

York Climate Commission

Steering Group Meeting – Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 23 September 2026, 08:30–10:00

Venue: Online

Present: Hetty Stock (Co-chair, chairing), Jennifer Potter (Co-chair), Katrina Snelling (Ecology), Sian Goodwin (People), Cllr Jenny Kent (left early), Katy Brooke (minutes)

Apologies: James Shipley (Infrastructure), Katie Thomas (Governance), Shaun Gibbons (CYC).
Written updates were received from James, Katie and Shaun.

Actions

Action	Owner
Invite other organisations to join the Infrastructure WG (carried forward)	James
Check whether any charity policies have been shared, ahead of the Trustee board meeting	Hetty
Continue drafting charity policies and templates	Katie / Governance WG
Review and revise the members' pack for Jennifer's sign-off	Katy & Halina
Feed back to Katie anything missing from governance templates	WG leads
Send Jenny Kent details of the Haxby farm shop application	Sian
Raise the Haxby farm shop application with planning	Jenny Kent
Consider follow-up to meetings with Richard Webb and Jane Gibson	Co-chairs
Include the Sustainable Business Guide call-out in the roundup	Katy
Send a short email update to Steering Group on long table event highlights (After 3 October)	Sian
Update the doughnut project mapping with feedback	Hetty
Review the doughnut with working groups and identify where each has or could have impact	WG leads
Add doughnut mapping to the next steering group agenda	Co-chairs
Include the CYC Circular Economy position paper call-out in the roundup	Katy
Comment on the draft core comms messages circulated by Jennifer	All
Rewrite the job ad for comms working group lead	Jennifer
Post the comms lead advert as a news item on the website	Katy
Promote the comms lead advert on LinkedIn	All
Think about possible venues for the spring annual event	All
Schedule 2027 steering group dates, starting in January, and circulate	Co-chairs

Review of actions from last meeting

- **Working group mailing lists:** Katrina has reviewed her list. People drop in and out depending on the topic, but most still respond, so her group is fine. Sian noted the same people appear across all working groups. She suggested two lists: one for people who want to stay informed, and one for people signed up to take an active part. Hetty said leads should flag any issues.
- **York Community Woodland engagement report:** Sian hasn't seen it; unclear whether Paul sent the report.
- **Sustainable Business Guide:** Complete. James has spoken to Angela, and his update is covered under item 2.
- **Invite other organisations to join Infrastructure WG:** Not known. Carried forward to check with James.
- **Charity policies:** Governance WG plans to work on these over the next quarter. Policies will be needed for the Trustee board meeting in a couple of weeks.
- **Members' pack:** Jennifer has shared it, and Katy and Halina are reviewing it. The aim is to send it to all existing members and new joiners, so it tells them everything they need to know about being part of the Commission.
- **Governance templates:** These are on the shared drive (e.g. terms of reference). Hetty encouraged leads to contact Katie for support or to suggest anything missing.
- **Minute-taker for each working group:** A council representative now sits on each working group. Hetty clarified that the role is mainly a link into council activity, such as consultations, and the representative can also help with minutes to ease the load on leads.
- **Water quality scrutiny paper:** Complete. Jenny [shared it in the chat](#), and Katy included it in the roundup a few weeks ago.
- **Standing agenda item for CYC/YNCA updates:** Complete.
- **Long table food event:** Complete (see item 2). Sian said the event is sold out with 125 attendees, so it doesn't need to go in the next roundup.
- **Digital agency:** Complete. Jennifer has secured a local creative agency (see item 4).

1. Update from co-chairs

Doughnut Economics workstream

- Doughnut work will largely inform next year's priorities. It has two strands:
 - **Vision:** a picture of York as the most thriving city it can be at some point in the future, shaped by a wide range of citizens and not just people already engaged on climate.
 - **Data snapshot:** where York currently scores well and poorly against the doughnut metrics. Together, the two strands allow a gap analysis between where York is now and what is possible.

- A pilot visioning workshop was poorly attended but produced some good ideas. It showed that a 2–3 hour open workshop asks too much of people. The new format is shorter and more guided, with a "shopping list" of ideas per area that people can vote on or add to.
- New format will be run at Aviva on 14 October. A list of other venues is being compiled, and a possible online survey is being considered.
- Data group met on 22 September. The amount of existing data is too much for volunteers to work through in detail, so the group is focusing on the metrics most relevant to York.
- Hetty is keen to test the vision with people outside those already engaged. She's interested in whether wider adaptation and resilience messaging will filter through into people's thinking.

Stakeholder meetings

- Positive meeting with Richard Webb (CYC Chief Executive) who is supportive of the Commission. Follow-up needs thinking about.
- Co-chairs met Jane Gibson OBE (Chair, Stakeholder Action Group, York Central) this week. Jane has a wide network, particularly among small citizen-representative groups. She wants to challenge the view of York as uniformly affluent and to make sure the needs of more deprived areas are represented. She's keen to connect YCC with the York Central developers, who seem to be doing a lot on sustainability, so YCC can collaborate where they're doing well and challenge where they could do more.
- Jennifer was reassured by the developers' emphasis on regenerative practice. They use a decision-making philosophy that considers the impact on people 100 years ahead. Follow-up with both contacts will be key.
- Co-chairs due to meet other regional climate commission chairs in Leeds that afternoon.

