

## **STOKESLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **The Annual Town Meeting was held in the Town Hall, Stokesley** **On Tuesday 28 April 2026**

Present: Cllr Sally Atkinson, Cllr Mike Canavan, Cllr David Cook, Cllr Claire Craster, Cllr Bryn Griffiths, Cllr Chris Johnson, and Cllr Gary Yuille.

Clerk – Julie McLuckie

1 resident.

#### **1/28/04/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. **RESOLVED** that no apologies were received.

#### **2/28/04/26 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 29 April 2025 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

#### **3/28/04/26 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising. The Clerk confirmed that following the request from a resident to introduce ticket free parking machine on the High Street rather than the disc parking that this had been reviewed by the Parking Committee and concluded that this was not financially viable.

#### **4/28/04/26 CHAIR'S REPORT**

Cllr Atkinson presented the following report:-

Town Councillors, Clerks, Town Hall Stewards, Caretaker and all our wonderful Volunteers have once again worked hard this year and have achieved a great deal. Although this is primarily the report of the Town Council, I would point out that each Councillor is also a Trustee of both the Town Hall and the Manorial Lands Trusts and responsibilities do overlap. Additionally, two councillors are Trustees of The Stokesley Community Library, two are Preston Educational Trustees, one representative on the Climate Action Group, one on Fairtrade one on the Stokesley & District Care Association and one representative on Lady Hullock's trust.

The day-to-day tasks undertaken by the Town Council on your behalf include grass cutting, tree maintenance, hedge work, managing the allotments, maintaining the public toilets, maintaining the North Road Play Park, funding the Stokesley Community Library Managers, providing the Town's Christmas Lights and commenting on Planning Applications. Additionally, in April each year the Council sets Strategic Objectives for the coming year. For 2025/26 these related to the Cobbles, Parking and Endeavour Footpath.

Below is an update on each of the objectives:-

**Cobbles** – North Yorkshire Council commenced repairs in April 2023 to the cobbled areas leased to it along the High Street with the work being completed in sections. The

Town Council is unhappy with both the quality of work and that the work still is not completed and has met with North Yorkshire Council on several occasions to try and get a resolution. At the most recent meeting the Town Council were advised that renewed quotes had been obtained and that these will be submitted for approval to North Yorkshire Council. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in a phased approach over the coming years. The Manorial Lands Trustees are in the process of having cobbles under their control repaired and this is due to take place in the coming weeks.

**Parking** – Stokesley Town Council (in its role as Custodial Trustee) is responsible for both the College Square and the Plain car parks along with some areas of cobbles at the West end of Stokesley. Following consultation, it was agreed to introduce an Off Street Parking Places Order covering both the Plain and College Squares and the designated bays at the West End of Town. The Order will mean that anyone parking outside of a designated bay will be subject to a penalty. It is hoped this will mean more considerate parking and eliminate the ongoing problems in particular in College Square. We hope to see this introduced in June 2026.

**Endeavour Footpath** – S106 funds were allocated for the introduction of the Endeavour Way – a proposed cycle path between Stokesley and Great Ayton. However, due to lack of support from landowners and concerns raised by North Yorkshire Council about crossing the A174 this has not progressed. Stokesley Town Council had hoped that they would be able to install a hard walkway instead but again the landowner is not in favour of this proposal, so the Town Council is now renegotiating with North Yorkshire Council to reallocate the S106 funds.

**Newsletter** - The Town Council continues to produce a bi-monthly newsletter that can be found in the 'Market Place' magazine as well as on the Town Council website.

**Surgeries** - Town Council surgeries take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month in the Town Hall between 11 am and 12 noon. If you are unable to attend, the Town Council is always happy to take any questions in writing or via email. They will be submitted to the appropriate Committee or full Council / Trust meeting when a response will be agreed and issued.

**Toilets** – The Town Council took the decision to introduce a pay entry system to try and eliminate the ongoing problems with criminal damage and general misuse of the public toilets. Due to the ever-increasing costs associated with the damage and misuse the Town Council had to consider either closing them all together or look for an alternative solution. The Town Council felt that having public toilets available in our Market Town was important and therefore concluded that the introduction of a pay entry system was the preferred option. Since the introduction of this system the damage has decreased dramatically, and we are pleased that this has enabled us to keep the toilet facilities open.

**Summer in the Square** – 2025 saw us host the first Summer in the Square Event in the Old Market Square. Working with SPIOTA we moved the Ziggurat from the Market

Square to its new home on the edge of North Road and this enabled to utilise the Old Market Square for performances that took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays through June to September. We were delighted with the response, and this provides new artists with an opportunity to showcase their act. Thanks to all those businesses who purchased a promotional banner and supported this event. Thanks to White Swan for providing the PA system. We look forward to building on the success this year and securing a Vibrant Market Town grant this year should be bigger and better.

