

# Appendix 11 – Draft Recommendations for Welburn Parish Council

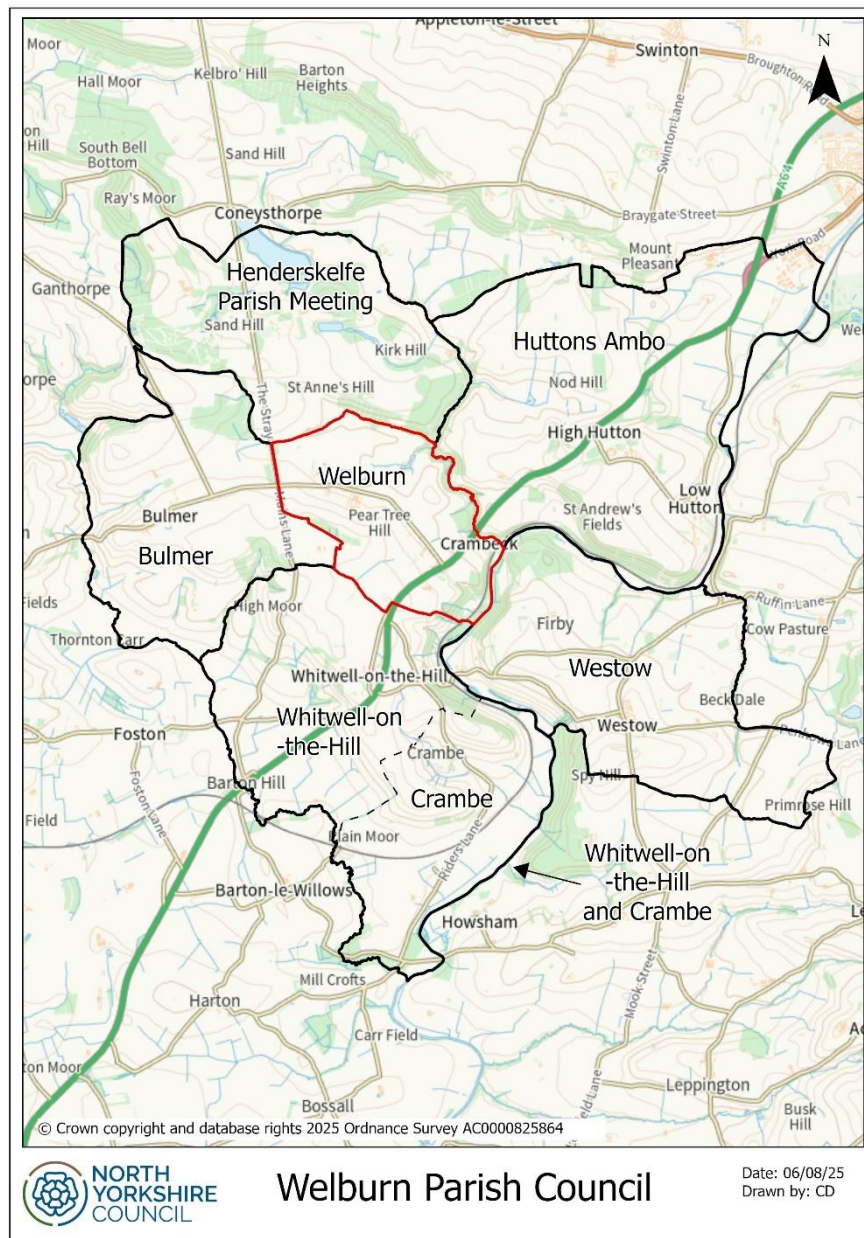
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## 1.0 Current governance arrangements and history of the area

### Current governance arrangements

- 1.1 Welburn Parish Council is situated within the Sheriff Hutton and Derwent division and is part of the Thirsk and Malton parliamentary constituency. The parish is comprised of the villages of Welburn and Crambeck.
- 1.2 Welburn parish currently has 412 electors and 245 properties.
- 1.3 Welburn Parish Council has 5 neighbouring parish areas as shown in the map below including Bulmer Parish Council, Henderskelfe Parish Meeting, Huttons Ambo Parish Council, Westow Parish Council and Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe grouped Parish Council.



- 1.4 Welburn Parish Council is comprised of 6 elected parish councillors. In order to meet and take decisions at least 3 councillors must be present. Parish Councils must hold an annual meeting and at least 3 other meetings each year.
- 1.5 Parish councils can raise a precept to raise monies for spending for the benefit of the parish. Welburn Parish Council raised a precept of £4,000 for the 2025/26 financial year.

