Minutes of Board Meeting 20th July 2026

Held at 8, Westgate, Ripon

Board Present and constituting a quorum: Richard Compton, DL (Outgoing Chairman), Stuart Baldwin, Rick Jones (Vice Chairman), Mark Lancaster (Incoming Chairman), Justin Scully, Stephen Craggs, Andrew Williams, Megan Green. Tony Watson (NYC rep).

Others Present: Lilla Bathurst, (Manager), Layla Martin (Comms) Juliet Hawkins (Liaison)

Apologies: Rebecca Layton

Proceedings

The meeting was called to order by RC (Chairman) at 6:00pm	
RC welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting including Tony Watson, Head of Economy and Tourism at NYC. TW introduced himself and his role including his responsibility for North Yorkshire BIDs. TW explained that either he or Michaela Young would be our contact at NYC going forward. RC thanked him for attending. RC reminded the Board that the meeting was being recorded (with the recording being destroyed after minutes are approved), to declare any conflicts of interest on the agenda and asked if there was any change to the register of interests. RC declared an interest in GYS/Yorkshire Ag. RC asked if the Board approved the minutes from the May Board and approval was given.	

Actions from previous meeting

GYS – various - *See agenda item.* Apprenticeships - *Kleek has a new content creator course. Harrogate College to attend September board meeting as observer.* Stay Awhile Signs- *Cost total at present: £1,170 per sign. Working on 3 missing ones. LB to ask RCC for contribution.* GEO vs SEO - *In progress.* Blogs via email - *LB has substack – selected blogs are going via email c. monthly.* Christmas Market / Gift Fair - *Initial discussions with Cathedral have been positive.* St Wilfrid's Stars - *LB will send out email.*	LB ML/LM LB

Items for Discussion

<u>GYS</u> RC stated that he thought the stand was excellent and thanked everyone who helped including ML, AW and JC. LB explained that they had learnt lots from attending including how to structure activities to get the most engagement. LB will do a full report in due course however she confirmed that 600 email addresses had been collected and 4 winners contacted about the prize draw. Engagement was overwhelmingly positive and the Hornblowers had proved very popular. LB confirmed that the stand had won one of only 5 merit awards from the Yorkshire Ag committee which was a great achievement in the first year. LB thanked all the attractions who had been involved, donated prizes and helped during the week. LB will write to RCC thanking them for their contribution and to thank both AW as mayor and the 2 Hornblowers. TW explained that his predecessor had a long term strategy of withdrawing from GYS which he had only committed to for a year and therefore VNY would be in a position to collaborate next year which could include providing team members to help staff the event. This was welcomed by LB who stressed that whilst she was happy to do the show again it would not be for 4 days at 14 hours per day again. AW suggested that the Nidderdale Show would be a good one to attend. LB explained that she doesn't have the capacity to do this show in 2026 but with ML and TW would look at the full calendar and plan which events to attend. TW will share the master event list with LB. <u>Summer</u> LB explained that the trail is underway and thanked LM and JH for organizing it so well. The climbing wall and facepainter is booked in and LB will liaise with RCC over cross-marketing events. [LB has since explained to RCC that dual branding of events is not something that the BID undertakes as levy payers need to be clear on what their money is going towards]. <u>Creative Streets</u> LB confirmed that the pre-application for planning was with NYC and she was expecting confirmation of a meeting soon. LB has structured a 3-way agreement between the BID, Antony Prince and the foundry which she will discuss with AP after St Wilfrid's Procession. LB asked if she could call on TW if needed at any point in the process and TW confirmed she could. YNYCA have confirmed that they will make an advance payment which will help with cash flow.	LB LB TW LB/ML TW LB LB TW

