

# Hartwith cum Winsley Parish Council

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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 via ZOOM

1.	A roll call was taken before the meeting started. The following were present: Cllr T Watson (Chair), Cllr N Milnes (Vice Chair), Cllrs J Stanton, H Benn, R Titchmarsh B Thornton, T Dawson, Clerk, J Scully, R Phillips, A Boyd (National Trust Brimham Rocks). No members of the public were present.
2.	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting; no apologies were received. North Yorkshire County Cllr M Harrison was not in attendance.
3.	The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 were received and approved.
4.	No representatives of NYCC were in attendance.
7f	<p>The Chair invited the National Trust representatives to make their report ahead of items 5 – 7 (e) as follows:</p> <p>This is a short report for the Parish Council to keep them informed of our plans for 2021 for our visitors &amp; for conservation at Brimham Rocks, but before looking ahead to the rest of 2021 we felt it would be useful to reflect on 2020.</p> <p><b>Looking back to 2020</b></p> <p>2020 was a hugely challenging year for us and the community as a whole. The lockdown in March 2020 happened very quickly, and with the financial pressures on the Trust ( both in lost income and cash flow ) we furloughed large numbers of staff, leaving a handful of staff to cover essential safety &amp; conservation tasks at Brimham. Our priority was to keep Brimham closed and not to attract visitors into the local area decreasing the risk of Covid spreading into the community. As lockdown continued (and with the unprecedented good weather) this position became increasingly difficult as we did start to see people coming to the countryside despite travel restrictions. The AONB were very helpful in gathering intelligence as to how various landowners were approaching this issue (many, frankly, didn't seem to know what to do!). The dilemma we faced was that with Brimham closed we were finding visitors parking on the roadside and causing obstructions to the local community. There was of course the issue that public toilets were not available.</p> <p>The community were in something of a dilemma – they didn't want us to open but they did want us to control visitor numbers - certainly at the beginning of lockdown we couldn't afford the staff to do this and we felt the ticketing system at place at Fountains wouldn't work at Brimham. It became increasingly clear that we would be better opening the car parks &amp; toilets at Brimham (and of course charging to offset the staff costs) as this would cause least impact on the community – we were however very short of staff initially. In retrospect we should have reopened earlier, as when we did it proved exactly the right decision. From mid-summer on however we were exceptionally busy (circa 30% busier than the same period in 2019) – on some days this caused traffic &amp; parking issues as we had to turn visitors away when our car parks were full (we were unwilling to use our grass overflow car park as this would have meant that we simply had too many visitors on site to be Covid safe). By autumn with the change in the weather visitor numbers lessened and things were much calmer.</p>

**Conservation Plans for 2021**

In 2021 we have three top conservation priorities: reinstating our normal programme of conservation work on the site; continuing the development of the grazing project; and exploring ways to enhance safe access to the moorlands. In 2020 the delivery of many of our usual conservation activities was more difficult and, in some cases, limited in scope when compared to recent years. Staff shortages due to the financial difficulties faced by the Trust as well as limited timeframes for volunteers to return safely meant some programmes had to be delivered with limited scope. This was particularly impactful on removing birch on the moorland. We are reassessing the programmes and are exploring ways with the return of volunteers and use of contractors to reinvigorate these usual programmes with new ways of working. A great example of this is a change to our bracken management system. This year, in lieu of using chemical control, we are planning to employ the use of heavy horses to roll the bracken on site. We hope the use of these charismatic animals will provide a new avenue for visitors to learn more about moorland management and conservation at the site.

Despite the setbacks from 2020 the Grazing Project is continuing with an expected start date of late summer 2022, however if things proceed quickly over the summer there is a small chance we can begin this year. We are currently awaiting the result of our Environmental Impact Assessment application which is likely the final major hurdle to cross. If we are successful, we will reinvigorate our publicity campaign to ready the local community and visitors for the coming changes to the site and begin procurement of local contractors to deliver the capital works. We are very excited to see the many years of planning and preparation come to fruition as we believe it will have a huge positive impact on the condition of the site.

We are exploring the start of a new project to improve access on several areas of the site, particularly on the Moorland. The previous year has shown us all how important our local wildlife sites are for our wellbeing. As such we would like to make areas of our site easier to enjoy, allowing more people to gain the benefits of time in the outdoors. Several of the rights of the way on the moorland are being examined for boardwalks or other similar infrastructure, particularly in very wet areas where ground conditions become boggy. We are also looking to improve several other paths on site including the loop to Idol as well as the network near the pond.

**Visitor plans for 2021**

Since the beginning of the year we have mainly been in lockdown and by and large most visitors have been observing the lockdown rules, because of this the business has become more manageable and we have not seen the large peaks of visitor arrivals we experienced last year. Compared to the first lockdown the police were a lot more proactive this time appearing on both Saturday & Sunday at the weekend and “having words” with anyone who wasn’t observing the rules, rumours soon got around on social media and this certainly helped with keeping the visitors local. The restrictions further loosened on the 29th March and we were prepared for a busy Easter with the overflow field ready for additional visitors, even though it was busy again it was manageable and it was a pleasant experience for both our staff and visitors with hardly any issues around parking on the roads or blocking access to roads for our neighbours. The restrictions have further eased on Monday 12th April with non-essential retail, outdoor theme parks allowed to open and pubs now able to serve outdoors, this now means that there is more choice for people on how they spend their leisure time as opposed to ourselves being the main option since the start of the year.

