



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Bentham, Lancaster LA2 7LH
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www.benthamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Wednesday 9th September 2026

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Bentham Town Council:

Monday 7th September 2026 at 7:30pm, Lower Hall, Bentham Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs Adams, MacEley-Young, Stannard, Taylor and Whittet

Town Clerk: C Burrow

Bentham News: 2

MOP: 40

County Councillor D Ireton

83 Apologies from members unable to attend: -

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

Cllr Marshall

83.2 To consider acceptance of reasons for absence – if consideration of reason requested.

AGREED

84 Declaration of Interest: -

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

Cllr MacEley-Young: 93.6 95.1 95.2 95.3

84.2 To approve dispensation requests – if dispensation request received.

NONE

85 To consider applications for the office of councillor and to fill vacant seats by co-option, if any.

NONE

86 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: Member of the public spoke about the People's Emergency Briefing film; a short film addressing the climate crisis and actions that could be taken nationally, locally and by individuals and organisations.

Bentham Town Council had acknowledged a climate emergency in 2014 suggesting that the current scale of climate impacts demonstrated the need for renewed action. The MOP highlighted recent impacts on farming, water supplies, transport, healthcare and property, and observed that the situation had progressed significantly since the Council's previous energy audit of the Town Hall.

The speaker said the film was both informative and positive, emphasising that collective action could make a difference.

They requested the Town Council to sponsor a free community showing of the film, potentially in the Town Hall Ballroom. They hoped the event would encourage members of the community, friends and neighbours to attend.

MOP2: A local resident addressed the Council regarding the Sidings car park and asked the Town Council to take urgent action to protect its long-established community use. They stated that the site had been leased and maintained by Craven District Council for over 20 years and remained well used by residents and users of the Victoria Institute, including older people and those with limited mobility.

The resident referred to planning application 26/04645/PIP, which seeks permission in principle for between one and nine dwellings on the site. Stating that, given the site's longstanding function as community parking, residential development should not be considered acceptable in principle, as the loss of the parking would simply displace vehicles elsewhere.

They asked the Town Council to take three actions: formally object to planning application 26/04645/PIP, urgently submit an Asset of Community Value nomination for the Sidings and immediately notify the planning authority of the nomination providing evidence of the site's longstanding community use. They requested that determination of the planning application be deferred until the ACV nomination had been considered.

MOP3: A representative of Hexagon Care, which operates the care home and school at Low Bentham, spoke in support of retaining the Sidings as a car park. They explained that the organisation employs over 20 staff, around half of whom are local residents, and that they had personally used the car park for staff parking for 14 years. Visitors to the care home and school were also directed to use the car park.

They highlighted concerns about the lack of alternative parking, particularly given the double yellow lines along the school route, raising significant safety concerns regarding the large number of young children who attend dance classes at the Victoria Institute, some from as young as three years old. Parents currently use the car park to drop off and collect children, the speaker felt that requiring them to use the pavement area opposite the busy T-junction instead would create a serious safety risk and could potentially result in accidents or fatalities.

87 To Confirm the Minutes of the meeting on Monday 3rd August 2026 as a true and accurate record.
RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the meeting on Monday 3rd August 2026 as a true and accurate record.

88 To Confirm the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 12th August 2026 as a true and accurate record.
RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 12th August 2026 as a true and accurate record.

89 To receive the Police Report & allow members to ask questions for information - If any.
Read out in full by Cllr Adams (Appendix A)

90 To receive a Report from NYC Councillor (for information only) - If any

Cllr Ireton reported that there was little to report during August, which had been a quieter month due to staff holidays. He advised that the Chief Executive of North Yorkshire Council, Mr Flinton, is due to retire at the end of March, following recent changes to senior management.

Cllr Ireton also commented on the planning application for Permission in Principle at the Sidings/Harley Bank car park in Low Bentham. He explained that, at the PIP stage, the three matters for consideration are the suitability of the location, whether the proposed land use is acceptable and whether the amount of development proposed (1–9 dwellings) is appropriate. Other material planning considerations would be considered at a later stage.

Cllr Ireton acknowledged the concerns and distress expressed by residents regarding the potential loss of the parking facility. Although the land is privately owned, he recognised its importance as a parking area, particularly for users of the Victoria Institute, which he had supported through various grant funding over recent years. He also raised the question of whether the site, given its close proximity to the railway line, was suitable for residential development.

A member of the public noted that the proposed residential use would require a change of use from the site's current classification. They referred to the site's historical industrial use as a coal yard and its current use as a car park, which may be classified as sui generis. They considered the change to residential use to be a key point for consideration when assessing the application.

91 Financial Matters:

- 91.1 To receive and note current bank balances; Unity current account as **£35,618.49**, the Public Sector deposit account balance as **£85,000.00** and the Virgin current account as **£31,257.07** with Bank Reconciliation dated 28.08.26

NOTED (Appendix B)

NOTED An unexplained deposit of £61.94 was identified in the Unity Account, with no corresponding entry in the Council's accounts. The depositor's details were obtained from the bank; however, when contacted, the individual confirmed that they had no knowledge of the deposit, an error of £61.94 remains in the bank reconciliation.

- 91.2 To consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return amendments.

RESOLVED to amend the AGAR with the following information:

Bentham Town Council confirms that it is not a sole managing trustee of any trust and does not administer any trust funds. Accordingly, the response of N/A to Section 1, Assertion 9 is consistent with the guidance in the Practitioners' Guide and is the same as in previous years.

Having reviewed the revised AGAR guidance for 2025/26, we understand that the wording and completion of Section 2, Box 11 has changed from previous years. We acknowledge that this response should be "Yes", confirming that the Accounting Statements include only the Council's own transactions and do not include any trust transactions.

- 91.3 To consider the External Audit for 2025-2026 (if received)

DEFER as not received.

- 91.4 To consider an Interim Audit and the Internal Audit for 2026-2027.

Members considered the appointment of the Internal Auditor and specifically considered the independence of the proposed Internal Auditor, in accordance with Paragraph 4.11 of the Practitioner's Guide. Members were satisfied that CheckMate Independent Internal Audit Services was sufficiently independent to undertake the Internal Audit for the Council.

