NYC COUNCILLOR'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2025.

BOUNDARY COMMISSION.

The original plan set out by the Boundary Commission was due to be confirmed in tablets of stone on 2nd September. There were however many howls of complaint from individuals, PCs and Councillors and others in various places so the review which was set in place has been extended allowing further consultation until this month.

The final decision on the boundaries of the 89 council divisions is now set to be announced in early January. This all really makes no difference in our part of the world to what was originally planned.

SCOTCH CORNER.

Well despite what we were told in June there is no sign yet of work recommencing on the Designer Outlet. I have asked the developer for a further update and was told only last week that it would be another 3 weeks before further information would be forthcoming. The knock-on effect is that the promised upgrade to the transformer and power system would hopefully mean that power cuts which many residents in villages like Stapleton, Cleasby and Manfield have to endure, will not be resolved in the near future.

And whilst the upgrade to the A66 which we have waited for 4 decades for will now commence, specific dates for the work are still to be revealed. The one that many are waiting for is the plan for Scotch Corner roundabout. Again if there was progress on the Designer Outlet we may have a better idea of what is likely to happen in terms of the roundabout.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT.

I am working on an initiative to try to persuade bus companies like Hodgsons and Arriva to alter their routes in some cases and tweak their times in others so that pupils from villages like Cleasby, Manfield, Eppleby and Aldbrough can use their services to travel to and from the Richmond Schools. Hodgsons charge £1 per journey for anyone under the age of 19. This would mean a cost of £390 or so for a pupil who attends every school day throughout the year, hence a saving of more than half of the County cost of £816pa.

Arriva charge £1.20 per journey. The Hodgson service from Barnard Castle to Richmond taking in villages from Newsham via Gilling should fit the bill now. However, the Darlington to Richmond service doesn't arrive in Richmond until 9.40am. A new service would be required from Croft, Dalton on Tees, North Cowton, Moulton and Middleton Tyas and this I am working on.

Integrated transport including bus services is part of the Mayor's portfolio. A substantial grant was awarded by the government to support integrated transport (some £6 million).

OFFICIAL

NYC's dire financial position is going to require considerable 'thinking outside the box'. I fully appreciate that no one wants to pay for something they have had for free but as things stand, without a further substantial increase in funding from the government, which earlier this year they said not only would there be no further funding , but they actually imposed further cuts in funding, then NYC will face bankruptcy in the year 28/29.

Naturally we are working on whole raft of savings initiatives to avoid this terrible prospect. The hated new Home to School Transport Policy was one. But the cost of school transport in the school year just ended was £52.5 million against a Government grant for this service of £44 million.

RICHMOND SCHOOL.

I had a most interesting and informative meeting with 3 Governors and the head Jenna Potter in June. It helped me to have a better understanding of their admissions policy which I really appreciated. I have had one parent contact me in May saying that due to the school being full they had been advised that their child would not be able to have a place. Given that pupils are being bused from Northallerton, Catterick and Leyburn this seemed harsh treatment for a child from a village not 5 miles from Richmond.

However, the school were at pains to point out that they would do their upmost to accommodate children from villages which are in their catchment area. There is a right to appeal if all else fails.

I had a similar meeting with the head of SFX Jenny Prime this week. This too was a most interesting and informative visit to a faith school and certainly helped me greatly to understand their ethos. I now have an understanding of their admissions policy and other factors in the day to day running of this Ofsted Outstanding school. The SFX admissions policy is one which I am frequently asked about by parents.

Well done to the staff and students of both schools who have vibrant, friendly and very successful settings.

WIND FARM ON FELDOM MOOR

It is very likely that a proposal will be brought forwards for 20 wind turbines with a tip height of up to 200m on a 2,700 acre (1,100 hectare) site on open moorland on Feldom Ranges south west of villages like Gayles. My understanding is that Fred Olsen Renewables is likely to submit an application to the Secretary of State for a 100MV wind farm. They have a dedicated website for the project https://hopemoor.co.uk/. This is a NSIP: Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project and so will not be determined by NYC.

It has not been submitted yet and NYC has not been consulted under any pre-application process. No comments on behalf of NYC have been submitted yet. Their website says, 'We anticipate our first stage of public consultation will be held locally in

the coming months. This will be followed by a second stage of public consultation later in 2026 at which we'll be seeking further feedback on our proposals'.

I would suggest that this will not be a proposal which will be welcomed by many.

RICHMOND SWIMMING POOL.

Following a public consultation which resulted in an overwhelming majority wishing for the pool to be kept open, it is proposed to spend £1.2 million to be taken from the strategic reserve fund, to do all necessary repairs including the main problem which is the roof. This work is likely to take 6 months or more.

But we need to be clear that when the pool is back up and running, it will be a case of 'Use it or lose it'. There were some 3,000 respondents to the public consultation but the number of people using Richmond pool is a fraction of this number.

Best wishes,

Angus Thompson.

!5th September 2025.

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