2. Working group updates and doughnut mapping

Ecology (Katrina)

- Working group meeting on Thursday this week. Attendance varies with meeting dates and times, and Katrina will ask the group how best to keep people engaged.
- The group has agreed to support a member-led initiative (Adam) to bring together groups and individuals working on green spaces in the city. Katrina and Guy Wallbanks (CYC) are updating contact details on the list from the former Green Spaces group. The gathering is likely to be in November, after the York Environment Festival. The group will discuss its role, and Katrina wants to explore gaps where Ecology WG could support current activity in the city.
- Katrina met Angela (Community Engaged Learning, University of York) and Meryl about two projects:
 - short messages linking ecology to climate and health benefits (e.g. trees providing shade in hot weather)
 - video project on York's green spaces, building on members sharing favourite green spaces and why they matter. The idea is for students to produce one video as a template for more.

- Jennifer suggested each working group could hold a once- or twice-yearly gathering of all groups in its area, members or not, to explore collaboration.
- Katrina: YCC can't offer funding, but it can share knowledge and connect people.
- Hetty agreed and likes the idea of an annual convening per working group. The YCC is often seen as a connector locally.
- Sian: Setting the next meeting date at the end of each meeting, or having a fixed regular slot, helps maintain engagement. Katrina agreed in principle but said finding a date is currently difficult.
- Sian is meeting Joyce and Alistair (education representatives, People WG) next week, and there may be links with Katrina's university work.

Infrastructure (James – written update, presented by Hetty)

- Call-out for volunteers for the Sustainable Business Guide. Only James, Brendan and Sam are involved so far.
- The guide belongs to YCC to develop as it wishes, with no commitments to the University of York on how it looks.
- The guide was co-developed with the University through Angela Purdham's programme. The writing needs work to make it professional and impactful.
- Waste-related conversations are under way. Sam Taylor (St Nicks) has put James in touch with Re Yorkshire, but they haven't spoken yet.
- A call-out on school tree planting is going out this week.
- Jenny said earlier that schools tree planting won't happen until next year; unclear whether these are the same initiative.
- A working group catch-up is overdue; James will arrange it after annual leave next week.

People (Sian)

- **Long table event:**
 - The event opens the York Environment Festival and represents work by YCC and Good Food York Alliance.
 - Trials the community conversation method Sian proposed for the working group. She framed each conversation and connection as part of a feedback loop that builds change over time, linking lived experience with governance and local business.
 - Attendees include MPs, councillors, growers and community groups. The asylum group is providing catering and the venue, and volunteers are helping with logistics.
- **Climate Action Fund:**
 - Sian is working on a food-system bid led by North Yorkshire (possibly broader).
 - The fund is for step change in infrastructure, not existing projects.
 - The bid looks at how community work is integrated into governance, funded and recognised, and at fair livelihoods for people working in food.
- **Education:** The education sub-group largely runs independently. Sian wants more visible engagement of young people, e.g. a long table at a university college using its catering facilities.

- **Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Food System Network:** Sian is supporting its work, including a proposal for a food resilience strategy and a more action-focused way of working.

Governance (Katie – written update, presented by Hetty)

- The group met last week and reset after losing momentum over the summer. Its focus to the end of the year is:
 - finalising key policy documents and templates/assets for working groups
 - coordinating YCC responses to key consultations. Paul McCabe has sent a list of upcoming CYC reports YCC could comment on.
 - horizon scanning for funding opportunities
 - mapping a process to develop an impact monitoring framework, building on the doughnut work.
- Katie coordinated the YCC response to the YNYCA Strategy for a Sustainable Future consultation. Volunteers enjoyed the short, task-and-finish nature of it. The challenge is making sure responses reflect a Commission view rather than individual views.
- Funding horizon scanning links to the ethical fundraising policy still to be developed. The impact monitoring work should connect with the doughnut data strand.

Doughnut project mapping

- Hetty has plotted the projects discussed at the last meeting onto the doughnut as a starter for ten. The aim is to explain the Commission's work as keeping York in the doughnut through collaborating, championing and challenging.
- **Ecology:**
 - The favourite green space campaign sits against air pollution and biodiversity loss, and health on the social foundation. Katrina welcomed the inclusion of health.
 - Connecting with other groups sits around education and knowledge-sharing.
 - Hetty noted the campaign is harder to run without a comms team.
- **Infrastructure:** The Sustainable Business Guide and school infrastructure/adaptation shared learning (e.g. what schools did in the summer heat) are plotted across several areas. Climate ambassadors also appears on the slide.
- **People:** The long table event is plotted against food and health. Sian said it's also about political voice. She said bringing communities together fits social equity, political voice, and peace and justice. Hetty agreed to add these.
- Jennifer: Each working group could go through the doughnut and identify which areas it currently influences or could influence.
- Hetty agreed. The mapping is iterative and will be revisited once the vision and data work is complete, feeding into next year's strategy. She hopes to use a version at the Aviva sustainability day.

