

WEETON PARISH

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 13 May 2025
at 7.30pm in Almscliffe Hall

Present: Councillors David Chalmers (Chair), Nanine Anderson, Harwin Bosworth, Kevin Clark & Paul Jagger.

In attendance: over 30 members of the public.

1. **Opening comments.** The Chair welcomed members of the community to the Annual Parish Meeting and explained that while it was being chaired by a member of the Parish Council the business conducted at the meeting was separate to that of the Parish Council.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2024.** A copy of the minutes from the meeting held on 14 May 2024 could not be found. Councillors did not recall any attendance by members of the public at the meeting and therefore believe the only matter that would have been presented was the Chair's report.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes.** No matters to discuss.
4. **Annual Report of the Parish Council.** The Chair delivered an update on activities conducted by the Parish Council since the last Annual Parish Meeting. This is at Annex A.
5. **Open forum.**
 - a. **Proposed solar farm at Juniper Farm, including update from the Help Save Weeton Village campaign.** Using information provided by Abei Energy at the public consultation events held in February and in subsequent email correspondence with the Parish Council, the Chair opened this item by providing an overview of proposal. A representative from the Help Save Weeton Village campaign then addressed the meeting to highlight their concerns with the proposal and promote their campaign to oppose the development during the planning application phase. Members of the community also raised their individual concerns with the proposal. Nobody spoke in favour of the proposal. In a straw poll at the end of the agenda item, there were no registered votes in support of the proposal while most people present registered their opposition.
 - b. **Other items.** No other items were raised with the Chair for discussion.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Date of next meeting: 12 May 2026

Signed:

Dated:

David Chalmers
Chair Weeton Parish Council

Annex A

Weeton Parish Council Chairs Report 2024-2025

Thank you to members of the Parish Council and our Clerk Chris Moore for the support over the last 12 months, especially when work commitments meant that I was absent from the UK for part of the year.

After more than 30 years as clerk to the Council Chris will be retiring at the end of May. The role of clerk is a varied one, with responsibilities from the council's finance, providing guidance to councillors on the legal power which we as the Council have, to managing the administrative aspects of Council meeting and responding to a steady stream of correspondence from residents. On behalf of current and previous councillors I wish to thank Chris for his dedication, commitment and support over the years and wish all the best for a happy retirement.

This year there have been some changes to how the council communicates with residents. We have launched a new website which has also seen us adopt a .gov.uk domain name in line with government guidance. The initial focus for the website was to ensure compliance with Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities; further enhancements are planned and feedback is always welcome. There is also now a dedicated WhatsApp Community for the Parish which is primarily used for disseminating information. To enable subscribers to tailor the information they wish to receive there are a number of dedicated groups for subjects such as the development of the a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire and the proposed Juniper Solar Farm. For those who prefer non-digital means of communication key information is still posted on the village notice boards and an article is included in most editions of the Village News.

Speeding along A658 through Huby remains a major concern. While there are mixed opinions about the recently installed Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) it has provided the Council with firm evidence on the extent of the problem. Consistently the percentage of vehicles passing the sign in excess of the 30mph speed limit is over 75% with over 10% of drivers travelling at speeds over 40mph. These figures have been presented to both North Yorkshire Police and the Deputy Mayor for York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority who while accepting there is an issue have failed to propose any viable options. Authorities in North Yorkshire remain opposed to the use of fixed and average speed cameras, instead North Yorkshire Police rely solely on mobile safety cameras. Due to the lack of any suitable location in Huby for the safety camera vans the police instead use a motor cycle, of which there are only two covering the whole county. Clearly this is unsatisfactory and through the efforts of Councillor Kevin Clark we are lobbying North Yorkshire Police to resolve the issues that prevent use of the safety camera van in the village.

In February we sadly lost Mike Denison, a stalwart of the Parish. Affectionately remembered by many for his involvement with community life, he meticulously and lovingly cared for the verge and planters around the Strait Lane/Harrogate Road junction. The Council has included the grass cutting into its schedule, which will also include removal of the grass cutting, and we welcome any volunteers to help maintain the planters. Staying on the theme of verges I am pleased to report that despite losing a sizable branch in the Autumn winds, the Ash tree that dominates the Weeton Village Green has been assessed as otherwise being in a good state of health.

Looking forward to 2025-2026 planning matters will feature heavily in Council business. North Yorkshire Council are in the process of developing a Local Plan which will set out where development will take place across the county over the next 15 to 20 years. Many will have seen the initial 'Call for Sites' where around 35 hectares of land across the Parish has been put forward to NYC for consideration. I must stress that before any decision is made on potential development of these site a number of consultation phases will take place, the first of which will start next week where NYC will seek views on the vision for the local area, including the issues and matters that the local plan should consider. Given the current governments housing targets it is probable that NYC will seek to increase the bounds of both villages, although green belt protection means that significant development will be challenging and therefore probably unlikely. With changes to the planning process also likely to reduce the influence of local communities I strongly encourage people to start considering what development they believe is acceptable/needed in the Parish so that we can attempt to shape what is built though the Local Plan. The Council will also look to conduct a follow up survey to the one carried out around six years ago which did indicate a broad ranging housing needs and some support for small scale development.

The other matter, and the one which I am sure most of you are here for tonight, is Juniper Solar Farm. It is fair to say that the engagement event hosted by Abei Energy in February was far from helpful and it was very disappointing that their representatives were unable to provide answers to many of the questions posed. A scheme of this size will have a lasting impact on the landscape and understandably there are many in the community who have concerns. I will though state that I have received some correspondence from a small number of residents who are supportive of the scheme. The Parish Council will formally discuss and agree upon a position on the proposal once the Planning Application consultation phase opens, which is expected to be around late June to early July. In the meantime we have been assisting all parties with dissemination of information about the proposal and providing guidance on how members of the community can participate in the consultation phase.