

**MINUTES of the Council Meeting held on Monday
7th November 2022, at 7.30 pm – in the The Ballroom,
Bentham Town Hall.**

Present: Cllrs Adams (Chair), Burton, Gerrie, Hill, Jones, Marshall, Paige, Pearce and Stannard. Cllr Ireton. The Clerk Christine Downey. Seven members of the public.

- 174 Apologies from members unable to attend: -
- 174.1 To Note Apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting. **None.**
- 174.2 To consider acceptance of reasons for absence. **None.**
- 175 Declaration of interests: -
- 175.1 To Note Declarations of Interest not already declared under members Code of Conduct or members register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. **None.**
- 175.2 To approve dispensation requests. **None.**
- 176 To Receive Comment & Concerns: Public Participation – to hear matters raised by members of the public or Cllrs with an interest (that are allowed to speak) either on agenda items or for future consideration.
- (NB: for non-agenda items Members of the Council are not permitted to respond, except to ask questions for the purposes of clarification; The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 20 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes).

A member of the public reported concerns regarding a dispute relating to the Punch Bowl, Low Bentham, which has been ongoing since January 2020. The concerns have been reported to the police and to Craven District Council. The police response is that it is a civil matter.

In view of the fact that the dispute concerns planning permission and licencing laws the full details have been provided to DCllrs Brockbank and Handley.

Cllr Ireton suggested that Bentham Town Council might consider writing to the licencing manager at Craven District Council and to the Chief Constable asking for updates on the situation.

Cllr Adams responded that threats of any kind must be reported to the police immediately; and that the matter will be an agenda item at the next full council meeting to allow the council to consider how it might be of assistance, and to agree a way forward.

A member of the public reported several instances of the bus failing to run. Cllr Ireton will report the service failures if details are passed on to him.

A member of the public raised a question regarding the condition of the fencing on the Bentham Bridge. The response was that this belongs to Network Rail and should be reported to them.

A member of the public reported that on Bonfire Night the fire engine had difficulty getting out because parts of the road were blocked by parked cars. And that some of the parked cars on the roads appear not to be tax or insured. The response was that the police should be informed about all uninsured and untaxed cars.

A member of the public reported that the library sign post is lying down outside Abbeyfield.

- 177 To Confirm the Minutes of the previous meeting of 17th October 2022. (Paper 2022/169)
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 17th October 2022 are agreed and be signed.
- 178 Police Matters: -
- 178.1 To receive the Police Report, if any, and allow members to ask questions for information.
Received.
- 178.2 To consider if there are any questions for Zoe Metcalfe, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and to agree a way forward. (Deadline for submission 14/11/22). (Paper 2022/170)
 It was reported that the meeting is on Tuesday 29th November at 6.30 pm, on zoom, and a registration link is supplied on paper 2022/170.
RESOLVED: Clerk to submit the following questions from Bentham Town Council by the deadline of 14/11/22;
- **What services/response do Bentham residents receive for their “Combined Fire Authority” and “North Yorkshire Police” charges?**
 - **What are the current staffing levels for Bentham?**
 - **Which incidents are prioritised?**
 - **How often is there a police presence in Bentham?**
 - **What is the detection rate in Bentham?**
- RESOLVED: Cllr Adams to organise the technology to allow interested councillors to zoom in to the meeting together, from the Town Hall on 29/11/2022.**
- 179 To receive a report from the Public Safety Officer, if any, and allow members to ask questions for information. **No report.**
- 180 To receive the Clerks Report (for information only). (Paper 2022/171). **Received.**
- 181 To receive reports from Cllr and DCllrs, if any, and allow members to ask questions for information. Cllr Ireton had nothing to report but was happy to take questions: -
- In response to a question regarding the current cost of living crisis he reported that visits are being made to food banks, to look at what grants can be supplied to help.
- In response to a question regarding how the changeover from CDC to NYCC will be managed he reported that a lot of working is being done now, on how the various council structures should be arranged, but that there is no agreement yet on how the committees should be structured, so there is a lot more work to do. Decisions on this will be taken at the 17th November council meeting. Cllr Ireton confirmed that everything that needs to be legal on 1st April 2023 will be in place. Another area where agreement has yet to be reached is regarding Taxi licenses and regulations. Craven has a policy of requiring CCTV in taxis, but other areas do not. It remains to be seen how this will be resolved.
- He explained that the “harmonisation” of the rates of council tax will result in the rate paid in Craven going up, because it has been a low-rate area. This harmonisation will take place over two years, and is an averaging of council tax rates. The harmonisation does not take into account the size of the population, or the standard of facilities, of each area. Final figures are not known yet, but the increase might be between £26 to £30, plus an inflation increase.
- 182 Bentham Masterplan: -
- 182.1 To receive an update on the Bentham Masterplan, if any, and allow members to ask questions for information.
It was reported that the surveys have now gone out, both to individuals and to organisations, and that the Masterplan group meets again tomorrow.

- 182.2 To agree a response to the consultation survey. (Paper 2022/172). Submission date is 30/11/2022.
RESOLVED: Councillors to send their responses to Cllr Adams, who will collate a Bentham Town Council response for discussion at the next town council meeting on 21/11/2022.
- 183 Planning: -
- 183.1 To consider and comment upon New Planning Applications: -
- 183.1.1 2022/24484/OUT. Outline planning application for residential development with all matters reserved except for access. Land North of Lakeber Drive, High Bentham, LA2 7JG.
RESOLVED: That the council has no objections to this application, subject to infrastructure and local services issues being adequately addressed.
- 183.1.2 2021/24502/TPO. T1, Pine, Fell. This tree has recently lost a large limb on the main stem. Ellergill House, Doctors Hill, Low Bentham, Lancaster, LA2 7DZ.
RESOLVED: That the council has no objections to this application.
- 183.2 To receive Planning Decisions – if any. (See Clerks Report). **Received.**
- 184 Highway Matters: -
- 184.1 To consider the problems caused by lack of dropped kerbs at the bottom of Robin Lane, and to agree a way forward. (Papers 2022/173 and 174)
 It was reported that the main concerns are: -
 The kerbs have not been dropped sufficiently to allow a mobility scooter to descend safely.
 The crossing points on either side of the road are only two tiles wide, and need to be four tiles wide.
 There is no signage to stop parking across the crossing points, and they are often blocked by parked cars.
 One side has not been installed correctly - the co-op side of the road. It is believed that the crossing points were installed by the Housing 21 developer, and not by NYCC Highways.
 It was also reported that there may be a safer option for crossing, which involves turning right out of Bowland View, and crossing at a higher point on Robin Lane.
 Bentham is in need of a proper scheme to address all of the highway issues and problems, as requested from NYCC.
RESOLVED: Clerk to send the press release to NYCC and Housing 21 after the car number plates have been blacked out.
RESOLVED: Clerk to point out to NYCC Highways that the arrangements currently in place at the crossing are not up to the job, and clerk to ask for an update on the request for a proper review, proposals from NYCC, and costings from NYCC.
- 184.2 To discuss arrangements for the gritting of pavements in High Bentham and Low Bentham and to agree a way forward. (Paper 2022/175)
 The arrangements last year were: -
 That the pavements were gritted when conditions were exceptional enough to warrant it.
 That the decision(s) that the conditions were exceptional enough to warrant pavement gritting were taken by any four councillors, without prior approval at a council meeting.
 That Thomas Brown was instructed to top up the grit bins as and when necessary.
RESOLVED: That the arrangements for pavement gritting during the coming winter are to be the same as last year.
RESOLVED: Clerk to instruct Thomas Brown that the pavement gritting arrangements are the same as last year, and that he may top up the grit bins as and when required again.
- 184.3 To consider what work needs to be done in order to bring Wenning Avenue to an adoptable standard. (Paper 2022/186)
RESOLVED: Clerk to send the request for details of what work needs to be done to bring Wenning Avenue up to an adoptable standard to NYCC for their attention.
- 184.4 To consider and note Highway Matters for information. Councillors can comment on any minor highway issues currently causing concern. NB: Councillors may report all concerns online to NYCC.

The library sign post is lying down outside Abbeyfield.
There is a post outside the chemist that needs to come out.

RESOLVED: Clerk to instruct Thomas Brown to remove the hand sanitizers from Main Street and Station Road.

