
MEETING	WESTFIELD WARD COMMITTEE (PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMUNITIES TEAM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION)
DATE	20 APRIL 2026
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS COLES, NELSON AND WALLER
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS

2. DROP IN FROM 6:30PM

Introductions:

Councillor Emily Nelson opened the meeting and welcomed residents. Cllr Nelson asked Councillor Jo Coles and Councillor Andrew Waller to introduce themselves.

3. 7PM MAIN MEETING

Councillor E Nelson then introduced the first speaker who spoke about the youth work in the area undertaken by the Gateway Church.

Caleb Ellwood - Gateway Church

Caleb Ellwood from Gateway Church, explained that two projects run by the church had received ward funding. They have a Thursday after school club which runs during term time and this is for children and young people of a wide age group. This is staffed by members of the youth work and kids work teams. It is open access and informal. They do crafts, games, play on the Xbox with snacks such as fruit and toast provided. Current attendees are mainly of primary school age, with some secondary and some pre-school. The groups averaged around 15-20, with 8 being the lowest attended session and 35 the highest. The ward funding covers the snacks for this event and it is very much appreciated.

The church also received funding for their youth residential weekend which took place the week prior to Easter. Thirty -eight young people were taken away for the weekend to an outdoor centre in the Eden Valley. The funding received from the ward helped to pay for the activities. Caleb stated that the weekend was a great opportunity to build more intensive relationships between the young people and the staff team.

Councillor Jo Coles asked how many children hadn't been on a residential weekend like that before? Caleb stated that he was unsure but a discussion ensued reflecting that since 2013 CYC universal Youth provision had been reduced significantly and therefore events such as this were really welcomed within the local community.

Westfield resident, Councillor S Fenton asked about the catchment area for attendees, asking if 100% were from the Chapelfields area and if the children were more from primary School or secondary school age. Caleb stated that children attending the after-school club were mainly from the

Chapelfields area, but those who engage with gateway activities (the youth club they run after school) attracts people from further afield than just the Chapelfields area.

A resident asked how engaged the parents were in the activities. Caleb reflected that some parents were very engaged while other parents were unknown to the team, and staff only really see them to receive the consent forms.

Jo Young – The Place

The second presentation was given by Jo Young who manages The Place. Jo presented a PowerPoint which is embedded into these notes, but briefly she explained the services they provide on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday after school mainly for the children of Chapelfields area. They provide a whole range of activities such as lunch labs on Tuesday, homework support and other activities. please refer to the PowerPoint. For more details.

A resident Cllr Stephen Fenton asked to what extent have volunteers got involved in the project? Jo explained that some volunteers work in the back office; some volunteers work in the garden and they have 4 volunteers to support the after school sessions. They are also supported by corporate volunteers, for example Aviva sent 6 volunteers to tidy up the garden last week. Volunteers from Aviva also came to talk about employability and work skills. They have had cooking sessions from Betty's. Councillor E Nelson reflected that it was good to see how embedded they had become in the community.

Kerry Briggs – Evolving Roots

The third presentation was from Kerry Briggs who is one of the directors of and helps run the company called Evolving Roots; a community interest company (CIC). It is a creative arts and wellbeing organisation, with the aim to nurture emotional well-being via the use of arts and crafts; connecting the children with peers to increase self-esteem and confidence. The sessions are open access but parents who attend with the young people are at higher risk of social isolation, either due to neurodiversity or economic challenges within the community. Kerry stated that she had received two pots of funding. The first pot was used for a painting workshop aimed at 8 to 12 year olds; this ran for six weeks at 90-minute sessions. The sessions involved painting different animals each week and were led by a therapeutic arts facilitator. Kerry shared photographs of the work produced by the children and she explained that the quality of the arts material is very high; they use proper paints and high quality canvases. This does make their project a little different to other arts and craft projects that could be running.

The second pot of funding was used to support a 3D sculpture project; again this ran for six weeks and each session was for 90 minutes. Here the children engage in a lot of crafting and were taught how to handle crafting tools safely (such as knives). This had a focus on using the imagination and encourage the use of recycled materials and the consideration of the environment.

The feedback from the children was very positive across the workshops. Children reported that they were feeling proud of what they had made, they

were happier and calmer and felt an increase in confidence and became more self-assured. Some parents had reported an increase in the emotional regulation of their children. Overall, the participants of the sessions reported a reduction in social isolation; the sessions made people feel included and welcome and fostered new friendships. It provided the opportunity for peer connections.

The sessions did not have any economic barriers and this allowed for a more inclusive atmosphere. The second programme filled up via word of mouth with new people joining. Also, some had signed up after seeing the sessions on a Facebook page.

The company have also developed a partnership with Westfield School and they have reached out to York High, but those connections are slower to build.

The participants of these workshops have moved on to a longer-term lottery funded project and again report feelings of being calm and happy. The parents report being amazed at what the children have produced. Kerry shared some feedback from parents, 'your sessions are the only thing she wanted to come back to' said one parent talking about her daughter. Unfortunately, there has been a delay in notification on some funding that was applied for and the lottery funding runs out in August. A lot of parents' report that they need these sessions to continue. The maximum they can take on a group is 12 and they book the sessions in six weeks blocks.

Councillor Jo Coles asked if Kerry had become involved in Acombfest but Kerry reflected that the organisation had very limited capacity at the moment to be involved in events. A resident asked where the sessions were held and Kerry explained that the sessions were held at the Friends Meeting House which worked so well because the whole building is allocated to them. If they need it, families can access breakout spaces and there are many rooms available for people to seek some quiet space.

