



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk:
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting in **the Ballroom** on **Monday 27th April 2026** at **7.00 pm**

Councillors present: Cllr Adams (Chair), Burton, Marshall, Stannard and Taylor

Town Clerk: C Burrow

Deputy Town Clerk: E Langan

Members of Public: 34

1. **Apologies** from members unable to attend: -
To Note Apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting. **Cllr Whittet and Cllr MacEley-Young.**
NOTED
To consider acceptance of reasons for absence – if consideration of reason requested.
RESOLVED- absence approved
2. Minutes of the 2025 Meeting were read out by Cllr Adamas- To **confirm the Minutes** of the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting as a true and correct record.
RESOLVED – APPROVED
3. Mayor's Report:

The Council remains with only 7 Councillors and 4 vacancies. Councillor Whittet joined in May 2025 and MacEley Young joined us July 2025. Claire Burrow, our town clerk took over the position of Responsible Financial Officer in October, following Carrie Pillow leaving the Council. With this, her hours have been increased to 26 per Week. With Emma Langan, taking on additional roles she was promoted to Deputy Town Clerk. Her hours remain at 16 per week. This means that the public have access to the council five days a week. Both of them work extremely hard for council and we thank them.

To ensure Council due-diligence, the PFAS issue required significant attention and focus over the past year, we, along with the rest of the UK, are on a steep learning curve to understand this. This has brought a significant amount of media interest to the Town. A well-attended public meeting was arranged by BTC in June 2025 with regulators, and we will be looking at a potential follow up this year.

Other topics of note are the buses, or lack of them and we have invited Mayor David Skaith back to Bentham to follow up on initial correspondence that Bentham residents had with him last year.

The Goodenber Road Play area was formally taken on by the Council and has already spent approx. £4000 on maintenance and improvements to date. There are initial plans for future

works to bring the area back up to a lovely place for our children to enjoy. The Duke Street Lighting project has been completed. The Council Cemetery project remains ongoing. The area just off of Butts Lane has been offered to BTC as an asset transfer from NYC and this is very close to being signed over.

As you can see, the Town Hall Ballroom floor has been replaced. This has been possible with a grant of £21,091 from the Community Buildings Programme funded by Mayor David Skaith of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, doesn't it look Fab!! Well done Claire. Hopefully this will bring additional opportunities into the Town Hall. We have also replaced windows in the Wenningdale room, upgraded the heating controls and re-plastered and decorated the entrance area.

I wish to thank our employees, Anne and Louise Chappell along with Ruth Green who look after the users of this building.

The Council has agreed to spend £50,000 from the sale of the former Youth Club building on assisting the Playing Fields committee, with their plans for a replacement for the old club house. Grants of just over £12,000 were donated to community groups last year and just under £14,000 is earmarked for the forthcoming year.

Phase 1 of the Bentham Boost delivered £30,000 of investment from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority of the Mayoral Sustainable and Vibrant High Street Fund, funding a Partnership Co-ordinator, an options appraisal for Main Street focusing on accessibility, parking and future communal space ideas. The appraisal has provided highways evidence to support upcoming discussions with North Yorkshire Council, especially on parking. Phase 1 supported community activity, from networking events to wellbeing sessions and expanded digital and First Aid training.

Phase 2, the £50,000 Colourful Bentham initiative, focuses on brightening underused areas with artwork trails, community-designed flags, storytelling maps and new planters. It brings together community groups, strengthening intergenerational links and civic pride.

The Council is here to try to promote and do the best for Bentham, its residents and workers. This may not always be the perceived objective. I would urge all members of the public to look at the best things about our parish, build on the community, whether it be the shops, pubs, restaurants on the high street, or the many clubs and organisations who offer a wide variety of offerings for our spare time. We are short of Councillors and we would welcome new members, without the local council, Bentham would lose a lot of what we enjoy. I thank the Council for its support over the past 12 months and the hard work they do for Bentham.

4. Financial Details:

This has been another productive year, with continued investment in our town, our facilities and our community.

We have focused on maintaining and improving the infrastructure that keeps Bentham safe and welcoming. The street lighting project on Duke Street has now been completed, with two additional lamps installed to improve visibility and safety costing £3,876.00. Across the parish, street lighting continues to be regularly maintained.

Public safety remains a priority; the damaged defibrillator cabinet at Bentham Playing Fields has been replaced and is now regularly checked by Council staff, the defibrillator battery at Naylor Myers has also been replaced with a spend of £800.

At the Town Hall, we have carried out a wide range of improvements to ensure the building remains safe, efficient and fit for purpose. This includes a fire door risk assessment, repairs to the front entrance, and the installation of remote heating to improve energy efficiency. We've

also ensured that lighting and plumbing are fully operational, installed a new baby changing unit, and purchased new equipment including vacuum cleaners and an electric grill, approximate spend of £5,000.

