



MINUTES OF THE PARISH OF CONONLEY'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT CONONLEY VILLAGE INSTITUTE, 10 MARCH 2026

The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor K Clark.

15 electors of the Parish were **present**, as were the Clerk to the Parish Council Hannah Sherriff-Jackson and North Yorkshire Councillor Andy Brown.

1. WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were approved as a true and accurate record of the following:

- Annual Parish Meeting held 11 March 2025

3. REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL AND PC CLERK

a) Allotments

The Chair reported that last year, a plot became available on the Meadow Croft site near the water pump that contained mature fruit trees. The Parish Council decided to create a community orchard on this plot. It currently has 4 fruit trees and the Parish Council is hoping to plant some soft fruit bushes and create a seating area for the community to enjoy.

The Chair informed the meeting that the pathways on both allotment sites were levelled and resurfaced to improve access for everyone. This was financed using planning gain funds from the mill development alongside a grant from the National Lottery. The Chair reported that the Parish Council recognises that the finish on the pathway of the Meadow Croft site needs to be addressed and the Parish Council is working with the Lengthsman to improve this.

The Chair reported that the Parish Council now provides water butts free of charge with every new allotment plot to encourage tenants to harvest rainwater in preparation for the drier summer months.

The Chair explained that the waiting list for allotment plots has reduced from double figures to 1. This was achieved through the plot splitting implemented last year.



b) Gritting

Cllr Steele reported that the Parish Council has upped the number of grit bins throughout the village from 3 to 6. The new Parish Council grit bins are located by the church, school and on the pathway from the railway to Crosshills Road. The other three grit bins belong to and are serviced by North Yorkshire Council.

c) Village Survey Action Plan

Cllr Allum reported that the Village Survey was carried out in 2025. The actions recommended in the survey have been passed on to the relevant groups including the Sports Club and North Yorkshire Council's Highways Department. Cllr Allum reminded the meeting that the Parish Council always welcomes comments and suggestions from residents.

d) Pavement Parking

The Chair reported that the Parish Council continues to receive numerous concerns from residents regarding pavement parking. The Chair explained that the Parish Council continues to encourage considerate parking and reminds drivers of the Highway Code and obstructing the pavements.

e) New Community Noticeboard

The Chair informed the meeting that a new community noticeboard was purchased using planning gain funds from the mill development. The noticeboard is located near the mill and is a great way of connecting residents in this area of the village.

The Chair also thanked the previous newsletter co-ordinator for her hard work over the past year. The Chair also thanked the team at Acorn Stairlifts for offering their professional time and expertise to re-design the newsletter this year.

f) Parish Council Community Grants

Cllr Paley reported that in the 2025-26 financial year, the Parish Council gave community grants to Cononley Art Group and Cononley Juniors Football Club. The Parish Council will be re-opening the grant application process from April 2026 for the 2026-27 financial year.

g) Parish Council Website Updates

Cllr Paley informed the meeting that the Parish Council website has been updated with new information and images. Cllr Paley invited groups to contact the Parish Council when holding community events so that these can be advertised on the website.

h) Cleaner Greener Cononley



The Chair informed the meeting that the Cleaner Greener Cononley group currently has 6 members. In 2025, they held 3 well-attended, family-friendly community litter picks as well as 2 wormery demonstrations at the Village Institute. This also included 2 wormery raffles.

Cleaner Greener Cononley used the feedback from the Village Survey to plan their activities for 2026. These include composting and 'Gardening for Nature' talks. Cleaner Greener Cononley will purchase more litter picking equipment for the Community Litter Picks. They are providing wildlife friendly tips for new gardeners and new residents as well as exploring how to encourage and promote the use of solar power by sharing user experiences. Cleaner Greener Cononley is seeking feedback from the wormery raffle winners. Recently, representatives from Cleaner Greener Cononley and Friends of Cononley Station met with Network Rail regarding tree removal along the Airedale Line. The Chair reported that this was a positive meeting. Finally, Cleaner Greener Cononley are considering holding another CVI-CGC retrofit event.

