

## BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 30 April 2012

Present: Cllrs Adams, Armstrong, Barnes, Burton, Marshall, DCllrs Barrington & Brockbank, also the Clerk and 18 parishioners

Apologies: Cllrs Handford, Hey, Hurtley & Procter, Also Mrs Pilkington (Age Concern / Mencap), Ms Graveson (Community Bonfire), Mrs Gillibrand (Meals On Wheels) & Miss Dowbiggin (Nursing Benevolent Fund)

1. Notice convening the meeting was read by the Chairman

2. Minutes of the 2011 Meeting

Minutes of the above meeting were presented, agreed and signed

3. Mayor's Report

Councillor Marshall expressed surprise that he was still in the chair, but thanked the Councillors and clerk for all their support in the last year, and also thanked Mrs Green and her husband for their work in opening and closing the Town Hall. He went on to thank the public for the interest they had shown in Council activities and for the support and feedback that had been received in the preceding year.

Looking back over 2011/12 the Mayor noted that 3 new Councillors had been co-opted following the resignations of Councillors Webster, Wills and Yaman, namely Councillors Handford, Hey and, more recently, Armstrong. He expressed the opinion that these individuals would work hard for Bentham.

The year had seen the completion of the outstanding maintenance projects on the Town Hall – to decorate the outside and re-render the rear of the building. Councillor Marshall stressed the importance of keeping the building in good shape as it has the largest function room in the area. The Council was also in the process of reviewing its website with the aim of producing a ‘one-stop-shop’ to promote Bentham alongside the Tourist Information Point. The Community Youth Building had been officially opened by County Councillor David Ireton and was now open for children several nights a week. After more than four years of trying the Council had finally signed a license for Cleveland Market Square for the market – only to have the stall holders quit due to lack of business which had been disappointing. Progress on the provision of allotments had been delayed by Craven’s Planning Department who had taken 6 months to decide that planning permission would be required for change of use. A decision on the application is expected in May. The Council had rented Low Bentham School Playing Field from NYCC to provide a safe area for children to play, and the Mayor expressed the Council’s thanks to the team of volunteers who lock the area each night. It had also given permission for Churches Together to install a new War Memorial on School Hill in time for 11/11/11.

Following its refurbishment Goodenber Play Area had asked for the Council’s assistance in obtaining an electricity supply for a CCTV camera and this was on going. St Johns Church had also asked for assistance in their successful appeal against Sport England’s demand for £50,000 to allow their much needed car park to go ahead. The Council had had some success in its battle with NYCC Highways to reinstate the white lines on the B6480 between Low Bentham and Wennington. This had resulted in many of the hedges being cut back and some of the white lines being repainted which made the road much safer.

Commenting on the coming year Councillor Marshall told the meeting that much needed drainage work in the Cemetery should start in the near future. Tender documents had gone out and a decision on contractors would be taken shortly. To celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee a beacon would be lit on Burnmoor on the evening of 4 June.

4. Financial / Precept Details

Draft copies of the Reconciliation of Receipts and Payments for 2011/12 (unaudited) were circulated. The clerk emphasised the fact that the accounts were due to undergo two rounds of audit in the next couple of months and small changes could occur.

The end of year figures indicated a credit of £99,673.73, which is has been artificially inflated by £50,000 due to Craven District Council paying the first part of the new financial year’s precept on 30 March instead of the beginning of April. The actual year end figure, removing this income stands at £49,673.73, which is just £1720 lower than at 31 March 2011 despite the completion of the rendering project on the Town Hall which was paid from reserves.

Total income, less the 2012/13 precept payment was £130,418.18. Removing the 2011/12 precept gives a figure just in excess of £30400, which is just £1000 down on 2010/11. There is still some expenditure in 2011/12 to be reclaimed, this includes LEADER funding for the parish caretaker and some ‘Walkabout’ money from Craven for improvement around the Town Centre. These monies, totalling nearly £3000, have been paid out already but because of the claim dates on the projects have yet to be reclaimed.

Payments for the year totalled £132,138.34 of which £47,855 was loan repayments. This is some £47,000 lower than last year which included the Community Youth Building refurbishment. Salaries accounted for £19309.63, down on last year due to a reduction in the clerks hours following the completion of the refurbishment project. Maintenance projects held over from last year – rendering the rear of the Town Hall and decorating the outside have been completed at a cost of £9000. The rest of the expenditure was used to run the parish – the Town Hall, Cemetery, Parish Caretaker, Tourist Information, some street lighting, the council administration and some maintenance.

