

BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 8 January 2007, at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall

Present Cllrs Hurlley (Chairman) Adams, Barnes, Barrington, Burton, Faichney, Heigh, Marshall, Rushton, Stannard & Wills, DCllr Camacho & CCllr Ireton. Also, the Clerk Mrs Burton, Ms A Ambrose, Mr G Harmer, a reporter from the Craven Herald and 4 parishioners.

Prior to the meeting the Council was addressed by Ann Ambrose from Active Bentham and Geoff Harmer of the Scarman Trust about the aims of the Can Do Investment Fund. This new fund, the first of its kind in Craven, is a combination of local assets and skills, access to training and £2000 held at a local level to allow local projects to fulfil local needs. A local panel of 9 people have been trained to assess grant applications, the first of which will be awarded in February, to a maximum of £200. There is also aid for larger projects to find funding. In other areas where CDIFs have been set up further investment has come from businesses and community organisations once they have seen the benefits of the Fund. The aim is to improve the community through greater local community involvement. At the end of the presentation Cllr Hurlley thanked both Ms Ambrose and Mr Harmer for their interesting talk.

1. Apologies none
2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk read a note from Democratic Services at Craven regarding the requirements of declarations of interest and when it is pertinent for members to leave the room.

Cllr Marshall declared an interest in item 6.1.4, planning application 08/2006/6991 as previous owner of the land in question. Cllrs Barrington and Rushton both declared an interest in item 8, Town Hall matters due to their involvement with other buildings for hire in Bentham and Cllr Barringtons management of the Tourist Information. Cllr Heigh declared an interest in item 6 during the general discussion as a site with problems is adjacent to a property owned by a family member. These were recorded in the book.

3. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meetings on 4 December 2006 were proposed by Cllr Marshall, seconded by Cllr Adams and agreed.

4. Police Report

PC McClurg said there had been a seasonal increase in the number of reported assaults between 15 and 27 December which were mainly domestic related. One serious assault had occurred in the early hours of New Year's Day in Low Bentham and investigations were continuing.

Further to previous comments that the current organisation of the police in the area was not working, the system is now under review. It is likely that the old system, with 7 officers at Ingleton and 8 at Settle will be re-adopted ensuring full 24 hour cover for the whole of the area. This could happen as early as 1 April.

CCllr Ireton asked about the reported drug problems in the area and PC McClurg replied that the police had been unable to substantiate the allegations and therefore no further action was taken. If further reports were made this would be reviewed.

5. CCllr & DCllr Reports

CCllr Ireton wished the meeting a Happy New Year and said that the new school for Bentham was now progressing, and would hopefully be open in September 2009. NYCC are to consider applying for unitary authority status and a decision will be made shortly. CCllr Ireton asked the meeting for their opinion on the replacement of the current 2-tier system. The general feeling was that this would be a costly exercise, particularly as Craven has some of the cheapest rates in the area – which would have to be equalised with other more expensive areas. He agreed to take this message back to the County Council.

DCllr Camacho had nothing new to report. Cllr Adams asked him if the newspaper reports about the sale of garages in Bentham were correct. DCllr Camacho said that it is extremely likely that they will be sold but that no firm decision has yet been taken.

6. Planning

6.1. Applications

- 6.1.1. 08/2006/6928 Erection of a 3 bed 2 storey residential property adjacent to Burton Road, north of Town Head Cottage, Low Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.2. 08/2006/6946 Alterations to barn to create changing rooms, function space & storage area at Sedbergh Junior School, Low Bentham

It was pointed out that the application listed Spanish Slate as a roofing material and Council agreed that, to be in keeping with other properties in the area, this should be changed to something more appropriate, e.g. Burlington or Welsh. Otherwise there were no objections.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval as long as the roofing material is more in keeping with the area.

- 6.1.3. 08/2006/6962 Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 08/2005/5537 to allow static caravan to be placed on site (in place of tourer) and erection of wooden building for domestic storage purposes at Clay Barn, Pottery Field, Waterside Potteries, Burton In Lonsdale.

Three letters of objection from residents at Waterside Potteries had been received. Cllr Wills said that this appeared to be development by stealth. Retrospective permission had been given to offset the fact that Craven does not have an official gypsy site and to placate the race card which was played at the time. He could see no justification in allowing this application as the inadequacy of the caravan had been pointed out by both this Council and the residents at the planning meeting - a point ignored by the planners and one which the applicant had strenuously defended, being adamant that it would be adequate for his purposes. Commenting on the application Cllr Marshall said that he had spoken to Craven's legal department to ensure that he could speak on this subject. He pointed out that a static caravan is not suitable for continued residential use, and that custom built statics can be as large as 40 x 20 ft. Cllr Adams was interested to note that, although the plans were incredibly detailed in most places neither the size of the caravan nor the height of the wooden building were noted. He felt and the meeting agreed that both these points needed clarifying. He added that the current barn should be suitable for domestic storage given the temporary nature of the current permission. Cllr Hurtley added that he did not think that family circumstance should be a planning issue – particularly on a temporary site and when it led to contravention of a previous decision

RESOLVED: That this application be strenuously refused. The site is temporary and permission was only granted 6 months ago, during which time there has been no change in circumstance – which is not a planning issue anyway.