i) Clerk's Report

The Chair explained that, at the end of 2025, the Clerk qualified as a CiLCA qualified clerk (Certificate in Local Council Administration). This is a great bonus for the Parish Council as the Clerk brings an even greater depth of expertise and knowledge to the role in areas such as law, finance and management.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for her hard work and the other Parish Councillors as well as Councillor Andy Brown for his ongoing support to the community. The Chair also thanked all the volunteers who give up their personal time to make Cononley what it is which, from last year's Village Survey responses, is described as 'A community with friendly people and lovely atmosphere'.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the Parish Council has set its budget for 2026/27 with the budget figure of £47,042. The precept has been set at £41,454 which represents an increase of £10.44 per Band D household per year.

The Clerk welcomed Cllr Hopwood who was co-opted onto the Parish Council in October 2025.

Finally, the Clerk reported that the Parish Council still has a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. She invited electors to come along to Parish Council meetings if interested to find out more about the working of the Parish Council.

4. NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCILLOR REPORT

Councillor Brown reported that he has spent quite a bit of time on planning issues, not always with success. North Yorkshire Council has been set a challenge of building twice as many houses as it has ever achieved each year. This is an impossible task and as such, many of the protections in the local development plan no longer apply. He stressed that there is a risk of major housing development in a village near to a railway station.



Councillor Brown informed the meeting that there continues to be issues with parking and HGVs trying to navigate through the village due to poorly designed sat nav systems. It was hoped that a new link road between Engine Shed Lane and the bypass in Skipton would divert this traffic however the scheme passed from Craven District Council to North Yorkshire Council has not been progressed.

Councillor Brown reported that the York and North Yorkshire Mayor's office has changed their policy on and no longer objects to fixed traffic cameras and average speed check cameras. The intention is to use an appropriate mixture of strategies.

Councillor Brown informed the meeting that the Locality Funding will continue to be funded for another year. This provides a sum of £5,000 to be used across 6 parishes for small match-funded community projects. In the past, it has been used for things like improvements to local green spaces, exceptional costs in running sports activities and other voluntary activities.

Finally, Councillor Brown reported that he continues to do a lot of casework to support individuals or the community on particular issues which concern them. This includes issues such as gaining school places, challenging environmentally damaging activities, housing access issues, drains, lighting, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. Councillor Brown reminded residents that if any issues arise, he can be contacted via email to andy.brown1951@outlook.com.

5. VILLAGE INSTITUTE TRUST

The Chair of the Cononley Village Institute Advisory Committee (CVIAC) explained that the Parish Council is the Sole Trustee of the Village Institute but the day-to-day running is done by the Committee. The Committee currently has 8 members including a Parish Council representative. The Committee is always looking to welcome new members.

The building continues to be well used both by regular groups and for private events such as:

- Stepping Stones Nursery
- Cononley Art Group
- Cononley Women's Institute
- Yoga & Pilates classes
- Brownies & Rainbows groups
- History events
- Cononley Art Show
- Cononley Beer Festival
- Christmas Fair
- Pantomime
- Musical Mayhem
- Film Festival
- Cononley Singers Concerts
- Cinema Club



CVIAC also organises the Scarecrow Festival. The festival in 2025 had 49 entries raising nearly £2,000. The theme for 2026 is 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'.

Maintenance works carried out in the building in 2025 include:

- Installing fairy lights in the main hall
- Installing additional smoke detectors throughout the building
- Replacing the taps in the toilets
- Painting the exterior iron work
- Professional cleaning of the chairs
- Sanding and varnishing the floor in the main hall
- An annual summer clean of the building

The Chair of CVIAC reported that the recent damage caused by the HGV accident has been repaired.

Finally, the Chair of CVIAC thanked the committee members, the caretaker of the Village Institute, the booking agent and the website manager for their hard work.

6. PLAYING FIELD TRUST

The Chair explained that the Friends of Cononley Playing Field advisory committee is no longer in existence so, as Sole Trustee, the Parish Council co-ordinates the ongoing management of the Playing Field alongside the Lengthsman. Thanks were given to the Lengthsman for his hard work inspecting and maintaining the equipment every month.

