

BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 4 December 2006, at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall

Present Cllrs Hurtley (Chairman) Adams, Barrington, Burton, Faichney, Heigh, Marshall, Rushton, Stannard & Wills, DCllr Camacho. Also, the Clerk Mrs Burton, a reporter from the Lancaster Guardian and 1 parishioner.

Cllr Hurtley had rung ahead with a message that he may be delayed. In his absence the vice-chairman, Cllr Wills, took the chair and started the meeting.

1. Apologies Cllrs Barnes & CCllr Ireton
2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Heigh declared an interest in items 6.1.5, retrospective planning application 08/2006/6913. Cllr Marshall declared an interest in item 6.1.1, planning application 08/2006/6868. Cllrs Barrington and Rushton both declared an interest in item 8, Town Hall matters, and Cllr Barrington also declared an interest in item 10, the Youth Café. Cllr Hurtley declared an interest in item 6.1.2, planning application 08/2006/6855 when he arrived. These were recorded in the book.

3. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meetings on 6 November 2006 were proposed by Cllr Marshall, seconded by Cllr Heigh and agreed.

4. Police Report

PC Hayes started by informing the meeting that senior police were now acknowledging that there were problems with neighbourhood policing system, particularly in rural areas where manpower levels were lower. The system introduced in April is to be reviewed in the light of falling clean up rates and increasing levels of crime, with a possible return to the previous system. During November there had been 4 reports of damage to cars on Goodenber Road and Robin Lane, with petrol being siphoned from a vehicle on Furness Drive. A car had been stolen from Wesley Place and written off, with 4 juveniles being charged with the offence. There had been 6 reported thefts from around the parish, but the bush stolen from Moons Acre had reappeared. The anti social behaviour on School Hill continues, and the culprits have been identified – but in the absence of a statement they have only been warned. Thieves had been apprehended attempting to steal from the gas pipeline store.

Cllr Wills commented on the problems on School Hill as when further vandalism to the seats was reported in progress no officer was available to respond. He added that the seats had been removed to prevent further problems prior to them being refixed.

PC Hayes said that he had followed up the comments about alcohol legislation from the last meeting and been informed by the licensing department that, currently, there are insufficient reported problems in Bentham for the order to be granted. This will be revisited if the level of problems increases.

Cllr Adams mentioned the report in the Bentham News regarding the lack of police at the Bonfire. This report had not come from the Bonfire Committee, but Sgt Thornthwaite had promised that officers would be present. PC Hayes said that he had, as yet, not been told why no officer was present.

PC Hayes added that recruitment for Community Support Officers was continuing, although no one had applied for the Ingleton area post.

5. CCllr & DCllr Reports

DCllr Camacho had attended the Humber and Yorkshire Awards the previous week. DCllr Carl Lis had won the award for the Cllr who had made the most difference, Craven employee Bruce Dinsmore had been made Employee of the Year, and the IT Department had been runners up in their section. This was quite an achievement for a small Council and he felt that Craven should be congratulated.

As a DCllr he had recently been approached for information under the Freedom of Information Act. DCllr Camacho said that he had taken advice and been told that he was not obliged to provide the information and that he should direct the person requesting the information to the Council. He felt that this was useful advice for the Cllrs present, that FOI requests should be made of the Council and not of the individual Cllrs.

Cllr Adams asked if there was any truth in the rumours regarding more houses on Wesley Place, which as far as DCllr Camacho was aware there is not. Cllr Marshall asked when the LDF draft would be published and was informed that it was imminent.

Cllr Hurtley arrived at this point, apologised for his lateness, and took the Chair.

6. Planning

- 6.1. Applications

6.1.1. 08/2006/6868 Change of use of land to caravans / chalets (resubmission of application 08/2006/6658) at Gate House, Wennington Road, Low Bentham.

Cllr Marshall declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or ensuing vote. Cllr Stannard noted that the caravans would probably look better than the current greenhouses. Cllr Adams added that the revised plans had moved the access to the site and therefore removed some of the original objections to the site. The following discussion centred on the lack of pedestrian access and the condition of the road. It was

felt that altering the 30mph zone would probably have little effect and that having a caravan site would increase the number of pedestrians using the road. Cllr Hurtley proposed that a site visit by the planning committee should be requested before a decision is made on the application. This was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: That a site meeting with the planning committee be requested before a decision is made

- 6.1.2. 08/2006/6855 New agricultural entrance to field no. 3550 & termination of 2 existing vehicular entrances at field 3550 opposite Tennant House, Clapham Road, Bentham.

Cllr Hurtley declared an interest, and Cllr Wills took the chair. Cllr Marshall noted that originally some of this land, between the road and a hedge, had been owned by the Council. The hedge had been removed by the owner previous to the vendor. He felt that the ownership of the land should be checked as access may be a problem if title had not been transferred.

RESOLVED: That ownership of the land between the road and the original hedge should be resolved before this application be approved.

- 6.1.3. 08/2006/6884 Infill at rear to form single storey billiards room – retrospective application – at Gill Farm, Wennington, Lancaster

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.4. 08/2006/6885 Infill at rear to form single storey billiards room – retrospective application – at Gill Farm, Wennington, Lancaster – Listed Building Consent

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.5. 08/2006/6913 Retrospective siting of 2 feed silos at Unit 3, Bentham Business Park, High Bentham.

Cllr Heigh declared an interest.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval as long as the silos are in keeping with the area

- 6.1.6. 08/2006/6916 Greenhouse & shed (retrospective) at 15 Holme Park, Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.7. 08/2006/6924 Change of use of agricultural building from feed & machinery store to building for keeping livestock & horses at Fold Bank Barn, Mewith, Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

08/2006/6929 Remove gates and install Cranbourne Gates modified with straight top & no higher than existing gate posts at High Barn, Greystonegill Lane, High Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

6.2. Decisions

- 6.2.1. 08/2006/6714 Two storey gable extension at 26 Robin Lane, High Bentham – GRANTED

- 6.2.2. 08/2006/6760 Change of use of existing station building to form Community Transport Office & Community Facility, Bentham North Platform Station Building, Station Road, Bentham - GRANTED

6.3. Correspondence

- 6.3.1. Removal of fir tree at Ellergill House – consent not required

- 6.3.2. Ian Swain response to meeting request

Mr Swain had written declining the Council's invitation, but offering to meet members at Skipton. The Council agreed that it could understand the reasoning behind this suggestion, recognising the workload of the officers involved. They decided that their views should be made more forcefully in future, and that the invitation should perhaps be taken up at a later date.

- 6.3.3. Ian Godfrey Developments meeting

Cllr Hurtley and Wills had met with Mr Godfrey regarding the Dalesview Development. Mr Godfrey wishes to transfer ownership of the amenity land, the land adjacent to the pump house, the crescent at the top of Butts Lane and the hawthorn hedge adjacent to the road into Council's ownership, in return for 5 years maintenance payments – estimated to be in the region of £5000.

Cllr Hurtley explained that this area included 8 large trees covered by TPOs, of which at least 5 required significant work. Cllrs Marshall and Heigh were against taking over this land as the offer will not cover costs for any period of time, after which the onus will fall on Bentham residents to cover the costs of maintenance. Cllr Adams added that the maintenance offer would need to be considerably larger and cover a longer period before the Council should even consider the offer.

Cllr Hurtley proposed that a letter should be sent requesting a more considerable sum before the Council accepted the offer. This was seconded by Cllr Wills. Cllr Stannard proposed that the Council should just reject the offer without further discussion, and this was seconded by Cllr Marshall.

The amendment was carried by 5 votes to 3, and therefore became the proposal. In a second vote on the new proposal the vote was tied 5:5, so the chair used his casting vote and the proposal was defeated 5:6. A vote was then taken on the amendment, i.e. to write asking for a more considerable sum. Again the vote was tied at 5:5, and the chair's casting vote was used to carry the amendment 6:5.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to Ian Godfrey Developments requesting a more realistic sum before the Council consider adopting the areas in question.

