



# Minutes of the Annual TOWN ASSEMBLY of SHERBURN IN ELMET TOWN COUNCIL

**Date:** Monday 13 May 2024

**Time:** 7.15pm

**Venue:** Squire Bradbury Hall, Eversley Park Centre, Low Street, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6BA

**In attendance:** Cllr Peter Baumann, Chairman and Georgina Ashton, Interim Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer.

In addition, 15 members of the public.

Including the following members in attendance: Cllr T Fenton, Cllr D Buckle, Cllr S Bradder, Cllr G Limbert, Cllr Tant-Brown, Cllr J Irvin, Cllr M Jordan and County Cllr Bob Packham. Deputy Clerk, Gaynor Brennan.

*Late arrivals: none*

*early departures: none*

*The meeting opened at 7.15pm*

## **Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly AGENDA**

1. To approve, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Resolution: to accept and approve as a true and accurate record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Apologies received from Cllr Nick Commandeur.**

2. To receive a report from the Chair regarding the Town Council's work over the past year.

Cllr Peter Baumann, the Chairman of the Council provided a presentation and annual report to local residents.

It's been a truly jam-packed 12 months for the Town Council.

### **Councillors**

Towards the start of the municipal year, Cllrs Mario Redhead and David Brook stepped down from their roles, with John Irvin filling one of the vacancies in February 2024. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mario and David once again for their contributions during their time on the Council, as well as Councillor Limbert for his contributions as Chair, a role from which he stepped down at the end of the 2022-23 municipal year.

### **Staffing & Processes**

In June, Rebecca Maindonald stood down as Executive Officer/Clerk to the Council, and we thank her for her contributions. We are incredibly grateful to our staff for rising to the challenge once again and keeping the Council's activities going with such passion and professionalism — Georgina Ashton (our Responsible Finance Officer) took on the role of Proper Officer and supported much of the strategic work of the Council, and Gaynor Brennan (our Deputy Clerk) took on Line Management and Health & Safety responsibilities.

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly – 13 MAY 2024

Sherburn in Elmet Town Council

Page 1 of 8



Karen Horn joined the team a couple of months into the municipal year as our Administration Officer and has slotted in seamlessly within our 5-strong staff team. We are incredibly fortunate to have such fantastic staff to drive forward the work of the Council.

The Council continued to modernise its systems and processes this year. A major data-system migration took place over the Christmas break, and a substantial amount of work went into upgrading our Health & Safety operations across the year, led by the Deputy Clerk. These efforts, although not particularly exciting(!), have significantly strengthened the Council's position in terms of its business resilience, efficiency, accountability, and reporting processes. Major change is never easy, so thank you to all of our staff for adjusting so smoothly to these new systems.

Congratulations also to all of our staff members for their training and development successes this year, with a number of our field and office staff working towards or completing sector-specific qualifications: David Varley renewed his ROSPA certification, Karen Horn completed the Introduction to Local Council Administration qualification, and we were delighted to be able to support Gaynor Brennan as she began working through the intense Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification. After completing her CiLCA qualification last year, the Town Council is also extremely fortunate to now have a CiLCA-trainer within its staff ranks in Georgina Ashton (who also takes on the role of Interim Clerk for the year ahead). Georgina continues to provide invaluable support to all staff, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our hard-working team for their dedication and commitment throughout yet another busy and challenging year.

### **Community Engagement, Events & Celebrations**

It's been an excellent year for events, fostering a fantastic sense of community spirit and pride. Wreath-laying at the Remembrance service in November, the annual Gala at Eversley Park in May (organised by the tireless volunteers at the Sherburn in Elmet Gala Association), and, building on the huge success of the previous year's Jubilee Picnic in the Park, we were delighted to be able to host another high-quality, free summer event for local families to enjoy, this time in celebration of Yorkshire Day.

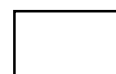
The Yorkshire Day event was extremely well received with approximately 3,000 people in attendance, and we were blessed with outstanding weather — it really was a fantastic celebration and I would like to extend a huge thank you on behalf of the Council once again to Cllr Buckle and all of the amazing volunteers who made it happen.

I'm pleased that we will have a number of events for residents to enjoy across 2024-25, including an event to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day next month, a summer Party in the Park, and plans are well underway for a Christmas event.

This year we also celebrated local hero Owen Jeffers, whose actions remind us of the extraordinary people that reside within our community. Owen was named 'Unsung Hero' at the Yorkshire Young Achievers Awards for his life-saving intervention earlier in the year whilst out with friends in York. It was a pleasure to hear his story and we were delighted to mark his actions with a commemorative bench in Eversley Park shortly afterwards.

The Council also ramped up the number of community engagement events this year, enabling residents to get to know the Council, who we are, and what we do, all whilst providing an opportunity to express their views and inform our activities and decision-making. We were extremely grateful to Selby's new MP, Keir Mather, for taking the time out of his busy schedule to attend our event in January.

Thanks again to everyone involved in the smooth running of all of the Council's events throughout the year.



## Assets & Amenities

This time last year, we were eagerly awaiting the outcome of two substantial grant applications through the then Selby District Council's Town Centre Revitalisation Programme (TCRP). The timeline was complicated by the dissolution of the old District Council and the shift to the new North Yorkshire Unitary authority, but we were extremely grateful to be awarded over £280k for two further projects, taking the total investment received to over £400k.

This money will be invested across three areas in Sherburn: the entrance to Eversley Park, a new pétanque court surrounded by a wildflower area and landscaped garden at the old bowling green on the Fairways, and a large scheme to improve the tennis courts, lighting and bowls facility at the Finkle Hill Recreation Ground, home to Sherburn White Rose Sports & Social Club and several of Sherburn's sports teams.

Paired with the significant investment coming to Sherburn over the next year or so from North Yorkshire Council for upgrades to the east side of Low Street, it's exciting to see much-needed investment being spent in Sherburn.

However, it wasn't all good news. We were extremely disappointed at the lack of funding allocated to the play facilities at Highfields, owned and operated by the former Selby District Council and, now, North Yorkshire Council, particularly given their unacceptable condition at the moment. The Town Council continued to push for this to be addressed as a matter of urgency and was completely behind residents raising concerns about the state of the facility, a position it maintains.

Frustratingly, albeit due to elements beyond our control, a couple of projects have been slower to complete, or start, than we would have liked. Works to the Pocket Park by the library remain incomplete, but the Council is doing all it can to push the contractors to arrange for the outstanding aspects to be finalised. We also find ourselves more than a year into the Eversley Park entrance scheme with the telegraph pole still in place. This is despite repeated attempts by the Council to progress the issue. As such, we have been unable to commence the major improvement works to the entrance of the park. We are hopeful that we will be able to start the main scheme soon.

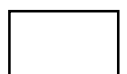
Spring of 2024 saw us pilot a wildflower scheme along Low Street. This was hugely successful, generating significant interest and appreciation from across the community, and I am pleased to report that the schemes have been extended for the 2024-25 season and beyond.

We continued our commitment to maintain and strengthen the local network of defibrillators, and we were incredibly grateful to one resident in particular — who wished to remain anonymous — for their generous donation of the defib now sited at the Scout hut.

The Council acquired a van to enable field work to be carried out by our staff safely and more efficiently across the Council's assets.

In October, the Council was finally able to progress issues around the long-term management of the Finkle Hill Allotments site, a position that has taken several years to reach. In a close result, ploholders opted for the Council to manage the site, and I would like to thank everyone involved for their patience as we worked towards a solution. As part of the process, the Council conducted a thorough assessment of the site to ensure that it had everything in place to manage the allotments legally, safely and in a financially sustainable way. Through this review we did, unfortunately, have to make the difficult decision to increase prices, bringing them more in line with similar sites (albeit towards the lower end of the scale). We look forward to a positive and collaborative relationship. Towards the end of the year, work to build a gabion wall to retain the raised carpark was completed by our field staff, David Varley and Nick Day.

