.

A meeting between TSRiNC and Rotary is expected shortly.

### **THIRSK CLOCK**

**Cllr. Steve Hoyland**

A very successful year with a new initiative to begin work with younger people and also adults. The Committee work very hard to raise funds.

### **GATEWAY ART PROJECT.**

**Cllr. Ellen Storm.**

A newly formed Committee for which six people had attended the inaugural meeting where ideas had been discussed.

### **CLOSING REMARKS.**

Chairman Cllr. Austin thanked everyone for their hard work and support to the various committees. Mr. Hinton thanked the Council for the invitation to attend and was sorry that more parishioners didn't attend.