

PRESTON-UNDER-SCAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 21 May 2026

1. Election of Chairman for the ensuing year

Resolved:

That Councillor Amsden be elected Chairman of Preston under Scar Parish Council for the period to the Parish Council's Annual Meeting in 2027.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Councillor Amsden signed the prescribed declaration of acceptance of office

3. Apologies for absence: Unitary Councillor Sedgwick. Councillor Sedgwick's Annual Report had been circulated to Councillors.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24 February 2026

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24 February 2026 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. To declare Councillors' interests in items on the agenda: None

6. Action since last meeting

Moor Road – North Yorkshire Council had advised the Clerk that stabilisation works were being programmed to commence on 15 June 2026 for up to 4 weeks under a road closure order. However, there were a number of outstanding issues to resolve, which could delay the start well beyond that date.

Bus Shelter opposite the Cemetery – the Clerk had contacted North Yorkshire Council to obtain an update on the outcome of their inspection of the condition of the bus shelter and the extent of, and timescale for, any remedial works proposed. No response had been received. The Clerk was requested to ask Councillor Sedgwick to pursue this matter on the Parish Council's behalf.

7. Finance and Banking

Resolved:

(1) To note the following opening balances as at 1 April 2026:

Current Account: £ 2550.09

Savings Account: £ 2353.80

- (2) To note the payments authorised by the Clerk since the last meeting of the Parish Council under her delegated authority or contractually required to be made.**

(3) Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026

Councillors were invited to consider, and if satisfied approve, the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026, and to receive the year end bank reconciliation

The Clerk confirmed that the accounts and the Council's financial records generally had been examined and approved by the internal auditor.

Resolved:

To approve the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026 and to note the year end bank reconciliation.

(4) Confirmation of Bank Mandates for 2026/27

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillors Amsden, Fletcher, Knights, Sayers and Higham continue as authorised signatories for Barclays Bank for 2026/27 and that the Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer continue to have read only access to the Council's Barclays Account.**

- (2) That Councillors Fletcher and Knights, and the Clerk continue as authorised signatories for the Parish Council's NS&I account for 2026/27.**

(5) Verification of quarterly Bank Reconciliations for 2026/27

Resolved:

That Councillors Fletcher and Knights be appointed as the Councillors responsible for verifying the quarterly Bank Reconciliations for 2026/27.

(6) Statement of Internal Control for 2026/27

Councillors were invited to consider and, if satisfied, approve a Statement of Internal Controls for the current financial year which had been prepared having regard to current Financial Regulations.

Resolved:

To approve the draft Statement of Internal Controls 2026/27 as submitted.

(7) Statement of Opening Balances on Reserves at 1 April 2026

Resolved:

To approve the following Opening Balances on the Parish Council's Reserves 2026/27:

Election Reserve: £1000

IT/Website Reserve: £23.32

Defibrillator Fund: £70

Cemetery Reserve: £1370 Extension (includes a £400 grant awarded by North Yorkshire Council for biodiversity initiatives in the Cemetery)

General Reserve: £2440.57

Total Reserves as at 1 April 2026: £4903.89

8. Updated Standing Orders

Resolved:

To note that the Clerk had updated the Parish Council's Standing Orders to reflect changes in procurement legislation and to ensure consistency with Financial Regulations, and to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements, and that the changes made were fully in line with the Model Standing Orders produced by the National Association of Local Councils

9. Financial Regulations

Resolved:

To note that the Clerk had reviewed the Council's current Financial Regulations and was content that they were consistent with the current national model.

10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

(a) Annual Internal Audit report 2025/26

The internal auditor had completed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026 which had been circulated to Councillors. His report showed under the main headings that:

- Appropriate accounting records had been kept throughout the financial year
- That the Parish Council had complied with its financial regulations and that payments had been properly approved and supported by invoices

- That the precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget had been regularly monitored and that reserves were adequate
- That the Parish Council's Website had been up to date at the time of the audit, in accordance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the Internal Auditor's report.

(b) The Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026

The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer requested Councillors to consider in turn each of the statements 1 – 10 set out in the Annual Governance Statement, which had been circulated with the agenda, and to respond either "yes" or "no" in each case. Councillors considered each of the statements in turn and affirmed that in their view the Parish Council had, to the best of their knowledge and belief, met all of the requirements in each case and were therefore able to answer "yes" to each statement, with the exception of statement 9 (Trust Funds) which was not applicable in this Council's case.