185

To agree the Accounts for Payments as: -

Kingsdale Projects	Grass cutting, parish caretaking and installation of sign at PHPF.	2,015.00
YLCA	Councillor training webinar	33.40
Howson Ltd	Repairs to emergency lights as estimated	661.07
Salaries and mileage allowance	October 2022	3,322.00
Clerglass Cleaning	Window cleaning at Town Hall	110.00
Mark Paige	Insurance for Bentham Christmas Lights	231.00
Mark Paige	Christmas Lights	369.68
Glasdon	Nine new benches	5,456.38
WEL Medical	Battery for defibrillator at Bentham medical practice	192.00
Creative Theory	Council website as per quote	540.00
The Cumbria Clock Company	Deposit for quote on Town Hall clock repair	3,751.20
Craven District Council	Trade waste	55.10
Swalec	Unmetered electric supply	101.49
Premium Credit Ltd	Insurance	354.02
NEST	Pension contributions	171.32
Total Energies	Electricity town hall	346.82
TOTAL		17,710.48

RESOLVED: Approved

RESOLVED: To be authorised by Cllrs Adams, Gerrie and Burton.

186

To consider filling the ordinary vacancies by Co-Option and agree a way forward. (Paper 2022/176)

RESOLVED: Change the deadline for the submission of applications to 14th December 2022 and proceed with the advert.

187

To consider appointing Members as Council Representatives for 2022/2023 and to agree a way forward: - (Paper2022/177)

RESOLVED: That representation on outside organisations is agreed as listed below.

187.1 Bentham Area Refugee Support Group (BARSG): **Cllr Jones**

187.2 Bentham Environmentally Sustainable Town (BEST): **Cllr Pearce**

187.3 Longstaffe Educational Foundation: **Cllr Jones**

187.4 Patient Representative Group: **Cllr Stannard**

187.5 Victoria Institute: **Cllr Stannard**

187.6 YLCA 2nd branch representative: **Not applicable, 2nd rep not required.**

188

To consider appointing members to the following Committees: -

188.1 Building Maintenance

RESOLVED: Not to appoint members to a Buildings Committee at this time.

188.2 Marketing

RESOLVED: Not to appoint members to a Marketing Committee at this time

188.3 Open Spaces

RESOLVED: that the Open Spaces committee membership be Cllrs Burton, Hill, Paige, Marshall, and Stannard.

- 189 To consider the following draft policies: -
- 189.1 Clerk's Expenses Policy. (Paper 2022/178). **RESOLVED: Policy adopted.**
- 189.2 Sickness Absence Policy. (Paper2022/179). **RESOLVED: Policy adopted.**
- 190 To discuss the new website and agree a way forward regarding: -
- 190.1 To consider the draft website policy. (Paper 2022/180)
RESOLVED: Para 9.1: Amend to read "The Website Managers will be the Town Clerk, a paid external Website Manager, and up to two nominated councillors".
RESOLVED: Para 9.2: Amend to read "The Town clerk may add, remove and update items on the website".
RESOLVED: Para 9.3: Remove "if the changes required are urgent and the Town Clerk is unavailable".
RESOLVED: That, subject to the above corrections, the website policy is approved and adopted.
RESOLVED: The clerk to obtain costs of ongoing website management from Creative Theory in the first instance, and from Emma Greenep if necessary.
- 190.2 To nominate two councillors to be Website Managers.
RESOLVED: To appoint an external paid Website Manager and "up to" two nominated councillors.
RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Adams as a Website Manager.
- 190.3 To review the content currently on the draft site and agree a way forward. (Paper 2022/181)
RESOLVED: Not to upload the Bentham Town Council Risk Assessment to the website.
RESOLVED: Not to upload a record of deeds, articles and land register references to the website, at this time. To review this decision in two years' time.
RESOLVED: Not to include individual councillor contact details on the website.
RESOLVED: To continue to display individual councillor contact details on the public notice boards in High Bentham and Low Bentham – this includes landline numbers but not mobile phone numbers.
- 190.4 Agree a date to go live. **RESOLVED: New website to go live immediately.**
- 191 Buildings Matters: -
- 191.1 To agree a date for the postponed archive evening.
RESOLVED: Archive evening to be after the council meeting on 21/11/2022.
- 191.2 To discuss the public toilet opening hours and agree a way forward.
RESOLVED: That the public toilets at the Town Hall are to be open until 3 pm on Saturdays, until the end of March.
RESOLVED: Clerk to discuss arrangements for the opening of public toilets on Saturdays after March with the caretaker.
- 191.3 To discuss the position regarding Christmas Trees at the Town Hall and agree a way forward.
RESOLVED: Clerk to instruct Thomas Brown to put up two Christmas trees, and lights on the Town Hall, as last year.
- 192 To discuss concerns regarding sewage being discharged into the river Wenning and to agree a way forward.
 It was reported that United Utilities is the company who deal with sewage locally. There are worrying statistics about the amount of raw sewage being discharged into the river Wenning as sewer storm overflow. The following statistics are from 2021.
 The High Bentham sewage works spilt sewer storm overflow on 102 occasions, for a total of 1,238 hours, discharging raw sewage into the Wenning.
 Low Bentham spilt 95 times for a total of .368 hours.
 Clapham Beck, there were 3 discharges, for 37 hours.

