

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD IN STILLINGTON VILLAGE HALL**

**ON WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2026 AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Cllr Richard Smyth

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nigel Knapton (Clerk)  
5 members of the public

**25/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies from North Yorkshire Cllr Taylor.

**25/2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2025**

These were approved.

**25/3 PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Stillington pond has been a cause of concern for some time. Fears were that the water was leaking under the island. The last major work was completed in 1989 and tree pruning, and pond dredging were needed. Due to very wet springs and summers work had been delayed until the dry spring and early summer in 2025 gave the ideal conditions and opportunity for the work. Dredging took place with the spoil placed North of the pond and then the floor was sealed with puddled clay. This more expensive treatment was chosen to ensure there would be no leaks and thus no further work required in the immediate future. The environment agency was very positive about the way the work was done and confirmed that no licences were required. Due to the lack of oxygen, the dredging confirmed that there was virtually no wildlife in the pond. We are grateful to Geoff Sykes for the unpaid work and expertise he brought to the project.

This has presented the Council with a challenge to make the pond a more wildlife friendly environment with oxygenating plants and to develop the large space North of the pond which includes another pond that takes the overflow from its neighbour. The island needs repairing after damage to it in the early autumn.

The division and strong feeling in the village concerning the removal of the two domestic geese from the pond in October were lessons for the Council to absorb. Communication needs to be improved, in this case, at informing residents about the danger caused by the multiple incidents of aggressive and confrontational behaviour of the Chinese goose witnessed by residents. A pond policy and a budget, ring fenced for the pond, is needed. A pond working group, including 2 volunteer Parishioners, has been created to review pond management guidelines and potential expenditure going forward. We await their update. The pond is an asset to the village and needs developing.

Thirty nine planning applications were considered during the year. Highway problems, mainly potholes, have required liaising with North Yorkshire highways. The damage to the bus stop

Approved ..... Chairman

windows was quickly repaired, and over twenty rotten posts have been replaced in the picket fence on the main street

As you may be aware, The Parish Council Precept for 2026/2027 has increased due to the circa £3,500 unexpected cost of the election and the circa £4,000 underestimate of Village Pond repairs. Consequently, a band D property will rise by circa £1.40 a month. The election was called for by the village and was delivered by North Yorkshire Council who control the fee charged. The pond was a one-off item, always intended to be funded from the Council reserves. However, it ran over the estimated cost, significantly reducing our reserves which need to be replenished.

We thank Tracy Sinclair for her work on the Council as vice-chairman. Her encouragement of rewilding established a site on the lower village green. It is still in the experimental stage, but it is reducing our mowing bill. Tracy's resignation triggered an election, and we welcomed Judith Fearn to the Council in December.

**25/4      RESOLUTION(S) FROM THE PUBLIC**

No resolutions had been received.

**25/5      QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

No questions were asked.

**25/6      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 May 2027 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.08pm.