RESOLVED to accept the quotation from CheckMate Independent Internal Audit Services for the 2026/2027 Internal Audit at £350.00 + VAT.

RESOLVED to accept the quotation from CheckMate Independent Internal Audit Services for the Interim Audit at £100.00 + VAT.

- 91.5 To consider the bank mandates for Unity Trust, Virgin and Public Sector Deposit Account.

RESOLVED to add Cllr MacEley-Young and Cllr Stannard to the bank mandates.

- 91.6 To consider a standing order for staff salaries to be adjusted each month by the Clerk.

DEFER – Clerk to undertake further research into the use of a standing order to ensure compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

91.7 To note the pre-authorised salaries and pre-agreed contractual payments.
NOTED

91.8 To approve the payments

146	Training	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Training	YLCA	X	75.20		75.20
147	Internet	05/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Email & web Hosting	1&1 Ionos	S	24.23	4.85	29.08
148	Staff pension (admin)	06/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Staff Pension	NEST	X	284.53		284.53
149	Furniture	10/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Chair feet	Amazon	S	10.82	2.17	12.99
150	Running costs (defib)	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Defibrillator Battery - Vic Inst	WEL Medical	S	244.95	48.99	293.94
151	Bentham Boost	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Bentham Boost artwork	Rachel Thornton	X	800.00		800.00
152	Water Rates (TH)	27/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Water Rates	Business Stream	E	73.83		73.83
153	Water rates (cemetery)	28/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Water	Business Stream	E	19.93		19.93
154	Gas (TH)	24/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Town Hall Gas	British Lite Gas	L	158.10	7.90	166.00
155	Water Rates (TH)	27/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Waste water bill Town Hall	Waterplus	X	119.61		119.61
156	Electric Supply (street lighting)	22/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Electricity Street Lights	SSE SWALEC	L	135.25	6.76	142.01
157	Clerk mileage (admin)	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Clerk Travel Expenses	Emma Langan	X	80.47		80.47
158	Clerk Mobile	19/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Mobiles	EE Mobile	S	50.67	10.14	60.81
158	Mobile - Caretaker	19/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Mobiles	EE Mobile	S	27.39	5.48	32.87
159	Town Hall Staff (TH) / Caretaker	28/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Salary		X	1,247.45		1,247.45
160	Town Hall Staff (TH) / Caretaker	28/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Salary		X	276.56		276.56
161	Clerk salary (admin)	21/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Salary		X	732.88		732.88
162	Clerk salary (admin)	28/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Salary		X	2,073.90		2,073.90
163	Chairman allowance (admin)	18/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Test transfer	Unity Trust bank	X	10.00		10.00
164	Trade Waste (TH)	24/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Trade Waste	North Yorkshire Council	X	68.18		68.18
165	Furniture	26/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Computer monitor for office	Amazon	S	70.82	14.16	84.98
166	Stationery	28/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Stationery - hooks, stand, blue	Amazon	S	3.24	0.65	3.89
166	Stationery	28/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Stationery - hooks, stand, blue	Amazon	S	6.49	1.30	7.79
166	Stationery	28/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Stationery - hooks, stand, blue	Amazon	S	5.82	1.17	6.99
166	Furniture	28/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Stationery - hooks, stand, blue	Amazon	S	13.99	2.80	16.79
167	Cleaning and Sanitary Supplies	25/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Cleaning supplies - mop bucket	Amazon	S	26.67	5.33	32.00
167	Cleaning and Sanitary Supplies	25/08/2026	02 Virgin Money	Cleaning supplies - mop bucket	Amazon	S	16.66	3.33	19.99
168	Internet	06/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Internet	SKY	S	60.45	12.09	72.54
169	Electric (TH)	01/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Electricity at Town Hall	British Lite Gas	L	212.21	10.61	222.82
170	Bank Charges (admin)	31/08/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	bank charges	Unity Trust bank	X	13.90		13.90
171	Goodenber Road Play Area	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	HAGS GRPA Inspection	HAGS-SMP Ltd	S	65.00	13.00	78.00
172	Bentham Boost	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Bentham Boost Admin	Laura Davy Admin Solution	X	750.00		750.00
173	Grass Cutting (OS)	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Grass cutting	Kingsdale Projects	X	3,366.61		3,366.61
173	PHPF (OS)	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Grass cutting	Kingsdale Projects	X	20.00		20.00
173	Grass Cutting (cemetery)	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Grass cutting	Kingsdale Projects	X			
174	Staff pension (admin)	04/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Pension Contribution	NEST	X	217.44		217.44
175	Bentham Boost	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Bentham Boost Flags installatic	Kingsdale Projects	X	123.75		123.75
176	Training	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	CB eye test H&S (DSE users) r	Claire Burrow	Z	25.00		25.00
177	Internet	07/09/2026	01- Unity Trust Bank	Email & web Hosting	1&1 Ionos	S	44.21	8.84	53.05
Total							11,556.21	159.57	11,715.78

RESOLVED to APPROVE

Payments to be authorised by Cllrs Adams and Whittet (except voucher 172) Cllr Marshall to authorise voucher 172.
Staff names redacted.

92 To consider and comment upon New Planning Applications:

92.1 26/04645/PIP Permission in Principle for residential housing of between 1-9 dwellings
The Sidings Low Bentham Lancaster LA2 7BH

RESOLVED to submit B The Parish Council objects on the planning ground set out below:

Bentham Town Council objects to the proposed development of between 1 and 9 dwellings on the site. The site is currently used as a community car park providing an important parking facility for residents, visitors and users of the Victoria Institute and other local services. Its loss would displace up to approximately 30 vehicles at any one time into surrounding roads, where there is already a significant lack of available parking and no alternative public car park.

Surrounding roads are frequently used by heavy goods vehicles and already experience on-street parking pressures; vehicles displaced from the site would inevitably increase parking along these roads. The loss of the car park would have implications for pedestrian and highway safety, in an area that is heavily used by pedestrians of all ages.

The Council considers that the existing use of the site as a community car park provides a greater benefit to the village and contributes to the safety and accessibility of the local community. Given the lack of alternative parking provision, the loss of this facility would have an adverse impact on residents, visitors and users of community facilities.

