
MEETING	GUILDHALL WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	22 APRIL 2026
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS CLARKE, MELLY AND MERRETT
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS

1. DROP-IN

2. MAIN MEETING

1. Main meeting – welcome and introductions (7pm)

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Melly who welcomed everyone, set out the housekeeping rules and reminded residents that the meeting was non-political.

2. Volunteering in Guildhall Ward and helping our communities

Cllr Melly introduced the topic as an opportunity to discuss and celebrate volunteering in the community.

Councillor Melly then invited the first speaker, Sadie Harvey, York Centre for Voluntary Service CVS Supported Volunteering Project Coordinator. York CVS is passionate about supporting and championing York's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector. Practical support and guidance is provided to enable charitable organisations in York to thrive. Free one-to-one support can be provided to help identify funding opportunities and write bids; develop policies and procedures; assist with setting up of groups, charities and social enterprises; explore legal structures and governance issues; and undertake health check of the organisation.

Networking events are organised to bring people and organisations together to share knowledge, build skills and create opportunities for collaboration.

Training courses, such as first aid, aimed for charities, community groups, social enterprises and volunteers are organised on a regular basis. York's Volunteer Centre, based within York CVS provides support and promotes volunteering across the city by connecting people with meaningful opportunities and helping organisations to recruit, support and retain volunteers.

Support for Volunteer Managers is provided via promotion of volunteering opportunities, advice on volunteering best practices, training and events,

Volunteer Management Forum and access to resources such as risk assessment templates.

Listing of current volunteering opportunities from across the sector is available on the York CVS website. This resource enables charitable organisations to promote their volunteering opportunities and prospective volunteers to browse available roles in York. A regular slot on Jorvik Radio offers an opportunity to highlight volunteering opportunities to radio listeners.

Supported Volunteering Project offers tailored support to individuals who are interested in volunteering but would like assistance to be ready to volunteer or to access and sustain volunteering opportunities. The Project is delivered in collaboration with the York Community Wellbeing Hubs.

Supported Volunteer Project Coordinator holds drop-in sessions at 30 Clarence Street Hub on Friday mornings between 10am and 1pm and at Acomb Garth Community Hub on Mondays between 9am and 12pm.

York citywide volunteering pledge reflects on the ambition to create best volunteering experiences for volunteers in York. Any volunteer involving organisation in York can undergo an assessment and adopt respective recommendations to achieve the Volunteering Quality Mark. Overarching principles of the Quality Mark are: a positive volunteering ethos within the organisation, accessible and inclusive volunteering, recruiting and welcoming volunteers, supporting and developing volunteers, valuing volunteers, volunteer processes and good governance. So far six organisations have been awarded with the Quality Mark and the application is available via the York CVS website.

Diversity in Volunteering is a pilot project providing support for refugees and asylum seekers to find ways to contribute to the society via volunteering. Information sessions with translated materials on how to access volunteering opportunities in York and dedicated volunteering sessions where a person can participate without the need to undergo DBS checks are hosted as part of the project. Sadie invited any charitable and community organisations interested in providing one off volunteering opportunities to come forward to discuss details.

Cllr Melly thanked Sadie for her presentation and invited Leanne Shaw, York Cares Operations Manager to speak about the organisation and its projects.

York Cares is a partnership of the city's employers committed to making York a better place through employee-volunteering. They match the skills and expertise of employers and their employees to community projects where they can have most impact. The charity has been committed to making the city a better place through social action for over 20 years. Through their programmes, they improve local green spaces; inspire young people to reach their full potential and combat loneliness and social isolation.

York Cares impact report for year 2025 states that 4,800 donations were received by their collections programme, 2,055 employees from 30 different businesses engaged with volunteering, employee volunteers gave 10,250 hours through their programmes and more than 3,000 pupils took part in Aspirations activities.

As part of the Environment and Sustainability programme a team of 5 volunteers from Aviva attended a Community Challenge at Foss Walk on the 19th of November 2025. They helped to go along the full length of the walkway pulling out weeds and edging the path to clear out years of growth. This completely transformed the path with the efforts of such a small group working over one morning.

Social Connections programme brings younger and older people together through meaningful connections bridging the intergenerational divide and reducing loneliness and social isolation. Events hosted over the last year included coffee mornings at Aviva, Shimmer and Shine Christmas party at The De Grey Room and Summer Sparkle party at the Hiscox Building on Peaseholme Green.

Via the Aspirations programme volunteers from Hiscox delivered a Project Dare for 16 & 17 year old pupils. This provided the students a chance to learn about the Insurance sector and develop vital presenting and teamwork skills.

Annual Collection campaigns, such as Work Wardrobe, Easter eggs, Hygiene Bank and Christmas gifts are organised to support causes across York.

Upcoming York Cares activities include:

A Community Challenge on 14th of May with volunteers from Aviva at the Greenfield Community Garden;

Summer Sparkle on 4th of June at the Hiscox Building;

Employability workshop on 24th of April at the Clarence Street Hub;

Mock interviews on 28th of May at Spear York;

Smart Works Career Fair for Women on 11th of June at Patch York on Terry Avenue.

