

YCC Steering Group Meeting

Online (Zoom), 16th July 2025

Attendees: Henrietta Stock, Jennifer Potter, Jenny Kent, Katy Brooke (Minutes), Andy D'Agorne, Denise Craghill, Liam Herringshaw, Adrian Lovett, Anna Gniwotta, Louisa Page, Will McDonald, Sophia Cheng

Apologies: Shaun Gibbons, Dael Robinson, Sam Perry, Jamie Sims, Peter Roderick, Holly Hennell

1. ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING

- New meeting schedule formalised.
- Comms Working Group successfully launched and present today.
- Sam Perry shared NFU contact with Adrian – no further progress due to capacity constraints.
- Shaun to include YCC in consultation on climate policies – ongoing.
- YCC logo refresh deferred until comms group more established.
- Website/newsletter updates ongoing and successful.

Actions:

- ☐ **JENNY:** Share York Central Partnership and Combined Authority food contacts with co-chairs.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Follow up with Johan on YPIP community funding.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Meet Sam Perry in August re. anchor institutions.
- ☐ **COMMS WG:** Explore a new YCC logo that better reflects the Commission's work, potentially via a schools design competition. Holly noted Dogeatscog may be able to support with final design.

2. CO-CHAIRS' UPDATE

- Met with Vicky Blakey-Archer (St Nick's) to discuss support for YCC.
- Attended YNYCA conference and follow-on discussions on updating 2034 net zero plans.
- Progressed project ideas with University Sustainability clinic.

- Held launch meeting for new comms team.
- Presented at Green Business Forum.
- Had a deep dive on city climate action plan with Shaun.
- Met with John Gray (Planet Southbank).
- Supported Katy with the first commission-wide newsletter.
- Held focus meeting on commission-wide event for York Environment Festival (YEFest).
- Attending the City Strategic Leaders Forum on Thursday.

3. UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

Good Food York Alliance (Adrian)

- Focus on resilience (e.g. Tim Lang's Just in Case report).
- Need for regional collaboration with North Yorkshire and YHCC.
- Cross-working with Health and desire to engage more with Waste group.
- Planning a "Good Food" communal event for YEFest.
- Limited progress due to resource constraints.

Health and Climate (Louisa for Peter)

- Continued collaboration with Good Food group.
- Planning YEFest event on extreme heat and impacts on vulnerable people; potential speakers from University of Leeds.
- Group valued as a space for networking and sharing best practice.
- Will work with Comms group to increase visibility.

Transport (Andy)

- Active City Conference hosted in York – national profile and high-level participation.
- Connection made with Living Streets working in York schools.
- YEFest: Planning an online event in early October about bike/walking buses for school travel; will avoid clashing with other events.
- Comms support requested for branding and publicity.
- Discussed need for alignment with the Commission's impact evaluation approach.

Comms (Anna)

- Group launched two weeks ago; 21 volunteers.
- Leadership team established (covering internal/external comms).
- OASIS-style plan drafted; survey conducted to understand volunteers' skills and interests.

- Planning to assign comms liaisons to working groups.
- Next steps: follow-up leadership meeting, full group meeting, begin producing outputs.
- Katy and others thanked for the first newsletter; future collaboration encouraged.

Future Economy of York (Sophia for Sam)

- Group meeting every 6–8 weeks; capacity remains low but consistent.
- Business Sustainability Roadmap is being developed with the University's Sustainability Clinic as a student project.
 - It will signpost York businesses to existing sustainability resources.
 - First meeting w/c 22 September; completion expected by January 2026.
 - The group plans to share it through Comms and Combined Authority channels.
- YEFest: Exploring a panel event on bioenergy (including carbon capture technologies).
 - The aim is to encourage informed dialogue with diverse perspectives, avoiding polarisation. Considering inviting Drax.
 - Andy raised concerns about platforming Drax; Sophia clarified the intent is constructive debate, not controversy.
 - Jenny noted the Combined Authority is also exploring the issue and can share expert input.
 - Jennifer reminded the group to align with the Commission's values: challenge, convene and collaborate.
 - Future Economies have other ideas for a YEFest event

Future Buildings (Denise for Jamie)

- The group is struggling slightly due to limited capacity – active members are already involved in other retrofit-related initiatives.
- Focus remains on adding value rather than duplicating existing work.
- Members are contributing to the York & North Yorkshire Routemap to Carbon Negative and Retrofit Strategy.
 - Consultations expected Sept–Oct; implementation from March 2026.
- A planned meeting on planning policy and retrofit (postponed due to a conference clash) will be rescheduled for autumn.
- YEFest: No standalone event planned, but group is open to contributing to a Commission-wide event.
- Current priorities:
 - Clarifying how planning policy can support retrofit (e.g. supplementary guidance).

- Sharing best practice and retrofit case studies.
- Working with Comms to promote examples and address barriers.

Connecting with Green Spaces (Will for Holly)

- Last year's YEFest events were high-effort with limited impact, so won't be repeated this year.
- A York green spaces spreadsheet has been created, covering public and non-public areas, and built on contacts from previous activities.
- The group is now prioritising actions where it can add unique value, given limited resources.
- Will highlighted the group's key strength as a connector and enabler, rather than event delivery.

Other Groups

- **Waste and Circular Economy:** No representative present.
- **Educators for Climate Action:** Georgia has stepped down as Chair; still active in schools work. Group seeking new leadership.
- **Waterscapes:** No representative present.

