



**Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council: How A New Parish Council Was  
Created In Pannal, Yorkshire**



### Headlines:

- The villages of Pannal and Burn Bridge are in the Harrogate district of North Yorkshire.
- This case study tells the story of how the Pannal Village Society triggered a Community Governance Review, successfully establishing a parish council for Pannal and Burn Bridge.
- The case study provides an example of good practice for campaigns aspiring to establish a town and parish council, giving advice on how to build a good relationship with the principal authority and how to overcome challenges throughout the campaign.
- The main lesson to share from this case study is that where a campaign group works positively over a sustained period with both officers and members of its principal local authority it is possible to complete the full campaign journey. To this end Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council held its first elections in May 2016, working closely in partnership with Harrogate Borough Council.

### Why A Council Is Wanted:

Then Pannal and Burn Bridge campaign group wished to establish a parish council as a new parish council is able to increase the village's ability to manage its assets and to influence development plans in its area, being a legacy of the Pannal Village Society.

The Pannal Village Society was created in the early 1990s under the initiative of a former Harrogate Borough councillor at the time, who had a firm commitment that Pannal was missing out by not having a parish council. Parish Councils are statutory consultees in planning matters and, as such, have to be consulted on planning issues within their parish and, in Harrogate, have an opportunity to present their views at relevant council meetings. Thus, from the outset, one of the main purposes of the Society was to monitor planning applications and make comments to the Borough Council when appropriate, concentrating on significant applications.

The area faces a continuous growth in population, as its proximity to Harrogate attracts more residents to the two villages, which also pride themselves on very popular leisure facilities such as a golf course and the cricket club. The Pannal Village Society has been actively contributing to planning consultations, on issues such as Local Development Plans and individual planning applications with a significant impact on the villages. So when the Pannal Village Society became the main campaign lead in the creation of a new parish



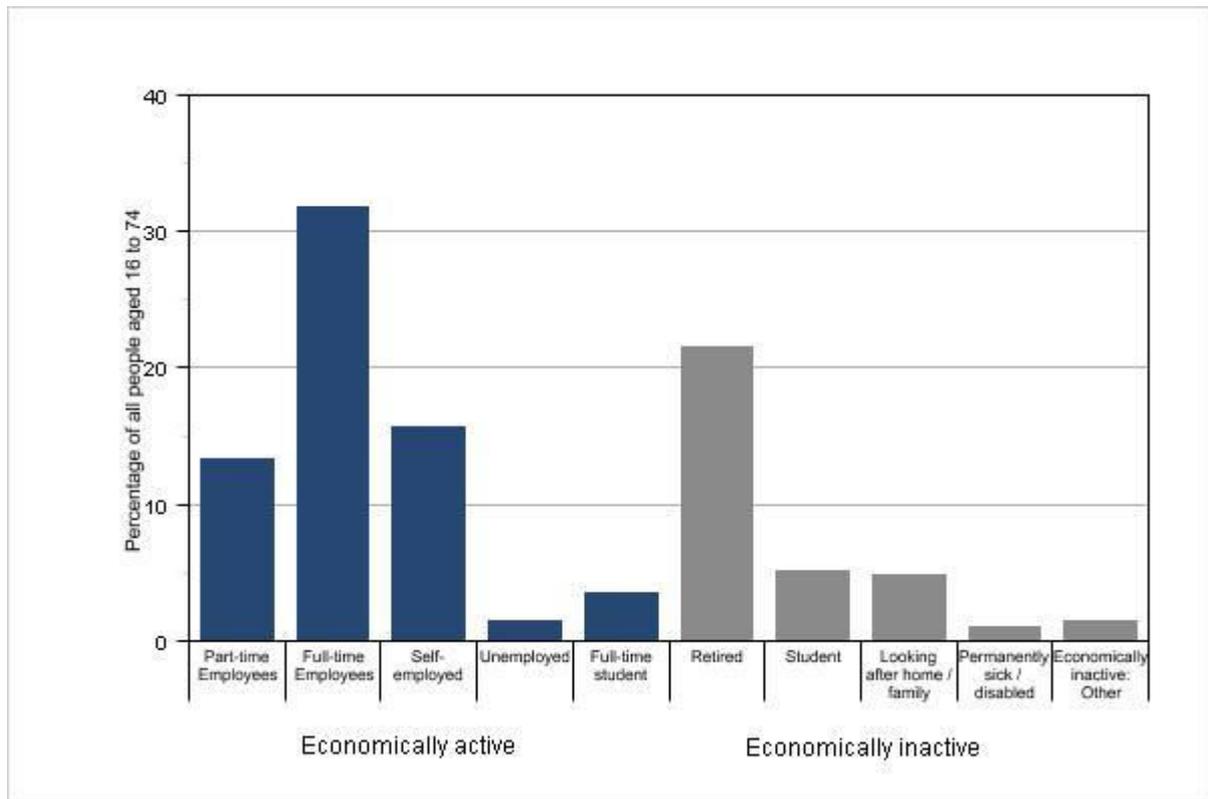
council for the village, its main interest was to ensure that the parish council provided the village with a stronger voice on planning applications.