93 Council matters:

93.1 To receive the Clerk's report.

NOTED Clerk explained that the new defibrillator cabinet had been installed at the Victoria Institute, Low Bentham, along with a new battery into the defibrillator. (Appendix C)

93.2 To note that North Yorkshire Council's Proper Officer has confirmed that insufficient elector requests were received for an election following Councillor Burton's resignation. To consider the co-option process and advertising the vacancy.

NOTED

93.3 To consider committee operations and functions; committee members and committee structures.

RESOLVED that Cllr Mac-Eley-Young join the Open Spaces committee and the Finance and Staffing committee.

Cllr Adams join the Open Spaces committee and the Marketing and Development committee.

93.4 To consider the National Joint Council updated pay scales.

RESOLVED to AGREE to implement the updated NJC pay scales, including back pay from 1 April 2026 and to ensure that the Deputy Clerk, who has resigned, receives the back pay due.

93.5 Outstanding Register of Interests and Sexual Harassment Legislation Training.

RESOLVED for Council members to complete the outstanding ROIs, Clerk to resend both ROI templates and Legislation Training again.

93.6 To consider the PFAS and Environmental Concerns Community Liaison Group.

RESOLVED to establish whether there is sufficient public interest in forming a Community Liaison Group and whether residents would be interested in becoming members. Publicity to be undertaken through social media, Bentham News and the Council website.

94 To receive information on the following ongoing issues and decide further action where necessary:

94.1 To consider quotations for the Wenningdale Room works and the allocation of funds from the Town Hall maintenance reserve.

DEFER until quotes for the carpet areas and skirting boards are received.

94.2 To consider the AboutBentham website.

DEFER to the Marketing and Development Committee.

94.3 To consider the hosting of the gov.uk website and the emails.

DEFER to the Marketing and Development Committee.

94.4 Roadworks in and around Bentham.

NOTED Yorkshire Water had advised that the final phase of the clean water pipe replacement works in Bentham has been paused. The remaining mains replacement works on Main Street and service connections on Mewith Lane are now scheduled to take place in January 2027. The delay is due to engineering challenges and difficult ground conditions. Yorkshire Water advised that further details regarding the timing of the works and traffic management arrangements would be provided in due course.

95 Correspondence received: To receive information on the following new correspondences and decide further action, if any;

95.1 Cleaner Bentham update.

Cllr Adams read out the first two pages (Appendix D)

95.2 Angus Fire update.

Cllr Adams read out in full (Appendix E)

95.3 Julian Smith MP regarding Angus Fire.

Cllr Adams read out in full (Appendix F)

95.4 Request regarding the film The People's Emergency Briefing.

RESOLVED for the Council to support and show the film The People's Emergency Briefing on Tuesday 27th October 2026.

95.5 The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, The Mayor's Local Transport Plan for York and North Yorkshire.

NOTED the public consultation will be at Bentham Town Hall on Tuesday 15th September 2026 from 6pm to 8pm, Clerk to circulate on social media.

95.6 Member of Public correspondence regarding the Sidings, Low Bentham.

RESOLVED that the Council submit an application to North Yorkshire Council to have the Sidings nominated as an Asset of Community Value, recognising its importance to the local community.

96 To receive an update on the Bentham Boost and decide further action where necessary

Cllr Whittet gave an update on Bentham Boost; The recently installed flags had received a very positive response, including some encouraging feedback from the community. However, a number of minor issues had been identified and the flags had therefore been temporarily removed to allow for some adjustments. They are expected to be reinstated, subject to other seasonal installations and the availability of space. Following the initial installation, further requests had also been received from local groups interested in having their own flag.

A community Bistro Night is scheduled to take place on Saturday 7th November. Tickets are currently on sale at £16, offering a choice of three curries, a band, with the event operating on a bring-your-own-bottle basis.

New, larger bins are also being provided, with a delivery date to be confirmed. Additional benches will hopefully be installed in response to community feedback highlighting the limited availability of places where people can sit, rest and socialise.

An artist from the community has been commissioned to create a piece of artwork and is collecting stories, photographs and memories from local residents to incorporate into the project. A number of workshops are also being delivered as part of the initiative.

It was noted that Phase 2 funding is due to conclude in December. A meeting had recently taken place with the Boost team and the volunteers confirmed their willingness to continue supporting the community and the Boost initiative. The group will also explore and apply for alternative sources of funding where opportunities arise, with the intention of maintaining the work beyond the current funding period.

97 Items for next meeting **and minor items for information** only.

Grasmere Car Park works

98 Dates of next meeting:

Full Council: Monday 5th October 2026 7:30pm

Open Spaces Committee: TBC

RESOLVED: Monday 21st September 2026 at 7:30pm

Buildings Committee: Tuesday 13th October 2026 6:00pm

RESOLVED NOT to have the planned committee meeting, all items referred to Full Council.

Finance and Staffing: Monday 19th October 2026 7:30pm

RESOLVED to have a Marketing and Development Committee on Tuesday 20th October 2026 at 7:30pm. To do: add all dates into bookings

Meeting closed at 21:04

C Burrow

C Burrow

Bentham Town Clerk and RFO

Wednesday 9th September 2026

Appendix A

Please find your police report for Bentham Town Council meeting 07.09.26

We have had 38 incidents reported between 29.07.26 & 03.09.26

Reports Include – Firearms admin, Abandon calls, other police force enquiry, wanted person, alarm sounding – False, Related Offence – manner of driving/ documents, Crime violence, Harassment, ASB personal, Drugs warrant & Online Fraud theft of images

4 Reports – Concern for welfare/safety/missing – joint partnership working

3 reports – RTC – single vehicle – wall/tarmac/fence

4 Reports – Theft from store/fake note

19.08.26 – Criminal damage/civil dispute – parking post

25.08.26 – Burglary – Sundial public house

How to report speeding concerns - Speed Management Protocol

www.northyorkshire.police.uk/search?q=speeding+concern

North Yorkshire Community Messaging is a free email messaging service from North Yorkshire Police providing news and updates on policing matters that are relevant to you and your local community. Sign up and receive email alerts about policing activity and initiatives in your local area as well as crime prevention advice and information. You will also have the opportunity to reply directly to your neighbourhood team and provide feedback via surveys.

www.northyorkshirecommunitymessaging.co.uk

Working to keep North Yorkshire a safe place to live, visit & work please visit

www.northyorkshire.police.uk.