It still is early days yet for making absolute predictions on how this year will turn out but from the evidence so far it does feel as though we are returning to a more “normal” mode of operation. With most people (around 80%) opting for a staycation this year this could influence our visitor numbers later in the year and increase them, but we will be mindful of this and adjust our operation if appropriate.

	<p>With lockdown easing further in June we hope to be able to run the Joe Cornish exhibition that was cancelled from last year and we will start to slowly re-introduce some of our activities and events that help to connect our visitors to Nature.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Justin Scully General Manager</p> <p>Mr Scully said the National Trust is hoping to get back to normal and the support of the Parish Council was appreciated. Cllr Watson suggested National Trust representatives attend future parish council meetings every 6 months and Mr Scully approved the idea. Cllr Stanton asked about dog walking on the site and Mr Scully confirmed that all dogs must be on leashes. Cllr Watson asked about the grazing of belted Galloway cattle and was advised that the last consents and funding are awaited but the project may be delayed until 2022.</p> <p>Cllr Watson thanked the representatives for attending and they left the meeting.</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Harrogate Borough Council</u></b></p> <p>Dear Residents</p> <p>We are living in strange times at the moment with the covid lockdown now being eased. It is just over a year since the first lockdown started in March of last year but Harrogate Borough Council has continued to deliver services to residents in the Borough throughout the lockdowns with Council meetings being held remotely on Zoom and council office staff mainly working from home.</p> <p>Local government reorganisation for North Yorkshire is now ongoing with two proposals now out for consultation. The first is one unitary council for the whole of North Yorkshire and the second is an east/west split of North Yorkshire with two councils, both being unitary authorities. The Government is yet to make a decision on the way forward but in the meantime has delayed the election of County Councillors.</p> <p>Harrogate Borough Council's local plan, which controls planning development in the district, has been adopted. Also a number of affordable homes have been built in the Dale over the last two years which has been a great help in housing young families with local connections.</p> <p>The NHS handed back the Harrogate Convention Centre to the Borough Council on 1st April 2021 following its use as a Nightingale Hospital and work is now ongoing to return HCC to an exhibition centre as soon as possible.</p> <p>I would like to thank all volunteers and helpers throughout the Dale for the hard work they have put into supporting the local community in these difficult times. The effort that everyone has contributed has been magnificent and I wish everyone all the best for the coming year.</p> <p>Kind regards Tom Watson Councillor for Nidd Valley Ward Harrogate Borough Council</p>
6	<p><b><u>Chairman of Hartwith cum Winsley Parish Council Annual Report</u></b></p> <p>It is just over a year since we had the first lockdown with the Covid 19 pandemic. Parish Council has been meeting remotely by zoom over the last 12 months to carry out its normal duties within the government guide lines.</p> <p>Major improvement works have taken place next to the Summerbridge war memorial with the creation of a remembrance garden by the developers Castellum Homes and Unite Construction and Parish Council would like to say a big thanks to them for the generous donation of materials and labour.</p> <p>Other maintenance work which was scheduled for 2020/21 and not carried out will be carried forward to this year.</p> <p>As Chair of Parish Council I would like to say thanks to all councillors and also to the clerk for all their hard work and support they have given me over the past year.</p> <p>Thanks Tom Watson Chair of Hartwith cum Winsley Parish Council.</p>
7	<p><b><u>Annual Reports from councillors and stakeholders representing the following bodies:</u></b></p> <p>a) Nidderdale Strategic Partnership. No meetings had been held due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>

	b) Safer Neighbourhood Partnership. No meetings had been held due to COVID-19 restrictions. c) Dacre and Hartwith Village Hall. Cllr Stanton reported that no meetings had been held and the hall remains closed due to lockdown restrictions. The floor problem had been dealt with. d) Dacre and Hartwith Playing Fields Association. No meetings had been held due to COVID-19 restrictions. There are concerns regarding repairs to playground equipment. <b>RESOLVED:</b> Clerk to contact Dacre Parish Clerk for information. e) North Yorkshire Police. Annual report not available but monthly report was provided. Cllr Thornton advised that the person who had attempted to rob Summerbridge Stores had been arrested and had pleaded guilty in court.
8	The Councillors attendance record was noted.
9	Electors question time. No electors were present at the meeting.
10	There was no exchange of information.
11	Date for the next Annual Parish Meeting will be advised in 2022.
<p>Cllr Watson concluded the Annual Parish Meeting by thanking Cllr N Milnes for his continued support as Vice-Chair, Cllr Stanton as Dacre and Hartwith Village Hall and Safer Neighbourhood representative, Cllr Thornton for his work as Treasurer and for his support and input to Summerbridge village, Cllr Titchmarsh for his continued representation of Smelthouses and Dacre and Hartwith Playing Fields Association, Cllr Benn for his support and input in Summerbridge and Hartwith and the Clerk for her support.</p> <p>Cllr Milnes thanked Cllr Watson for all his efforts to support the parish and Cllr Watson responded that said it had been a privilege. The meeting closed at 19.15.</p>	

*To be confirmed at the next Council meeting.*