

DARLEY AND MENWITH PARISH ASSEMBLY
MONDAY 28 APRIL 2025 8pm
AT THE DARLEY MEMORIAL HALL, DARLEY
MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chairman's Remarks (Councillor Sue Welch)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Assembly meeting (report attached below).

2. North Yorkshire Council Report

North Yorkshire Councillor Andrew Murday gave a report (attached below).

3. Darley and Menwith Parish Council Clerk Report (Martin Pearson)

The Parish Clerk gave a report on the activities of Darley and Menwith Parish Council during the year (attached below).

4. Current local issues

North Yorkshire Council Local Plan: North Yorkshire Council (NYC) is in the process of preparing a Local Plan, which will cover development across the whole North Yorkshire county for the next fifteen to twenty years. The process should be similar to the process which took place to agree the Harrogate District Local Plan 2014-2035, which was adopted in March 2020.

The dates for key stages are:

Call for Sites: April 2024 - December 2025;

Issues and Options consultation: May 2025 (Quarter 2 2025);

Consultation on preferred options: Quarter 4 2026;

Publication of pre-submission plan: Quarter 4 2027;

Submission of plan to Secretary of State: Quarter 3 2028;

Examination of the plan: 2028 - 2029; and

Adoption of local plan: 2029.

It was noted that, as of April 2025, only two areas have been put forward in Darley and Menwith Parish following NYC's Call for Sites (in the vicinity of Silverdale Close) and that the number of submissions in Nidderdale is relatively limited.

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review: It was noted that LGBCE has published a proposal for new divisions of NYC to take effect from 2027 and that, for the existing Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division, the proposal includes:

- the addition of three parishes (Hartwith cum Winsley, Bishop Thornton, Shaw Mills & Warsill, and Clint cum Hamlets); and

- the removal of two parishes (Thornthwaite with Padside and Thruscross). These are to join the Wharfedale division.

An LGBCE consultation on the proposal is open until 9 June 2025.

Darley Mill Centre: There has been recent activity at the site, with clearance of some areas of the site taking place. Two planning applications are currently awaiting decisions.

Pollinator plot, Stocks Green, Darley: The Council has agreed to support the initial stages of a project to add a pollinator area on Stocks Green. Advice will be provided by Nidderdale National Landscape and James Spencer (Live Wild and Grow) is expected to help with the necessary preparation of the area in August / September 2025. Following this, it is hoped volunteers will help maintain the area on an ongoing basis.

5. Updates from other local organisations

It was noted that reports from a range of local organisations are included in the annual Darley & Menwith Organisations report (available as a handout at the meeting and on the village website (www.darleyvillage.info)).

A request was made for the report to include an update on the activities of the Darley and Menwith Parish Council.

It was noted that a “Tax and Financial Care” seminar is planned to take place at Darley Memorial Hall on Thursday 19 June 2025 from 6.30pm. This is intended to include an introduction to a number of legal and financial issues such as wills, trusts, lasting power of attorneys, inheritance, and sideways disinheritances (issues that can arise from remarriage) and an update on recent developments.

If anyone would like to attend, please reserve a place by text (07740 951946) or email tax@darleymemorialhall.com.

6. Open forum

No further questions or issues were discussed.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Welcome to everyone.

The Parish Council has remained in place with seven councillors throughout 2024/25. We are fortunate as many parish councils are unable to maintain a full council.

Unfortunately, Philip Ward is unable to be here today – but we do have Dave Dickinson, Jo McAllister, Andrew Robertshaw, Jo Hayes, and Rob Ferguson.

I am also pleased to welcome Councillor Andrew Murday, our local representative on North Yorkshire Council. He has helped us to make progress with officers of North Yorkshire Council on several local matters.

As mentioned at last year's Assembly, we have replaced the interpretive board on Stocks Green, which was installed in 2013. The artwork was updated and set into a new frame, which we hope will last another ten years or more. This project was funded from Commuted Sums (money paid by developers towards village amenities).

The Council continues to help Focus on Darley with the costs of the Newsletter which is published every two months, and the Darley Playing Fields Association with the expenses of the children's playground which is a free facility used by all the village.

My thanks to all the Councillors. They give their time and efforts freely to help the village, and receive little thanks.

Thanks also to Martin Pearson (Parish Clerk) for all his work and support. I know it is a tough and thankless job, but can also be rewarding. I hope he agrees.

Thanks to all of you for coming and for helping to make Darley such a great community.

As you may know Darley was awarded the maximum 5 Roses in the Yorkshire Rose Competition run by Yorkshire in Bloom this year, so the judges obviously agreed.

I am proud to have been the Chairman of your Parish Council during 2024-25.

Sue Welch

I have almost completed my third year representing Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale Division on what is now North Yorkshire Council (NYC). Almost a year has passed since the election of David Skaith as Mayor for North Yorkshire and the City of York.

In addition to sitting on the full council, I also am a member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and, since the Autumn of last year, have been member champion for development in the national park. I also sit on the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee of NYC and I am chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee of the Nidderdale National Landscape (previously known as the Nidderdale AONB). Since January I have been a member of the board of trustees of Nidderdale Plus. In addition, I am a member of the Gouthwaite Board and the trustees of the Greenhow Fund.

Local government finances continue to be constrained. This year NYC approved an increase of 4.99% in council tax rates, which is the maximum permitted without resorting to a referendum. This increase will still result in a budget deficit which will be met by reserve funds.

Highways: The state of our roads remains a problem, with the highways department of NYC without the resources to adequately cover the road repairs that people expect. I believe that there has been an improvement in communication between the parishes and Area 6 of NYC highways.

Parish Liaison: A new Parish Liaison team is also helping to improve communication between NYC and parish councils on other matters.

Locality budget grants: Each year every councillor has a pot of money which is available to support community projects and activities. Last year there was £10,000 in this budget for our division.

Amongst projects which this fund supported were:

Purchase of a defibrillator at Wilsill;
St Cuthbert's renewal space;
Pateley Bridge Christmas lights;
Nidderdale Plus community transport;
Sunday 24 bus service;
Improved access to Christ Church Community Centre, Darley; and
Equipment for cricket pitch for Lofthouse Cricket Club.

The locality budget is to be reduced to £5,000 per councillor for the year 2025/26, but please contact me if you have a project which you think might be appropriate for funding.

Nidderdale Greenway Extension: The report of the steering group of the Nidderdale Greenway Extension is still in the hands of NYC officers and we await their decision.

Public Transport: I continue to press wherever and whenever possible for improvements to the Pateley Bridge to Harrogate bus service. I understand that the regional mayor is intending to fund an evening bus service in his imminent transport plan.

Refuse Collection: Refuse collection now alternates weekly between collection of household waste and recycling, with coloured bin lids to distinguish the two. Collections are changing to a "Tuesday to Friday" cycle in order to avoid the confusion that arises over collection days when there are Monday bank holidays. Residents should have received appropriate notification and details are also available on the NYC website.

Local government boundary review: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is in the process of deciding on new divisional boundaries for North Yorkshire Council. This is the consequence of the need to have approximately equal number of voters in each division They have now produced a report which is available here: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-yorkshire>.

The report is now subject to public consultation which continues until 9 June 2025, after which the LGBCE produces a final description of the new boundaries. They welcome contributions from all sources.

Andrew Murday

Clerk's Report

Darley and Menwith Parish Council (the Council) held eleven meetings during the year to 31 March 2025. These were all held in the meeting room at Darley Memorial Hall. The Council had a full complement of the same seven Councillors throughout the year.

The Council was again heavily involved in planning matters, responding to thirty-one different consultations on planning applications, planning enforcement and appeals. The Council also continues to monitor how the preparation of a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire will affect Darley and Menwith Parish. Sarah Hart, Community Led Housing Manager for Community Led Homes North Yorkshire and East Riding attended the Council meeting in March to provide information on progress with community-led housing schemes in Nidderdale.

The Council responded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review when it was clear that the North Yorkshire Council proposal could adversely affect the representation of parishioners from 2027. The concerns of local Parish Councils in Nidderdale were specifically noted in the Boundary Commission's proposal.

The Council regularly reports problems with roads, footpaths, and lighting within Darley and Menwith Parish to help keep these fit to use. During the year, North Yorkshire Council Highways agreed to hold monthly calls to push for progress with ongoing highways issues and to report new problems and matters. Calls have been held most months since July 2024.

The Council supports several organisations in the community with regular grants – this includes a grant to Darley Playing Fields Association (towards the costs of providing the playground), Darley Memorial Hall (a contribution to help towards the cost of providing the public car park for the village) and Focus on Darley (towards the costs of printing its regular newsletter). It also gave a grant to Christ Church Community Centre towards the cost of improving accessibility to the venue.

The Parish Caretaker, Jim Benson & Sons, continues to do a great job, regularly cutting the grass through the village and around lanes and junctions once a year. The team also helps with ad hoc tasks such as fitting new benches and signs and strimming Fringill and footpaths when needed.

Following the retirement of Derek Hinds, Yorkshire Lighting & Electrical took over the role of inspecting and maintaining the Christmas Lights on Low Green, Darley. This included fitting a new set of lights and a timer.

The Council also continues to maintain four defibrillators, located at Hookstone Memorial Hall, Christ Church Community Centre, Prospect Cottages and at Darley Playing Fields. These are monitored regularly to keep the devices available for emergencies, replacing batteries and pads and carrying out servicing when needed.

With the help of a commuted sums grant from North Yorkshire Council, the Council replaced the information board panel on Stocks Green, Darley. It also purchased a new sign to direct visitors to the car park at Darley Memorial Hall and a new noticeboard outside the village shop.

A project to improve access on one of the village footpaths (known as "Footpath 1") is ongoing. However, through the generosity of the landowner, one very high stile has been replaced with a gate. A second gate purchased by the Council is awaiting installation.

As ever, I would like to thank all of the Councillors (who give their time on a voluntary basis) for making the Council a friendly and fun organisation to be part of. Many also give additional time to represent the Council at meetings and events and are part of other local organisations in order to keep the Council informed.

I would also like to thank the Chairman, Sue, who regularly puts in significant extra time for the benefit of the Council and parishioners.

Martin Pearson