Please report & suspect incidents at the time on 101, online or 999 if urgent.

Useful site re Crime and policing in England which allows you to search re incident recorded in your area

www.police.uk.

Contact Information:

1 Ring 999 in an emergency or to report a crime in progress.

2 Ring 101 to report incidents or provide information.

3 Ring Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 to remain anonymous.

4 E-mail SNACraven@northyorkshire.police.uk

Kind Regards

Jayne

PCSO Jayne Grace

Collar number 5561

Dedicated Safer Neighbourhood PCSO

Settle Ingleton & Bentham area

North Yorkshire Police

101

PCSO Jayne Grace added on: Burglary at the Institute Low Bentham 03.09.26

Bentham Town Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 28/08/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		137,305.82
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 28/08/2026		113,703.45
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 28/08/2026		251,009.27
	Cash in Hand 28/08/2026 (per Cash Book)		99,685.65
B			151,323.62
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	01- Unity Trust Bank (Current Acco 28/08/2026	35,618.49	
	PSDF (Deposit Account) 28/08/2026	85,000.00	
	Acc for Jnls only - to Allocate recei 28/08/2026	0.00	
	TIP Tourist Info Petty cash 28/08/2026	10.00	
	02 Virgin Money 28/08/2026	31,257.07	
			151,885.56
	Less unrepresented payments		500.00
			151,385.56
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		151,385.56
	Error A does NOT equal B		
	ERROR IS £-61.94		

Appendix C

Clerk's Report – Council and Committee Actions For consideration by Full Council September 2026

Full Council

A number of actions arising from previous Full Council meetings have now been completed or significantly progressed.

North Yorkshire Council Planning Public Access portal is now accessible.

Correspondence has also been exchanged with Yorkshire Water regarding the condition and reinstatement of roads, footways and verges. Yorkshire Water has advised that North Yorkshire Council has revoked permits for further works until current works have been completed to the required standard. This matter will continue to be monitored.

The business case for the proposed transfer of the Rose Garden has been completed and submitted to North Yorkshire Council. Receipt has been confirmed and the Council is now awaiting an outcome. The Clerk has also inspected the Rose Garden and prepared a letter for residents living adjacent to the site explaining the Council's intentions. The letter will be delivered and a news update has been placed on the Council website.

The potential acquisition of Grasmere Public Convenience continues to be investigated. A plumber has been asked to provide an initial indication of refurbishment costs and research is being completed to alternative arrangements for sandbag storage. Further information and advice, including from Gargrave Parish Council, will be sought before the matter is brought back to Members.

Members were reminded at the August meeting of the outstanding Register of Interests and Sexual Harassment Legislation requirements. There remain three Members who have not completed the required training and four Members who have not updated their Register of Interests. These matters will continue to be monitored.

The Council has continued to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the Angus Fire Site. A meeting was arranged for 5 August and a report has been prepared. The proposed Community Liaison Group will be brought forward for consideration at the September Council meeting.

The Council has responded to North Yorkshire Council in support of the proposed double yellow lines, along Main Street, opposite Robin Lane and has requested regular enforcement visits, particularly given the existing problems with vehicles ignoring the current restrictions. Following Councillor Burton's resignation, the Monitoring Officer has been contacted and the Council website updated. The necessary vacancy process will continue.

The masterplan timeline and future actions have been sent to North Yorkshire Council officers. The Extraordinary Council meeting relating to the staffing matter was also arranged as required.

The Victoria Institute defibrillator battery is down to one bar, this is being carefully monitored and a new one sits in the office.

Open Spaces Committee

The Open Spaces Committee continues to manage a significant programme of maintenance and improvement works across the parish.

A number of tree matters have progressed. The ash tree at the cemetery has been inspected by a tree surgeon and early signs of ash dieback were identified. The tree is not currently considered to be an imminent danger and will be reviewed again when in leaf. Further quotations have been obtained for tree and hedge works, including works to overhanging trees.

The Committee continues to progress improvements and repairs to the parish play areas. Quotations are being obtained for wet-pour repairs, zip wire flooring, the accessible seesaw and other equipment. Three quotations have been received for the accessible seesaw and wet-pour works are being evaluated. The PHPF multiplay unit weld has been investigated, with HAGS confirming that the repair is not covered by the warranty.

The roundabout has been inspected by an engineer, who considers the bearing to be satisfactory and the equipment worth repairing. The proposed repair includes adjustment of the perimeter ring to address the finger-entrapment gap, together with replacement of bolts and the centre cap.

New play area signage has been installed.

The old fallen fence has also been removed and replaced by Yorkshire Housing. The top entrance gate remains unresolved despite repeated requests to Yorkshire Housing for repair.

Full Council has approved £33,000 for Goodenber Road Play Area, with a further £3,100 already held in the existing fund. The Clerk has prepared and is maintaining a spreadsheet of Open Spaces works, recommendations and costs so that the Committee can prioritise works and bring forward appropriate recommendations.

The new cemetery noticeboard has been installed. The kerb clearance works have been completed by the Caretaker. Further work is being considered in relation to the memorial wall, bench positioning and tree risk management. New burials in the cemetery and memorials topple tested – one laid flat still, unable to contact owners of the EROB.

The pond works remain on hold while the specification and costs are considered. The Clerk is also continuing to seek confirmation of the public footpath position from the Public Rights of Way Officer.

Buildings Committee

Following the annual building walk-around, the Caretaker has worked through a number of identified issues, including stage cobwebs, touch-up painting and cleaning of the gents' toilets ceiling.

The Wenningdale Room works: decorating quotation received being approximately £400 per section. The cracking following the damp-proofing works has been inspected and the decorator is confident this can be addressed. A quotation for the replacement carpet and mat is awaited, with radiator re-fitting to follow once the entrance works are completed.

