



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Terms of Reference of Open Spaces Committee

Approved: June 2026

Minuted: 35.7.4

Review: May 2027

The Open Spaces Committee is appointed to oversee the maintenance, management and improvement of Council-owned and Council-managed open spaces, recreational areas, street furniture and environmental assets within the Parish, within the delegated authority granted by Full Council. The Committee shall make recommendations to Full Council on matters outside its delegated authority.

Membership and Voting

(To be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May)

1. The Committee shall consist of at least 3 councillors.
2. The Committee shall appoint a Chair annually in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
3. The Chair shall have an ordinary vote and, in the case of an equality of votes, a casting vote.

Convening

The Clerk shall convene meetings of the Committee as required. The Chair of the Committee may also call meetings when necessary.

Meetings shall be held in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Standing Orders.

Meetings

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Quorum

The quorum of the Committee shall be 3 members.

Documentation

1. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the Clerk or appointed minute taker.
2. Draft minutes shall be circulated to Committee members as soon as practicable.
3. Approved or draft minutes shall be presented to Full Council for information and/or ratification as required.

Accountability

The Committee has delegated authority from Full Council to act within these Terms of Reference only. Any matters outside the Committee's delegated powers shall be referred to Full Council with recommendations.

REMIT OF THE COMMITTEE

1. To oversee the maintenance, management and condition of Council-owned and Council-managed open spaces, recreational areas and street furniture within the Parish.

2. To monitor the condition of Council-owned assets including, but not limited to:
 - Bentham Cemetery;
 - Philip Harvey Playing Field;
 - Goodenber Play Area (equipment);
 - Low Bentham Cross;
 - School Hill;
 - Welcome Walls;
 - streetlights;
 - town signposts;
 - public benches; and
 - other public realm assets under the Council's responsibility.
3. To undertake weekly safety inspections of the Philip Harvey Playing Field and Goodenber Play Area and ensure that identified defects, hazards or maintenance issues are appropriately recorded and addressed.
4. To monitor and respond to issues identified through inspections, reports from contractors, third-party inspections or reports received by the Council.
5. To arrange and approve routine maintenance works within agreed budgets and delegated authority.
6. To report major repairs, safety concerns or expenditure outside agreed budgets to Full Council for consideration and approval.
7. To undertake inspections or tours of Council-owned and managed areas at least annually to monitor their condition and identify maintenance requirements.
8. To consider, prioritise and agree maintenance and improvement works.
9. To obtain or prepare specifications for maintenance works and seek quotations in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Procurement procedures.
10. To appoint contractors and authorise works within approved budgets and delegated authority.
11. To make recommendations to Full Council regarding maintenance works or projects outside approved budgets, including recommendations for suitable contractors where appropriate.
12. To contribute to the Council's annual budgeting process by identifying future maintenance requirements, improvement projects and associated costs.
13. To ensure that memorial safety inspections within Bentham Cemetery are undertaken at least every three years and that appropriate records are maintained of inspections and any resulting works required.
14. To oversee and monitor the work of the Parish Caretaker and any contractors engaged for grounds maintenance or environmental works within agreed budgetary limits.
15. To prepare and review specifications for the Council's grass cutting contracts and obtain quotations at least every three years for recommendation to Full Council.
16. To develop, maintain and review policies relating to Council-owned spaces and street furniture, including policies such as a Bench Policy.
17. To monitor the condition of areas leased or managed by the Council from North Yorkshire Council, including Cleveland Square and Goodenber Play Area, and report issues or concerns to the relevant authority or organisation.

Review

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually at the first Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Council, with any recommended amendments referred to Full Council for approval.