Resolved:

To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26, as now completed.

(c) The Accounting Statement 2025/26

The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer formally submitted the Accounting Statement 2025/256, which she had signed and certified presented fairly the Parish Council's financial position. Councillors were requested to consider the Statement, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting, and if satisfied with the statement resolve to approve it.

Resolved:

To approve the Accounting Statement 2025/26 as submitted by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

(d) Explanation of Variances and the Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer submitted the above documents which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Councillors were requested to consider and, if appropriate, resolve to approve these documents.

Resolved:

To approve the Explanation of Variances and the year-end bank reconciliation for 2025/26 as submitted.

(e) Certificate of Exemption

Having considered the above sections of the AGAR, the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer invited Councillors to consider and, if satisfied that the Parish Council met all of the criteria, to resolve that the Council was exempt from an external audit and authorise the Chairman and the Clerk to complete the Certificate of Exemption and submit it to the External Auditor.

Resolved:

Being satisfied that the Council met all of the criteria, to authorise the Chairman and the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer to sign the Certificate of Exemption and submit it to the Council's external auditor.

(f) The Proposed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return

Councillors were requested to determine who would act as the named contact for the purposes of the inspection of the AGAR and the accounting records and otherwise consider and if appropriate resolve to adopt the draft notice which proposed that the dates between which the Council's various documents and records would be available would be Wednesday 3 June to Tuesday 14 July 2026 inclusive.

Resolved:

That Councillor Fletcher be appointed as the named contact for the purposes of the public inspection period and that the dates between which the public would be able to inspect the relevant documents be set as Wednesday 4 June –Tuesday 14 July 2026 inclusive.

11. Issues arising from the Annual Village Meeting

Grass Cutting – Councillors considered the comments made at the Annual Village Meeting about the current level of grass cutting along Light Lane. It was acknowledged that the ground was too nutrient rich to support wildflowers, but it was pointed out that the longer grass provided a habitat for insects. Councillor Higham said she was happy with the current grass cutting arrangements for the Cemetery.

Resolved:

To continue with the current arrangements for grass cutting along Light Lane and

elsewhere in the Parish, but to review the frequency of cuts at the end of the current cutting season.

12. Cemetery

Councillor Higham presented a draft Cemetery Policy and associated appendices, including new Cemetery Regulations, which she and the Clerk had developed having regard to current legal requirements and good practice.

Councillor Higham also submitted a table showing the current fees for the purchase of a burial/cremation plot at the Parish Cemetery and fees charged for other Cemeteries in the vicinity. She also raised the need to consider the setting aside of an area in the cemetery extension as a garden of remembrance and how that area might be developed, in consultation with interested residents.

The Clerk raised two issues of principle relating to the current administration of the cemetery, which required determination by Councillors. These related to:

- Outstanding fees payable under the Cemetery Regulations 2003, given the paucity of records. It appeared that a fee of £50 had previously been charged under the Regulations for a burial and the erection of a memorial/headstone.
- A request by a resident to inter their parents' ashes in the Cemetery. Their parents had no previous connection with the village).

Resolved:

- (1) That the draft Cemetery Policy and associated appendices be approved as submitted, subject to any minor amendments the Clerk in consultation with Councillor Higham, considers necessary in the interests of consistency and clarity.**
- (2) That any changes of substance considered necessary to the Policy/appendices be submitted to the Parish Council for approval.**
- (3) That Councillor Higham and the Clerk liaise to develop proposals for a new scale of charges and outline proposals for a Garden of Remembrance in the Cemetery Extension, for submission to the next Parish Council meeting.**
- (4) That, having regard to the records available, a fee of £50 be charged for a burial and the erection of a memorial/headstone, under the Cemetery Regulations 2003.**
- (5) That approval in principle be given to the interment of the ashes of the parents of the resident in this case and that the Clerk discuss with that resident the various options available, including the future garden of remembrance.**

13. Biodiversity

Councillor Knights reported on his monthly nature diary on the Parish Council and felt that this experimental approach to engaging residents on local biodiversity should continue for a while to assess that level of engagement. Councillors endorsed that approach.

14. Parish Council Website – update

Councillor Sayers briefly reviewed progress with the Parish Council website, which had now been live for a year. He thanked the Clerk for her excellent work in getting the new website up and running. The website was a live resource that would develop over time, but already eclipsed the old version in every respect, especially in design, functionality, breadth and quality of content, images, and it would seem popularity.