The Chair reported that in 2025, the Parish Council replaced the safety surface under the roundabout with bonded recycled rubber chippings. This improves safety and saves on maintenance costs.

The Playing Field was humbled to receive a bequest from Alf Bairstow who sadly passed away in 2024. The first part of the donation will be used to buy a replacement play tractor and a memorial bench to remember Alf and his wife Amy.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Parish Council is considering spending plans for the planning gain funds from the Meadow Lane development. This includes the potential renovations of the shed and toilet building.

Finally, the Chair reported that unfortunately, due to insufficient volunteer support, the gala will not be going ahead in June 2026 as planned. There may however be a possibility of combining something with Confest in July.

7. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

a) Friends of Cononley Station

A representative from the Friends of Cononley Station group addressed the meeting.



The rep reported that the Friends group consists of 5 members who offer a lot of volunteer support.

Cononley Station has been shortlisted for the Silver band of the 'It's Your Station' category for the 2026 Community Rail Awards thanks to the hard work carried out by the Friends group.

Finally, the rep thanked the members of the Friends group and volunteers for their hard work and support.

b) Cononley Bowling Club

The Chairman of Cononley Bowling Club informed the meeting that the Bowling Club had a fantastic season in 2025.

The Bowling Club took part in the Big Bowls Weekend. The Club will be holding an open day in May, a curry and quiz night and is also opening a C team.

The Bowling Club re-opens for the new season on Saturday 28th March.

Thanks were given to the Greenkeeper for working hard on maintaining the green throughout the winter. Thanks were also given to the Parish Council and the Lengthsman for the recent works carried out on the paving alongside the green.

c) Cononley Women's Institute

The Clerk read a report from Cononley Women's Institute.

Cononley Women's Institute was established in 1960 and has over 40 members with ages ranging from 40-90. One of the members is celebrating 55 years of membership this year.

The group meets on the first Thursday of each month and has an eclectic programme of speakers and events for example:

- A milliner
- A baker
- Yorkshire Air Ambulance
- An actor from Emmerdale
- A royal worker from Windsor Castle
- Salsa dancing
- A cruise in summer 2025 & just before Christmas
- Annual day trips

Every year, the group holds a Christmas party, an auction and a pre-loved clothes sale to raise money for charity. In 2025, the group donated £300 to Cononley School and £300 to Cononley Juniors Football Team.



The group runs a tea and cake stall at Confest, a café at Make it, Bake it, Grow it, a lucky dip at the Christmas fair and has supported the gala in the past. Four of the members worked in the WI café at the Great Yorkshire Show.

The group tries to support the village and offers friendship and help to women in the village. The Women's Institute is always very welcoming to new members.

d) Musical Mayhem

The organiser of Musical Mayhem addressed the meeting.

The event has been running for 15 years and raises money for the Village Institute.

Anyone can come along and play any instrument on the evening including children who are especially encouraged to come along and join in.

e) Cononley Wildlife Group

Cllr Hopwood read a report from Cononley Wildlife Group.

The rep reported that it has been another busy year for the Wildlife Group. The group is run by 2 volunteers but relies on other volunteers to assist where possible. The Group is always keen to welcome new members.

Following a request from the Church to plant the churchyard, the Group organised a fundraising concert to raise funds to purchase and plant bulbs which included a performance by the All Together Now Choir. The event was well attended and raised over £1,000. 10,000 bulbs were purchased; planting equipment was hired and more than 20 volunteers (including 2 classes from Cononley School) came along in October to plant the bulbs. Unfortunately, over the winter, rabbits have eaten through a significant number of the bulbs but it is hoped that there will still be some left when they flower.

The Wildlife Group also organised a working group to help to tidy up the churchyard and remove invasive plants. The branches were taken down to the Pinfold to add to the natural fence along the edge of the beck.

The bird nesting signs purchased in 2024 were replaced with new laminated signs in May 2025 however these will be replaced with permanent metal signage in May. These are being purchased with £200 received from the Beer Festival. The new signs use images from Curlew Action who are keen to see the result. The new signs should be sturdier than the previous signage. They will be displayed along the river bank and on the gates at the top of Netherghyll Lane.