3. Update from CYC and YNYCA

YNYCA (Jenny – given at the start of the meeting)

- The adaptation and resilience piece Jenny shared is due for approval shortly.
- YNYCA Strategy for a Sustainable Future goes to Cabinet on 2 October. Jenny wants a launch with key players (major businesses, regional partners, ideally a minister) focused on delivery.
- Local Net Zero Accelerator programme: This is a public–private partnership, and the full business case is awaited. YNYCA has asked government for £7m seed funding, and alternative sources such as North Yorkshire pension funds are being explored but have been resistant so far.
- Schools tree planting is being prepared but won't happen until next year.
- Haxby farm shop: Sian asked about a farm shop application in Haxby, reportedly rejected after local objections. Jenny said planning reforms mean very few applications will go to committee in future.

CYC (Shaun – written update, presented by Hetty)

- **Y&NY Climate Change Adaptation Study:**
 - Due to be published shortly.
 - Identifies a wide range of risks for York that won't be felt equally.
 - Assesses vulnerability through exposure, susceptibility and adaptive capacity.
 - Concludes that the cost of inaction is likely to be significantly greater than the cost of adaptation.
 - Shaun recommends reading at least the [executive summary](#).
 - Hetty has seen an earlier version of this analysis. It would be useful to comment if there's an opportunity.
- **Green Business Forum:**
 - Returns on Thursday 15 October at Patch, focusing on energy, water and waste efficiency.
 - Free, but [booking is required](#).
 - Hetty noted there has been a gap due to council resourcing. YCC has spoken there before, and it's a good link with smaller York businesses.
- **Climate Change Action Plan refresh:** To be published in November. Shaun thanked YCC members and working groups who contributed.
- **Circular Economy position paper:** CYC is developing a position paper on the Circular Economy in York. Anyone involved or able to contribute should email Issy.Burkitt@york.gov.uk.

4. Comms pro bono support – key messages

- The agency has offered four things:
 - brand one-pager
 - 10–12 social media posts
 - Flyer
 - roller banner.

- Jennifer has asked them to start with the first two: a one-page brand guide (colours, logo, design rules) for a consistent visual identity, and 10–12 posts forming a reusable bank of core messages. The posts will be for LinkedIn only for now, alongside reposting others' news. The agency is waiting on content. Jennifer wants the steering group to agree the messages.
- Sian asked what documentation already exists. Jennifer said there's a purpose document and the annual event slides covering what, how and why. Sian distinguished core messages (the essence of who YCC is and what is unique) from social media content (news). Core messages should come first and run through everything. A short core-proposition document based on the what/how/why would do.
- Two key strategic messages are that YCC collaborates, champions and challenges, and that it uses Doughnut Economics as the framework for York's sustainability.
- Sian suggested these content threads:
 - ways to get involved, at three levels: follower, actively engaged, or joining the team
 - showcasing community stories
 - the Commission's journey over its first year, including priorities and progress
 - interactive posts such as polls and questions.
- LinkedIn is business-focused and generally gets less engagement than Instagram or Facebook. Every post should include a call to action (follow, share, comment), as the algorithm rewards interaction.
- Hetty agreed the audience is businesses and people working in York rather than the wider community. This is a positive first step, and visible comms may encourage more volunteers.
- Roller banner and flyer would need print funding. They may be more useful next year, possibly alongside a new website.

5. AOB

Comms lead recruitment

- Jennifer proposed a third attempt at recruiting a comms lead and group, by reusing and editing the previous advert, posting it as a news item on the website and promoting it on LinkedIn. No objections were raised.
- Sian suggested also using Reach, a volunteer platform linked to York CVS that has recently been saved from closure.
- Hetty: The Commission needs to be clearer about the role. Past adverts sought a strategic lead to convene a group, but the day-to-day asks were hands-on tasks like posting and writing. A strategic lead would quickly need volunteers willing to do those tasks.
- Sian described the Joseph Rowntree Theatre's fully volunteer marketing model: a rolling group of about six volunteers, a weekly meeting, a clear two-hours-a-week expectation and a structured approach.

Annual event

- The event will move from January to spring (March/April), giving more time for the doughnut work and better energy.

- Neither Merchant Adventurers' Hall nor Homestead Park is available. Homestead Park would only work with funding for a marquee. Merchant Adventurers' Hall may be free for an evening event, but daytime would be charged.
- The event usually attracts about 100 people. The venue needs space for both a briefing/update session and interactive workshops.

Dates for next meetings

- No December meeting. With the annual event moving, the next steering group will be in January 2027.
- 2027 meetings will follow this year's pattern, alternating 08:30–10:00 and 16:00–17:30.