## History of the area

- 1.6 In January 2024, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) was notified that Welburn Parish Council had become inquorate due to several resignations since March 2023, leaving only one remaining parish councillor. The usual vacancy procedures were followed but there was no subsequent interest in the vacancies and the remaining councillor later resigned. The Parish Council, which did not have a Clerk at this time, therefore became inactive.
- 1.7 Section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the principal authority (NYC) can make an order to appoint to a parish council until such time as the vacancies on it have been filled by either election or co-option.
- 1.8 On 26 June 2024, NYC Division Member, Councillor Caroline Goodrick was temporarily appointed to Welburn Parish Council and on 17 July 2024 NYC Division Members Councillors Nigel Knaption and Janet Sanderson were also temporarily appointed to maintain quoracy and allow the parish council to conduct business and co-opt additional members.
- 1.9 Despite the temporary appointments of 3 Division Members, there was no subsequent interest in the parish to fill the vacant seats via co-option.
- 1.10 In June 2025, Democratic Services contacted the Division Member for Sheriff Hutton and Derwent, Councillor Caroline Goodrick who agreed that the best solution would be to combine Welburn parish with one of the neighbouring parish councils. Councillor Goodrick advised that Welburn was a relatively large village, and residents would benefit from a parish council voice although raised concerns about whether neighbouring parish councils would be willing to take on the Welburn parish area.
- 1.11 In July 2025, the Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Clerk was contacted about the possibility of combining both parish councils. In response, the Clerk advised that the matter would be brought forward to the councillors at the next parish council meeting in September.
- 1.12 Henderskelfe Parish Meeting and Huttons Ambo Parish Council also neighbour Welburn but following the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's final recommendations for NYC divisions, these parishes will sit in the new Howardian division after the 2027 elections and it is not recommended that parish councils cross division boundaries.
- 1.13 After consultation with Democratic Services, it was suggested that a CGR be carried out for Welburn Parish Council. Following the Standards and Governance Committee on 20 June 2025, Full Council approved the terms of reference of the

2025/26 Community Governance Review, which included Welburn Parish Council on 16 July 2025.

- 1.14 As Welburn Parish Council has remained inactive for two years, it is not within the interest of the public to keep the current governance arrangements as local electors are not currently represented by an active parish council. Combining Welburn Parish Council with a neighbour, such as Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council would ensure that electors are represented by a parish council. Since the discussions with the Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Clerk, this parish council has also become inquorate following the resignation of a councillor, and the remaining councillors being disqualified due to a parish council meeting not being held in over 6 months.
- 1.15 The NYC Division Member for Sheriff Hutton and Derwent, Councillor Caroline Goodrick, was informed of the CGR and initially agreed that Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council was the most suitable option for being combined with Welburn Parish Council.
- 1.16 By November 2025, mid-way through the 12-week stage 1 CGR consultation, it was apparent that none of Welburn’s neighbouring parish councils were willing to take on the parish.

### Five year electorate forecast

- 1.17 The electorate and 5 year electorate forecast for Welburn parish is as follows:

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Electorate (2025)</b>	<b>Electorate prediction (2030)*</b>	<b>Predicted electorate increase</b>
Welburn	412	429	17

## 2.0 Assessment of consultation responses for Welburn Parish Council

2.1 The following table shows the number of households written to, with the number of consultation responses received, and response rate.

Households sent CGR consultation letter	768
Consultation responses received	46
Response rate	6.0%

2.2 Consultation letters were sent to households in Bulmer parish, Henderskelfe parish, Huttons Ambo parish, Westow parish and both Whitwell-on-the-Hill parish and Crambe parish as following the suggestion of a CGR to combine Welburn Parish Council with a neighbour, these were the areas under review.

2.3 A copy of the consultation survey can be found at Annex 11A. A summary of consultation responses received can be found at Annex 11B.

2.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the free text comments received through the consultation process reflect the views of the individual respondents alone. These comments do not represent the views of North Yorkshire Council and should not be construed as being endorsed by the Council.

2.5 The response rate in the table above was calculated by comparing the number of consultation responses with the number of households directly consulted by means of a letter sent to all properties in the areas under review. The total number of responses for Welburn Parish Council was 46.

2.6 Of the 46 respondents, 25 reported that they lived in Welburn, with one of these respondents also advising that they were a member of a community organisation in Welburn. 19 respondents were residents of a neighbouring parish. 6 of these respondents were from Bulmer, 4 were from Westow, one respondent was from Huttons Ambo and one was from Whitwell-on-the-Hill. Another respondent was from Barton-le-Willows parish, which is not a direct neighbour of Welburn parish. A further 6 respondents did not indicate which neighbouring parish they lived in.

2.7 A further respondent used the 'other' category to advise that they lived in Crambeck, which is part of Welburn parish, and another respondent used the 'other' category to advise that they were a resident from a neighbouring village but did not indicate the relevant parish.

2.8 67% (31) of respondents indicated that they were aware that Welburn Parish Council had experienced difficulty finding residents to stand as parish councillors.

2.9 48% (22) of respondents were in favour of combining Welburn Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils, either by forming a single parish council which could be warded, or by forming a grouped parish council. Of these options, 11 respondents chose a single parish council which could be warded and 11 respondents chose a grouped parish council arrangement.

2.10 30% (14) of respondents chose to provide another option, as detailed in the table below.

Option	Number	Percentage
Combine Welburn Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils and dissolve Welburn Parish Council and merge with a neighbouring parish council to form a single parish council, which could be warded	11	24%
Combine Welburn Parish Council with one of the neighbouring parish councils and dissolve Welburn Parish Council and form a grouped parish council	11	24%
I am unsure	10	22%
Other suggestion, please describe below	14	30%
Total	46	100%

2.11 Annex 11B summarises at page 2 the suggestions individuals gave for the option “other suggestion, please describe below”. Of the 14 respondents, 9 indicated that they wanted Welburn Parish Council to remain intact. Some respondents suggested a more coordinated appeal to attract new parish councillors ought to be pursued. Respondents referenced the fact that Welburn is a thriving village with various village groups involved in its upkeep, such as the Church Council, Horticultural Society and Village Hall Committee, and that representatives could be taken from each of these village groups to sit on Welburn Parish Council. Other respondents felt that combining Welburn parish with a neighbouring parish council will only spread the issues further.

2.12 Of the 14 respondents, 4 suggested that Welburn Parish Council should be dissolved, and a parish meeting be established in its place. Some of these respondents acknowledged that volunteers would still be required to fulfil the role of Clerk and Chair. A further respondent suggested that the parish should be abolished completely.

2.13 Of the 22 respondents who wanted to combine Welburn with a neighbour, 15 were in favour of Welburn being combined with Bulmer Parish Council and 3 were in favour of Welburn being combined with Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council. None of the respondents suggested Westow Parish Council. 4 respondents did not indicate which parish council they would prefer Welburn to be combined with.

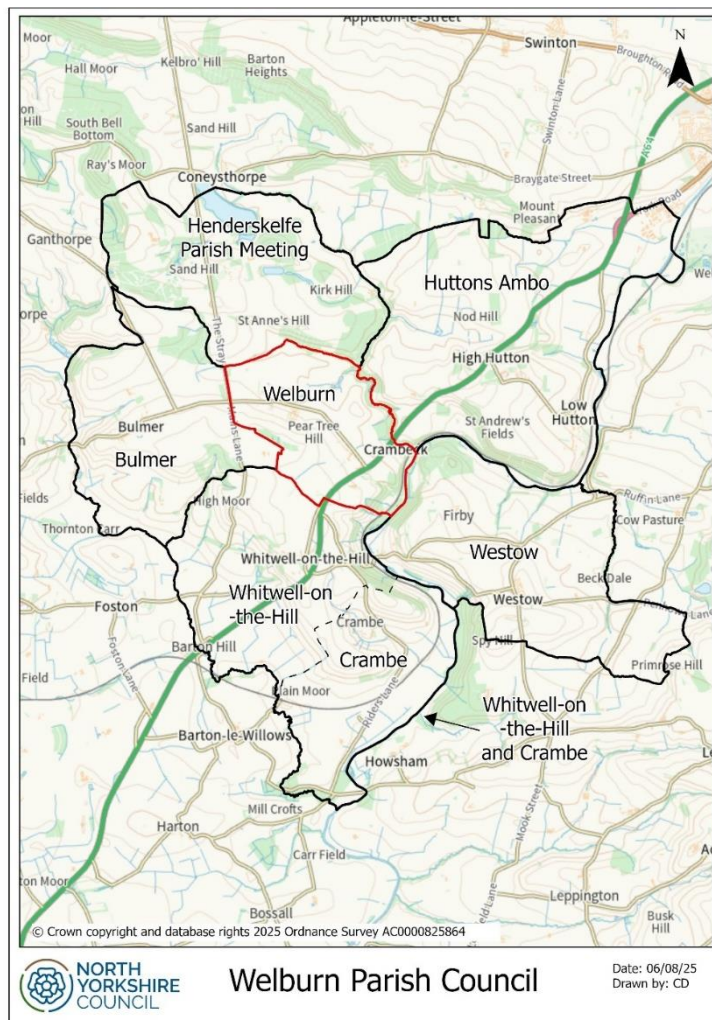
- 2.14 Annex 11B summarises at page 3 the reasons people gave for their preferred option. The most popular reason for the choice to combine Welburn Parish Council with Bulmer Parish Council was the geographical proximity which was referenced by 8 respondents. Respondents noted the easy access to Bulmer from Welburn by road, with both parishes being situated on the same side of the A64. Respondents also commented that as Bulmer was the closest village to Welburn, both parishes may have similar issues to deal with. The second most popular reason for combining Welburn with Bulmer Parish Council was that residents in each parish share the same amenities, societies and events. One respondent commented that many residents know each other through shared clubs and societies, making Bulmer “*a natural fit*”.
- 2.15 3 respondents chose to combine Welburn Parish Council with Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council. One of these respondents suggested that Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council was closer and had a similar demographic and setting to Welburn. Another respondent shared similar views that Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council better represented the makeup of the residential properties and residents of Welburn than Bulmer. One respondent, who lives in Bulmer advised that they did not want Bulmer Parish Council to be changed in any way, and therefore thought Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council was a better fit.
- 2.16 10 respondents advised that they were unsure of their preferred option. The reasons for this included respondents being unclear on how the options would make a difference to local decision making. Other respondents advised that combining Welburn with a neighbouring parish council would create a large parish council geographically. Others did not feel that a neighbouring parish council should have to take on Welburn issues. One respondent commented on the inconsistency of Welburn parish councillors resigning in recent years and questioned the reasons for the vacancies. One respondent who lived in Westow explained that they were unaware of the situation at Welburn Parish Council, which is situated on the other side of the A64 and therefore remote to Westow Parish Council.
- 2.17 Of the 14 respondents that chose an alternative option, 9 indicated that they wanted Welburn Parish Council to remain intact. The reasons for this suggestion included that Welburn is a large community and ought to be represented by an active parish council to voice the opinions of the village. One respondent who lives in Welburn advised “*I was unaware that it was being dissolved and would be willing to be involved in keeping it going*”. Another respondent suggested that Welburn residents ought to be consulted through canvassing and that there had been little previous communication from Welburn Parish Council to encourage new members. Other respondents felt that combining Welburn with a neighbouring parish council would not resolve the difficulties that Welburn has.
- 2.18 Bulmer Parish Council submitted a consultation response via email advising that they did not support combining Welburn Parish Council with Bulmer Parish Council. Before it became inquorate, Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe Parish Council also advised that they did not wish to be combined with Welburn Parish Council.
- 2.19 The Division Member for Sheriff Hutton and Derwent, Councillor Caroline Goodrick has advised that if the neighbouring parish councils of Bulmer, Westow and Whitwell-on-the-Hill with Crambe do not wish to combine with Welburn, Welburn Parish Council could be dissolved and a parish meeting formed. Given the number of respondents that would prefer Welburn Parish Council to be retained in its

