

Buckden Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held in the Buckden Village Institute
on 14th May 2024 at 7pm.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Ingram

Officer: Elaine Barlow-Hall, Clerk

Members of the Public: 32

Introduction by Cllr Ingram, Chair of Buckden Parish Council

An overview of the work of Buckden Parish Council and the issues addressed over the last year. This covered the liaising with NYCC and YDNPA over Planning and Highways, as well as specific events such as the Bonfire, Defibrillator training with the help of Robin and Barbara, and the purchase of new salt bins.

Cllr Ingram also took the opportunity to announce that funding for the new Village Signs had been secured by donations from NYCC, UWB, Greystones, Playground and BVI.

The following presentations were then introduced:

Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation – Anne Vetch

Mrs Vetch began with an historic overview of the formation of the Primary Federation as a means to prevent the closure of local schools by pooling the resources across four sites. She described the success of the federation as a beacon of good practice, offering a broad curricula and welcoming environment with the aim to maintain a good rating with children they are proud of.

This is the last year Anne will be in the role, but she is confident that the federation is in a strong position going forward.

The Farming Community - Garry Schofield

Mr Schofield gave a sobering outline of the challenges faced by our farming community. The post-Brexit decline in subsidies is approaching zero whilst the production costs continue to rise, and little clarity is in place as to the long-term governmental support which is needed to keep farming viable in the dale. It was pointed out that if the landscape is to be maintained the role of the farmer is vital,

and all the support which can be given by the landowners like the National Trust need to be focussed towards helping them.

The Buckden Village Institute – Debbie Roe

Mrs Roe spoke on behalf of the committee of 12 trustees of the Village Institute to outline the objectives of the charity.

- 1) To provide and operate the Village Hall.
To maintain and repair the hall for use by the community.
- 2) To fund raise to cover the costs of maintenance.
Primarily this is from the Buckden Gala, the Duck Race, Buckden Singers and lettings. Currently the institute is in credit, but both the floor and roof are likely to require investment in the coming years.
- 3) To Organise recreation and leisure activities for the benefit of parishioners.
This is in the form of regular coffee mornings, a village quiz, skittles, and Buckden singers, as well as ad hoc events such as craft workshops and a Casino night!

It was noted that last year the institute also worked with the Parish Council to equip the hall for use as an emergency centre, with a generator for use in the event of a power cut.

Last year's Gala went particularly well with the return of the Sheep show and good weather, resulting in net profit on the day of £4750. Requests were made for volunteers to assist in the coming Gala in June.

The Institute is also proud of its fundraising on behalf of other charities: Macmillan Cancer Relief, the British Legion, the Red Cross and the Yorkshire Air Ambulance, the latter receiving over £6000 from Buckden in the last ten years.

Buckden House – Lee Paskin

Mr Paskin, Manager for Outdoor Learning, gave a brief description of the history and current status of Buckden House as Bradford Council's last remaining outdoor centre. The closure of Ingleborough Hall has led to Buckden House receiving more bookings allowing children from the cities of Bradford and Leeds to come and experience the dales.

They have 68 beds and offer Caving and Ghyll Scrambling as well as the onsite High Ropes, Archery and Bushcraft, with recent upgrades in the form of a new Biomass boiler have reduced their carbon footprint from 85 to 3 tonnes per year.

The National Trust - Peter Katic and Patrick Wardle

Mr Katic outlined the current activities of the Trust in Upper Wharfedale from recent Tree planting at Greenfield and Cow Close, flagging of paths to prevent peat erosion, an extension to the riverside section of the Dalesway between Buckden and

Hubberholme and applying for funds from the government's Land Recovery Scheme to help tenant farmers and their neighbours benefit over a 20 year period aiming to offer a balance between businesses and the natural environment.

Patrick started the second talk covering the peat restoration work being carried out on the peak tops. He then went on to describe his work as the NT Ranger of the area; repairs along the riparian ways and boundary fencing; maintaining and managing the woodlands; a butterfly survey; and the protection of the rare Field Gentian at Yockenthwaite, which cannot survive in grazed grassland but is vulnerable to overgrazing!

Upper Wharfedale Bus Company - Peter Vetch

Mr Vetch gave an outline of the origin of the UWB C.I.C. which has been providing buses since NYC cuts of 2016 removed the existing bus service. In that time more than 75000 passengers have been carried, with over 10000 return trips up and down the dale.

The company runs with only 5 parttime staff and 15 volunteers. It has broken even every year with a small surplus provide adequate reserves, although it relies heavily on the subsidy from the North Yorkshire County Council.

Unfortunately, the average age of the staff is increasing. By the end of 2026 16 of the drivers will be over 70 and Mr Vetch took the opportunity to put out a plea for new volunteers to get involved, either driving or in admin, to help keep the service going.

Parochial Parish Council – Rev Tom Lusty

The Rev Tom Lusty gave an engaging presentation about the place of the church in our community, emphasising that "It's your Church". As the 28th vicar, he covered the link between the George and the church at Hubberholme, recent events at the church (including the filming for All Creatures Great and Small) and the donation to the church of a painting by J.B.Priestly.

North Yorkshire County Council – Cllr Richard Foster

The final presentation was from Cllr Foster who outlined his career and praised the independence of the people of Upper Wharfedale. He gave a summary of the new Unitary County Council which has had to make changes in order to cut its debts, mostly by consolidating functions. He described his roles within the council, a new role in Highways, on Planning and with the YDNPA.

Closing Comments – Cllr Ingram

The meeting was closed by Cllr Ingram thanking the speakers and the audience.

The meeting closed at 20:55