The emergency lighting and bulkhead works have now been completed by Howsons. The previously approved electrical works are also being progressed, including the new fan, external Christmas light socket and Lower Hall ceiling socket.

The automatic door service contract with ACE Elevators has been accepted at £480, and arrangements are being made for the work to be booked. Staff have also been reminded that the automatic door sensors will need to be deactivated and the doors manually locked following installation of the shutters.

Three quotations have now been received for the entrance shutters. As the Buildings Committee does not have sufficient budget, the matter will need to be referred to Full Council for consideration.

A priority list of internal fire doors requiring replacement has been prepared and is currently being checked by the Chair before being submitted to Full Council with a budget request.

Other matters remain under investigation, including the lift telephone/digital changeover and LOLER requirements, the Ballroom boiler, rear handrails, Lower Hall floor sanding and more suitable replacement feet for the Ballroom chairs.

Finance Committee

The principal outstanding Finance Committee matter is the deposit account administration update, which remains with the Chair.

The Clerk has continued to follow up outstanding invoices. All but one late payment has now been received. There is also an outstanding issue regarding a coffee morning payment where the incorrect amount was paid, and further communication is awaited.

Bank reconciliations still have an error of -£61.94, this is due to an ingoing unidentified payment into Unity bank, the Clerk has contacted the named depositor after requesting details from the bank, still no response.

Internal Audit quotes have been sought – receiving three independent quotes ranging from £350 to £600, contacts through the Internal Forum Audit Service.

Externally Audit still ongoing, questions have been answered and further breakdowns of payments and receipts have been sent.

Budget movements from furniture allocations to electrical repairs have been completed with £300 from furniture to electrical repairs.

Financial implications arising from the Open Spaces programme, Town Hall works and potential asset acquisitions will continue to be brought to the appropriate Committee or Full Council when firm costs and recommendations are available.

Boost and Community Projects

The Bygone Bentham Trail has been progressed. A new location for plaque 5 has been agreed at the Black Bull on Station Road side following the removal of the previous location at the Neil Wright building. This was necessary due to planning and listed-building considerations regarding additional signage.

The Clerk has reviewed the trail and identified the locations of all 17 plaques. The leaflet wording has also been updated and a meeting has been arranged with Creative Theory to discuss updating the leaflet using photographs from the trail.

The Bentham Boost children's trail is also progressing.

Three flags have been removed following complaints from residents, with the Parish Caretaker responding promptly to each request. Two flags now sit in the office which have ripped – a meeting will be arranged for the flag maker to attend to assess all flags which will be removed when the weather is better.

The Clerk has met with a consultation firm gathering information regarding the need for continued access to banking services in Bentham. In light of potential York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority funding, the Clerk has offered to support the building society with its application.

A meeting has also been arranged with the Bentham Masterplan team and North Yorkshire Council officers to discuss updating the Masterplan in relation to Town Improvement Plan funding.

General Clerk's Matters

New cleaning equipment has been ordered following a request from the Caretaker for equipment suitable for maintaining the Ballroom flooring. A new computer monitor has also been ordered for the Clerk to improve working arrangements.

A broken sign on Butts Lane has been reported to North Yorkshire Council.

In relation to the Sidings planning application; North Yorkshire Council acknowledged that Bentham Town Council had previously been given an incorrect date. The Clerk advised that local residents had not been informed and that notices had not been displayed near the Sidings in Low Bentham. North Yorkshire Council has advised that the required notices will be displayed on Friday 28 August. The Clerk will be researching and contacting North Yorkshire regarding a Asset of Community Value.

The cellar gate remains with the contractor. The contractor's mobile telephone number is currently inactive and the Clerk is attempting to re-establish contact to progress completion.

The annual boiler inspection has been arranged for Wednesday 23rd September 2026, as the inspection became due in August.

Actions Remaining to be Completed

The main outstanding actions across the Council and Committees are:

- Completion of outstanding Register of Interests and Sexual Harassment Legislation training requirements.
- Further quotations and recommendations for PHPF and Goodenber play equipment and wet-pour works.
- Further investigation of Grasmere Public Convenience, including refurbishment costs and alternative sandbag storage.
- Completion of the Victoria Institute defibrillator cabinet installation.
- Completion of the archive room data cleanse and cemetery record uploads.
- Progressing the outstanding deposit account administration.
- Full Council consideration of the entrance shutters and internal fire door budget requirements.
- Further investigation of the lift telephone/digital changeover and LOLER compliance.
- Specialist assessment of the broken boiler.
- Further quotations for rear Town Hall handrails and Lower Hall floor sanding.
- Progressing outstanding tree, cemetery, memorial and pond works.
- Continuing to pursue Yorkshire Housing regarding the top entrance gate at GRPA.
- Following up the issue of the cellar gate.

Cleaner Bentham Briefing Note – Bentham Allotments

24th June 2026

Introduction

In the June 2026 edition of the Bentham news, the Bentham Allotments Association Ltd Committee provided a news article on PFAS testing of soils at the allotment.

It is understood that testing was privately commissioned following sustained public concern regarding PFAS contamination and in light of Environment Agency guidance identifying PFAS as an emerging contaminant requiring assessment in settings where home-grown produce is consumed.

They stated that:

- An independent laboratory did the testing
- A suite of 54 different PFAS were tested for
- At four sampling sites

Results reported

	Highest ug/kg	Average ug/kg	Lowest ug/kg
PFOA		1	
Four others – not specified PFAS	0.39		0.11

The news report used the following DEFRA screening values:

DEFRA derived safe values for land which is used for 'Residential with consumption of homegrown produce' are :

- PFOA - 7.6 ug/kg
- PFOS - 13.0 ug/kg

The news report also states that “ a PFAS expert who supplied the crucial fact that long-chain PFAS (those that are most persistent and most damaging, including PFOS and PFOA) have NOT been found to accumulate in fruit and vegetables.

The news article concluded that data “confirmed the safety of eating food grown on our allotments site”.

CB Assessment

Use of an independent laboratory is likely to have used suitable sampling methods and protocols to avoid cross contamination.

The size of the allotments is not specified, but four samples may be adequate for preliminary screening, although a larger number would normally be expected for a statistically robust risk assessment.