- 6.1.4. 08/2006/6991 Removal of 70m of hedgerow at Burnside Nursery, Low Bentham Road, High Bentham. Cllr Marshall declared an interest and left the room. It was noted that much of this hedge has already been removed and so the application should really be retrospective. The Council had no objections to the removal as long as the hedge is replanted along the new boundary and native species are used

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval as long as the hedge is replanted using native species along the new boundary.

- 6.1.5. 08/2006/6993 Conversion of redundant ex-United Utilities Water Pumping Station to a camping barn for non-vehicular access (re-submission of previously refused application 08/2006/6672) at Badger Ford, Mewith Lane, High Bentham.

Cllrs Adams & Wills questioned the sense in a non-vehicular access camping barn in an area devoid of scheduled public transport (contrary to the design and access statement) and not on any major walking or cycling routes. Cllr Heigh added that, in her experience, Camping Barn users tended to be groups travelling by minibus and asked whether there would be another application in 6 months to allow vehicular access?

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for refusal as there is no demonstrated need for this type of accommodation in this area

- 6.1.6. 08/2006/6999 Change of use from Office to Dwelling at Bartle House, 12 Main Street, Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.7. 08/2006/7000 Retention of sign attached to industrial unit at Unit B1, Low Mills, Mill Lane, Low Bentham.

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

- 6.1.8. 08/2006/7015 Proposed Works to protected trees at 15 High Croft, High Bentham

RESOLVED: That this application be recommended for approval

6.2. Decisions

- 6.2.1. 08/2006/6788 New shop front, roof & windows at 19 Main Street, High Bentham – GRANTED
 6.2.2. 08/2006/6814 Storm porch to SW gable elevation at Laneside Barn, Mewith Head, Bentham – GRANTED
 6.2.3. 08/2006/6842 Amendment to permission 08/2006/6671 to raise roofline, alter front elevation to create access and amend side access to dwellings 2 & 3 at 28 Station Road, High Bentham – GRANTED
 6.2.4. 08/2006/6868 Change of use of land to Caravan / Chalets (resubmission of 08/2006/6658) – GRANTED

Cllr Wills noted that application 08/2006/6868 had been approved without recourse to a site meeting which this Council had requested on the grounds of safety. He added that it was not the first time that the Council had been ignored and asked who would be to blame if and when problems arose. He pointed out that two developments that the Council had recommended for refusal but had been passed by Craven now had serious problems attached to them and yet neither Planning nor Building Control were prepared to accept any responsibility. As one of these is affecting neighbouring properties and the other maybe he asked for clarification on the role of both Planning and Building Control from Craven. (At this point Cllr Heigh declared an interest). Cllr Adams agreed that this was important and proposed that a letter be written to Sian Watson, Head of Planning, asking for a definition of the roles and also for an explanation as to why the local Council is ignored when it is best placed to know about local issues.

RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to the Head of Planning asking for clarification of the roles of the Planning Department and Building Control in the development process.

6.3. Correspondence

- 6.3.1. Letters of objection to 08/2006/6962
 6.3.2. 08/2006/6884 & 6885 Retrospective infill at rear to form single storey billiards room at Gill Farm, Wennington - WITHDRAWN

7. Highway Matters

- 7.1. King Street reply - NYCC

Stuart Marshall had agreed to consider a KEEP CLEAR, but nothing will happen until the next financial year.

7.2. King Street reply – Police

The traffic warden is only part-time and therefore only comes to Bentham occasionally, however the local police will keep an eye on the area and ticket vehicles accordingly. In the case of blocked access a resident should phone the call centre and an officer will attend if deemed appropriate

7.3. Road Markings

Cllr Wills asked for a progress report regarding the poor road markings at the Lairgill narrows and at Ellergill. The Clerk had chased both of these and been informed that road marking teams come from Durham so need 2 days work in an area to make it worth while coming, also the paint cannot be applied in wet or frosty weather which has delayed things recently. The new road service means that the extra GIVE WAY cannot be burned off at Lairgill and must be chipped off or painted out, and therefore requires the Durham team.

Cllr Marshall pointed out that cost should not be an issue in these cases as they were contractor errors and therefore should be put right FOC.

