

Minutes (373) of Kirkby Malhamdale Parish Council Meeting – Monday 1st December 2025

Attending: C Wildman M. Harrop N. Heseltine , M. Throup, and P Wherity

Apologies: P Dewhurst, A Bradley, D Howlett, M Egan and C. Braeburn (National Trust)

Observing: Cllr Myers, P. and S. McWhinney, J. Smart, S and E .Cummings, L and M Parker, G Swales R Rand, N Bradley, J Bagley, S Stevenson, Mark Turner, Michelle Lorimer, Beejay Preston, B Jackson and W Locke (YDNPA),

Public Questions - None

Minutes of the Last Meeting Approved after minor correction. Proposed: MH Seconded: NH

Matters Arising

After our correspondence with the organisers of The Macmillan Mighty Hike, they have agreed to change the Half Marathon route to a circuit, thus avoiding the need to bus participants back to Malham.

Changes to Councillors Circumstances - No change

Update from County Councillor, Cllr. S. Myers

- NYC are still waiting for final budget settlement from Government.
- If the Parish Council were to ask for a precept this year, the impact on households would be slightly less, as second homes would need to pay double.
- The Parish Precept in Gargrave will now have to cover the £100,000 that is needed to repair the wall next to the river. they will receive no help from Highways as the wall does not support the road.
- Parish precept for Hellifield is £90

National Trust Update - none

YDNPA - Update from Area Ranger: W Locke

- Gordale six-month path closure at Gordale notice up today.
- There has been a meeting with the National Trust about the state of the footpath between the Watersinks car park and the Tarn.
- Work on changing place at the visitor centre and the roof improvements has been delayed, and will probably open again in February.

Rock Falls & Tree work on Parish Land

CW gave a summary of the current situation and explained how no precept had been levied for several years due to good management of the Parish Council Finances and donations from visitors.

- Earlier in the year, our annual tree inspection by Webber's tree surgeons, had found that we needed to fell over 100 trees as a result of Ash Die back. Large numbers of trees will need to be felled in Gordale, around the Cove but also in the Plantation in Malham Village and alongside the Beck in Malham. This is likely to cost in the region of £12,000 (many other landowners throughout the UK are having to come to terms with the same problem)
- We had an organised tendering process to select a contractor and it was deemed that Webbers would be the best choice.
- Unfortunately, due to illness, Webbers can no longer carry out the work so we will need to look for an alternative contractor
- The footpath at Gordale is closed for up to 6 months whilst the trees are removed.
- The Parish Council have contacted YDNP, YD Millenium Trust, Forestry Commission, Natural England, NT and many other organisations to see if there is any grant aid to help with felling costs but to no avail.

Grants are available to help with replanting and woodland management but that will leave our Parish Council with some large costs.

- This year we have had 2 rockfalls in Gordale. Both Gordale and The Cove are deemed Open Access land. That means that the Public are allowed free access to the land and do not have to keep to the footpaths. They are owned by our Parish Council. Because the land is Open Access, we have a reduced liability for natural events but we do still have a duty of care. This means that we have to make the public aware of any potential dangers and do all that we reasonably can to minimise any risks. We have to be aware though that it would be impossible to make Gordale completely safe and it is in the nature of cliffs like this to periodically suffer from rockfalls. In September there was a large rockfall but fortunately this occurred at night. Had it occurred during the day there would likely have been a large number of injuries and even fatalities. Following this we have improved the signage at Gordale and The National Park have put a temporary closure of up to 6 months on the footpath through Gordale.
- The British Mountaineering Council had been hugely helpful, sweeping any loose rock away from the main part of the cliff. They have also offered to do an annual inspection. The company that recently filmed in Gordale have donated £1,250 to them (via the Parish Council) in recognition of the help that they provided.
- Because The Cove and Gordale are registered as Open Access and they are both SSSIs we have to get permission from Natural England for any work to be done and have to abide by their stringent regulations. That means that we need to undertake bat surveys and ecological assessments which come at a not inconsiderable cost financially and also in terms of time.
- It is estimated that the cost of a bat survey might be around £3,000 and if required a Geotechnical survey following the removal of the trees might be around £2,000
- 2 articles have been published explaining the situation, one in the Craven Herald and the other by the BBC. This has generated a lot of interest with many offers of support (including from HF holidays) of possible financial help.

This summary was followed by a long discussion about our liability and what we should do. This led on to talk about finance.

Finance

Summary for the last 2 months Balance on 18/09/25 £36,369

Income

QR code donations £272

Milk kit donations £1,993

Dark train filming ££6250 (£1,250 to go to the BMC)

Repayment of loan for the Curlew Project £3961

Total income £12,476

Payments

Curlew Project £3951

Water Bill £298

Gloves and bags £10

Electric bill £69

Toilet supplies £49

Net available in the bank £44,458.81

Malham Initiative now has £2,662.95

Brochure £1314.67

Contingency fund £9370

Total available to KMPC £31,111.19

Potential expenses in the near future

Bat Survey for The Cove £3,000

Geotech Survey £2,000

BMC contribution from filming £1,250

Tree surgery £11,280

Carols at The Cove £200

3 months Lengthsman approx. £450

TOTAL £18,180

So, the amount available to spend over the next year would be £12,931.19

Other things we might do next year

Donation to Dales Bus £1,000

Discussion about the precept

- The decision about the precept needed to be made at this meeting
- The precept would be paid to us in April 2026
- The next time we could raise any money from the precept would be April 2027
- The costs that we face at Gordale and the Cove are approximations and could change so difficult to predict what we might need
- Our income might also rise as a result of other sources of funding
- We could approach local businesses for donations
- A £5,000 precept would mean £25 to £30 per year on a band D property depending on the new 2nd home rules.
- Some parishioners were in principle opposed to a precept
- Most thought that £25 to £30 per year was not a large amount and would be in support of the precept
- There were some offers of help from the Parishioners
- A vote was held by the councillors present, it was agreed unanimously to ask for a £5,000 precept for 2026/27

Traffic Management

Nothing new

Police & Parking Enforcement Issues

There is a current crackdown on vehicle crime (speeding, drink driving etc)

YDNPA Planning Matters

- PD has written in support of the change of use from B+B to short term lets at Miresfield. This means that the decision will now go to committee.

Lengthsman's Update

Still waiting for the plumber and the remaining splashbacks. When completed we need to send the invoices to HF holidays who have offered to pay half the costs.

MEG Update

- MEG have agreed to support the "Eyes on the Skies" campaign to help protect birds of prey.
- The next meeting will be in January

Litter and dog poo

Lots of poo bags are being dumped in the bags of gravel for footpath repair near the Cove

Housing needs

Nothing new

Correspondence

Several offers of donations and possible funding sources for the work at Gordale and the Cove as detailed above.

We have had notification from NALC that we will need an IT Policy including a designated .gov website and emails for the Parish Council. We currently have pages within the Malhamdale.com website. This is likely to entail a setup cost followed by annual running costs. Setup approx. £750 annual running costs of approx. £150

AOB

none

Next meeting 7.30pm, Monday 5th January, Malham Parish Hall