SKELTON CUM NEWBY PARISH COUNCIL
c/o Nick Reed, Clerk, 9 Little Market Place, Masham, N. Yorks HG4 4DY

MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

DATE:	**Thursday 9th July 2026**
TIME:	**7.00pm**
LOCATION:	**Reading Room, Skelton-on-Ure**
PRESENT:	**Cllrs Emma Gerrard** (Chair)**, Rea Bell**, **Alexandra Lake, Alice Madill,** and **Liz Van Hee**
CLERK:	**Nick Reed** (minutes)
IN ATTENDANCE:	**11 members of the public** [MoP]

26.26	**Declarations of interest** and requests for dispensation There were none.
26.27	**Apologies** and consideration of reasons for absence There were none, all Councillors being present.
26.28	**Minutes of the Annual and Ordinary Parish Council meetings held on 14th May 2026** These were AGREED as a true record of the meetings, and signed as such by the Chair.
26.29	**Ongoing issues from the minutes for updating** (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)
26.291	**Commuted sums**: The Council NOTED with pleasure that North Yorkshire Council has formally agreed building renovation work at the Reading Room for up to £110,441.52, and, subject to further quotes being obtained, capital purchases of up to £14,489.34. The works include: damp management, new bathrooms, lowering the ceiling, and installation of better lighting; and purchase of a stage and stage lights, AV system, an organ, and white goods for the kitchen. Construction work is due to take place in September and to take around four weeks. The Council minuted THANKS to Jim Spillings for his invaluable work in bringing the project to this stage and his continuing development of cash flow, project management and timetabling.
26.292	**Digital connectivity**: The Council noted the results of the questionnaire circulated at the behest of North Yorkshire Council Cllr Nick Brown and collated by Cllr Madill. Parishioners report that generally mobile and 4G/5G coverage is poor, while broadband is acceptable or good.
26.293	**NYC Joint Parishes Forum**: The forthcoming meeting on 14th July was noted, with Cllrs Madill and Van Hee available to attend.
26.30	**Reports from parish organisations / activities** (not covered elsewhere on the agenda) The Council heard from Friends of Christ the Consoler that fundraising is going well – of the £250,000 project, £80,000 is already in hand, with a Heritage Lottery Fund application, while a mammoth task, potentially able to provide the balance in full. This bid is informed by a public survey with an impressive 213 responses. A service is planned to mark the 150th anniversary of consecration, with forthcoming performances on 24th July ("The Salt Road", Ryedale Festival), 8th August ("Macbeth" by Handlebars Theatre), and 16th September ("Back to the Land Girls", by Badapple Theatre). The Council heard that the phone box has been stripped of existing paint, with new heritage paint arrived and a volunteer workforce sought for a painting party on a forthcoming weekend. The Council noted a report from the Millennium Pond: the access gate and walkway have been strimmed and the whole circuit is now available for parishioners to enjoy, although it was noted that the walkway can still be precarious in places, and with the pond currently dried up in the warm weather this would be an ideal opportunity to cut down the intrusive self-seeded willows. Volunteer help gratefully received by Alan Rayner, who can be contacted on 07398-215348.

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26.31	**Questions and Comments from members of the public / district and county councillors / NY Police** Concerns were raised over fading road markings at the junction of Skelton Road and Skelton-on-Ure. *Action: Clerk to inform NYC Highways* It was noted that the reserved matters planning application for a Motorway Services Area at Kirby Hill goes to North Yorkshire Council's planning committee on 21st July. The Council RESOLVED to support the work of RAMS and Kirby Hill PC on this issue and to write to the Committee noting its continued objection to this application. Concerns were raised about parking at the nursery, and side street parking in Skelton-on-Ure village. It was noted that these behaviours are "legal but inconsiderate" and that there is little to be done beyond polite encouragement of community-minded parking.
26.32	**Financial statement and approval for payment** The Council RESOLVED to approve the following payments: Clerk (salary, expenses and training); Joint Parishes Group Secretary (salary); HMRC (PAYE); Absolute Gardens (£140, parish caretaking qtr 1); and J Spillings (£90.89, paper and print cartridges re Commuted Sums application). The Council further RESOLVED to approve commuted sums expenditures to AO Ltd (£521.75+VAT, white goods) and Electromarket (£468.55+VAT, electronics for AV installation). Receipts were noted of: £3,344 (North Yorkshire Council, precept #1 of 2); various parish councils (£282.84, contribution towards joint parishes clerking); and £120 (Reading Room hire fees). The cash book balance after these transactions was noted as being £3,025.60.
26.33	**Planning applications and decisions** The Council considered 26/02814/LB, listed building consent for repairs to the tower and spire stonework and pointing, renewal of valley gutter between tower and nave, associated work to louvres, and overhaul of weathervane rod, at Christ the Consoler Church, and resolved that the Council enthusiastically supports this application.
26.34	**Reading Room lease** The Council considered agreeing to renew the lease from Newby Hall for the Skelton-on-Ure Reading Room for a term of 21 years from 6th April 2028, noting that the rent would be £100pa and that the legal costs of drawing up the lease are payable by the Parish Council. The Council RESOLVED to renew the lease on these terms, with attempts to be made to find pro bono legal help and any costs necessary to be added to the precept for 2027-28.
26.35	**Skelton Gala** The Council considered hosting a Gala within the parish in 2027, for the benefit of the community and potentially as a fundraiser, and RESOLVED to research and consult with a view to doing this. Cllr Bell agreed to lead on agreeing a suitable date, asking to borrow furniture and a marquee from Newby Hall, and working out an itinery for the day.
26.36	**Litter pick** Noting the results of a Facebook poll, the Council RESOLVED to host a community litter pick on the morning of Saturday 24th October.
26.37	**Bus services** The Council noted the current North Yorkshire Council survey on rural bus services, and Cllr Madill agreed to create a local survey, reporting back the results to feed into the NYC survey.

26.38	**Parish Caretaker** It was notes that the bush by the door of the Reading Room needs cutting back, but there was no other work to commission in addition to the regularly scheduled caretaking.
26.39 26.391 26.392	**Correspondence** **North Yorkshire Police / Newby Hall**: noting a car crashed into a hedge on 11th June with an incident number, and its subsequent removal. **PKF LIttlejohn LLP**: Noting receipt of the Certificate of Exemption from External Audit, and that therefore the 2025-26 audit process is complete without notes.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 8th October

SIGNED: ..... **(Chair)**

DATE: