

Sowerby Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Sowerby Parish held at
Thirsk & Sowerby Town Hall Annexe on
Thursday 14th May 2026 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr M Robson; Cllr P Bardon; Cllr T Beadle; Cllr Y Bowling; Cllr A Jackson; Cllr C Snowden; Cllr E Storm; Cllr K Till.

Also Present: Alexandra Robson, Clerk.

APM26 1 Apologies for Absence

It was resolved that apologies be received and accepted from Cllr S Bardon; Cllr A Turner and Cllr S Hoyland
Cllr D Sladden, North Yorkshire Council, also offered apologies for the meeting.

APM26 2 Minutes of the previous meeting held Thursday 8th May 2025 were noted

It was resolved that the minutes be noted

APM26 3 Presentation of Reports

Reports were received.

appendix i

APM26 4 To discuss any other business, including questions from members of the electorate

No additional questions.

APM26 5 To confirm the date of next Annual Parish meeting as Thursday 13th May 2027

It was resolved that the date of next Annual Parish meeting will be Thursday 13th May 2027

Signed:
Chairman
Date:

Sowerby Parish Council

Appendix i

APM26 3 Presentation of Reports

Sowerby Parish Council Chairman's Report

Throughout the year, Sowerby Parish Council has continued to deliver stable, responsible governance, ensuring that the essential services our residents rely upon are maintained to a high standard. We have remained fully engaged with planning and environmental matters and have supported wider strategic initiatives, including the ongoing work around the Town Investment Plan. As always, the council has met monthly and remained accessible, ensuring that the voices of Sowerby residents are heard and acted upon.

We have seen continued strong demand for our allotments, with every plot occupied and a waiting list in place. This is a positive sign of community engagement and the value residents place on these facilities.

Thirsk in Bloom continues to do an excellent job enhancing the appearance of the village. Their work brings real pride to the area and the council is pleased to support their efforts and see the benefits they deliver.

For the 2026–27 financial year, the council has set a precept of £137,000, ensuring we can continue to maintain services and invest in the parish responsibly.

A memorial stone and tree have been dedicated at Worlds End to honour the Thirsk Branch of the Royal Artillery Association and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This is a fitting and lasting tribute.

We expect to progress the next phase of improvements to roadways around the village greens this year, continuing our commitment to maintaining and enhancing these spaces.

Our play areas remain well used and, despite rising costs, we continue to carry out the necessary maintenance to ensure it remains safe, welcoming and fit for purpose.

It was a pleasure to officially open the new Londis shop, which is already proving to be a valuable and thriving asset for the village. I was also pleased to open the new padel court near Sowerby Gateway, providing modern fitness facilities and further opportunities for residents to stay active.

Over the coming year we will be surveying the lime trees on Front Street, as their size and scale needs to be actively managed to ensure they stay healthy. Further information about any works will be shared at the time.

However, it is important to note that, despite assurances, North Yorkshire Council's promise of closer working with towns and parishes has not yet materialised. Dialogue remains limited and follow-up on actions is inconsistent which continues to be a concern.

A new North Yorkshire Local Plan remains significantly delayed. We were assured that a new plan would be in place within three years of the Unitary Authority being formed, but this is nowhere near being delivered. As noted last year, the call for sites has been extended again, this time by a further six weeks. By February 2027, the former Hambleton District Council Local Plan housing register will be out of date, which may lead to increased development pressures in our area.

Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks to all councillors and to our Clerk for their hard work, commitment and support over the past 12 months. It is very much appreciated.

Signed:
Chairman
Date:

Sowerby Parish Council

Thirsk & Sowerby Town Hall Vice Chairman's Report

Our Town Hall continues to be a well-used and valued community asset, with a strong level of regular bookings and a consistently busy calendar, supporting a wide range of groups and activities.

As energy costs remain significant, the Secretary continues to manage heating carefully, ensuring we balance comfort with financial responsibility. The impact of the newly installed heating panels is being monitored closely so we can assess their long-term benefit.

We have experienced ongoing issues with water pressure and, while steps have been taken to improve the situation, it is clear that a longer-term solution may be required. The current supply dates back to 1911 so we may need to consider a full replacement at some point.

Work has been carried out to clean and seal the roof void and gutters, preventing birds from accessing the loft space and helping to protect the building fabric.

Parking continues to be a challenge and, in an effort to improve the situation, parking bays have now been marked out alongside the building. This has already helped to bring more order to the area.

Financially, the Town Hall remains in a sound position, maintaining a credit balance to ensure all bills can be met. Over the past financial year, income and expenditure were balanced, reflecting careful management.

The Town Hall continues to support local organisations and events, offering reduced hire rates for groups such as the Christmas Lights Committee, the Royal British Legion, and the Yarnbombers' fundraising coffee mornings. This is an important part of our commitment to community life.

Finally, thanks were expressed to Thirsk in Bloom for their continued work in keeping the front of the building tidy and the flower displays looking attractive. Their contribution makes a real difference to the appearance of the Hall and the wider village.

Thirsk & Sowerby Flatts Presentation Trust Chairman's Report

The Flatts Trust continues to operate efficiently, upholding its commitment to preserving this important community asset. During the year, a previous tenancy agreement was not renewed following a number of difficulties.

The Trust now has one tenant with full responsibility for the site, providing health and wellbeing facilities that align with the aims of the Preservation Trust. This arrangement is proving more stable and better suited to the use of the building. The building itself remains in excellent condition, ensuring the site is safe, welcoming and well maintained.

A range of recreational organisations continue to make good use of the Flatts green spaces, including the successful Thirsk & Sowerby Festival on the Flatts, now entering its tenth year.

The grounds are regularly cut and kept tidy through the joint efforts of Sowerby Parish Council and Thirsk Town Council .

Thirsk & Sowerby Swimming Baths Charity Chairman

CLlr Robson confirmed that he was the Chairman of the Charity and is still awaiting North Yorkshire Council to update the Charities Commission details, prepare an audit and organise replacement bank signatories. As they have not done this, CLlr Robson has advised them that he will not sign cheques until these responsibilities have been fulfilled.

Signed:
Chairman
Date: