

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors

Held in Gargrave Village Hall

7.30pm on Thursday 7th May 2026

Present : Claire Cadman (Chair), Jayne Dunlop (secretary to the meeting),

1. Welcome from the Chair and an introduction to the parish councillors present, county councillor and clerk.

The Chair welcomed the six members of the public, and introduced the parish councillors in attendance along with Councillor Simon Myers.

2. To resolve as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2025 and for the Chair of the meeting to sign these.

The Chair proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on May 22nd 2025 are a true and correct record, seconded by Jayne Dunlop and approved.

3. To obtain a summary of the council's endeavours throughout 2025-2026.

The Chair reported that Traveller Gypsy Roma plan was put into operation with the meeting and greeting of travellers. This interaction worked well and most camped on Mill Lane apart from one which was parked at Damside.

The bird's mouth fencing and lego blocks kept vehicles off the greens.

A public meeting was held on June 26th to review the process, and the feedback was generally favourable.

The Marton Road development was approved by the planners, despite objections.

The environment working group continued to monitor Kelber Farm activities and liaised with officers in NYCC.

A section of the river wall collapsed causing concern about the stability of the Northern Power Grid substation and adjacent pole. Northern Power Grid created a temporary substation and moved the pole to prevent any major disruption to service, that might occur if the pole collapsed, or the building moved. The work was completed in March and will be followed up by upgrading the existing network.

The Council commissioned a report from JBA on the river with a view to moving river issues forward in a co-ordinated manner. The report was presented to council in January and offered some possible solutions including widening the river across Middle Green, adding more planting and boulders for protection of structures such as the ford. Following the report, a River Aire Project working group was established to plan a way forward. The group will be recommending priorities and seeking funding to enable improvements to be made to protect the north bank of the river.

One of the trees downstream from Mill Lane collapsed into the river exposing a sewer pipe. Yorkshire Water confirmed that the pipe is stable as it had previously been lined, and the trunk of the tree was removed by Yorkshire Water. the root plate of the tree has been left in situ until works to stabilise the bank have been completed.

Following a request from residents the war memorial area was tidied and the war memorial was cleaned. The results can now be seen.

Following the resignation of Cllr Gregory Butt as Chair and councillor the Council elected Claire Cadman as Chair and co-opted Steve Coetzer as councillor. Following the resignation of Cllr Derek Steele the council co-opted Jack McKell as councillor. The Council thanked both former councillors for their contribution and Cllr Butt for his work with the Travellers.

4. To receive a short report from the North Yorkshire Councillor on his work for this community in the past year.

A written report was submitted which will be posted on the parish council website and is appended to these minutes. Introducing the report Cllr Myers thanked the councillors for all the work they do in their free time, and thanked the clerk for her contribution and also those who provided refreshments including delicious cake.

He reported that Hon Alderwoman Shelagh Marshall OBE died last week. She represented Gargrave (and Wharfedale) on North Yorkshire County Council between 1989 and 2017, was Exec Member for Social Services for a number of years and was Older People's Champion for 17 years receiving an OBE for services to older people in 2014. Cllr Myers paid tribute and expressed gratitude for her service to local communities in North Yorkshire.

5. To consider matters raised by electors.

One resident asked about the implementation of fixed speed cameras. There are no details yet and no timescale has been given for their installation. There is a strong case for these on the A65 but competition from other parishes.

Coniston Bridge plans for work in June have been sent to the parish council and were reported to the May monthly meeting.

A query was raised about Kelber Farm activities. Cllr Myers will obtain an update on this.

In response to a question about consultation of those living downstream of proposed work on the river banks, it was stated that the River Aire Project working group would be consulting during the planning stages. Details of Professor John Grey would be sent to the Clerk for future use.

It was noted that there is a published Equality Impact Assessment on the council website in the neighbourhood plan section. This was written by the Kirkwell consultants as part of the neighbourhood plan submission. The Clerk will review this alongside the equality impact statement that was discussed at the April monthly meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm

Appendix: Report from Cllr Simon Myers

Gargrave Annual parish meeting of electors 7th May 2026.

I know residents will be unhappy about increases in Council Tax at a time when the cost of living has increased and most particularly with the increase in costs caused by the situation in the Middle East. The context of this is that last year we saw a massive cut in North Yorkshire Council's funding from Central Government when it abolished the Rural Services Support Grant. Together with the Funding Review (I omit the prefix 'fair' used by the Government, as it is far from that) and the unfunded increases in Employers NIC, we have seen a reduction of £42 million in our annual funding.

The good news is that North Yorkshire Council has been independently assessed as being the third most productive in the UK and the most productive in the north of England. However, this emphasises the unfairness of Local Government funding. We are more efficient than, say Wandsworth Borough Council, but you pay almost twice the Council Tax and on average earn considerably less.

And as ever there are considerable pressures:

Demand continues to grow for services, especially our SEND budget and services for children and the elderly.

Home to school transport and particularly that for children diagnosed as having SEND continues to be a huge cost despite the controversial change in policy.

We have made since the start of the Council made savings in excess of £67 million which were it not for the cuts in Government funding, would have allowed us more flexibility with regards to Council Tax increases.

But there are some positives

In my Portfolio, Housing, Culture and Leisure, we are making some good progress:

£36 million investment in our Leisure estate, including £9 million in Skipton and the development of a more holistic hub there with a focus on wellbeing and helping all our residents to keep fitter for longer and with targeted plans for various needs, pre and post operative health, our Healthy You programme and more.

More Council Homes, including the first new Council Homes in Gargrave and Skipton for 40 years. I am also very pleased to say that funding from the Second Homes Council Tax Premium (which is ring fenced for providing more affordable Housing) has allowed the Craven Land Trust to acquire their first two houses for social rent in the National Park in Giggleswick. I hope they will now progress at pace and that more Community Led Housing will be developed in our villages.

We have some more funding as part of the **'Warm Homes' fund which is directed at home owners or private tenants who live in the most difficult to heat homes. There are some real opportunities for qualifying residents to get their homes insulated and made energy efficient at no cost to them** and I do ask that anyone who is interested lets me know.

A few other positives:

We have received a good **CQC inspection for Adult Services, 81/100, 3rd highest nationally.**

We are investing **£60m in dedicated care and support hubs**, and a new programme for prevention called Prevention Plus. These are Invest to Save initiatives, designed to save money in the long term.

We are **working with the NHS to reduce hospital stays** and get people home sooner

We have **disposed of excess property** exceeding our original target but we will continue with more.

We will complete the Blubberhouses bypass scheme on the A59 on target over the summer, finally ending years of landslips leading to road closures,

We are **intending to introduce a lane rental scheme to speed up utility works**, so that Utility Companies don't simply start work and disappear, much to all our frustration.

1. Locally, I continue to do battle with some of the more exasperating areas of the Council, Planning and Highways principally and the Parish Council are used to hearing of my frustrations. Sometimes we are successful and sometimes not. Despite funding challenges, **we hope to produce a scheme for the extension of the footpath to railway bridge at Gargrave Station** and will be applying for some of the mayor's 'Active Travel' funding which would be very welcome.

I am encouraged to see the Police and the Deputy Mayor embrace the idea of **fixed speed cameras**, although I await the details, not least as to where the money will come from.

2. I have been able to help a variety of local causes with my **Locality Grant funding** including Upper Wharfedale School, the Long Preston May Day Committee, The Langcliffe Singers, new goals for the Gargrave Under 16's Football Club, new Christmas Lights for Gargrave and an accessible toilet for Hellifield Institute. The **new fund will be available from the 11th May** and **I ask people to contact me with any worthwhile causes.**

I would like to thank all the Members of the Parish Council and to the Clerk for all their hard work and commitment on behalf of the Community and to all the Community Groups who do so much to enrich life for all residents in Gargrave and more widely.

Cllr. Simon Myers

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North Yorkshire Council.

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