

County Councillors Report December 2022

Let's Talk North Yorkshire – your last chance to have your say

North Yorkshire's biggest conversation, Let's Talk, ends this month, with just a few days remaining for you to join the 5,700+ residents who have already shared their views on important topics to inform decision-making and priorities for the new North Yorkshire Council. The survey on the proposed Devolution deal for York and North Yorkshire closes next Friday 16 December, followed by Let's Talk Local and Let's Talk Money on 23 December. Don't miss out – join the conversation today at <https://letstalkny.commonplace.is/>. If you've already taken part - thank you. But please encourage your residents, friends, and family to share their views.

Yorkshire water hosepipe ban

An update was received from Yorkshire Water on the 6th December regarding their ongoing hosepipe ban, which as I'm sure many will already be aware was lifted with immediate effect, as stated below;

After this year's exceptionally dry summer, October and November have seen above average levels of rainfall. This wet weather has helped our reservoirs to begin to recover and reservoirs are now around 75% full, an increase of over 35% since the start of October. Whilst reservoir levels have been recovering, the rate of recovery has been different in different parts of the Yorkshire region with our reservoirs in South Yorkshire initially recovering much more slowly than in other areas although they are now also recovering well.

This uneven regional recovery has meant we needed to keep our hosepipe ban in place throughout October and November, despite the wet weather. This is because we wanted to ensure we retained the option to use Drought Permits on reservoirs which weren't recovering as fast. The Drought Permits granted by the Environment Agency for our reservoirs include conditions that, unless otherwise agreed with the Environment Agency, a hosepipe ban must be in place if the permits are to be used.

However, whilst Yorkshire is still classified as within drought by the Environment Agency, reservoir levels in South Yorkshire have recovered enough in the last few weeks to mean we are in a position to be confident that we can lift the hosepipe ban. **As a result, the hosepipe ban in Yorkshire will be lifted today, Tuesday 6th December.**

During the warm summer months, the hosepipe ban helped to save an average of 28 million litres of water per day, which took pressure off the reservoirs.

Whilst we are now in a position to be able to lift the hosepipe ban, we do still need to ensure that supplies are managed carefully over the winter months. To help us to these we've been granted a Drought Permit to increase our annual abstraction limit from the River Wharfe, and we have recently applied for a permit to make changes to our abstraction on the River Derwent.

These changes will allow us to continue to make use of our river abstractions over the winter, helpful reservoirs to recover even further. Unlike the reservoir Drought Permits, these permits don't require a hosepipe ban to be in place.

Alongside the hosepipe ban and Drought Permits, we also increased our leakage activity in reaction to the dry weather and we are on track to reduce leakage by more than 9% this year as we work towards our target of a 15% reduction in leakage by 2025.

I'm sure many residents will be surprised to learn the ban was still in place given recent weather conditions and inconsistencies of service in several parts of Craven, leaving the promise of a nine to 15% increase in leak reduction looking somewhat underwhelming. If residents have any further concerns, I would encourage them to contact Yorkshire water directly at www.yorkshirewater.com/contact

Council tax support for care leavers in North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire County Council has decided to introduce discretionary council tax support for young people who have left care, including up to 100 per cent reduction in council tax for those living on their own. There will be a 50 per cent reduction for young care leavers living in a household with another person.

The council has decided to provide the support in recognition of the many challenges young people face as they leave council care to develop independent lives and life skills. It can be a challenging time for care leavers and difficulties in managing their own budgets can be exacerbated if they fall behind with council tax.

The council, as a corporate parent, already has a policy of supporting care leavers up to the age of 25. By granting a discretionary reduction of up to 100 per cent of council tax, the council will be providing financial support to care leavers as they start out in life.

The help will only be extended to care leavers who live in the county.

“As the corporate parent in these circumstances, it is only right that the county council has discretion to step in and help.”

Under the new proposals, there will be a 100 per cent reduction for care leavers living on their own, which includes those who were looked after for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14.

It will also include young people who were in residential education, including provision for mental health needs or other health provision and those who were privately fostered, or subject to special guardianship arrangements.

There will be a 50 per cent reduction for care leavers who are jointly liable for council tax with at least one other person in a household who is not a care leaver.

Both the amount and the duration of the reduction will be at the discretion of the council and will be awarded on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the individual.

Help on offer for young children with Special Educational Needs

People working with babies and young children are being invited to sign up for free training in supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families.

North Yorkshire County Council is rolling out the Early Years Inclusion Project run by the charity Dingley’s Promise in order to increase the number of young children with SEND accessing early years and childcare places. The course is designed to provide people working in the early years sector with the confidence and skills to support children with a wide range of additional needs.

The training programme, funded by Comic Relief, is free and looks at how children’s environments enable learning, how to consider different developmental levels and learning styles and how staff can work together to offer all children opportunities for learning.

Although it is aimed at early years practitioners, it is open to anyone who works with children aged from birth to five and can be completed at any time, from any location in North Yorkshire. There

are a total of four courses with a further six to be developed over the next five years. The courses result in the setting receiving a Kitemark to show they are an inclusion friendly setting and the individual learner will receive a certificate of completion to use in career development.

Brougham Street Nursery, in Skipton, is on the steering group which will help oversee the roll-out of the training across North Yorkshire.

The nursery, which was this year shortlisted for the Early Years Foundation Stage Setting Of The Year award in the Times Educational Supplement Schools Awards 2022, has a large percentage of children with additional needs.