One of the most significant upgrades this year has been the refurbishment of the Ballroom floor. This involved removing the old flooring, painting throughout and making improvements to seating. The result is a much-improved space, this came in at £24,000.

Our outdoor spaces continue to receive a high level of care and attention. For our younger residents at the Philip Harvey Playing Field, works have included the safe removal of an old pond, removal of a potentially dangerous tree, and drainage repairs to address flooding issues with a spend of £5,000.

Environmental work is continuing, including the long-term programme to eradicate Japanese Knotweed near the river in Burton in Lonsdale at £680.

We are working with an architect to develop plans and are obtaining quotes for necessary drainage works at £1,600. We are also moving forward with taking ownership of the entrance area, ensuring the cemetery is a peaceful and respectful place.

Our staff continue to develop their skills, and this year they have completed additional training, including first aid at work training at £200.

Bentham Town Council began the year with an opening balance of £150,006, this year it closes with a balance of £137,305, with £8,600 returning from the Vibrant and sustainable high street fund in April. The Council has seen an increase in receipts this year at £89,090 coming into council accounts, with grants and an increase in Town Hall bookings of income being £9,000. The precept has increased this year to £160,000, with a Council tax band D house at £118.30 an increase of £7.41 per household.

Overall, the Council continues to deliver essential services, maintain our community spaces, and invest carefully in projects that benefit residents both now and in the future.

5. PCSO Report

Bentham Annual Meeting 27.04.26 – Police report

Annual report can be found - Crime and policing in England which allows you to search re incident recorded in your area www.police.uk

I have put this together for the past year of incidents, so you have an idea of incidents reported.

Annual Report - Bentham - 26.04.25 & 25.04.26 - 394 reported incidents

Annual Report - Bentham - 21.04.24 & 25.04.25 - 412 reported incidents

213 - Reports include – General Admin from other Police force, General Admin from other agencies, Safeguarding, Sudden Death, Civil dispute, lost/found property, abandon calls/ hoax, absconders, Highway disruption – HGV low bridge/tree/potholes/lights/parking, Animal concerns, Firearms admin, abandon vehicles & we care scheme

5 - Burglaries – tools/attempt quad/stolen vehicle & number plates

54 - Concern for safety/welfare – checks carried out by police, ambulance, family & friends, Missing persons.

42 - Crime Violence/domestic/sexual/harassment/stalking/dog bite

19– ASB Nuisance/personal/neighbour dispute/off road bikes/noise/internet

5 – Criminal Damage – property/graffiti

11 – Theft – shop/parcels/boots/vehicle keys/number plates

22 - Road Traffic collisions

12 - Road Related offence – manner of driving/medical/documents/ suspect drink/drug/speed/seized/parking

11 – Suspect circumstances – vehicles/persons/fraud/banking/online/disturbed land/fakes notes/malicious communication/electric bike/scooter/drone/door to door sellers/suspect wires/lights

PCSO Jayne Grace

Collar number 5561

Dedicated Safer Neighbourhood PCSO

Settle, Ingleton & Bentham area

6. Reports from Local Community Groups

Reports read out from:

- 1. Bentham Community Primary School PTFA**
- 2. Ingleton and Bentham Twinning Group**
- 3. Age Concern Bentham Thursday Lunch Club**
- 4. Bentham Refugee Support Group**
- 5. Bentham Community Bonfire**
- 6. Bentham Footpath Group**
- 7. Bentham Rounders Group**
- 8. High Bentham Women's Institution**
- 9. Bay Prostate Cancer Support Group**
- 10. Bentham Theatre Group**
- 11. Community Link Café**
- 12. Low Bentham Public Hall and Victoria Institute**
- 13. Cancer Care**
- 14. Fire Starter's Drumming Band**
- 15. Friends of Bentham Station FOBS**
- 16. Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users Group**
- 17. Longstaffe Educational Foundation**
- 18. MENCAP**
- 19. Bentham Playing Fields**
- 20. Pioneer Projects**
- 21. Bentham Pantry**
- 22. Stepping Stones**
- 23. Bentham Show**
- 24. Springfield Bowling Club**
- 25. Settle District Aid in Sickness**
- 26. Collingwood and Longstaffe Almshouses**

7. Presentation of Community Grants

RESOLVED - Community Groups were advised to pass their BACs details on to the Town Clerk, to ensure swift payment.

8. Any Other Business:

Open Spaces committee are looking at reinstating the Cross at the Low Bentham Green, anybody has any contributions are welcome, time capsule located underneath will be opened and reburied along with another one, this will commemorate the crowning of King Charles the third.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 20:22

C Burrow

C Burrow

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