With some juggling of the budget and by agreeing to pay for much needed drainage work in the Cemetery from reserves, the Council has managed to maintain the precept at £100000 for the fourth year. Grants totalling £4600 were awarded to 8 local organisations including the Tourist Information Point, and a small budget was allocated to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the town.

A question was asked about the financing of the War Memorial. The meeting was told that the Council's only involvement had been to give Churches Together permission to site the memorial on School Hill, and whilst it was aware that the invoice was outstanding it was not aware of any current details

It was agreed that a request for improvements to the Wenningdale facilities would be passed back to the relevant committee.

Money is still held for Low Bentham Playing Field. No progress had been made for two reasons, firstly the problems with buried cables and pipe on the site and secondly as NYCC were to dispose of Low Bentham School and there was a chance that either some S106 monies may become available for the project or that the Council may be able to acquire part of the school field which would be a safer environment.

The BEST Thermal Imaging had shown some areas of heat loss. A survey of the rear of the building was due the coming week, in conjunction with some grant funding for improvements which was, unusually, available to Councils.

#### 4. Library

A review of 'paid' staff hours had been completed and Bentham Library, from 6 June, will be open 2.30-4.30 Mondays, 10.00-1.00 Wednesdays, 2.30-5.30 Fridays and 10.00-12.00 Saturdays. The volunteer open day held in March had given prospective volunteers an opportunity to meet staff and find out more. There was no final decision at that time about volunteer staffing, but the Friends were looking at a homework club. They had also arranged a photo shoot to promote volunteering. Plans were underway to install a self issue machine to assist volunteers outside 'paid' staffed hours.

#### 5. Reports from Local Organisations

Reports were received from:

Adventurers, Age Concern, Aid in Sickness,  
Bentham Beagles, Bentham Christmas Lights, Bentham Community Transport, Bentham Environmentally Sustainable Town, Bentham for Bees, Bentham Youth Café, Bentham Youth Theatre Group, Blooming Bentham Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Bonfire, Community Link Cafe  
Ewecross Historical Society,  
Footpaths Group, Friends of Bentham Library  
Goodenber Play Area, GFI Youth Group,  
High Bentham Line Dancers, High Bentham WI,  
Indoor Bowls,  
Justice & Peace,  
LASRUG, Looking Well / Pioneer Projects, Low Bentham Badminton Club, Low Bentham Line Dancers, Low Bentham WI  
Meals on Wheels, Mencap,  
Nursing Benevolent Fund,  
Playing Field Association, Pet Rescue,  
Springboard, Springfield Bowling Club, Sunbeams  
Theatre Group, Toddle In, Tourist Information, Tuesday Craft Club,  
Victoria Institute,  
Welcome-In, Women's Social Services and NSPCC.

There were no reports from:

Abbeyfield, Bentham Agricultural Society, Bentham Juniors FC, Bentham AFC, Bentham Cricket Club, Bentham First Responders, Bentham News, Blind Persons Association, Cancer Support Group, Churches Together & Christian Aid, Homing Society,

#### 6. A.O.B.

Mr Henshaw informed the meeting about My Last Car and My Last Carnival. The former being shown in the Town Hall in the week before the Jubilee, culminating in the Carnival being organised by Pioneer Projects on Saturday 2 June which would also incorporate CarBizarre on the Main Street and Station Road. He asked that people spread the word that something special would be happening in Bentham. Mrs Clough added that the Jubilee Boat Flotilla

would be moving up Main Street on Monday 4 June, and encouraged everyone to get involved making boats for the parade, which would be followed by a DIY picnic on the Playing Fields.

Other Jubilee events announced included the Youth Café coffee morning on 2 June in the Community Youth Building, with jubilee face painting for children, and BEST were also arranging a Cycle Trail. On 3 June the Victoria Institute were holding a Jacobs Join in the Garden with prizes for crowns and a treasure hunt, the Methodist Church had an all age service and BBQ and there was Songs of Praise down at Riverside Caravan Park. The week would end with a special Churches Together Celebration Service on 10 June.

Cllr Marshall mentioned the Town Team and encouraged everyone to view the YouTube video promoting Bentham as a Portas Pilot.

Mrs Mounsey encouraged anyone interested to attend a RoSPA workshop on 23 June.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm.