

Garsdale Parish Council

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Minutes of Garsdale Annual Parish meeting held, Garsdale Village Hall, Garsdale at 7.00pm, Thursday 22 May 2025

In attendance – Cllrs Colton (Chair), Ellwood, Dickinson, Simmonds, Todd, and Labbate. With nine members of the public also in attendance.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Introduction and Welcome

The acting Chair welcomed all those present to this open Annual Parish meeting.

3. To approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes were adopted as a true record and signed by the Chair

4. To receive the Annual Report and i) Accounts of the Parish Council 2024/25

Acting Chair, Cllr Colton, gave an overview of the previous year, along with some additional historical background. Also giving thanks to the outgoing Clerk after his many years of service to the Parish. It was acknowledged that the Parish had then been without a Clerk for some time following his resignation, with the former Chairman acting as Clerk while a new permanent Clerk was sought. Whilst a new Clerk was appointed briefly, they had to leave at short notice, and the Chairman again stood in as acting Clerk – with a new Clerk finally appointed in January 2025. With the various changes, it was acknowledged that there had been some challenges during this time. It was hoped, moving forward, that matters would settle, perhaps also seeing some increased engagement with Westmorland and Furness Ward Councillors. Following the challenging times, it was noted that the Council had been subject to various complaints/challenges, queries around VAT, insurance, association with the Village Hall and Freedom of Information requests. Unfortunately, therefore, in recent months the Council's time (and the Clerk's) had been largely taken up with these matters, which had prevented the Council considering any other plans/projects to support the community going forward – it is hoped that discussions around these can now be considered for the future. It was believed that all concerns raised, during 2024/2025 had been addressed, which included a concluding report from the Monitoring Officer at Westmorland and Furness Council.

Successes were also noted, including installation of the village signs – with thanks given to all those involved in the community that made this happen, progression on emergency phone installation, following the removal of the BT kiosks. In respect of the emergency phones, information about contacts for the railway station installation will now also be shared with Cllr Simmonds, who hopes to progress further. Thanks, were also expressed to the former Chair in securing a new website and gov.uk emails for Garsdale Parish Council during the year.

Finally, the changes around the operation of the Village Hall were noted, including the separation of insurance etc – and Members wish the Committee well for the future, and note they can continue to support.

Garsdale Parish Council

- i) **Accounts of the Parish Council 2024/2025** The Clerk confirmed the cash in bank balance as at 31 March 2025 - £2230 and advised Members that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/2025 has been completed, including Internal Audit, and will be discussed further at the following meeting (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council).

5. To receive any reports from Ward Councillors, Westmorland and Furness Council, and any other representation from organisations in the Parish

None present

6. Forum – to deal with specific matters from any elector (48hrs notice), or general opportunity to discuss or ask questions on matters of interest – for general reference

A member of the public queried an earlier point about the Village Hall, and this was clarified to confirm the issues related to additional support given to the Village Hall during (by the Parish Council) in previous years and relating to Covid.

Also noted, was discussions between Mr Benson and Yorkshire Dales National Park in relation to improvement works to Bridleway 525016 Garsdale. With work now planned later this year, thanks were expressed to Mr Benson for his perseverance.

Finally, thanks were also extended to the Village Hall Committee, from the Chair, for all they do in the community, with notice given of their forthcoming AGM planned in June.

7. Close

The meeting closed at 1940hrs