Matt Harper – Next Door But One and Menfulness

Matt Harper was the next speaker and he explained his work with Next Door But One and Menfulness. Matt stated that they have just received some award funding and they will start work on their project which is basically bringing theatre into the community. He explained they work more like a 'nomadic theatre company', and they work in partnership with organisations such as Next Door But One. With the University of York they are looking specifically at men's mental health for ages 18 plus. Many young men drop off activities between the ages of 16 and 18 so this age group is of interest to the company. With the University of York they use theatre as an art form to explore mental health in 'almost like a roundabout way'. Matt described it as sneaking vegetables into a meal via the media of theatre they can then talk to young men about their mental health.

They have run twelve sessions in at the Inspire Academy with 12 young men in years 7 to 11. The aim is to learn about the experiences of these young men and they have created a podcast which is entitled 'The Little Bastards Podcast', which came about when the boys reflected that they were sick of being called little bastards; when they are repeatedly called this, then they conform to that stereotype. The podcast was a challenge to this label. They have produced a survival guide for teenagers 'made by teenagers for teenagers'. They have also created a monologue describing what it's like being a young man navigating school, home life and social

life. The monologue try to summarise what it means to be a young man during these times. This has been picked up by Downing St and a group of people went to Downing St to meet the head of strategic partnership. The aim was to explore how the resources they've produced can impact upon the wider community. They do hope to share their learning and resources with a wider audience when they are refined.

Matt reflected that these sessions with Inspire give an opportunity to provide mental health support for young men. The young boys engage well with them, for example if they said they wanted to do a session on mindfulness the young boys would probably be negative toward the session. However when they reflected themselves one lad explained how he taught himself how to fish which was an act of mindfulness. The workers then reinforced this with the young people saying you've actually got the resource is to teach yourself to engage in mindfulness. Matt stated that girls have been curious about the sessions too and have wanted to contribute to things like the podcast and the monologue. The girls articulate how they would like to be treated by young men.

Councillor Jo Coles asked if there were any plans regarding the launch of all the materials and initiatives that they have put together and it would be a good idea to ask young people how they would want to launch it.

Ollie – Pilot Theatre

Ollie from pilot theatre spoke next. He outlined the work that his company has been doing with York high. They specialise in working with teenagers and young adults within the school setting. The project is very much provided and led by the school with over 240 students taken part in their extracurricular drama club. They work in partnership but they're very much dependent upon funding. York High has increased its attainment in areas of arts, against the national trend.

Jess – Inspire Youth

Jess from Inspire Youth spoke about her company which provides sessions in Foxwood Park. Previously they were running every other week but now, because they have secured funding they can run every Wednesday from **8:30 until 10pm**. They have two vehicles, including a minibus. They rely heavily upon funding. Unfortunately, they lost a member of staff recently due to lack of funding. However, the sessions are weekly again Jess reflected that some people have actually grown up with them. Originally the project was a five-week pilot course but they have managed to secure funding to keep the project going they're also very visual because of the van and being in Foxwood park. At times the staff are quite vulnerable because of the children could be under the influence of substances. Conflicts between youths or sometimes conflict with the general public can arise. Staff are hoping that in some ways their intervention will help teach 18 year olds a bit more respect.

Jess reflected that sometimes they have meetings and decide to focus on certain topics to discuss what could help young people, such as coping strategies and harm reduction. However, it is difficult to plan these sessions as basically the staff just respond to the needs of the young people; so whatever the young people bring up that evening that's what they will work with. Jess reflected that the energised vouchers for the gym and swimming were really useful and that has encouraged some of them to go to the gym and direct their energy.

Taking Care of the Local Environment

The next item of the agenda was taking care of the local environment. Catherine Claudius Cole gave a brief update on the fly tipping strategy in Westfield. There is a city-wide initiative, however as Westfield has the highest percentage of reports of fly tipping the council have chosen Westfield as a ward to do a 'deep dive' into the causes and possible solutions to fly tipping. Neil Fletcher has conducted a couple of workshops in the local community getting feedback from residents about fly tipping and there are several meetings going on to come up with a strategy that will first be implemented within Westfield to address the issue.

The new initiative, Neighbourhood Caretaker Walkabouts has been introduced. Westfield has had two walkabouts. The aim is to improve the local area; various people are invited to inspect certain areas and 'clean up' jobs are logged with the neighbourhood team and a couple of weeks after the walkabout the teams are set out sent out to conduct the work and report back with improvements. A lot of the work is street cleaning, grass cutting and repairing damage within the communities. Westfield has two more walkabouts scheduled for this year.

LAC

The new local area coordinators were invited to speak and outline their work (Jennie Race and Fran Hornsby). Local area coordination is a service provided by your council which works very much on an individual basis. Referrals are called 'introductions' and the local area coordinators walk alongside residents in need of help. There's no referral criteria there's no cut off point in terms of the time a LAC would work with somebody. The aim is to help residents identify what changes would be needed to create a 'good life'. LACs can help with referrals into services advocacy and in helping the person to engage within the local community. Jennie will take over a lot of the work in the Chapelfields area and Fran is taking it the earlier from Kingsway West and some of Acomb. They will attend droppings at the gateway centre, Lidgett Grove and Chapel fields. Ellen Vipond will still maintain at her drop in at Foxwood community centre on a Friday.

Councillor Emily Nelson reiterated that the LACs are really good at linking people to services and working alongside other professionals.

Have Your Say

The meeting was then opened up for residents to 'have your say'. One resident asked about the corners Rd play area and asked what was the plan with this area, as it seems that some pathways were being put in and there hasn't been any consultation regarding this. The councillors stated that they would look into this concern. Councillor Emily Nelson then thanked all the speakers and everyone who attended and closed the meeting.

, Chair

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