<u>UK Town of Culture bid</u> LB explained that Ripon had been unsuccessful but the process had been useful and would serve well for other funding applications. The shortlisted towns were: Small towns: Ilfracombe, Isle of Bute, Lerwick, Sandown, Strabane, and Stockton Town Centre Ward Medium towns: Corby, Great Yarmouth, Leith, Pontypridd, and Port Talbot Large towns: Basildon, Birkenhead, Grimsby and Rotherham TW explained that he thought that Ripon had been viewed too central for a map-based exercise. TW went on to say that NYC and YNYCA are looking at the legacy of this process and may have a small amount of funding to bring some of the ideas forward. <u>Tour of Britain</u> AW explained that he had met with Karl Battersby and Melisa Burnham on site to agree that RCC could erect screening to hide some of the area on the corner of Low Skellgate and Water Skellgate from TV cameras. RCC have committed £1000 to this. They are also looking at what can be added to the Bedern Bank roundabout to promote Ripon. LB said that the pop-up event tent could potentially be used on the grass on the corner of Low Skellgate and Water Skellgate to screen it but explained that she was away on the actual date. TW confirmed that VNY were collating images of all the places on the route to give to the Tour of Britain to use and as part of their campaign. <u>Digital update</u> LM updated the Board as follows: Since the last board meeting, the Visit Ripon website attracted **6,511 active users**, generating **18,223 page views** and **51,068 events.** While overall website traffic was lower than the previous comparison period **key events increased by 24.9%**, indicating that visitors who did access the site were more likely to complete meaningful actions. Content relating to events, visitor information, walking routes and food and drink continues to generate the highest levels of engagement, demonstrating strong visitor interest in planning trips and discovering experiences within the city. The website has retained the number 1 spot on Google for the following search terms: events in ripon, ripon bid, ripon events, what to do in ripon and visit ripon. Instagram delivered excellent growth during the reporting period with **56.9K views (+89.8%)**, **3.4K reach (+68%)** and **718 content interactions (+40%)**. Consistent engagement throughout the period, combined with strong performance during the	AW

Ripon Theatre Festival demonstrates the growing reach and effectiveness of Visit Ripon's Instagram content. Facebook: Visit Ripon's social media performed strongly during the reporting period, with **172.6K views (+35%)**, **1.3K content interactions (+51%)** and **310 link clicks (+133.1%)**. While unique viewers dipped slightly to **41.5K (-5.4%)**, engagement increased significantly, driven by the Ripon Theatre Festival weekend. <u>Financial update</u> SB updated the Board on the finances compared to budget which were all generally in line with forecasts. <u>AOB</u> TW said he would give a quick 5 minute update on NYC at each meeting. On the Town/City Investment Plans TW will send over a summary of what he is working on including his tourism board which is chaired by JC. One thing that the tourism board had raised was for North Yorkshire attractions there was no way to get an award in the Visit England Awards – that has now been resolved so that there are categories for small and large visitor attractions in North Yorkshire plus best hotel and serviced accommodation. TW continued to say that there was some funding coming through for supporting community Christmas events. There is also the opportunity for F&B businesses to become a top-end partner of Visit North Yorkshire for free and alongside that will sit a VNY campaign highlighting F&B. TW has managed to get Lady Borwick (Chair of Visit England) up to NY for a second visit on Thursday and she will be visiting Newby Hall among other NY places. TW went on to say that Andy Burnham had confirmed that the visitor levy would definitely be coming so VNY want to be in the correct place to champion rural places and this visit gives him the chance to influence national policy. JS confirmed details of the York-Boroughbridge-Ripon-Fountains bus service (LB has promoted already) and said that they would be pushing the flip side of this in their marketing saying "if you are coming to Fountains, you can get the bus to Ripon whilst parked for free at Fountains". TW mentioned their separate fund for promoting sustainable travel. AW requested a meeting with LB regarding Christmas Thursdays and Saturdays in December.	TW/JS AW

SB reminded everyone again to nominate people and businesses for the St Wilfrid's Stars. SC asked whether there was any news on the transport hub and works and improvements to be done there. AW explained that there was a separate piece of work ongoing at the moment on the hub and he would report when able. LB stressed the need for really advanced warning on it to enable businesses to plan for disruption. RC congratulated LB for getting the BID through to a 2nd term, thanked the Board for all their hard work and welcomed ML the new Chairman.	AW

RC thanked everyone for their attendance and concluded the meeting at 7:00pm.	

Future Board meeting dates: 21st September 2026, 17th November 2026, 19th January 2027, 16th March 2027, 18th May 2027