Importantly, the depth of the samples is not specified. Taking samples from 1m below ground would have very different results from samples taken from 0.0-0.05m below ground.

PFAS concentrations typically decrease with depth; therefore, shallow sampling (0.0–5 cm) is required to assess exposure relevant to gardening and ingestion pathways.

The suite of 54 PFAS chemicals is not specified but it probably reasonable. However, a consultant would have checked that the suite included the full range of PFAS chemicals identified at the Angus Bentham site in multiple phases of previous testing.

Screening Values

The DEFRA screening values quoted in the Bentham news are NOT DEFRA values.

These two numbers do NOT come from any published DEFRA, S4UL, or Environment Agency document. No DEFRA or Environment Agency publication contains these values.

The normal screening values to use in the U.K. would be the U.K. CL:AIRE 2024 interim Category 4 screening levels for allotments.

It is noted that the DEFRA values incorrectly quoted match the CL:AIRE C4SL values for residential with consumption of homegrown produce. Therefore, as well as being incorrectly attributed to DEFRA, the incorrect scenario for the screening values was used by the Allotments committee. CL:AIRE publishes C4SLs in mg/kg; the Bentham News article converted these to µg/kg but incorrectly attributed them to DEFRA.

Land Use Interim C4SLs (ug/kg)	PFOA	PFOS	PFHxS	PFNA
Residential with consumption of homegrown produce	7.6	13	8.1	7.3
Residential without consumption of homegrown produce	41	41	41	41
Allotments	1.4	2.7	1.5	1.3
Commercial	600	600	600	600
Public Open Space (Residential)	79	79	79	79
Public Open Space (Park)	170	170	170	170

Comparison of the published Bentham allotments concentrations with the CL:AIRE 2024 C4SLs is summarised in the table below:

	Highest ug/kg	Average ug/kg	Lowest ug/kg	CL:AIRE C4SL ug/kg	Notes
PFOA		1		1.4	Average is below
Four others – not specified PFAS	0.39		0.11	1.3 (conservative selected value)	All results below

Without identification of the specific PFAS, it is not possible to compare these values to the appropriate C4SLs for those compounds. C4SLs are risk-based screening values, not pass/fail safety limits. Exceedance triggers further assessment, not automatic prohibition.

It is noted that the PFOA average value was noted in the Bentham news, and no maximum concentration was reported. Because the maximum PFOA concentration was not reported, it remains possible that one or more samples exceed the 1.4 µg/kg CL:AIRE allotment C4SL.

Bioaccumulation

A literature review (see below) was undertaken regarding bioaccumulation of PFAS chemicals in vegetables grown in contaminated soils. This concluded that :

The current literature provides clear evidence that PFAS, including PFOS and PFOA, bioaccumulate in vegetables grown in PFAS contaminated soils.

Given that PFOS and PFOA bioaccumulate in vegetables at soil concentrations comparable to those measured at Bentham, the claim that long-chain PFAS do not accumulate in produce is not supported.

The Bentham allotment committee advise in the news report that they have been working with “a PFAS expert”, but no name is specified. Given the incorrect attribution of the CL:ARE 2024 screening values to DEFRA, and the incorrect use of a residential scenario instead of the allotments scenario, the accuracy of the advice provided is questioned although it is not stated that the expert provided any advice on screening values.

Critically, the news report states that “ a PFAS expert who supplied the crucial fact that long-chain PFAS (those that are most persistent and most damaging, including PFOS and PFOA) have NOT been found to accumulate in fruit and vegetables.

This reported crucial fact is not supported by the academic literature review provided below.

The use of an incorrect land-use scenario and incorrect attribution materially affects the interpretation of risk.

Recommendations

Discussion of the safety of the use of the allotments is not best discussed in the media.

It is regrettable that the allotment committee had to find funding for the testing and attempt to understand complex data and risk assessment themselves.

It is understood that at Thornton-Cleveleys, the Environment Agency commissioned testing of the allotments and the vegetables which it is assumed was supported by competent professional interpretation.

At the Bentham Town Hall public meeting in 2025, testing of the allotments was specifically called for, with the request directed to the panel, including the Environment Agency.

Targeted testing of edible plant tissues (leafy, root, and fruiting vegetables) should be undertaken to directly assess dietary exposure. This assessment should be undertaken before any definitive statements about the safety of produce are made.

In an email from the Bentham Allotments Association, they state: *“If an official scientific survey of PFAS in Bentham is commissioned, by a body democratically representative of the community, such as the Town or District Council, we would be happy to supply our testing report to add to the study.”*

Considering the Bentham Town Council have written to the Environment Agency requesting the formation of a “Multi-disciplinary committee” (as verbally recommended by the MPs on the Parliamentary day in Lancaster, and as stated in their PFAS report to Parliament), it is recommended that further evaluation is required. A multi-disciplinary team should have the technical expertise to provide a definitive answer to the questions raised herein. Specifically:

- Do any soil samples exceed the CL:AIRE C4SL screening values for allotments.
- Do the PFAS chemicals bioaccumulate in the produce being grown.
- Is it “safe” to eat produce grown in the Bentham allotments.

A single authoritative communication should be issued once the multidisciplinary review is complete, to avoid conflicting or inaccurate public messaging. The current absence of an authorised body leaves public concern on this matter and many other related matters an ongoing concern which needs resolution for the benefit of the Bentham community.

It is noted that consumption of home grown produce is only one possible PFAS exposure pathway, when historically multiple pathways existed. Users should therefore consider, that if they have had a long history of PFAS exposure via these multiple pathways, if they wish to further expose themselves to even very low levels via consumption of home grown produce.

PFAS bioaccumulation in vegetables grown in contaminated soil: an academic literature review

1. Introduction

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), are highly persistent anthropogenic contaminants increasingly detected in agricultural soils via biosolid application, irrigation with contaminated water and atmospheric deposition (Ghisi et al., 2019). PFAS occurrence in edible crops has raised concern about dietary exposure as a significant pathway for human intake (Blaine et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2014). This review synthesises current evidence on PFAS uptake and bioaccumulation in vegetables grown in PFAS-contaminated soils, with emphasis on PFOS and PFOA.