A new and improved lease was agreed between the Sherburn White Rose Sports & Social Club Ltd and the Sherburn in Elmet Recreation & Sports Ground Charity (of which the Council is sole trustee). Work is now advancing on updating other leases held by the Council and its community partners.



It's fair to say that this year has not been without its challenges, though. With the new North Yorkshire Unitary Council implementing cost-saving measures, it has, unfortunately, fallen to the Town Council to use its own funds to, for instance, replace and maintain bins and benches across the town. Our own costs have continued to rise too, and once again the Council has done what it can to absorb much of the inflationary pressures where possible, recognising the continued cost of living challenges that many are facing.

### **Planning & Infrastructure**

We've seen yet another year of significant planning applications in Sherburn. These included several developments on the industrial estate and two large-scale residential developments — Garden Lane and land south of Rochester Row — both of which generated significant resident interest.

As a Council, we have been more vocal than ever in expressing our concerns about ongoing development in the area and the potential cumulative impact on residents, visitors, our infrastructure, and the natural environment. We have challenged applications that do not meet the necessary standards or are deemed inappropriate, and I'm pleased that this **has** had a positive impact on a number of proposals that have been presented this year.

The Council has also responded to the Selby Local Plan re-consultation, in particular calling for greater accountability from developers and delivery of vital improvements to local infrastructure. Anyone who has travelled towards the Industrial Estate over the past couple of days will have seen just how quickly our transport infrastructure can grind to a complete halt, and the immense impact that an ever-growing community without the necessary improvements to transport and active travel infrastructure can have on residents, businesses and visitors to Sherburn.

I want to thank, in particular, John Irvin (now a fellow Councillor), Dave Shanks and everyone involved within the community for their tireless efforts as residents over the past year fighting to protect vital public open space from damaging development proposals. Efforts such as yours enabled us to strengthen our objections to the proposals, without which we might have found ourselves in a very different position today.

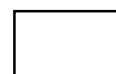
Highways safety continues to be an area of high interest across Sherburn. Since investing in two vehicle-activated signs, we have been able to gather important data on speeding and highways usage across 4 key locations in Sherburn. This data will enable us to ramp up our efforts to ensure that law enforcement and planning representatives at North Yorkshire Council consider local transport infrastructure as a priority.

Similarly, parking provision in Sherburn is a regular concern amongst residents. To help address this, the Council has agreed to fund an extension to the car park at Eversley Park using a grassed geogrid system, enabling site operators to increase capacity as and when required.

Over the summer, a number of bike racks were installed at Town Council-owned sites (Eversley Park, Fairways and Finkle Hill Recreation Ground), giving many residents and visitors to Sherburn an alternative to driving for shorter journeys. Once the long-awaited upgrades to the east side of Low Street have been completed, our active travel infrastructure will have been markedly improved.

Work is underway to update Sherburn's Community Emergency Plan, in partnership with North Yorkshire Council and NY Cllr Bob Packham, and I am optimistic that this can be finalised over the coming weeks.

In November, we set up a steering committee for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and appointed external consultants Mike Dando and David Gluck to support its smooth implementation and timely delivery. The Council was successful in being granted funding for year one of the work — thanks again to Georgina and all involved in securing those funds. This is a major project which will see residents have a direct say in the future of Sherburn in Elmet, and there will be plenty of opportunities going forward,



including at this year's Gala, for local people to get involved. Recently, councillors were able to hear a special representation from the local Brownies as they set out what they would like to see for Sherburn going forward, and I would like to thank them for their presentation.

Work continues to find a positive solution to challenges around youth provision in Sherburn, and we are cautiously optimistic that a viable solution — temporary or otherwise — will be found in the very near future.

We have also set up a working group to identify solutions to our sports facility infrastructure issues — the group's work will become increasingly important in the coming months as North Yorkshire Council looks to review and refocus its leisure services across the region and pushes forward with the Selby Local Plan, and as we develop the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## **Environment**

It's been a positive year for environmental initiatives in Sherburn.