About 40 per cent of children at the nursery have additional needs, meaning they have significant difficulty with their learning and need extra support throughout their day and 25 per cent with complex needs – meaning they have an illness, disability or sensory impairment which needs a lot of additional support on a daily basis.

Michael Pettavel is co-headteacher of Brougham Street Nursery School and worked as a headteacher in London before moving into early years education. He said training in SEND helps create an environment where activities and routines include all children and has far-reaching benefits.

He said: “Inclusion creates a positive culture right throughout society. We still struggle with including others with disabilities within everyday life, whether that’s children or adults.

“One thing we do by being fully inclusive is we show children are open to ideas that everybody is part of society. Whether it’s another child with disabilities, language disorders, cerebral palsy or who doesn’t have spoken English. Some needs are more hidden than others.

“Training in inclusion allows children the benefit of living in an inclusive society. It changes the way society operates. We want to get to the point that when they see someone in the supermarket, or on the bus, they see each other as friends.

“There’s a very fundamental concept behind the idea of inclusion which is about changing attitudes and attitudes of children by parents and parents by children. These children in nursery now are the paramedics, the nurses, the pilots, the bus drivers and the CEOs of the future. We all have a shared responsibility to make sure each children does well – it’s to all of our advantage.”

Dr Alison Stewart, who runs Brougham Street Nursery with Michael as co-headteacher, said: “Inclusion training goes beyond children with Special Educational Needs. It’s about supporting children who are developing their language and communication skills and who are developing those skills at different rates.

“When I began working in this nursery school it was life-changing. It’s incredible to support someone developing their language, whether that’s children with complex needs, language delays or child refugees. You are providing them with life skills and opening up their world.”

To sign up for training visit <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/> or for further enquiries email training@dingley.org.uk

Support to tackle cost of living response unveiled in North Yorkshire

Households in North Yorkshire struggling with the cost of living are being directed to community and financial support during the winter months.

As more people struggle with affording everyday essentials and bills, North Yorkshire County Council has put together a co-ordinated response to the cost of living crisis across the county to highlight the support that is available to the public.

The council is also working with Community Support Organisations (CSOs), which have extensive knowledge on locally-run projects. The CSOs can direct people to local support, such as food banks or food share schemes, community venues offering warm spaces or support groups.

Alongside the established foodbanks and network of libraries offering a warm welcome for people over winter, there are many more smaller schemes such as food pantries run by volunteers in their spare time, or when resources are available.

The CSOs will have the local knowledge to direct people to the nearest support in their communities. There are 23 CSOs across the county, which co-ordinate volunteer and community support in each area. The network was used effectively during the pandemic to direct resources on the ground to where they were needed most. A list of North Yorkshire community support schemes can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/info/community-support-organisations

Libraries are also on hand to provide people with a warm and friendly welcome, where people can pick up a book, join an activity, or find out details of other events in their communities.

The council is also urging people to look out for family, friends and neighbours over the colder months.

Some community spaces in North Yorkshire are looking at extending their opening hours and the range of activities they have on offer, to provide a warm and inviting venue over winter. Community venues which have the resources to offer help in this way are encouraged to register on the website www.warmwelcome.uk which provides an interactive map which people can search, along with information packs for venues.

Venues which have already registered with the Warm Welcome project include the Living Rooms project in Northallerton, a community hub in the town set up to tackle social exclusion and provide support for good mental and emotional wellbeing. It includes a Renew Wellbeing space, a quiet, shared café-style space where it is “okay not to be okay”. It partners with other similar organisations in the town, including Hambleton Foodshare, Hambleton Community Action and Jubilee Debt Advice and Darlington Credit Union, which run sessions from the town centre building.

Jo Swain, hub co-ordinator at the Living Rooms said the project always offers a warm welcome to anyone who needs it, but this winter will be looking to extend the support it can offer to people struggling with the cost of living.

North Yorkshire County Council will be updating its cost of living online resource throughout winter, which details where people can go if they need help or advice on everything from energy bills to childcare support and help with housing costs. The webpage can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/cost-living-support

It also includes information for households with children, to direct them to support such as free school meals; the holiday activities programme run by North Yorkshire Together, which includes activities and a meal, and Healthy Start support which can provide food and milk to parents more than ten weeks pregnant, or with a child under four.

Spread some Christmas cheer by donating toys to those in need

Residents are being urged to donate their spare or unwanted toys and games amid the cost of living crisis to ensure more children wake up to a gift on Christmas Day.

For the fourth year running, the Reuse Santa appeal has been launched at household waste recycling centres across North Yorkshire and York.

This year, however, the appeal has taken on an even greater resonance amid the soaring cost of living, with rising inflation and the dramatic increase in the price of food and essential items placing more pressure on household finances.

North Yorkshire County Council, City of York Council and Yorwaste are accepting donations of pre-loved gifts that are suitable for babies, children and teenagers until Sunday, December 11.

Last year, over 20 Transit Van loads, plus four 7.5-tonne wagon loads, of good quality, pre-loved gifts were donated to families experiencing hardship over the Christmas period.

The donated items will be sorted, cleaned and distributed to local organisations and charities including Early Help, Ryedale Special Families, Colburn Hub and Community Café and the British Heart Foundation.

The appeal is once again partnering with No Wrong Door, the county council's service supporting young people within or on the edge of the care system.

Site operatives at the recycling centres will be on hand to accept donations, as well as advise on recycling or disposing of items that are unsuitable.

Recycling centres across North Yorkshire and York can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/hwrc and www.york.gov.uk/WasteAndRecycling