Iain Dunn, CYC Environment and Community Officer spoke about his work and how volunteers can be involved with maintaining a clean, safe and green environment in York. Iain works closely with York Cares, who had a group of business volunteers tidying up plants in Clarence Gardens this morning. Other organisations involved with upkeep and enhancements of York's parks and green spaces include Good Gym York and the Probation Service. Ian's team involves volunteers in roles such as litter picking, with over 1200 volunteers being supported and actively involved across the city, leaf clearing in autumn and snow clearing in winter. There are three

officers who cover the entire city. It is recognised that volunteers play an important part in maintenance of local green spaces and new volunteers are always welcome. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact the team via environmentandcommunity@york.gov.uk

3. Ward priorities and funding

Cllr Melly outlined Guildhall ward priorities which are being used to guide spending of the ward budget. Couple of years ago Ward Committee consulted on matters which are important to residents and this feedback informed the current ward priorities. Ward funding is one of the resources which can be used to address local priorities, and Ward Committee can either award grants, or commission projects. Individual ward budget allocation is comprised of £250,000 shared across the city. Guildhall ward budget allocation for the financial year 2026/27 will be £25,332, which is a significant increase comparing to the £17,731 allocated the previous year. This increase is a result of the change of the formula used to calculate the ward budget allocation. The new formula is based on the most recent deprivation figures. Over the last financial year ward funding enabled provision of financial support towards several local projects. Representatives from some of the groups in receipt of ward funding were present and Cllr Melly invited them to speak about their project and experience of ward funding.

Frances Simon, Providence Confidence Management CIC spoke about the Bereavement Café pilot and production of a podcast. Frances read a quote from one of the Café attendees providing a real-life scenario of how the person felt helped in managing grief. The podcast was created to share strategies to cope with the grief after losing someone close to you. Dealing with grief affects young and old and an example of a 23 year old whose mother died was quoted. The Café provides a safe and welcoming space where people can talk to each other. Some people can turn to alcohol and drugs to numb the pain associated with grief, however social interaction and opportunity to talk with others in similar situation has far more positive results. Bereavement Café sessions are organised by the Providence Confidence Management CIC and the intention is to learn from the pilot and perhaps link up with York CVS to explore opportunities for further provision and collaboration.

Tracy Ostle, The Groves Community Association spoke about community festivals. Over the past two years ward funding contributed towards purchase of plants for communal gardens and various elements of expenditure associated with hosting community festivals. A collaboration of local organisations led by Door84 has been successful in securing a grant from the Combined Authority High Street Fund, a portion of which will be

used towards costs of the festival in 2027. This year's festival will be taking place between 1st and 3rd of May.

Andrew Cambridge, Bluebird Academy spoke about phase two of setting up a charity retail shop at 107-9 Walmgate. The shop opened 6 months ago and is open as usual despite boarded window which had to be installed to secure cracked glass. The charity supports adults with learning difficulties, and the shop aims to provide social enterprise employment opportunities. The business model is to achieve self-sustainability from sale, whilst maintaining affordability, so that the local community can purchase items at affordable prices. It is not intended to generate income but provide retail model for people supported by the charity. Ward grant enabled purchase of gift aid labelling materials and software contributing towards additional income. Andrew invited anyone interested to visit and explore the shop.

Cllr Melly outlined the Red Tower Foodbank project of which she is a Trustee. Located on Navigation Road the foodbank is open on Monday mornings. The tower is open for visitors, and anyone can pop in for a cup of tea. Ward Councillors and the Local Area Coordinator visit the foodbank regularly and are available for a chat about any local or personal matter. The project operates mainly on surplus food obtained from supermarkets, mainly fruit, veg and bakery products, which are picked up by volunteers and distributed on Mondays. Any surplus remaining after the session is passed on to another food project in the city. Ward funding was used to purchase some long shelf-life items to top up food obtained from supermarkets and provide a good selection of items.

Greg McGee, New Visuality spoke about Manga art workshops for young people. The project called Angels of Guildhall turned ward's priorities into Manga illustrations of angels with aspirational speech bubbles and Guildhall ward friendly slogans. Art activities for young people were delivered over the Easter holidays, with further workshops to be held in early May. As part of the project teenage champions engaged with pupils from Haxby and St Wilfrid's primaries. Greg would welcome an introduction to the Park Grove Primary to be able to invite their pupils to take part future projects. An exhibition of the artwork created during the workshops will be put up in the ward before the summer, with the potential venue being the York Elim Pentecostal Church on Monkgate.

Simon Procter, Converge/St John University spoke about their creative writing workshops and reading club. The project supports adults who experience mental health illness and aims to help with their recovery journey and reintegration with the community. The intention is for students and residents to get together on a weekly basis and host creative writing and reading club sessions at the University campus and in local parks.

Sessions will be on Thursdays, starting in June, or July. Simon asked anyone interested in taking part to contact him directly.

Michael Reakes, River Foss Society spoke about the group aims to protect the river environment and prevent pollution. The group undertakes frequent litter picking action days and the Council's boat is often used to lift items from the river. Interpretation boards and tree planting along the river were funded by the ward in previous years and the most recent project was to improve safety of the paths by application of gravel along the muddiest parts.

