



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Tuesday 31st March 2026

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting – Monday 30th March 2026 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllrs Adams, Marshall, Stannard, Taylor and Whittet.

Town Clerk: C Burrow

MOP: 21

Bentham News: 0

275 Apologies from members unable to attend:

275.1 To note apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting.

Cllr Burton and Cllr MacEley-Young

275.2 To consider acceptance of reasons for absence; if consideration of reason requested.

ACCEPTED

276 Declaration of Interest:

276.1 To note declarations of interest not already declared under members Code of conduct or members register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

NONE

276.1 To approve dispensation requests: if dispensation request received.

NONE

277. 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 consultation. (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).

MOP1 – A member of the public, involved in the Bentham Masterplan, stated that Bentham is being overlooked in transport planning despite being comparable in size to Settle and located within the same county. The speaker highlighted that Settle benefits from regular bus services, including five daily buses to Clitheroe, in Lancashire, funded by North Yorkshire Council, as well as connections to surrounding villages, while Bentham lacks similar connectivity, particularly to Lancaster. They urged the Council to advocate for improved bus services for Bentham, suggesting that a comparable level of provision (e.g. five daily buses to Lancaster) would significantly benefit the town. They also referenced a recent visit from Mayor David Skaith, describing him as receptive and encouraging continued efforts to press the issue.

MOP2 - A member of the public referred to their previous contribution and the response that North Yorkshire Council could not afford additional bus services for Bentham. They expressed concern that this position disadvantages Bentham residents without access to a car; older people, disabled individuals, those on low incomes and younger residents, while significant resources continue to be allocated to car-related infrastructure.

Stated that public transport should be considered an essential social service, highlighting the impact of limited provision on social isolation, access to healthcare and community connections, particularly for vulnerable residents. MOP also raised environmental concerns, stating a preference to use public transport rather than private cars in light of the climate crisis and suggested that smaller or electric buses could provide a more suitable and sustainable solution for the area. Difficulties are faced by those unable to travel to key local services without a car, particularly from Low Bentham.

MOP3 - Member of the public stated that residents contribute significant Council Tax and should receive a fairer share of investment in return. They acknowledged positive comments regarding the new Mayor but expressed concern that only limited funding would reach Bentham. They highlighted the need for improved public transport; referencing successful “Little White Bus” services in parts of the Dales and suggested a similar model for Bentham, particularly to provide a direct and reliable link to Lancaster. The speaker emphasised the importance of such a service for accessing healthcare, noting the difficulties of reaching Lancaster and the hospital, especially for appointments earlier in the day and the challenges faced by residents in Low Bentham due to distance from the railway station and limited onward connections. They concluded by urging greater funding and resources be directed to Bentham, expressing concern that investment is disproportionately focused elsewhere within the county.

MOP4 - A member of the public described difficulties visiting their wife at Ingleborough Nursing Home due to limited transport options. While a bus service exists to Ingleton, it ceases at the Community Centre and they are unable to continue the remaining journey on foot. They noted reliance on friends for transport but expressed a desire to be more independent. They also reported an unsuccessful attempt to use the community bus, which failed to arrive as booked. The speaker raised concerns about the loss of the former “Little Red Bus” service in Bentham, describing it as a valuable community asset and requested that the possibility of reinstating a similar service be reconsidered.

MOP5 - A member of the public spoke in support of young people in Bentham, drawing on their previous experience as a youth leader in the town for over 20 years. They expressed concern that current transport limitations restrict opportunities for young people aged 16–17 to access leisure and cultural activities, such as visiting the cinema in Lancaster, which they described as effectively impossible without an adequate bus service. The speaker noted that while local facilities such as the Playing Fields provide valuable provision, they do not meet the full range of needs or aspirations of young people, particularly in terms of independence and wider life experience. They recalled earlier bus services that enabled evening travel to and from Lancaster and highlighted the loss of such opportunities. They urged the Council to consider the needs of young people more fully in future transport planning.

MOP6 - A member of the public raised three main points relating to transport and its impact on different groups in Bentham. Firstly, speaking on behalf of young people, they described significant difficulties caused by limited transport options. They referred to family members who are restricted in their ability to travel for work, education and job opportunities, noting that this limits independence and access to employment and training, particularly outside Bentham and Ingleton. Secondly, as a local employer who has run a business in Bentham since 1991, they explained that transport connectivity has consistently been a major barrier to recruitment. They stated that despite engaging with schools and promoting apprenticeships, attracting staff remains difficult due to inadequate transport links. Finally, from a personal perspective, they described experiencing temporary loss of driving ability following an injury, highlighting to them the extent of isolation faced by non-drivers in the area and the reliance on private transport for basic access to services. They concluded by emphasising that transport provision has wide-ranging impacts across age groups and employment and remains a significant issue for the community.

MOP7 - Member of the public referred to previously submitted information and thanked attendees for their contributions. They noted that historically there had been more comprehensive bus services in

the area, but these have reduced over time, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. They also mentioned recent issues with service reliability during roadworks, although noting some improvement more recently. However, they highlighted the continued lack of return bus services from Ingleton, except on Saturdays.

The speaker expressed agreement with the concerns raised by other members of the public regarding the need for improved transport provision.

MOP8 - A member of the public reported that they had written to Mayor David Skaith regarding local transport. While initially encouraged, they stated that the response received was negative, citing reduced Local Transport Grant funding and indicating that higher priorities exist elsewhere. The speaker expressed concern that this suggests Bentham is a low priority for investment. They also referenced correspondence from a North Yorkshire Council Officer noting that bus usage fell significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic and that services were withdrawn prior to the introduction of the £2 fare cap. The speaker suggested that higher fares and timing of service reductions may have contributed to low passenger numbers. MOP noted that passenger numbers tend to increase closer to larger centres, indicating a cumulative effect along routes. They reiterated concerns raised by others regarding the impact of limited transport on young people, older residents and general accessibility, expressing dissatisfaction that available government funding is not being directed towards improving services in Bentham.

MOP9 - A member of the public raised concerns regarding proposed housing growth in Bentham, referring to plans for a significant number of additional homes in the coming years. They questioned how increased population levels would be supported by existing infrastructure, particularly in relation to transport provision and expressed concern that new residents would rely heavily on private cars due to the lack of adequate public transport. The speaker highlighted existing traffic issues in Bentham and suggested that further development without improvements to transport services could significantly worsen congestion. They urged that future planning by North Yorkshire Council should take into account both current transport limitations and the anticipated impact of housing growth ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided to support expansion.

278. To consider and comment upon **New Planning Applications:**

278.1 26/01346/PIP Permission in principle for two three bed properties, 2 Springfield High Bentham North Yorkshire LA2 7BA

RESOLVED: A – The Parish Council has no objections

279. To consider the stakeholder consultation on the Local Transport Plan from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

RESOLVED – completed the LTP online stakeholder consultation during meeting.

280 **Council Items for next meeting and minor items for information only.**

NONE

281 Dates of next meeting: **Council meeting: Monday 13th April 7:30pm**
Finance meeting: Wednesday 8th April 7:30pm
APM: Monday 27th April 7:00pm

Closed the meeting at 20:28

C. Burrow

Claire Burrow
Town Clerk and RFO