In 2014 the Government Planning Inspector declined Harrogate Borough Council proposals for housing and employment to 2024. The Pannal Village Society was concerned that with no plan in place, Harrogate Borough Council will struggle to reject inadequate proposals from developers. So it was decided that it would be in the best interest of residents to have the presence, strength, representation and influence of a parish council. As a result Pannal Village Society launched a petition to trigger a Community Governance Review (the process through which a new parish council is created).

In addition to having the ability to influence planning decisions, it is hoped that the parish council will better administer services which the Pannal and Burn Bridge communities need, yet which the borough and county councils are unable to provide. Therefore, it is hoped that the creation of a parish council in the area will improve residents representation, better service delivery and better local administration for residents than hitherto has been the case.

#### **Campaign Demographics:**

Pannal is a village in the Harrogate district of North Yorkshire. The village is situated to the immediate south of Harrogate and in many ways is a suburb of the town. Pannal is well known for its golf course, which attracts people from across the town. The neighbouring village of Burn Bridge now forms part of the new parish council boundary. Pannal, Burn Bridge is home to commuters to Harrogate and Leeds, as well as a preferred place by many for retirement. The population of Pannal and Burn Bridge is 2,100. Pannal and Burn Bridge is well connected to Harrogate, York and Leeds.

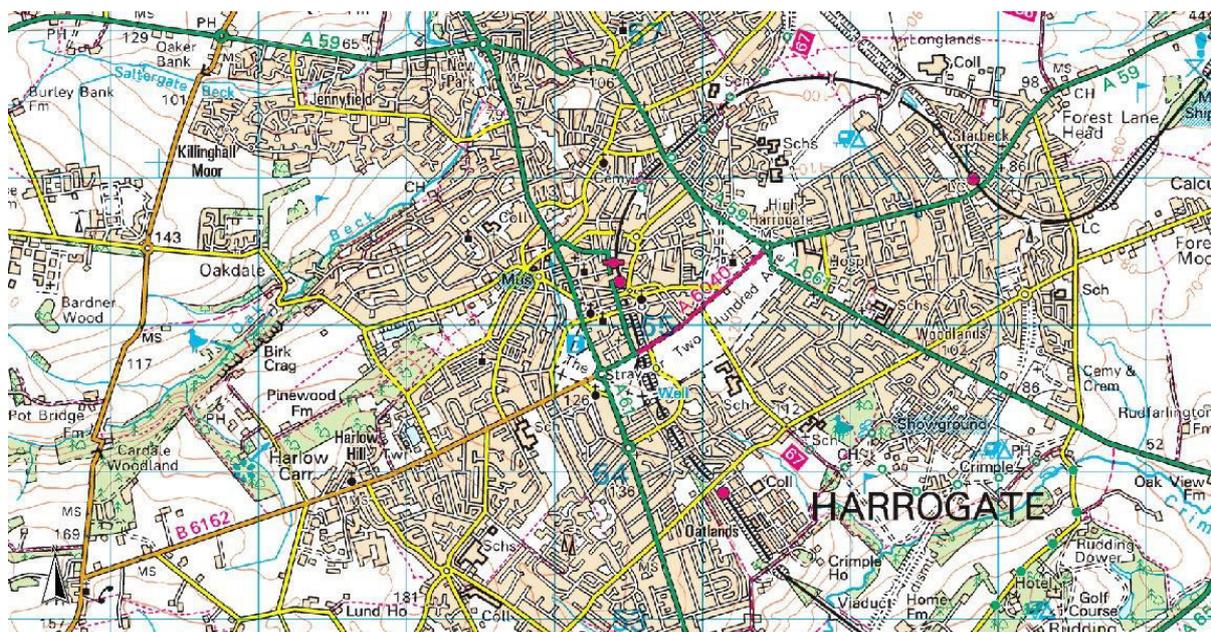


Above: Graph illustrating the economic activity in the Pannal and Burn Bridge area based on data from the 2011 Census, (Office of National Statistics, 2016).

The area is ranked 32,773 out of the 32,884 English neighbourhoods in the Indices of Total Deprivation 2015 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015), making it one of the least deprived areas in the country. In addition, the unemployment rate is lower than the average unemployment rate in England. According to the Office of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>, in March 2013 Harrogate had an unemployment rate of 3.9%. This compares with the average 7.8% in England. The average weekly total household income in Harrogate was estimated at £910 in 2008, in comparison to £570 for the Yorkshire and the Humber region.

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<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/NeighbourhoodProfile.do?a=7&b=6275121&c=HG3+1JZ&g=6454580&i=1001x1012x1013&j=6309537&m=1&p=9&q=1&r=0&s=1456139447656&enc=1&tab=4&inWales=false>



Above; map of Pannal area of Harrogate, North Yorkshire

## Who Are The Key Partners / Stakeholders Involved?:

The campaign for the establishment of a parish council in Pannal and Burn Bridge was sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government, receiving a grant under the New Councils' Programme (a national Government programme running between 2013 and 2016 to promote the creation of new parish councils in previously un-parished areas). This funding was accessed by the Yorkshire Local Councils' Associations from the National Association of Local Councils (which was managing the programme).

