

Cllr Felicity Cunliffe-Lister Parish Report Fearby & Healey : January 25

Highways.

The scheme for the drainage at the bottom of Fearby Road is not yet scheduled. There are proposed works to straighten the bridge over the Swinney which I have raised with the Flood Officer, to suggest that flood alleviation measures are built into the design

Youth Council

Cllr Brodigan now has the support of Outwood and interest from Ripon Grammar, so we are hoping that a Youth Council will be formed in the near future. Once this is in place I will be able to help invite rural groups to join.

Community Partnership (Ripon)

The Steering Committee met this month and appointed the Chairs for the Task & Finish Group. I am Chair of the Connectivity group and I am also assisting with skills/training and will also introduce Sarah Hart, the Nidderdale Community Led Housing Officer to the Partnership, to see if sites can be identified for this.

Long Course Weekend

There is a meeting in February where I will ask LCW for clarity on what is planned this year for better communications with the villages that the routes run through. The routes should also be established by then. I have asked for the LCW website to set up a special offers page for the Masham event where local businesses can advertise offers to help generate some business. Please contact the Masham Community Office if you would like to be listed on the page.

Connectivity

I am still waiting on the public announcement for the Gigabit delivery. I have called for the ACC to invite the CEO of DCC to attend, the company that is responsible for connecting smart meters. In this part of the world a radio signal is used rather than mobile, and it can be very patchy. I'd like to know what coverage is like here.

Locality Budget

This has all been allocated.

Budget

The proposed budget has been circulated. NYC has been hard hit by the removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant, central government has reallocated this funding to areas of deprivation (mostly urban). With a proposed increase in Council Tax to 4.99% the current draft budget shows a deficit of £32M, which, after provision for efficiency savings this year of £25M from the move to a unitary council, will leave a shortfall of £4M. Locality budgets are under threat, and I am concerned that for all the disruption caused by the changes to the Home to School transport policy there may not be actual savings made – we will not see the numbers for this until after the start of the academic year. The schools most at risk from this policy are thought to be those on the county boundary.

Planning

I am not aware of any current planning issues.

Boundary Commission

We are now waiting for the Commission's proposals, and the consultation period that follows.

Waste Collection vehicles

Having discovered how inefficient these vehicles are, I have been in contact with the fleet officer to discuss more efficient options such as hydrogen. There is a review in place, so by the end of the year it will be established how the fleet will be best adapted – electricity, hydrogen cell, hydrogen or otherwise. I will be speaking the officer further about the viability of solar generated hydrogen.

Farmers' Meeting

I was on the panel at a public meeting in Thirsk Auction Mart recently, to discuss the concerns surrounding the proposed removal of Agricultural Relief on inheritance tax. I have circulated a questionnaire to those who attended to establish their views on solutions such as raising the threshold, and I will be writing to Defra and local MPs to lobby for their concerns to be considered. If there are family farms in the parish who would like to contribute to the questionnaire please put them in touch with me.

Household Support Fund

North Yorkshire Council (NYC) has been allocated £3.54million as part of the sixth phase of the Household Support Fund scheme. The scheme has been funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and runs between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025. This funding is to support low-income households most in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled households.

A large proportion of the funding is being used to provide targeted support to 19,012 eligible households across the district from 8th January 2025. These households will receive a letter between 8th to 21st January, giving them a shopping e-voucher code and asking them to redeem their voucher online by no later than 13th February 2025. The voucher will be a single e-voucher worth £150. Customers will be able to use their voucher at nine different supermarkets across the district.

The eligibility criteria for receiving a voucher is for households who were in receipt of the maximum means tested council tax reduction on 1 December 2024.

Households do not need to let us know that they are eligible - we will write to everyone who meets the eligibility criteria using contact details provided by the NYC Welfare and Benefits Team. The letter will also include information about other organisations offering help and support as well as a flyer about pension credit that has been produced by the charity Independent Age

Those who are unable to redeem their voucher online and have no family, friends or neighbours to assist, will be offered the option to seek support in their local Library or Council offices.

Customers who have no support network, no digital access and are unable to leave their home, will be advised to contact the NYC Customer Service Centre – (on 0300 1312131) - where a community-based solution will be sought.

The Household Support scheme is also providing additional funding to the following local support agencies - Local Food-banks; The North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund; Warm and Well Energy Support scheme; The NYC Care Leavers Team. Further details about the support these agencies offer, can be found at: www.northyorks.gov.uk/cost-living-support

Rogue Traders

Residents and traders are urged to be wary of rogue traders who may target properties in the aftermath of damage caused by Storm Eowyn. Trading Standards officers advise not to agree to work from roofers or tradespeople who knock on doors unannounced.

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