

County Councillor Janet Sanderson  
Thornton Dale & The Wolds

E-mail: [Cllr.Janet.Sanderson@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Janet.Sanderson@northyorks.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01751 474516

**Report for Thornton Dale Parish Council Meeting Date 7 July**

Responsible Councillor Janet Sanderson

e-mail: [cllr.janet.sanderson@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.janet.sanderson@northyorks.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01751 474516 Mobile: 078 3355 3014

First of all may I wish a very belated congratulations to all parish councillors elected in May and offer you my support as both District and County Councillor.

Last Month the leader of NYCC John Weighell stepped down handing the leadership over to Cllr. Carl Les. Cllr Weighell is the longest serving leader of a county council holding the position for nearly fourteen years, a fact which has surely contributed to the stability of NYCC during this time. With the change of leadership came an inevitable reshuffle of the cabinet and I now find myself executive member for children's services, a challenging job but a position I am honoured to undertake.

At our executive meeting yesterday, we received the "Highway Condition Annual Report 2014/15" a hot topic for many of us living in rural areas. The "lesser used road" (categories 4a, 4b & 5) network have clearly been hit the hardest in these times of austerity and though there has been recent capital investment directed to these roads, it is estimated that this network will continue to make up about 80% of the maintenance backlog across the county. To improve the condition of the category 4 network to that which existed prior to the very harsh winters of 2011 and 2012 would require an estimated £56 million to be spent.

Two useful highways tools for residents and councillors are –

1. A pilot scheme to track roadworks. Information about all road works around the county, can be found on an interactive map [www.northyorks.gov.uk/notices](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/notices)
2. Online reporting of potholes – a little more complicated but worth the effort. Start at [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk) and go to "**Transport & Streets**" from the home page. Then "**Highways & maintenance**" and on to "**Roads - Potholes**" take the "**Report a pothole**" tab and you can make your report. You can also track its progress.

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### **Thornton Beck**

I understand that the Environment Agency (EA) are to be in attendance at this meeting so I thought it timely to appraise you on the work done last year with a team of residents and local steak holders including Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, County and District Council, Pickering Fishing club and Local Land owners/businesses.

Our initial contact was with Steve Wright ([steve.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:steve.wright@environment-agency.gov.uk)) a group of us walked the area above Thornton Dale and Dalby to assess siltation problems. The area was divided by the EA into three sections to address –

1. Above Paper Mill Farm to Dalby.
2. Paper Mill to Railway Station (Including Thornton Dale Village)
3. Below Railway Station

We were lead to believe that there was funding to be awarded which would address the situation and that we would be informed if we had been successful in September 2014.

September passed without any information from the Environment Agency however, later in the year I was contacted by Peter Stevenson ([peter.stevenson@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:peter.stevenson@environment-agency.gov.uk)) to say that even if we were not eligible for the grant, we would be given some funding as we had been such an active group within the community. Needless to say, nothing more was heard from the Environment Agency.

In May, after a very dry spring, the level of the beck down Maltongate looked critical. I was on the point of contacting Mark Young NYCC flood officer when I met TD PC chairman with the EA assessing the situation.

The next day, some of the weed was removed which alleviated the immediate problem however there is an obvious and ongoing management situation to be addressed.

It is worth noting at this point that there is a history of broken promises from the EA which was first drawn to my attention by Cllr Acomb several years ago. I understand that this has been mainly due to changes of staffing within the EA and restructuring.

A great deal of effort has been put into addressing this situation by several interested parties so it would be very frustrating to see this issue return to the starting post once again.

I have had a recent communication from Peter Stevenson (EA) who informs me that he has been promoted and that he has passed on this issue to James Duke his successor who will be contacting me.

My own personal feeling is that a local management plan is required for the maintenance of the beck and this would be best handled by the PC with the blessing of the EA. However if the issue continues to be left unaddressed then NYCC as lead flood authority would be brought in as a last resort.

*Janet Sanderson*