**Vibrant Market Town Grant** – thanks to the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority David Skaith Mayor for awarding us a grant of £50k to support the Summer in the Square event and a Yorkshire Day Family Fun Day Event but also to help us make other improvements along the High Street. These will include bin store(s), cyclist facilities, dog waste bag stations etc.

**Stokesley Sparkle and Lantern Parade** –Visits to Santa took place in the Town Hall and as always, the children loved meeting Santa. Thank you to all involved in organising the event and to all the volunteers who helped on the night – special thanks to Little Brushes and Catch Designs for organising the gift bags and to Richard Agar for the PA equipment and giant swans, Stokesley School Choir and of course Santa and his elves. Lantern workshops also took place at Stokesley School and in the Town Hall funded by the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority through the Vibrant Market grant. A Christmas Tree was also erected on the Old Market Square and this is where the lantern parade concluded with the Christmas Tree lights switched on by Patrick Monahan. The plan is to build on this success and make this year’s parade bigger and better – so save the date – Saturday 28 November 2026.

**Local Business Meetings** – Cllr Atkinson and the Communications and Events Committee were keen to build up a working relationship with the Local Businesses to try and support each other and promote all that Stokesley has to offer. Meetings take place every couple of months and a WhatsApp communication group has been set up.

### **Manorial Lands Trust**

The Friday Markets continue to take place and offer a varied selection of stalls selling a wide range of goods. We are pleased to have a steady number of regular stalls and welcome casual vendors as well. We are always looking to encourage additional stalls and to increase the footfall on a Friday. To assist with this the Trustees have agreed a new branding for the Friday market and have included a promotional budget for the coming year. Various charity organisations have been present during the year, including Citizens Advice, Cleveland Rotters, RSPB, and the World Wildlife Trust. Barclays Bank also attends every other Friday offering financial advice.

The Farmers Market on the first Saturday on the month continues to be very well supported as does the Northern Makers Market on the third Saturday of each month. The annual fair took place in September, and the Trust looks forward to welcoming it again this year. The decking areas outside some of the local businesses who do not have the benefit of any other outside space have been well received and a lot of favourable comments made about the ‘café culture’ feel that this offers along the High Street.

### **Town Hall Trust**

The Town Hall is very busy, and the Trust is delighted to see a lot of new groups meeting regularly. The Town Hall craft and gift fairs on the first and third Saturdays plus additional ones over the Christmas period are well supported and offer local traders an opportunity to display their talents. Thanks go to the Assistant Clerk for all her hard work in organising these. The Town Hall music events are also proving to be a great success with recent performances being a complete sell out. Sincere thanks go to Cllrs Johnson, Sowerby and the team of volunteers who run the bar at these events which means that all the money raised goes to the Town Hall. Santander also attend on a weekly basis to offer a much needed banking service.

**Volunteers** - The town is very lucky so many volunteers who give their time freely. The Town Council would once again like to say thank you to the following groups:

**SPIOTA** for their continued hard work planting and maintaining the splendid displays in the ziggurat, flower tubs and baskets around the town and keeping public areas clean and tidy.

**Friends of the Town Hall** who raise funds for the Town Hall and support various events and activities in the Town Hall. Not only do they host the coffee mornings assigned to them, but they have also covered, at short notice, any groups that were unable to attend.

**Stokesley Community Library** - Without the volunteers the Stokesley Community Library would not be able to open, they provide a key role in ensuring the facility goes from strength to strength providing not only key services to the residents of Stokesley but as a hub for activities and events. Our thanks also go to the Library Manager, volunteer Trustees and the NYC Librarian who oversee the running of the Community Library.

**Litter Picking** – thank you to the many individuals who litter pick around the Town and the volunteers who joined us for the ‘Great British Spring Clean’ event. It makes a real difference. A special thank you to Michael, who for many years has litter picked across the Town, he is a true gentleman who takes great pride in doing his bit to keep Stokesley looking tidy. The Town Council presented Michael with a certificate, litter picker and high viz along with a sincere thank you for his continued service.

This list is not exhaustive and the Council thanks everyone for their voluntary efforts for the benefit of the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all our staff. The Town Hall Stewards, Bill, Mark and Shane who all do a great job in maintain the Town Hall and welcoming the many visitors to our lovely building. Thanks also to Keith who has now officially retired but kindly does still cover some shifts if required. Thanks to Kevin who tidies the Play Park and carries out equipment checks, cleans the public toilets as well as working some shifts in the Town Hall. Our two Clerks, Julie and Debbie who work

hard to support both the Town Council and the two Trusts. Our thanks also go to our Grass Cutting, Tree Work and Hedge Cutting contractors who maintain all these throughout the year.

I would also like to thank all my fellow Councillors who volunteer to serve the Town, including Olivia Dell-Price and David Oxley, who due to personal circumstances, recently resigned from the role. We look forward to working together as a Team over the coming year serving the residents of Stokesley and making sure our lovely Market Town remains vibrant.

**5/28/04/26 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None raised.

**6/28/04/26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Signed: .....

Date: .....