It is a nationwide problem that is happening everywhere, not Just Bentham.

Cllr Pearce has spoken to Jemma Wilson from the Lune Valley Rivers Trust. They have found that higher up the river Wenning there are small fry, but the further down the river you come the more they die off because the river is so polluted. Jemma suggested that a possible way forward is to get bathing status, which obliges the Environment Agency to come out and make sure that the river is clean. This has been done in Ilkley. Jemma advised that there is an active group in Staveley (which is of comparable size to Bentham), with good strategies, who could be consulted; she is providing Cllr Pearce with a link to that group. She will also provide details of "Citizen Science" which might be a means of getting schools, BEST, and other interested groups involved.

The combined sewers are a contributing factor. As is the lack of inspectors.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Pearce will pursue this matter and report back further in due course.

- 193 Transfer of the footprint of the old toilet block at School Hill from Craven District Council to Bentham Town Council; To consider the terms of engagement and terms of business from Oglethorpe Sturton & Gillibrand, and the draft transfer and agree a way forward. (Paper 2022/182)
RESOLVED: Clerk to request the map that should accompany the transfer document.
- 194 To receive Letters of Apology in respect of the incident at the Town Hall. (Papers 2022/183 and 184)
Received.
- 195 To consider making nominations for the Craven District Council Legacy Sub-Committee Award, and agree a way forward. (Paper 2022/168)
No nominations.
- 196 To consider the following correspondence and to agree a way forward and/or a response: -
196.1 Letter of 14 October 2022 from Craven District Council regarding "Parish precept – arrangements for the financial year 2023/24". (Paper 2022/185)
RESOLVED: To advise Craven District Council that it is not possible for Bentham Town Council to confirm the precept amount by 31 December 2022. To let them know that the precept amount will be confirmed after the precept meeting, which is on 9th January 2023.
- 196.2 NALC Consultation document: PC7-22: DLUHC Committee Funding Review. Submission deadline 10/11/2022. (Paper 2022/187)
RESOLVED: That the Bentham Masterplan group will consider the consultation document at their meeting tomorrow and provide a suitable response if possible.
- 197 To receive reports from councillors who represent the Council on other bodies (for information only) – if any.
Tourist Information Point: Cllr Stannard reported that the season has now ended and that the TIP is no longer open during the week. As was done last year, several volunteers are continuing to open the TIP on Saturday's and the Calendars will be on sale from the TIP shortly.
Collingwood Almshouses: Cllr Marshall reported that there was a meeting last week, and that the general running and increases for next year were discussed. New trustees will be needed in due course. There are currently no vacancies. There is no waiting list for vacancies. Details of previous applicants, who were unsuccessful, are kept on file for six months.

- 198 Items for next meeting and minor items for information only.
Next Agenda: -
- Consideration of the situation at The Punch Bowl. Low Bentham.
 - Town council response to Bentham masterplan survey for consideration.
 - The bins at the Playing Field fill up very quickly and need to be bigger. Consider asking CDC to do this.
- Minor items: -
- Grateful thanks were expressed to the Bentham Bonfire committee for all their hard working in putting on this year's event.
 - Apologies received from Cllr Marshall for the 21/11/22 meeting.
 - The clerk will be taking a week's holiday towards the end of November.
 - The Calendars will be collected on Wednesday 9th November.
 - Cllr Hill to complete access to the current account asap.
 - Cllr Burton to complete access to the deposit account by providing certified ID asap, the cost of having ID certified will be paid for by the council.
- 199 Date of next meeting; 21st November 2022.
- 200 To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, that the public and press be excluded further from the meeting, whilst item 201 is considered.
RESOLVED: NOT APPLICABLE.
- 201 To consider items of correspondence received regarding the Community Youth Building, and agree a way forward, if any.
NONE.
- There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.44 pm.