

North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at The Friends Meeting House, 19 Castlegate, Pickering, YO18 7AX on Wednesday 29 September 2020 at 10 a.m.

Present:

County Councillors Caroline Goodrick (Chair), Val Arnold, Gareth Dadd, Roberta Swiers, Caroline Patmore, Janet Sanderson & Helen Swiers and Greg White.

Apologies: County Councillors Peter Sowray, Robert Baker,

Also in Attendance: County Councillor Carl Les; County Councillors David Chance; Antony Firth (Highways England Officer); Inspector Matt Hagen (NYP) and PC Rory Sadler (NYP).

Officers in Attendance: Andrew Dixon, Alison Hall, Carol-Ann Howe, Richard Marr, Melanie Carr and Jonathan Spencer.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

69. Welcome by the Chair – introductions and updates

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed there were no updates to provide.

70. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committee held on 11 March 2020, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

71. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

72. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

73. Rural Policing Presentation

Members considered a powerpoint presentation delivered by PC Rory Sadler and Inspector Matt Hagen of North Yorkshire Police (NYP) on the work of the Rural Taskforce, which highlighted the current issues within the Thirsk & Malton constituency area and provided a breakdown of the statistics for the different types of crime recorded. It was noted that rural

crime on Ryedale was lower than that in Hambleton.

PC Rory Sadler provided a detailed overview of the North Yorkshire Police's ongoing Operations – Checkpoint and Figaro.

It was confirmed that Operation Checkpoint was intelligence led, focussed on tackling cross-border inquisitive crime - jointly run by forces across the north of England with support from Neighbourhood policing and community watch groups. It was noted that:

- Poaching season had started leading to an increase in the number of reports of damage to crops and gates, and harassment of land owners, with 36 incidents reported in August 2020;
- Opportunistic crime was commonplace.
- Theft of power tools, quad bikes and vehicles was regularly reported

In regard to Operation Figaro (run alongside the national Operation Galileo), Members noted NYP's civil action approach to poaching i.e. the issuing of community protection warnings and Notices. PC Rory Sadler provided a detailed breakdown of the various stages, and it was confirmed that a lack of compliance with the associated conditions would result in criminal charges and Criminal Behaviour Orders being made – the equivalent of an Anti-social Behaviour Order. It was also noted that the process was reliant on members of the public giving evidence.

PC Rory Sadler went on to provide an overview of NYP's Rural Watch Scheme, facilitated through social media, allowing rural communities to contact and receive feedback from NYP to report suspicious behaviour in their communities. It was recognised that rural communities were often hard to reach communities and therefore Members welcomed the use of WhatsApp as a way of keeping in touch with the Police, and enabling communities to work together to prevent crime in their localities. It was also noted that Parish and Town Councils were welcome to join their local WhatsApp group.

In regard to Raptor Persecution – Operation Owl, it was confirmed that North Yorkshire was the worst hit county for that type of crime, with an increasing number of calls being received by NYP. It was noted that this type of investigation was forensically complex and required the involvement of specialist wildlife crime officers. It also involved close working with North Yorkshire's two National Parks.

In regard to hare coursing, County Councillor Gareth Dadd questioned what the local authority and individual Members could do to support and help, particularly as the geography of North Yorkshire made it more difficult to police this form of poaching. Members questioned whether hare coursing suspects were likely to take note of a Community Protection Warning/ Notice, and it was confirmed that many do go on to re-offend. It was also confirmed that the outcome for repeat offenders was a Criminal Behaviour Order, being barred from the county and the confiscation of their vehicle, equipment and dog.

Having noted there had been 40+ reports of poaching in Hambleton in September alone, County Councillor Gareth Dadd questioned whether a change in legislation was required, and offered his support. It was suggested that Members should encourage reporting as the more calls received, would lead to an increase in NYP resources being applied. In response, Members acknowledged the problems with getting farmers and landowners to come forward and give evidence, and provided feedback from their local Rural Watch.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick queried whether dog theft was related to rural crime and it was confirmed that whilst numerous reports were received and it was a problem effecting the whole country, it was not a NYP priority at this time.

Members thanked Inspector Matt Hagen and PC Rory Sadler for their attendance and it was:

Resolved –

That the presentation be noted.