In March 2026 the website had received 225 visits – more than the old website would get in a year, with 387 page views. The most popular pages were History (61), biodiversity (29) and Planning (10).

Thanks were also due to Ben Knights, the author of both the History and Biodiversity pages and to Andrew Fletcher for supplying so many new photographs.

Councillors endorsed Councillor Sayers' comments.

15. Parish Council Budget and Precept

Councillor Sayers reviewed the budgetary pressures that had led to the significant increase in the Council's precept for the current year.

He referred to further costs which it was already known would arise during the 2007/28 financial year, over and above expected inflationary increases ie:

- £500 to cover NYC's administrative charge for the Parish Elections,
- increased IT costs will need to increase further to reflect additional activity
- costs arising from any digitisation of Cemetery Records, if approved

It was also clear that the Council needed to review the cost of reserving a plot in the cemetery.

Councillors acknowledged that these additional costs would need to be reflected in the Council's budget for 2027/28.

16. Delegation of powers to the Parish Clerk and Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972

Councillors were invited to review the current Delegations to the Clerk and ongoing usefulness of the current provisions for remote meetings, authority for which would expire at the end of May 2025, if not renewed.

Resolved:

- 1. That, in order to give the Council flexibility in the discharge of its business and subject to compliance with Paragraphs 7 and 8 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 (which, respectively, require the Council to hold an Annual Meeting and at least three other meetings in every year), all meetings of the Council during the relevant period shall be in-person meetings unless, in relation to any meeting, the Clerk, following consultation with Councillors, decides that the meeting shall be a remote meeting.**
- 2. That all meetings of the Council during the relevant period shall be held on such days, at such times and in such places as the Clerk, following consultation with Councillors shall determine.**
- 3. That, during the relevant period, the following powers be delegated to the Clerk:**
 - (a) To authorise payment of invoices for work undertaken for, and services provided to, the Council, subject to being satisfied that payment is due in accordance with the invoice details;**
 - (b) Following consultation with the Chairman, to do anything expedient or necessary in the interests of the Council or to ensure the continuation of the effective or proper business of the Council, subject to any action taken under these powers being reported to the next available meeting of the Council;**
 - (c) To take any decision following any recommendation made by the Councillors at a remote meeting of the Council**

Provided that neither of the delegations at (a) and (b) above shall amend, modify or affect the approved signatories required to authorise payment from the Council's bank account.

- 4. That, for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972:**
 - (a) the Council approves, in relation to each and every member of the Council, during the relevant period, attendance at a remote meeting of the Council as a reason for a failure to attend an in-person meeting of the Council;**
 - (b) the Clerk be authorised, in relation to any specific member of the Council, to approve a reason for the failure of that member to attend a meeting or meetings of the Council where the failure to attend would not be covered under (a) above.**
- 5. That, for the purposes of 1 to 4 above:**

“Chairman” means the Chairman of the Council;

“Clerk” means the Clerk to the Council.

“Meeting” means an in-person meeting or a remote meeting;

“In-person meeting” means a meeting of the Council, or of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, at which Councillors come together in person in the same place and which is held in accordance with Paragraph 10 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972;

“Remote meeting” means an informal meeting of the Council, or of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, where Councillors do not come together in person in the same place and which would have complied with the requirements of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 were those Regulations, which ceased to have effect on 7 May 2021, still in force;

“Relevant period” means the period from the passing of this Resolution until 31 May 2027 unless earlier terminated or amended by the Council.

17. Planning Applications

New Applications:

ZD26/00265/CLP – application for a Certificate of Lawfulness proposed for the demolition of the existing sun lounge and its replacement with a new sun room constructed on the same footprint and in the same position as the existing structure and the removal of the existing garage door and installation of a new window opening to match the style and proportions of the existing windows within the dwelling - Low Barn Preston Under Scar Leyburn North Yorkshire –

Councillors were invited to consider and determine any comments to be submitted to North Yorkshire Council in respect of the above application.

Resolved:

That the Clerk advise North Yorkshire Council that the Parish Council has no objections to the above application.

Upcoming Applications: none notified

Update on previous applications: none notified

18. Date of the next meeting: September 2026, unless an earlier meeting is required.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