7. Highway Matters

7.1. King Street

Both Cllrs Hurlley and Heigh had received further complaints regarding cars parking across the access to King Street. In one recent incident a resident who has recently suffered two heart attacks had to wait 15 minutes before being able to get his vehicle onto the Main Street. Cllr Heigh questioned what would have happened if this had been an ambulance. Council agreed that this was a problem, not just with people parking to use the cash point, but with others leaving their cars on the double yellow lines whilst shopping on the Main Street. The clerk pointed out that a request had been made to NYCC Highways some months ago regarding the use of a KEEP CLEAR in this area

RESOLVED: That NYCC Highways be contacted again and the request for a KEEP CLEAR be reiterated.

7.2. Pye Park Footpath

A verbal request to tidy up the footpath entrance at Pye Park had been made by a resident, who has offered to do the work if the Council provides some gravel. In the following discussion it was agreed that this was the responsibility of NYCC or the landowner, who should be approached to do the work. It was agreed that the clerk should contact NYCC footpaths department first.

RESOLVED: That NYCC Footpaths be asked to improve the entrance to the footpath.

8. Town Hall Matters

Cllrs Barrington & Rushton declared an interest and left the room.

8.1. Minutes of meeting of 21 November

These were proposed by Cllr Adams, seconded by Cllr Wills and agreed.

Cllr Adams went through the items discussed.

The Tourist Information had requested to stay open for the winter months. The original agreement had been for 6 months (April to September), with storage over the winter months. Remaining open has cost implications in terms of heating, lighting and the extra costs in opening the building every morning. It was agreed that a further sum to cover the extra costs would be required. As the original agreement had been for £500 / 6 months, Cllr Adams proposed that a similar sum should be paid for the further 6 months. This was seconded by Cllr Faichney and agreed. Cllr Marshall asked that the usage of the TIC should also be clarified

RESOLVED: That a further £500 be charged for the Oct / March period.

RESOLVED: That a meeting be set up with the TIC to consider the rent for 2007.

An increase in hiring fees, which were held constant in 2006, was agreed at 7%. Whilst it was recognised that this was above the rate of inflation, the costs of both gas and electricity have almost doubled in the last year (with further price rises expected) increasing the running costs of the building

RESOLVED: That hiring fees increase by 7% for bookings in 2007.

8.2. Sound Proofing

Following a complaint to Environmental Health the Council had agreed to look at the problem regarding the noise emissions from the Town Hall. An acoustic consultant has looked at the building and a possible fix had been suggested involving sound proofing of the underpass. If this is to be done in the next financial year tenders will be required prior to the precept meeting in January. A specification should be drawn up and circulated to local building firms as soon as possible. Enquiries regarding procedure at Craven District Council had shown that MJ & Y Faichney, as local builders, could tender as long as Cllr Faichney took no part in the tendering process, and all tender documents considered by the Council were viewed blind, i.e. with company name removed, to ensure no bias.

RESOLVED: That local building firms be asked to tender for sound proofing the underpass before the precept meeting.

9. Accounts for payment

The accounts were proposed by Cllr Marshall and seconded by Cllr Adams

Mopps	339.00	J Burton	625.00
Viking Direct	63.26	R Green	430.56
M&M Joinery	473.25	C Louth	95.66
Yorkshire Water	104.32	Craven DC	84.00
British Telecom	153.84	HCS Ltd	21.42
Horton Landscaping	30.00	SLCC	95.00
B Hewitt	15.00		

10. Council Representative for Youth Café

Cllr Barrington declared an interest. Cllr Stannard asked for clarification, and it was explained the Youth Café is being run by Churches Together, from the Station building when the refurbishment was complete. A small management committee is being set up to run the project, and a Council representative had been requested. Cllr Heigh proposed Cllr Burton, as a Councillor with children, albeit young ones. In the absence of any further proposals Cllr Burton agreed to be the Council representative.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Burton be the Council representative for the Youth Café.

11. Correspondence

11.1. Precept Meeting 2007

The 2007 precept needs to be set before 22 January 2007.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Precept meeting be held on 10 January 2007 at 7.30pm in the Lower Hall

It was agreed that notices should be put up around the parish regarding the meeting. The clerk said she had sent notification for the December Bentham News although it had not appeared. Council requested that another notice be sent if the delivery date was in good time for the meeting. Miss Dowbiggin should also be asked to put a note in the Lancaster Guardian

RESOLVED: That the meeting be advertised around the parish and in the Lancaster Guardian

RESOLVED: That a notice be placed in the next Bentham News if the delivery date is prior to the meeting

11.2. Mrs Louth, Grasmere Drive

Cllr Adams had inspected the light from the outside, but needs to ascertain where the power supply is from. He and Cllr Wills will arrange to visit Mrs Louth shortly.

11.3. Land at Legion Hut

No further word has been received from Craven on this matter

11.4. DTI – Rural Post Office reply - received

11.5. NY Police reply - received

12. Reports from other bodies

Cllrs Adams had attended a joint meeting of the Council and Bentham Traders. The main topics had been the Christmas lights and parking. The new road traffic order had been explained and favourably received.

The Goodenber Road Play Area have passed their annual ROSPA inspection

The Community Bonfire is in a good financial state and there will be another in 2007.

Cllr Burton had attended a Bentham Development Trust Board meeting. It is likely that the TIC will be taken over by the Trust as they are VAT registered, which the current committee are not, this will be decided at the TIC AGM in March. Ann Ambrose had asked if she and Geoff Harman could come to explain the 'Can Do' fund to Council. It was agreed that an invitation be offered for the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That Ann Ambrose & Geoff Harman be invited to make their presentation on the Can Do fund prior to the January Council meeting.

Cllr Burton had also attended the BDT AGM at which the annual accounts had been presented. The lease for the Station is nearly signed. The refurbishment of the building will cost approx £80K and the funding is in place. There had been some questions raised regarding the use of the Extra Care fund at the surgery to pay over £4000 in Community Transport costs. Cllr Wills said that he thought this fund was for equipment and questioned if bequests would be made if people knew it was being used to pay for transport. Cllr Heigh suggested that the surplus in the accounts could be used to repay the money, but Cllr Rushton explained that these funds were earmarked for project work. She added that it was a surgery decision to use the funds in this way, and concerns should be voiced to them. Cllr Barrington asked to explain the history of the situation. When Community Transport was set up in 2000 they had met with the surgery regarding bringing people to the surgery to save time and costs in home visits. The volunteer drivers receive 40p/mile. The service has grown considerably and CT now spends at least 4 hours / week administering it.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to the surgery asking for clarification of the aims and objectives of the Extra Care fund.

Cllr Wills reported that he had been to 2 governors meetings at High Bentham school and the new school does appear to be progressing.

The LASRUG railway walks leaflet has been a success and is to be reprinted.

Cllr Barrington reminded the meeting about the Traders Christmas Fair on December 8.

13. Items For Information

13.1. Consultation on joint Lancashire minerals & waste development framework

13.2. Balfour Beatty Services

13.3. South Craven Community Action

13.4. Craven Voluntary Action Funding Guide

13.5. Craven Get Active Guide

13.6. Local Councils Update

13.7. The Hub No.1

13.8. Craven Events, Nov 06 – Feb 07

13.9. Lancaster District LDF News

14. AOB - minor items only

Cllr Barrington said that Community Transport's open day was in the Town Hall on 6 December.

She also asked about the sale of calendars at the Traders Christmas Fair. Cllr Adams said that he had a table organised and would be present at the event.

Cllr Heigh said that the Slaidburn Road sign was missing from Thickrash Brow and needs replacing. Cllr Faichney commented that the kerb between the Town Hall and the Black Bull was in need of repair as he had seen someone trip and fall into the road the previous weekend. The clerk agreed to pass these comments to NYCC Highways.

Cllr Marshall is attending a Community meeting with the police on 13 December, and asked to be informed of any issues that need to be raised.

He also said that he was not happy with the uninformed and incorrect comments regarding the school site in Bentham News and had been in touch with his solicitor regarding the article. He suggested that Bentham News should wait for a press release before printing information to ensure that it is factually correct. Cllr Adams added that the Bonfire article had also been factually incorrect.

Cllr Stannard commented on the Christmas decorations in the Town Hall. The clerk said she had been searching for replacements, but finding any of a suitable size was proving difficult so she was open to suggestions.

The Clerk reminded the Council about the coffee morning on 23 December asking for volunteers, cakes and raffle prizes. She also asked for suggestions of dates and possible venues for the Councillors Christmas Meal in January.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45pm