The Pannal Village Society managed and drove the campaign for a Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council. It worked very closely with the Yorkshire Local Councils' Associations, and the National Association of Local Councils. Campaign leaders have also been liaising with Harrogate Borough Council, who have been very helpful throughout the campaign.

## Progress With Campaign To Date:

The Pannal Village Society opened a petition requesting Harrogate Borough Council to conduct a Community Governance Review of the area in June 2014. The petition gathered 283 signatures very quickly, exceeding the minimum of signatures required, and the petition was formally submitted on the 18th July 2014 triggering a Community Governance Review in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The campaign group experienced no serious problems during 2014-15.

Harrogate Borough Council launched a consultation with electors and other interested parties between the 12 May and 28 July 2015, which registered 68.7% of responses in favour of the creation of a Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council.



Above; Campaign leaders celebrating their success in establishing a parish council in Pannal.

On 17 September 2015 the Harrogate Borough Council General Purposes Committee considered the consultation responses alongside a report from the Head of Legal and Governance, and made a recommendation to full council that a parish council be established for Pannal and Burn Bridge. This decision was endorsed by full council on 7 October, 2015.

The Borough Council found that a parish council will add value to the community of Pannal and Burn Bridge, delivering services which the Borough Council and the County Council are not able to provide, enabling other sources of funding to be accessed and facilitating the delivery of actions on the community-led action plan. It was agreed that the area of Pannal and Burn Bridge is a clearly defined community, separate from Harrogate town, with its own identity and the creation of a parish council will enhance community cohesion.



### Campaign Management:

The Pannal and Burn Bridge campaign did not encounter any major problems. As Peter Stretton, campaign champion, confirmed: *“There were no serious problems to overcome. Whether this was through luck or good planning it is difficult to say although I like to think that we got things right from the outset. It helped that the vast majority of the community supported us”*.

Certainly, having an active village society that has been mobilising residents for more than a decade around issues that affected their community, also eased the process. The dedicated members of the Pannal Village Society, good planning, and a good communication strategy have been key to a successful campaign in Pannal and Burn Bridge.