current form, dissolving the parish council at this stage is not perceived to be the most suitable option.

- 2.20 Additional comments about the CGR included residents showing willingness to attend Welburn Parish Council meetings in the future, with one respondent suggesting that a public meeting should be held in Welburn village hall to encourage new parish councillors so that the parish council can operate once again. One respondent commented “*please could a more rigorous search for volunteers be undertaken before relinquishing our Welburn voice?*”.
- 2.21 Other respondents commented that action needed to be taken to ensure local views are represented by the parish council in relation to housing development. Another respondent suggested contacting Henderskelfe Parish Meeting who may have an interest in the governance of Welburn parish. In response to this, Henderskelfe Parish Meeting (which will be in a different division to Welburn parish from 2027) was contacted about the CGR although no response was received. One respondent commented on increasing council tax payments, and another on speed limits in Welburn. Both matters are out of scope of this governance review.

### 3.0 Final assessment and draft recommendations

- 3.1 Whilst 48% of responses indicated support for combining Welburn Parish Council with a neighbouring parish council, either by forming a single parish council which could be warded, or by forming a grouped parish council, none of Welburn's neighbouring parish councils have shown willingness to take on the area. 30% of responses were in favour of an alternative option, many of which indicated that they would prefer that Welburn Parish Council remains intact. Several respondents showed an interest in attending future council meetings and suggested that further attempts ought to be made to encourage new councillors.
- 3.2 It is not recommended that Welburn Parish Council be dissolved as paragraph 120 of the Government Guidance on Community Governance Reviews states that support for abolition needs to have been demonstrated over at least a period equivalent to two terms of office of the parish councillors (i.e. 8 years). Given that Welburn Parish Council has not been functioning for only 2 years, and that several residents have indicated their support that the parish council remains, there does not appear to be clear evidence and sustained local support for abolition.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that no changes are made to the governance of Welburn Parish Council.
- 3.4 A map of the continuing parish is shown below identified by a red boundary.



3.5 A list of recommendations can be viewed below:

**Recommendation 1 – that Welburn Parish Council is not dissolved and the parish of Welburn is not amalgamated with a neighbouring parish to form a new parish council**

3.6 As no changes are recommended, a Stage 2 consultation will not be required.

Annex 11A – Consultation survey

Annex 11B – Summary of consultation responses