8. Town Hall Matters

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

8.1. Tourist Information

A reply had been received regarding a meeting to agree the rent payable to the Town Hall, however neither date suggested was suitable.

RESOLVED: That further dates be sought, preferably in the evening

9. Accounts for payment

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

Mopps	508.50	J Burton	804.04
Cannon Hygiene	14.21	R Green	430.56
Stannah Lift Services Ltd	124.84	C Louth	76.44
Yorkshire Water	38.65	Craven DC	184.00
Hygiene Cleaning Supplies	63.75	Inland Revenue	83.50

10. Correspondence

10.1. Precept Meeting 2007

The Clerk circulated the Precept Grant applications for discussion at the meeting on 10 January

10.2. Citizens Advice Bureau

An update on the work of Craven CAB was received, with 2 advisers coming to Bentham every fortnight. The offer from Ms Cadbury to come and speak to the meeting was discussed and agreed

RESOLVED: That CAB be invited to address the meeting at a later date

10.3. Ian Godfrey Developments

A letter from Mr Godfrey had crossed in the post with Council's. This offered £3000 plus £500 legal costs to take over the amenity land at Dalesview. Council agreed to wait for a reply to their letter requesting a more realistic sum.

10.4. Ambulance Services in rural areas - received

10.5. Grasmere Drive Lights

The lights to the rear of both 7 and 23 now require repair. Craven Housing have ascertained that NYCC will not take over these lights. Cllr Marshall asked who owns the footpath now that Craven have disposed of the ownership of the houses. If the footpath is still in their ownership then surely they have a requirement for health and safety to illuminate the footpath

RESOLVED: That a letter should be sent asking for clarification of the footpath ownership.

10.6. Craven LDF Feedback Event 26 January 2007.

It was agreed that this was important and that Council should be represented. Cllrs Marshall and Barrington said they should be able to attend

RESOLVED: That Council should be represented at this meeting.

11. Reports from other bodies

Cllrs Adams said that the Traders considered their Christmas Fair to be a success, and reminded Council of their joint meeting on January 16.

Cllr Burton had attended a Youth Café Committee meeting. The Drop In Centre had opened in the Wenningdale on 2 January, the first session had been well attended and the feedback was good.

Cllr Marshall had attended the annual review of the Collingwood & Longstaff Charity. The showers will be fitted with features for the disabled to allow better access this year.

Cllr Heigh had been unable to attend the Playing Fields Association meeting but commented on the success of the football club. There are now 3 teams in the under 8s, with plans to add an under 12 section. An application for improved lighting is about to be submitted.

12. Items For Information

12.1. Craven Housing Homebuy Leaflet

12.2. NYorks Minerals & Waste Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options & Supplementary Sites Issues & Options

12.3. Asda Sites

12.4. Voluntary Sector Network Forum, 19 January

12.5. Parish Government Conference 2-4 March

12.6. Maritime Policy Green Paper launch

12.7. The Playing Field, Autumn 2006

12.8. LASRUG newsletter, September 2006.

12.9. Country Air, Winter 2006

12.10. YLCA Craven branch meeting 18 January 2007.

13. AOB - minor items only

Cllr Barrington had received a complaint regarding the state of the footpath at the side of the Coach House. Cllr Marshall said this had been raised in the past but as ownership of the land was unknown it is not possible to get it repaired.

She also suggested that the Low Bentham Playing Field Committee should have a meeting to agree the way forward. This was agreed

RESOLVED: That a meeting of the Low Bentham Playing Field Committee be arranged.

Cllr Heigh commented on the hard work of the children, Hanna Rushton, Kate Burton, Aaron Rushton-Pilling and Alex Burton at the coffee morning before Christmas and asked for letters of thanks to be sent to them.

RESOLVED: That letters of thanks be sent to the children involved with the coffee morning.

Cllr Wills asked if Bess Martin had responded about the Legion Hut land and if it could be chased.

RESOLVED: That the possible transfer of the Legion Hut land be chased

He also asked about the return of Blood Donor sessions to the Town Hall, which the clerk agreed to look into

RESOLVED: That the possibility of Blood Donor sessions returning to the Town Hall be explored.

Cllr Burton asked if something could be done about the potholes on the Lairgill car park and also enquired if there had been any response regarding the access to number 1.

Cllr Adams had been approached about the removal of the fallen tree at the end of Furness Drive. This is the property of NYCC and it was agreed that he should liase with the Clerk.

Cllr Faichney asked for NYCC to be told of loose kerb stones by Stonegate in Low Bentham

Cllr Stannard asked for NYCC to look at the red reflectors on the bollards by Ridding Lodge. These would suggest that traffic should travel to the right of them – which puts cars from Wennington in the field.

The clerk asked for suggested venues for the Christmas Dinner and agreed to get some dates from the Horse & Farrier.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.25pm