

## **Cllr Felicity Cunliffe-Lister Parish Report**

### **Fountains Abbey Parish Council**

**May/June 2023**

#### **Transport**

As previously reported, some of the bus routes in the Masham & Fountains division are currently at risk. If we are to return to the pre-pandemic levels of use there would need to be an extra 40 passengers per week on the routes 136 (Ripon/Melmerby), 138 (Ripon/Masham), 139 (Ripon/Sawley/Markington) & 144 (Bedale/Masham) and an extra 150 per week for the 159 service (Richmond/Leyburn/Masham/Ripon). It has also been announced that the Eastern Dales bus 825 (Harrogate /Brimham Rocks/Fountains Abbey/Masham/Leyburn/Richmond) will now only run on the first Sunday of each month.

A survey has just been launched by the North Yorkshire Council, and the feedback will be used to inform the first draft of the Local Transport Plan which will review all aspects of the region's transport – from cycling to rail, bus and car. This is a very important opportunity for residents to have their say, to ensure that investment and services are improved where they are most needed. This can be completed online at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalkNY](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/LetsTalkNY) - please encourage all the residents in your parish to complete this.

#### **Rural Broadband**

I now have the list of all those properties that fall within NYNet's Phase 4 roll out, leaving over half without broadband. I have had meeting at County Hall in early May with Robert Ling, the Director of Transformation – he advises that for those who are not going to benefit from a Phase 4 connection, the outlook is uncertain for the time being. There is no further phase on the horizon, but at the same time the central government's Gigabit scheme – when it is announced – should be delivering connectivity to all those without. This announcement should be made by the end of the year, and in the case of community led projects there may also be some council support. He advises caution in the sense that communities and individuals should not invest too heavily in broadband schemes if the payback is over a long period of time – if the likelihood is that Gigabit will deliver a connection within (say) three years. Having been the first Councillor to meet him to address this issue, we are in a position where – if a community wanted to make a group application for a connection, either through cable or wireless signal – Robert is a good point of contact to take this forward.

Regarding the lack of mobile reception in some areas (Shaw Mills, Mickley and Markington to name a few), and have been given further details of voucher schemes that would support and part subsidise the installation of a mast. This is might still involve investment on the part of residents to meet any shortfall. If any community groups would like to review this further I am more than happy to support, and to help establish what the costs might amount to.

#### **Volunteers**

It is National Volunteers Week on 1<sup>st</sup> June, and the Council have launched a campaign to recognise all the volunteers in our community who contribute so much. Residents can also nominate their local heroes for awards to honour volunteers who make a difference in their community.

The council has opened nominations for the annual Community Awards, which recognise organisations and individual volunteers who selflessly dedicate their time to improving lives. This year sees the introduction of a new category aimed at recognising those who have launched initiatives to tackle climate change and support the natural environment.

The closing date for nominations is June 4. Nomination forms can be completed online at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/communityawards](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/communityawards)

More information about volunteering in North Yorkshire is available at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/TeamNorthYorkshire](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/TeamNorthYorkshire) online.

### **Community Bus**

Having established what support there might be at Council level for the purchase of a Community Bus, I am now establishing what the demand might be for one (or more), if there would be enough volunteers, and how we might be able to purchase one or share the resources of other community bus networks in the area. I am aware that there are many sixth form/college students in the area who are struggling without public transport, and the Community Bus may be able to provide a regular service to help them connect to the bus routes at Ripon and Bedale. It would also be available to schools and community groups for excursions. If you are aware of a particular need for community transport please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Bilsdale Mast**

Arqiva have announced that the Bilsdale transmitter has been repaired, following a fire in August 2021, and is now back in action. Please note, that 99% of households will need to take no action, beyond a possible retune of their televisions. Anybody who needs to do anything additional, should have been contacted directly by Arqiva. Please contact them on their Helpline if there are any issues.

### **Council Meeting**

At the Council Meeting last week, other than the usual reports, a motion was passed to ask for a Public Enquiry to address concerns about the reduction in catches of crabs and sightings of dead crustaceans on the beaches on the North Yorkshire and Cleveland coast. A motion calling for a change in electoral law to enable proportional representation to be used for local, mayoral and national elections was not passed.

### **Destination Development Plan**

I have attended a workshop and been in contact with local attractions and destinations within the area to establish what their views are on the current and potential destination status of the area. Many feel that the Harrogate brand is not appropriate, and that now that the borough boundary has fallen away, a Ripon hub with nearby attractions such as Fountains Abbey, Brimham Rocks and Newby Hall might work better. I am feeding back views on this – please get in touch if you have any thoughts on this.

I raised a question about the application for a North Yorkshire LVEP (as a tourism destination) at the Council Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May, and what steps were being taken to maintain the Yorkshire brand and

enable co-operation between the regions to avoid them working in competition with each other.  
This was not fully addressed and I will continue to push for this.

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