2. Mechanisms of plant uptake and internal distribution

2.1 Root uptake from soil pore water

PFAS are primarily taken up by roots from soil pore water and transported with the transpiration stream (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Their anionic character and surfactant properties favour movement in the apoplast, although specific membrane transporters have not yet been conclusively identified (Ghisi et al., 2019). Sorption to soil organic matter and mineral surfaces reduces the freely dissolved fraction, particularly for long-chain PFAS such as PFOS and long-chain perfluoroalkyl carboxylates, whereas short-chain PFAS exhibit weaker sorption and higher mobility, increasing their bioavailability for root uptake (Blaine et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2017).

2.2 Translocation and tissue distribution

Translocation from roots to shoots is strongly chain-length dependent. Short-chain PFAS (e.g. PFBA, PFHxA) are more readily transported to above-ground tissues, while long-chain PFAS (e.g. PFOS, long-chain PFCAs) tend to accumulate in roots with limited upward movement (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Functional group also plays a role: sulfonates such as PFOS generally show stronger sorption and lower mobility than carboxylates such as PFOA of comparable chain length, resulting in higher root retention and lower shoot concentrations for PFOS relative to PFOA (Lechner and Knapp, 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019).

3. Bioaccumulation patterns in vegetables

3.1 Bioaccumulation factors and organ-specific trends

Across multiple studies, a consistent hierarchy of bioaccumulation factors (BAFs) within plants has been reported: root BAF > stem/straw BAF > grain/fruit BAF (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). A recent synthesis of PFAS in crops indicates that leafy vegetables generally exhibit higher PFAS concentrations in edible tissues than root or

fruiting vegetables grown under comparable contamination levels (Ghisi et al., 2019). This pattern reflects both higher translocation of more mobile PFAS to foliage and high transpiration rates in leafy species.

3.2 Leafy vegetables

Experimental work on lettuce, spinach and other leafy vegetables grown in PFAS-contaminated soils or irrigated with PFAS-contaminated water consistently shows substantial accumulation of PFAS in leaves (Blaine et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2017). Short-chain PFAS such as PFBA often dominate the PFAS profile in foliage, but PFOA and PFOS are also frequently detected (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Given both elevated concentrations and high consumption rates, leafy vegetables are repeatedly identified as major contributors to dietary PFAS exposure in impacted agricultural systems (Blaine et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2014).

3.3 Root vegetables

Root crops (e.g. carrots, potatoes, radishes) show significant accumulation of long-chain PFAS in below-ground tissues, reflecting strong sorption and limited translocation (Lechner and Knapp, 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). PFOS concentrations are often higher in roots than in shoots, whereas PFOA tends to display a more even distribution between roots and above-ground tissues (Lechner and Knapp, 2011). Although concentrations in root vegetables may be lower than in leafy vegetables for some PFAS, they can still contribute substantially to dietary exposure where soil contamination is high (Zhao et al., 2014).

3.4 Fruits and grains

Translocation of PFAS into reproductive tissues (fruits and grains) is generally lower than into leaves and roots, resulting in smaller BAFs for these organs (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Nevertheless, measurable levels of PFOA, PFOS and other PFAS have been reported in cereals and fruiting vegetables in contaminated regions, indicating that reproductive tissues are not exempt from PFAS uptake (Zhao et al., 2014; Navarro et al., 2017).

4. PFOS and PFOA in vegetable tissues

4.1 PFOS

PFOS exhibits strong sorption to soil and plant tissues, leading to pronounced root accumulation and limited shoot translocation (Lechner and Knapp, 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Pot and field studies demonstrate detectable PFOS in roots, stems and leaves of vegetables grown on contaminated soils, confirming bioaccumulation despite its relatively low mobility (Stahl et al., 2011; Navarro et al., 2017). Root-to-shoot concentration ratios for PFOS are typically higher than for PFOA, consistent with its stronger sorption and lower xylem mobility (Lechner and Knapp, 2011).

4.2 PFOA

PFOA is more water-soluble and mobile than PFOS and is frequently reported as a predominant PFAS in both soil and plant tissues in contaminated agricultural environments (Lechner and Knapp, 2011; Blaine et al., 2013). Its higher translocation efficiency results in appreciable concentrations in leafy tissues and, to a lesser extent, fruits and grains (Stahl et al., 2011; Navarro et al., 2017). Consequently, PFOA is often a key driver in dietary exposure assessments involving vegetables grown on PFAS-impacted soils (Blaine et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2014).

5. Determinants of bioaccumulation

5.1 Soil properties

Soil organic matter and clay content enhance sorption of long-chain PFAS, reducing their immediate bioavailability but potentially acting as long-term reservoirs that sustain plant exposure over time (Blaine et al., 2013; Ghisi et al., 2019). Soil pH and ionic strength further influence PFAS speciation and sorption behaviour; increased ionic strength can promote sorption and reduce plant uptake for some PFAS species (Ghisi et al., 2019).

5.2 Plant traits

Species-specific differences in root architecture, transpiration rate and tissue composition affect PFAS uptake and distribution (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). High-transpiration leafy vegetables tend to accumulate more mobile PFAS in foliage, while deep-rooted species may access PFAS at greater soil depths (Navarro et al., 2017). Variability among species suggests that plant physiological traits and membrane transport characteristics play important roles, although mechanistic understanding remains incomplete (Ghisi et al., 2019).

5.3 PFAS structural diversity

Chain length and functional group jointly determine sorption, mobility and bioaccumulation. Short-chain perfluoroalkyl carboxylates are generally more mobile and more likely to reach edible leaves, whereas long-chain sulfonates such as PFOS are more strongly retained in roots and soil (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). This structural dependence underpins observed differences in tissue distribution between PFOS, PFOA and other PFAS.

6. Dietary exposure and risk

Integrative assessments combining plant concentration data with food consumption patterns conclude that vegetables can be a significant PFAS exposure pathway in contaminated regions (Blaine et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2014). Leafy vegetables often dominate estimated daily intake due to both higher PFAS concentrations and higher consumption rates (Blaine et al., 2013). PFBA, PFOA and PFOS are repeatedly

highlighted as compounds of concern because of their environmental prevalence, plant uptake and toxicological relevance (Ghisi et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2014).

