



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting on 26th April 2023 in the Lower Hall at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllrs Adams (Chairman), Burton, Gerrie, Hill, Marshall, Paige, Pearce, Stannard. The temporary clerk Jo Burton. And ten members of the public and two members of North Yorkshire Police.

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones and Dr Story

- 1 Notice convening the Meeting.

Received.

- 2 Minutes of the 2022 Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 27th April 2022 were agreed and signed.

- 3 Mayors Report, read by Cllr Adams.

This year saw the formation of a new Council with only 5 unopposed councillors, meaning the start of the year was difficult requiring meetings to be fitted in around being quorate and restricting what the Council could achieve. Four further members have since been co-opted, and there are still two vacancies – for which applications would be welcome. This year has seen the introduction of the new North Yorkshire Council and it is unsure to some degree how this will work going forward.

Planning matters still bring the largest public attendance at meetings. There have been 3 larger developments put forward and also the rejection, on appeal, of the proposed development north of Springfield. The Masterplan is taking shape and being drafted. It will hopefully enable wins to be made on delivering what people want in the future. The Council thanks the team for what has been achieved to date and looks forward to working with them to deliver some of the ideas.

The Council replaced the last few benches around the parish meaning that all have now been replaced and the project completed. Other completed projects include works on the Heritage Trail, the Philip Harvey Memorial Playing Field commemorative sign, the Heritage road sign at the junction of Lane Foor & Mewith Lane, installation of power at School Hill and lamp posts for Christmas Decorations, a further defibrillator installation and the long awaited repairs and upgrade to the Town Hall clock.

After 5 years in the post, Christine Downey resigned as town clerk in February, putting additional burden on the Council until a replacement can be found. Thank you to those councillors who have taken up extra tasks in the interim and to Jo Burton for offering her support and time to assist in the interim. This period has certainly opened some councillors' eyes as to the work that goes on in running the Council and its activities. It has also provided an opportunity to review operations and potentially streamline some operations such as the adoption of Finance software for the accounts and consideration of on-line bookings for the Town Hall.

Cllr Adams thanked the Council staff for their dedication to the users of the Town Hall, and also thanked the volunteers who run the Tourist Information Point – noting that there are vacancies in this area and anyone interested should contact Cllr Stannard.

In conclusion Cllr Adams said that the Council exists to try and promote and do the best for Bentham and its people, and thanked the councillors for their support over the last twelve months

- 4 Financial Details

Draft copies of the reconciliation of receipts and payments for 2022/2023 (unaudited) were available.



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It was emphasised that the accounts have not yet been audited and could therefore be subject to change.

The public were reminded that after the accounts have been audited there will be a period during which they can exercise their right to come in and scrutinise the financial records, should they so wish.

Income was up from £131,210.31 in the previous year, to £143,604.57, primarily because Town Hall bookings were back up to pre-pandemic levels and the Council's reserves deposit account was finally making interest payments.

Expenditure for the year, at £153,380.57 was £16519.10 higher than in the previous year primarily due to the increase in costs for the Town Hall (utilities & maintenance) and grass cutting. And also the completion of several outstanding projects like the Town Hall clock, Heritage trail, PHPF sign and School Hill electric supply.

The Council ended the year with a balance of £73,996.57. Of that amount approximately £21,720.00 is earmarked for the following projects: -

Town Hall windows	17000.00
Mayoral roll update	1000.00
QE2 memorial	1000.00
Parish landscaping	1220.00
Xmas lights & Uplights for Town Hall	1500.00
Total	21720.00

The precept for the coming year has been slightly increased, with the Band D equivalent charge increasing from £91.15 to £96.00, an increase of £4.85.

- 5 PCSO Jayne Grace gave an annual report for the crime figures in Bentham stating there had been 530 reported incidents over the last 12 months. This included 6 burglaries, 15 thefts, 72 concerns for welfare, 14 Highway disruptions, 18 road traffic collisions, 18 other road related offences, along with various other domestic incidents, suspicious circumstances and hoax calls.

Reports from Local Organisations: Reports were received from:

1	Bentham Playing Field Association
2	Bentham Christmas Lights Committee
3	Aid In Sickness
4	LASRUG
5	Bentham Theatre Group
6	Goodenber Play Area Association
7	Bentham News
8	Bentham Bonfire
9	Collingwood & Longstaffe
10	Community Link Cafe
11	Low Bentham Victoria Institute
12	Stepping Stones Baby & Toddler Group
13	Friday Lunch (Age Concern)
14	High Bentham WI
15	Victoria Institute

- 6 AOB
None.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45 pm.