Actions:

- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Identify a new chair for the Educators working group.
- ☐ **DENISE:** Follow up with Issy to explore potential collaboration or alignment with the York Retrofit Network.
- ☐ **JENNY:** Share expert input or contacts from the Combined Authority's work on Drax and carbon capture with the Future Economy group, to inform planning of the YEFest event.
- ☐ **SOPHIA:** Share details of Louisa's Green Business Forum energy event (run by CYC) with the Future Economy working group, to avoid date clashes and explore potential coordination or input.

4. YORK ENVIRONMENT FESTIVAL UPDATE

- A small group met to discuss a Commission-wide event for YEFest and proposed a climate-themed treasure trail in Rowntree Park.
 - Aim: Showcase the work of each working group and engage the public in a fun, accessible format.
 - Suggested format: A one-day weekend event, with themed stations, activities or quizzes.
 - Resource-light and constrained to the park to keep it manageable.

- Hetty noted the event would only go ahead with strong support and capacity from across the Commission.
- **Responses:**
 - Anna supported the idea and suggested partnering with organisations like Make Space for Girls and York Creatives for materials, marketing and limited funding.
 - Louisa highlighted overlap with the [York Walking Festival](#) and suggested aligning with it and promoting through the [BetterPoints scheme](#).
 - Denise noted the child-friendly theme aligns with YEFest priorities and suggested it could serve as a team-building opportunity for the Commission.
 - Suggested seeking sponsorship for prizes.
 - Volunteered to join the organising working group.

Actions:

- ☐ **WG CHAIRS:** Confirm YEFest working group event details (including contact points) by 31 July.
- ☐ **COMMS GROUP:** Support promotion of upcoming YEFest events.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Set up a YEFest planning group to take the proposal forward.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS & ANNA:** Draft a basic structure and communications outline by the 31 July YEFest submission deadline.

5. MEASUREMENT AND IMPACT DISCUSSION

- Jennifer and Hetty introduced this as the YCC's next major priority: to define how success and impact will be measured over the next 1–4 years.
- They emphasised the need for this framework to be developed internally, reflecting the Commission's own values and strengths.

Key discussion points:

- Denise suggested starting with soft metrics:
 - Increased visibility
 - Increased engagement
 - Increased action
- Andy:
 - Emphasised the need to assess outcomes of events such as those during YEFest.
 - Suggested post-event follow-ups (e.g. 2-month surveys) to gauge behaviour change.

- Proposed future focus areas:
 - Behaviour change (e.g. school streets, women's safety in active travel)
 - Re-engaging major employers and anchor institutions around travel planning and new developments.
- Jenny noted:
 - Ultimate success is reducing emissions – but acknowledged this is hard to attribute or measure directly as a volunteer group.
 - Suggested perception-based measures (e.g. through public surveys or sampling).
 - Emphasised the Commission's potential to create a non-partisan space for climate conversation.
 - Education and youth engagement are crucial areas to influence.
- Hetty recommended developing a baseline public perception survey soon, to allow future comparisons and evidence of progress.
- Jennifer added that clarifying impact measures will also help focus and align working groups' efforts and resources, especially where capacity is limited.

Actions:

- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Begin drafting a framework for measuring impact, based on this initial input.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Identify potential methods for gauging public perception (e.g. baseline survey).
- ☐ **WG CHAIRS:** Reflect on what success looks like in your area, and share 2–3 meaningful, realistic impact measures with Jennifer and Hetty.

6. AOB

Collaboration with Other Climate Commissions

- Adrian raised the need for better connection with other commissions to share learning, avoid duplication and divide focus.
- Hetty and Jennifer are meeting with Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission and others to explore this.
- A follow-up update will be shared once clearer collaboration models are developed.

YEFest

- Confirmed: YCC will run a "Convene the Convener" event at YEFest, bringing together climate-active organisations in York to map collaboration, overlaps and partnership opportunities.

- Some concern raised about capacity to deliver both the treasure trail and “Convene the Convener”.

Future Internal Event – Commission Collaboration & Ways of Working

- There is interest in organising a YCC-wide session to focus on how members work together, strengthen relationships and collaborate more effectively.
- Comms team will scope this and share a proposal in due course.

October Steering Group Meeting

- Next meeting scheduled for 22nd October (in the morning).
- Will include a presentation from Shaun on York’s Climate Action Plan – members encouraged to come prepared to engage with Council priorities.

Offers of Support from Co-Chairs

- Hetty and Jennifer invited working group leads to contact them if support is needed – e.g. co-chairs attending WG meetings or helping with direction.
- Jennifer encouraged suggestions on any resources the Commission needs to increase effectiveness – send to her directly.

Social Event

- Proposal for an informal social gathering (e.g. at Spark) to help members build relationships outside structured meetings.
- Details to follow soon.

Actions:

- ☐ **KATY:** Circulate the Steering Group Meeting recording to the group.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Continue conversations with other regional commissions and report back on collaboration opportunities
- ☐ **COMMS GROUP:** Finalise logistics and submission for Convene the Convener event.
- ☐ **COMMS GROUP:** Plan a Commission team-building and ways of working session.
- ☐ **CO-CHAIRS:** Explore options for a social gathering.
- ☐ **ANNA:** Follow up with Jennifer & Hetty to confirm whether the YEFest trail event will proceed, based on capacity.
- ☐ **ALL:** Prepare questions for Shaun’s October update on the Climate Action Plan.