74. Highways England Update

Antony Firth from Highways England provided a presentation on their ongoing work across the constituency area, which included an update on works to the A64 which included:

- An overview of safety schemes and barrier improvements at Crambeck & Whitwell duals,
- Work to address the long standing flooding issues in Sherburn village, and improvement to drainage at various other hotspots along the A64;
- Planned resurfacing works e.g. between Brambling fields and Heselton (requiring some road closures),
- The planned completion of other village gateways i.e. a reduction of speed limits on some section of the A64 to make it more consistent and safe approach for villages e.g. 30miles per hour in Sherburn, 40miles per hour in Rillington Fields, West & East Heselton, Potter Brompton and Gampton, and 50 miles per hour between Welburn and Crambeck, and at Scagglethorpe and Scampton,
- To repair damage to Seamer Station railway bridge

County Councillor Janet Sanderson welcomed the drainage upgrade work carried out in her area and the planned village gateways work and speed reductions. She thanked Highways England for their increased level of communication throughout the drainage works but raised concern about the lack of continuity of officer attending ACC meetings.

In regard to the use of vehicle activation signs, County Councillor Janet Sanderson requested confirmation on their planned use as a way of reducing speeds through villages and Antony Firth agreed to provided confirmation outside of the meeting.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick raised concern about the positioning of the bus stops used by residents at the top of Whitwell Hill and the bottom of Barton Hill, recognising the need for pedestrians to cross the A64. In response it was acknowledged that control of speeds in that area would require regular enforcement, which may in the future be supported through the use of average speed cameras.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick also suggested a safety audit of Scotchman Lane junction was required, to be conducted when traffic was heavy and when it was dark, and that perhaps lighting improvements were needed. Finally, she raised the issue of Barton Hill junction re-alignment.

In regard to the long term plans for the A64, Antony Firth confirmed:

- York Park & Ride signage improvements;
- Improvements to the waiting and crossing facilities for the Harton bus stop;
- Askham Bryan congestion relief works

In regard to the A19, Antony Firth provided an overview of a number of ongoing schemes:

- To carry out a number of gap closures e.g. at Mount Grace Priory, subject to successful funding bids;
- Bridge Inspections southbound on the York Road
- Resurfacing works e.g. between Tontine to Trenholme

He also highlighted a number of completed schemes along the A66, ongoing re-surfacing works, and the long term proposal to dual the A66. This is currently expected to take up to 10 years to

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complete but it may benefit from the government's plan to speed up the delivery of large infrastructure projects (Project Speed).

Finally, he provided a brief overview of Highways England's ongoing work in support of the creation and delivery of Local Plans and in consideration of key planning applications, particularly those affecting access from trunk roads on to the A64.

The Chair thanked Antony Firth for his attendance at the meeting, and it was

Resolved – That the update be noted.

75. Schools, Educational Achievement & Finance

Members considered a detailed report introduced by Andrew Dixon, CYPS Strategic Planning Manager.

The wide-ranging report provided information on:

- The no of schools across the area and their status;
- School standards and attainment;
- Exclusions;
- Special Education Needs;
- Schools Finance;
- Planning of school places;

County Councillor Gareth Dadd raised the issue of attendance since the re-opening of schools since the COVID lockdown, and it was confirmed that that in the first two weeks attendance was quite patchy, but was now settling down with averages for primary and secondary schools across the constituency area of 87% and 91% respectively.

In response to questions from members, it was also confirmed:

- Attendance was being tracked daily particularly for specific cohorts of children e.g. those with Educational Healthcare Plans and those with social workers.
- Work was ongoing with individual schools to reassure and encourage those parents still reluctant to have their children return to school;
- Levels of attendance across the constituency area compared favorably with figures from across the rest of the north Yorkshire region and were generally higher - it was expected that they would also be higher than national averages;
- Across the region 13 schools had yet to report their attendance levels;
- A number of requests had been received for moving to elected home to school education;
- A framework for engaging with schools either have or are forecasting a budget deficit. Where no action was being taken to address it, those schools were challenged to develop action/recovery plans and support was given to help them deliver on those plans.
- A school running in to deficit was a factor affecting its longer term viability.
- Budget deficits and poor educational standards were both key factors affecting an academy's decision not to sponsor a small rural school;

All members agreed that local schools in local areas was very important for the region.

The Chair thanked officers for their comprehensive report and it was

Resolved – That the annual report be noted.

76. Work Programme

Members considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) which contained the Committee's current work programme for the remainder of the municipal year (2020/21).

It was noted that an additional meeting in January 2021 was required to consider the Budget proposals for 2021-22. Members also agreed that the December meeting date should be subject to the availability of the MP.

Resolved – That the work programme for 2020/21 be updated to include an additional meeting in January 2021

The meeting concluded at 12:02pm