The Council resolved to ban the use of harmful chemicals in its land management practices and our wildflower pilot scheme was a huge success and has been expanded to cover more areas. Young residents were invited to submit artwork for signage, which I hope we will be able to feature as part of this coming year's display. We joined the 'Hedgehog Project' (providing free hedgehog-highway openings to be retrofitted to garden fences), reviewed our Environmental Policy Pack and set out our responsibilities under the new Biodiversity Duty and, complementing the report commissioned by the Sports & Social Club for the clubhouse, we commissioned comprehensive energy audits of the Council's remaining buildings to identify ways in which we can lower bills for the community groups leasing these assets and reduce our collective impact on the environment.

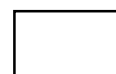
## **Finance & Community Support**

Thank you to Georgina for her dedication and diligence across the year, with Councillors presented with an exceptionally detailed and comprehensive budget to review, as always. This year, she has also overseen the diversification of our financial accounts, to reduce risk to taxpayer money.

In December, the Council met to agree its budget for the financial year ahead. Councillors agreed to increase the precept by 4.6% (an increase of £4.29 for a Band D property), enabling us to deliver a number of projects on top of our core activities, including improvements to street furniture, an expanded wildflower scheme in 2024 and 2025, one-off events, earmarking of funds for a new Youth Facility, community grants, defibrillators, repairs to the skate park at Eversley Park, the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and much-needed upgrades to our website.

Over the last year, it's been fantastic to be able to fund almost £50k worth of external community projects. This funding has supported the activities of:

- The Wheatsheaf Angling Club
- Sherburn Cricket Club
- Sherburn Bears Rugby Club, replacing their storage container and providing new equipment for their teams to enjoy
- U3A
- Meals on Wheels (contributing to their facility-use costs)
- Sherburn & Villages Community Trust
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sherburn in Elmet Brownies Group
- Friends of Bethany Lauren Dance Company
- We Are Sherburn
- Sherburn & Villages Community Library, including a contribution to their warm spaces scheme over winter
- Elmet Art Society
- Sherburn Community Minibus Association



- Sherburn Visiting Scheme
- Sherburn in Bloom

Recognising the importance of stability and certainty for community groups with whom we have had long-term funding or service arrangements, I'm pleased to report that this year the Council formalised 10-year agreements with the Sherburn Bowls Club and Sherburn in Bloom, as well as a three-year agreement with the Community Minibus Association to support their activities.

Now clearly, whilst we will not be in a position to distribute this level of funding every year, it has been incredible to see the amazing projects and activities carried out by so many committed volunteer organisations over the last 12 months.

For anyone interested in applying for funding, please note that going forward the Council has changed its grant process slightly, moving to quarterly opportunities. If you are eligible and interested in applying for funding, please visit the grants section of our website and consider this new timescale when preparing your application.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned at the start of this report, this has been an incredibly busy year. On top of everything highlighted so far, the Town Council also:

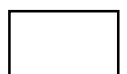
- Joined calls to reconsider the proposed closure of train station ticket offices, including Selby's;
- Worked with the police to support their efforts to tackle troubling spates of antisocial dirt-bike use and car thefts;
- Agreed a partnership with North Yorkshire Council to facilitate a mural on the Rugby Club building, to be delivered later in 2024;
- Consulted with residents of Wolsey Croft and the surrounding roads to identify and seek to resolve long-standing, localised highway and speeding issues. This work is still progressing;
- Began working towards achieving a Local Council Award;
- Joined We Are Sherburn;
- Introduced a bike-to-work scheme;
- Signed the Community Safety Charter;
- Signed up to Accessible Sherburn;
- And, became a Real Living Wage employer.

Reflecting back on the year has been a really positive experience and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity not just to represent residents on a daily basis and work with everyone at the Council to make meaningful improvements to this wonderful place, but also to do so as Chair of the Council for the past year.

I'd like to thank my colleagues on the Council for another year of hard work, for tolerating longer meetings than would perhaps have been ideal, and for their teamwork, support and encouragement throughout the year. Despite the challenges and obstacles that have inevitably come our way, our staff team has consistently gone above and beyond. Their commitment to excellence and their ability to adapt and persevere in the face of adversity is, as always, unparalleled.