### Outcomes - Learning From The Campaign:

The campaign to set up a parish council for Pannal and Burn Bridge was effectively managed. Under the umbrella of the Pannal Village Society, the campaign received substantial attention from the residents in the area, with petitions being lodged at the village shop, the village Hall and the local pub. The unity of the two village communities also contributed to the petition being submitted in a relatively short period of time.

The Pannal Village Society also made sure that all residents in the area were aware of the proposal to create a parish council by organising a public meeting and distributing leaflets to all households in the villages. A representative from the Yorkshire Local Councils’ Associations attended the public meeting to help answer questions about what a parish council could do for the community.

### How Was Progress Made So Far?

Peter Stretton, Pannal campaign champion, is very clear about why he felt the Pannal campaign succeeded: *“Having a committed group in the Village Society who were enthusiastic in pursuing the objective.”* Indeed, what all successful campaigns have in common is an active team of volunteers, willing to dedicate their time to do whatever needs to be done to keep the campaign running.

*“The other key was to take adequate time to plan the details of the campaign so that nothing hindered progress.”* – Peter Stretton, Pannal campaign champion.



Good planning is another essential element to ensure that successful campaign is delivered. Planning every step ahead means that there will be very little that can take a campaign group by surprise. Knowing how many petition signatures are needed, whether the principal authority accepts an e-petition, establishing a strategy for managing opposition and making sure all residents are correctly informed are just some of the things which a campaign group may want to consider at the beginning of its campaign. Although campaigns do not always go to plan, by knowing what its next steps are, a campaign group also knows what its options are when a contingency is needed. In addition, planning also ensures that a campaign group maximises resources available. By coordinating activities a campaign group ensures that the time that campaign members have the possibility to offer towards this cause is well spent.

It was clear that the Village Society had a long term vision for the area which included giving residents a say against inappropriate development. This vision chimed with residents who could see that a parish council would have the necessary statutory clout to defend the area's interests in an optimal way.

Chris Pilkington, Deputy Chief Officer at Yorkshire Local Councils' Associations: *"The Pannal and Burn Bridge campaign was a good example of a model campaign to create a new parish council and was remarkably 'challenge' free. This was partly because the Village Society had a clear vision for the community and could bring residents along with them in regard to the proposal and partly because Harrogate Borough Council were open minded about creating a parish if public support could be demonstrated."*

The Parish Council was elected in May 2016 with 9 candidates competing for 7 places and the first meeting elected a Chairman and a planning committee. Although it is still in the process of defining its agenda, the council has decided to give priority to items included in the community-led action plan, such as creating a Neighbourhood Plan and consulting residents on a parking permit scheme, as well as cooperating with the Borough Council to improve street lighting in dark spots, and improve the local bus service.

### **Campaign Lessons To Share With Others:**

The support of the Pannal Village Society has helped the campaign, by attracting more immediate attention than the campaign would have otherwise received. This, as well as the small size of the electorate, allowed the petition to be formally submitted in a relatively short period of time. Campaigns to set up a new parish council can benefit from the support of civil society organisations, as often these organisations have already well established means of dispersing information and the necessary expertise of promoting the campaign.



Although cooperation can suit both parties' interests, the campaign for a new parish council should not be overshadowed by the individual interests of participating organisations involved.

**Who Can I Contact?:**

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**Other Information:**

**More information on creating a Council: The NALC 'Create a Council' web page:**

<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/create-a-council> .

**To see template resources such as a media release, leaflet and poster, please click here:**

<http://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/create-a-council> .

**NALC Create a Council:** <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/create-a-council> .

**NALC Power to the People Resource:** <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/publications> .

**Harrogate Borough Council Consultation response:**

<https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/mslg/Documents/CommGovReview-ConsultationAnalysis.pdf> .

**Harrogate Borough Council Community Governance Review:**

<https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/mslg/Pages/Community-Governance-Review.aspx> .

**Pannal Village Society:** <http://www.pannalvillagesociety.org.uk/> .