

Byland with Wass and Oldstead Parish Council meeting

15th December 2025 @ 7pm in Wass village Hall

The meeting opened at 7pm

Attendees

- Councillor John Williams – Acting chair - JW
- Councillor Stephen Cain - SC
- Councillor Peter Williams – Minutes - PW

Apologies

- Councillor Christine Bradley - CB
- Councillor Charles Skeffington - CS
- Mike Bradley – Parish clerk – MB

1. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last parish Council meeting held on 15th September 2025 were **agreed by the council members** and signed off as a true record > **Action : PW**

2. Matters arising

CPR Training

Training event of 30th October 2025 was a successful and a well-attended event. The Council gave their thanks to the instructor and the WI who organised the event, and happily donated to the Red Cross group who provided the training.

3. Finance

The accounts were reviewed by the members and deemed to be in a healthy state and a true reflection of the Council finances with a balance at 15th Nov 25 of £7855-17 with all budgeted expenditure for the year committed. The forecast for year end remains at £7281- 67 with the difference being a contingency against unforeseen costs.

- **The Council members accepted** the report and signed off the accounts > **Action: PW**

4. Request for the potential involvement of the PC in the purchase of local land.

No-one attended the meeting to talk about this item, so JW briefly summarised the written request received in advance of the meeting from Roger Statham (RS) for the Council to consider the potential for the purchase of the field opposite Keepers Cottage off Hambleton Lane and adjacent to Acres Nook . This opportunity was as a result of the titled ownership of the field having been agreed after many years of confusion over ownership. RS had maintained adhoc communication with the family in his previous role of Chair of the Millenium Committee and had recently been advised by the family that they were looking to achieve a best sales price with the Wass community having a first option to buy the field if the community was interested.

Following local research a preliminary estimation of purchase costs were (subject to variation of 3rd party evaluation model)

- Field purchase of 1.6 acres at £25K – agricultural / amenity use . This was a recent valuation by Strutt & Parker. **Note:** The Council thought this was a higher value than expected considering the size and condition of the field.
- Legal fees at £2.4K– **Note:** Initial evaluation survey fee of £900 and legal costs for conveyance etc £1500.
- Initial repair costs for field fencing and bridge repair at £4-6K
- Maintenance budget for 5yr plan at £2.5K
- Resulting in a minimum budget of approx. £35K with a likely needed budget of £40K plus.

The Council discussed in depth:-

The benefit to the Council – This was seen as limited as it would mean the Council taking on a major liability, with no external funding available for either the purchase or upkeep of the land. There also appears to be no opportunity for any future income to be generated from the land, just future maintenance costs.

The benefit to the Wass community – The community already access the field via a public footpath and it is currently used by dog walkers in particular. This public access will continue whoever the future owners are, and the Council could see no benefit in the community actually owning the land.

The lack of an overall plan to cover ownership, outline of intended use, ongoing maintenance management in perpetuity and general financial management.

- **The Council concluded** that being involved in the purchase of the land for which there was no known community desire or support plan would not be in the interest of the Council and would incur additional cost and liabilities that it could not justify.
- **The Council would communicate** its decision to Roger Statham via provision of a copy of these minutes> **Action: MB**
- **The Council thought** that a community consultation might be appropriate to gauge the appetite in the village to take this forward> **Action: RS**

5. **North York Moors – Parish training** : Update carried forward to next meeting > **Action: CB**

6. **Emergency planning** – Update carried forward to next meeting > **Action: CB**

7. **Planning** – No applications were received in the period since the last meeting.

8. AOB

- a. Martin Barnes of the Oldstead community had proposed, following feedback from the Oldstead residents, the purchase of a simple grit spreading machine for use in Oldstead, on the section of Main Street downhill from Scawling Farm to the junction with Oldstead Hall. Cost would be approx. £225-00.

The council supported in principle the initiative though required more detail, to enable further consideration on the:-

- Health and Safety Issues – Risk assessment for operational use, insurance etc

- Confirm if Council liability insurance covered parishioners use of the gritter > **Action: MB**
- An operational management plan covering areas such as resource management , gritting alert mechanism , contingency , alternative solutions > **Action : MB / JW**

Next meeting – Proposed dates

- 9th March 2026
- 18th May 2026 (includes Wass village open meeting : Oldstead 1week pre/post this date)

The meeting closed at 19:55