Thanks also to those Councillors who went above and beyond this year — Cllr Limbert for carrying out watering duties of flower tubs in Sherburn, supporting the fantastic work that Sherburn in Bloom does to deliver stunning displays all year round. And to Cllr Tant-Brown for serving as an incredibly supportive Vice Chair, and for filling in for me in my absence.

On behalf of the Town Council, I would also like to thank NY Councillor Bob Packham for his hard work over the past year, and for the support he has given us on Town Council issues and projects.



I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the residents who have taken the time to attend our meetings, some of whom have consistently sacrificed their Monday evenings to bring important issues to our attention and to provide invaluable oversight of the Council's work. Your contributions have played a vital role in shaping our decisions and guiding our efforts to better serve Sherburn.

It's an exciting year ahead for the Town Council and, even more importantly, for Sherburn residents. From our all-new 'Best Kept Garden' competition to events and major upgrades across Sherburn, there is a lot to look forward to.

There is a significant amount of work continuing behind the scenes to ensure that the Council takes its place at the forefront of local authorities, adopting a modern, transparent, forward-thinking, inclusive and ambitious approach.

Finally, I want to leave you with a question, a challenge, a call to action, an invitation — to every member of the Town Council community. What more can each of us, and more importantly, all of us together, do in the coming year and beyond to better serve the people of Sherburn? How can we build upon the solid foundation we've laid in recent years, to enhance this remarkable place we're proud to call home? How can we support and uplift one another as we strive to make Sherburn a shining example of a thriving community — a place where people are proud to live, work, and visit; a place where families can flourish, and where people can live out their retirement in comfort and contentment?

Thank you.

3. To consider any matters raised by registered electors present at the meeting.

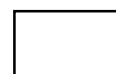
Cllr Limbert immediately responded by thanking *Cllr Baumann for chairing the Council over the past 12 months as you have carried out an outstanding role*. Cllr Packham thanked Cllr Baumann for the co-operation and backing of the Town Council, saying *"we can achieve so much more together. A particularly outstanding presentation of the Council's achievements over the past 12 months"*.

Resident 1 – a resident survey has been conducted with regard to the usage of the temporary bollards off Low Garth Link Road during events and construction access during the EPC entrance works. This was raised by Cllr Tant-Brown on behalf of a resident.

Resident 2 - Cllr Buckle explained that he has had 9 years on the Council representing local residents and that his most recent time on the Council has been the most rewarding work with staff and council members.

Resident 3 – are there any plans for real time bus information to be launched across Sherburn. There are talks for this upgrade to take place on Low Street in the town centre, hopefully part of the east side developments of Low Street and perhaps on the west side bus stop too.

Resident 4 – Highfields. Cllr Packham and Cllr Buckle has met the new officer with responsibility for Highfields and it is hoped that future talks will look at the refurbishment of the facilities in this area. Would it be useful for the new Mayor of North Yorkshire to get involved – Cllr Packham explained that this isn't perhaps part of his remit. Future discussion of who this could be escalated to will be discussed with the TC.



Resident 5 – Youth project – Cllr Limbert asked regarding the progress of this. Cllr Packham explained that he hadn't an update. The RFO explained that North Yorkshire Youth have been contacted and are awaiting a response of their budget for Sherburn Youth Club and the funds available within the budget.

Resident 6 – Cllr Bradder asked if the Council can carry out some research to see how accessible play equipment is for disabled children. Perhaps this is something that the Council can research over the next municipal year.

Resident 7 – Cllr Jordan asked for an update on the BT pole which is affecting the progress of the EPC Entrance works. The RFO explained that this was now escalated to the local MPs office as a serious complaint to BT Openreach and they are now involved in all updates and correspondence. In the last 10 days both Zzoom and Swish have removed their fibre optic cabling and apparatus from the pole and we now await BT Openreach to remove their apparatus and remove the old pole. Staff are forcefully chasing action on this.

The meeting closed at 7.56pm

Chairman's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