Tim joined the Society during the Covid-19 pandemic and found it really rewarding. Approximately 150 trolleys and bicycles have been removed from the river thanks to voluntary efforts. The group appreciates support from the Environment and Community Officer who supplies them with green bags and litter pickers. The group is well organised and new volunteers are always welcome. You could be involved with anything from helping to write funding bids to water sampling.

At this point Cllr Melly thanked all the speakers and stated that the voluntary sector help to address ward priorities is enormous and very appreciated. It is always helpful when an organisation steps in to help deliver against the priorities. Other projects funded from the ward budget over the last year include football themed sessions for girls, installation of raised beds for edible growing in Clarence Gardens and installation of new notice boards on Bull Lane, Lawrence Street and at Clarence Gardens. Cllr Melly encouraged groups to promote their projects via posters on newly installed notice boards and suggested for any posters to be passed on to the Community Officer.

The next window for groups to apply for ward grants will be between 1st and 31st of May. Further ward funding rounds will be hosted on a quarterly basis, subject to available funding.

3. HAVE YOUR SAY

Tracy from the Groves Community Association stated that a lot of their projects would not be possible without help from organisations such as the GoodGym, or the Probation Service. Help with distribution of the local newsletter, or festival flyers helps to spread the word about projects and to attract new volunteers. Tracy invited anyone interested to join their monthly estate clean-up sessions held on the 1st Saturday of each month, 10am, meeting outside Helmsley House.

Q – Would it be possible to prevent cars from parking on housing land on Clarence Street?

A – We are aware that vehicle parking at that location damages the grass space and are working with CYC Housing to rectify the issue. It is a

communal shared space and requires some type of demarcation from the road, perhaps some planters.

The Groves Repair Café, an initiative allowing York residents to visit and get their broken items fixed was mentioned and promoted by one resident.

Pastor Paul from the York Elim Pentacostal Church introduced himself and briefly spoke about their church building on Monkgate, next to the Theatre@41. The building is now open to the public and space is available for community groups to use. It was useful to learn about the range of projects already happening in the locality and Pastor Paul is keen to discuss and explore projects aiming to tackling poverty.

Q – Could you explore provision of stickers with a polite notice asking cyclists to dismount? Those could be attached to bollards at locations where cyclists and pedestrians share the route.

A – The issue of inconsiderate cycling gets raised very often. Thank you for the suggestion. The recent Police operation resulted in seizing several customized Ebikes which were in contravention of the Highway Code.

Q – There is an issue with cyclists riding on the pavement along Monkgate. I experienced it on the way to the meeting this evening.

A – Thank you for raising it with us. Please do keep reporting such issues to the Police.

A project to introduce community edible growing is taking place in Clarence Gardens. Four raised beds will be installed next to the existing herb garden. Volunteers are invited to join the inaugural session on Wednesday 6th of May, 6pm, meeting outside the park pavilion. Recent flyer drop attracted 12 responses from residents interested in being involved. For more details about the project please chat with the Community Officer, or come along to the session on the 6th of May.

Cllr Melly added that the potential to create a community café at the park pavilion is being explored and several meetings with various stakeholders have been held. Councillors were advised that no appropriate drainage exists under the pavilion. Appropriate drainage connection would be required for a commercial type of café operation. This obstacle prompted exploration of other alternatives.

Q – Has progress been made with installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points at Monk Bar car park?

A – A contract with the previous provider came to an end and the Council is in the process of appointing a new contractor who will look at installation of new EV charging points. The new contract will be for 5 years. The issue has been evaluated by the Place Scrutiny Committee. Council officers are cautious about the option of EV charging point cables running under the

pavement. This option creates health and safety issues and would require a bigger clearance space around vehicles. The Council is hoping to introduce communal EV charging points in the future and potential locations are being evaluated.

Q - 21 other local authorities have implemented the EV charging point solution where cables run under the pavement and have not had such health and safety concerns. Why can this solution not be implemented in York? There is no regulation requiring 2.5m of clearance around the vehicle.

A – We had a lengthy meetings with officers discussing technical complexities. The response from officers is that connecting EV charging points via cables under the pavement would not be a safe practice. A potential solution offered was to install communal EV charging points.

Q- Cost of communal charging can be expensive. If the Council appoints a new contractor on a 5-year contract to implement communal charging points, there is a risk they will charge an elevated rate for communal charging. I would like to challenge that point with the Council.

A – We have challenged on all those issues. There will be a decision session on the matter, and anyone can register to speak. Please provide us with your contact details after the meeting, so that we can keep you informed.

Q – Could charging points with sockets attached to lamp posts, like in London be explored in York?

A – This solution was also implemented in other cities, i.e. Liverpool. The difficulty in York is that some lamp posts are mounted to buildings or are at the back of the pavements. This solution was not pursued by officers due to health and safety issues it would present.

Cllr Merrett offered to take contact details from anyone interested in pursuing the matter.

No further questions were raised, and Cllr Melly closed the meeting at 8:30pm

, Chair

[The meeting started at Time Not Specified and finished at Time Not Specified].