7. Knowledge gaps

Despite substantial progress, several gaps remain:

- **Mechanistic understanding:** Molecular-level characterisation of PFAS transporters, binding sites and sequestration in plant tissues is limited (Ghisi et al., 2019).
- **Mixture and co-contaminant effects:** Most real soils contain complex PFAS mixtures and other contaminants; interactions and competitive uptake effects are poorly understood (Navarro et al., 2017).
- **Long-term field data:** Many available data derive from short-term pot experiments; long-term field studies under realistic agronomic conditions are comparatively scarce (Blaine et al., 2013; Ghisi et al., 2019).

8. Conclusion

The current literature provides clear evidence that PFAS, including PFOS and PFOA, bioaccumulate in vegetables grown in PFAS-contaminated soils. Root uptake from soil pore water is well established, and subsequent translocation leads to measurable concentrations in roots, stems and leaves (Stahl et al., 2011; Ghisi et al., 2019). Leafy vegetables generally show the highest PFAS levels in edible tissues, while root vegetables and fruits/grains also contain detectable PFAS (Blaine et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2014). Structural properties of PFAS, soil characteristics and plant traits jointly determine bioaccumulation patterns. Consequently, PFAS-contaminated soils represent a credible and, in some settings, significant pathway for human exposure via vegetable consumption.

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Date: 7th September 2026

Bentham Town Council

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Councillors,

I am pleased to report that the deep groundwater investigations have been completed on the Bentham site. Samples were sent to a third-party laboratory for PFAS testing, with the results received at the end of August. Our independent environmental consultants have started their detailed analyses of the PFAS test results to understand the condition of the site and determine what corrective actions/remediation will be required.

This work should be completed by the end of September. The independent consultants will then present their investigative findings, together with their proposals for any additional corrective actions and/or remediation to the Environment Agency and other UK regulatory bodies, as required.

The consultants have also concluded their testing of the Sunnyside properties (on Duke Street) and have confirmed that they do not require any corrective actions or remediation to be undertaken. These houses will return to the open market for sale in 2026.

The properties in Ashbank (on Duke Street) will also return to the open market for sale once we have undertaken a level of remediation on the Angus owned parcel of land closest to their back gardens. This is to ensure that the PFAS contamination on Angus land is unable to migrate into the gardens of those houses over time. These are likely to be put back on the market in early 2027.

The continued support we receive from the Town Council, local community and our employees is really appreciated.

Yours faithfully.

Paul Williams
Managing Director



For homes and habitats

Rt Hon Sir Julian Smith KCB CBE MP
By email

Our ref: MP/2026/20371
Your ref: JU94884
Date: 2 June 2026

Dear Julian

Thank you for your email regarding soil sampling for PFAS at Bentham Allotments and for sharing Mr Eden's recommendations and concerns. PFAS continues to be a topic of national interest, especially with growing attention on sites such as the Angus Fire Site in High Bentham, North Yorkshire, and others in the Northwest. Each location presents unique circumstances, so our approach is tailored to the specific facts and evidence relevant to protecting people, land, and habitats.

PFAS compounds are widely detected in the environment due to their extensive historic and ongoing use, as well as their persistent nature. We have an active programme screening PFAS sources across the country and we welcome opportunities to share our findings to support broader initiatives. For further information on our work with PFAS, please visit: [The Environment Agency's role with PFAS 'Forever Chemicals' | Engage Environment Agency](#).

We recently contributed to the Environmental Audit Committee proceedings. While these reports are important, the government, rather than industry or regulators, is responsible for issuing a formal response. Government responses usually occur within 60 days, though adoption of recommendations into policy is not guaranteed.

It's worth noting that the Angus Fire Site differs from the AGC Thornton Site, where the main concern was historic PFAS releases to the air and a significant risk to human health, prompting a contaminated land inspection. This included vegetable and egg testing within a defined area. The AGC site was a PFAS production site, and a multidisciplinary team supported formal investigations led by Wyre Council. Under contaminated land legislation, the AGC site was designated a 'special site', allowing Wyre Council, as primary regulator, to request our involvement.

Angus Fire produced PFAS containing Aqueous Film Fire Fighting Foam until spring 2024. To clarify, PFAS was not produced on site but added during foam production. The addition of PFAS was not directly regulated by our environmental permits, but its use in manufacturing is likely the source of shallow groundwater contamination detected via a borehole within the permitted area.

Consultants from Ramboll, acting for Angus Fire, have collected soil samples from land near the permitted area, which show relatively low PFAS levels at depths up to 50cm. The allotment site mentioned by Mr Eden is located around 400 metres southwest of the Angus Fire permitted area. Given both the distance and the likely groundwater gradient, it is unlikely that PFAS could reach the allotments from the site boundary, and currently there is no strong evidence to support soil sampling at the allotments from an environmental permitting perspective.

To report environmental problems please visit www.gov.uk/report-environmental-problem or call the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60

Further assessment at the Angus site will be part of a contaminated land review led by North Yorkshire Council, who serve as the primary regulator for Land Contamination Risk Management. We hold regular operational updates with North Yorkshire Council, including collaboration with the public health directorate and the UK Health Security Agency. Public interest in this issue is understandable, especially in light of recent media attention on blood sampling among some residents, although this information has not yet been shared with health specialists.

To address Mr Eden's recommendations:

Firstly, regarding the formation of a multidisciplinary team led by John Neville of the Environment Agency, we already have a multi-agency group focused on the Angus Fire Site. This group was established to clarify roles and responsibilities and responds to community concerns, with improved coordination discussed alongside Bentham Town Council.

Secondly, on organising allotment sampling to ensure correct protocols and analysis, at this time there is no evidence of a pathway from the permitted area of the Angus Fire Site to the allotment site. Therefore, there is no environmental basis to conduct soil sampling at the allotments.

We can assure Mr Eden that should concern be evidenced regarding any location relevant to the Angus Fire Site we would act with our partners to ensure public safety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Peart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lyn Peart
Area Director, Yorkshire