In May 2025, the Wildlife Group organised a tidy up at the Pinfold which attracted a number of volunteers. The invasive Geranium was weeded out again, the hedge bottom tidied and more bark was added to the path. The Autumn clean up took place in November 2025 where hedges and bushes were trimmed ready for winter. The Lengthsman carried out the annual mowing of the grass and the



group planted more bluebell bulbs. The Group will soon be holding a Spring tidy up at the Pinfold where the pathway bark levels will be topped up, the shed painted, branches added to the natural fence and the pathway weeded.

The tidy up works on the Pinfold have been ongoing for 5 years with many volunteer hours going in to making it what it is today. The hedgerow of Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Wild Rose and Hazel is growing thicker. The trees are thriving. The wildflowers are doing well in areas. The bird feeders are well used but do require filling regularly.

A number of local people have said that they enjoy going to the Pinfold and sitting in a peaceful and natural environment. The Group finds it rewarding that the area is being used in this way and that all the hard work is appreciated and beneficial.

f) Friends of Dead Eye

A representative from the Friends of Dead Eye group addressed the meeting.

The representative explained the history of how Dead Eye came to be under the ownership of the Parish Council. Dead Eye is a pond comprising of reed beds, woodland, marshland, traditional hedging and a viewing platform. The site is entered via Ings Lane along Throup's track.

The Friends Group held two working party tidy up events in 2025. The first in Spring to tidy up and remove any winter flotsam and in Autumn to prepare for winter and the floods.

A number of issues arose in 2025 such as:

- The water level dropping by up to 60cm in summer due to a lack of rainfall, the impact of gulley clearing in late 2024 and the diversion of more water directly into the river upstream of Dead Eye
- Nettles encroaching over pathways
- Deer jumping the fence and eating the trees

The Friends Group carried out the following actions in 2025:

- Met with local farmers and the drainage board to liaise over the water levels
- Installed a temporary barrier to gauge the impact of a potential outfall sluice in dry conditions to slow the growth of the reed beds and provide water for stock around the site
- Informing the community about changes to the topography of the site
- Mid-summer nettle and meadowsweet strimming along the pathways
- Replanting as necessary

The representative reported that, aside from the winter flood flotsam, the site remains damage and litter free.

g) Cononley Footpath Group



The lead footpath co-ordinator addressed the meeting.

The footpath co-ordinator thanked the previous co-ordinator for their hard work. Thanks were also given to the volunteers who come along to help clear the footpaths.

Further clearing works will be carried out before the bird nesting season. Waymarks and fingerpost signs will also be replaced. The group will look into handling the Himalayan balsam.

Councillor Brown reminded the meeting to continue to use the urban footpaths throughout the village.

h) Cononley Speed Watch

A representative from the Speed Watch Group addressed the meeting.

The group works in teams of 3 to count the number of vehicles, register the speeds and take the registration numbers of speeding cars.

The representative recommended people coming along to join in.

i) Public Governor for South Craven NHS Trust

The Public Governor for South Craven NHS Trust addressed the meeting.

He explained that Airedale Hospital is in £30 million deficit resulting in a freeze on expenditure. Millions are being spent to keep the hospital open and safe due to the issues caused by the RAAC buildings. The new hospital will be built to a standardised design. The Trust also has a new Chairman. The hospital found itself in an emergency situation multiple times over winter with the A&E department scoring 100 out of 103 for waiting times. The hospital is also 34th on the league table. Unfortunately, there has been an increase in inappropriate and racist comments aimed at staff in the hospital.

Finally, he reported that there will be a meeting in the future with Modality to improve the relationship between GP surgeries and the hospital.

8. OPEN DISCUSSIONS, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

An elector reported that North Yorkshire Council has changed its policy on the use of fixed speed cameras.

An elector raised concerns about recent issues with motorists trying to beat the barriers at the level crossing.

Finally, an elector thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the community for its hard work over the past 12 months.



The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

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(Chair)

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(Date)