

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on**

**7th November 2023 at 7pm**

**Present:** Cllrs J Turner (Chair), P Sharkey, J Ashton, W Wyatt-Millington

**In attendance:** Clerk, Cllr Dixon, Cllr Davies (Ward Member), residents of Lodge Hill and Dene Hill (for item 8), Peter Ashton (for item 13), George Corbett and Emily Jones, Bradford Council (for item 9)

# ENV2324/18 Chair’s opening remarks

Cllr Turner welcomed members of the public from Lodge Hill and Dene Hill. Committee members introduced themselves.

# ENV2324/19 Approve reasons for absence.

None.

# ENV2324/20 Disclosures of interest

# Cllr Wyatt-Millington is a resident of Dene Hill.

# ENV2324/21

Item 7 Planning Applications agenda item rearranged at chair’s request.

* **23/03858/HOU**

**Resolved:** no comment

* **23/03806/OUT**

Cllr Turner described the powers that the Town Council had with regard to planning – that we don’t make the final decision.

Residents were represented and the representative gave a presentation summarising their concerns. Many residents had lived in the area for many years and had concern that their daily lives would be disrupted by this application should it go forward. Traffic increases and parking for such a development would be inadequate for a small cu-de-sac such as this. Flooding and drainage were issues (Yorkshire Water had already objected) and the plot would spoil the amenity of residents. Planning had been refused on a similar plot for similar reasons. The development will threaten local wildlife.

It was suggested that possibly 2 houses might be developed but no 4 as this was too many for the plot size. Overall, the topography of the site meant it would be highly visible in important views.

**Resolved** to make the following comments to Bradford Council**:**

Baildon Town Council is aware that the District Ward Councillor has already made representations to Bradford Council about this application. We share their and residents’ concerns ie, this development will cause problematic drainage and water supply issues (as also highlighted by Yorkshire Water), loss of environmental benefits (wildlife), additional possible flooding from nearby streams, loss of amenity to residents due to the excessive amount of development on this plot (due to height of the two storey buildings, topography of the site and proximity to other houses). The proposed development which is in the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone and the proposed development site can be seen from within the World Heritage Site itself and will be prominent within the view. Baildon Town Council supports these and all residents’ concerns and as a consequence we object to this application in its current form.

**ENV2324/22 Playable Spaces – Jenny Lane Play Area.**

Emily Jones and George Corbett from Bradford Council introduced themselves and where they had got to with developing this project. Emily gave a presentation of 4 options for the design of the playground – including discussion of the types of equipment to be included, the treatment of surfaces and other features of the design. It was stressed that equipment not replaced would be renovated, there was an emphasis on making more opportunities for toddler play, disabled access and buggy access.

Option C1 which contained a bigger toddler play area and basket swing, public seats and renewed surfaces was proposed as the optimum option.

Cllr Ashton asked about the path network and the response was that there was a desire to reduce the amount of ‘plastic’ surfacing to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the design and bring more green space into it.

**ENV2324/22.1** The Environment Committee resolved to support Option C1 as the Council’s preferred option for Bradford Council to work up to tender as soon as possible.

**ENV2324/22.1** The Environment Committee recommends to Full Council on 4th December 2023 that the Green Spaces Reserve of £10,136 be spent on this design.

**ENV2324/22.3** The Committee recommends to Governance Committee on 20th November 2023 that the recently received CIL amount of £1,768.22 be committed to this project in addition to the already resolved amounts of CIL.

These commitments would bring the total contribution of Baildon Town Council to £20,457.02.

George thanked the Committee for their involvement and funding.

The Committee indicated that George and Emily should press on with their designs and thanked them for presenting a range of options which had been most helpful.

**ENV2324/23** **Jenny Lane Play Area Associated Works**

Cllr Turner outlined the purposes of renovating the adjoining spaces as these may look tatty once the main play area had been renovated.

Cllr Ashton asked how these proposals had come about and Cllr Sharkey responded that the Working Group, when discussing the designs of the main play area, had identified these as associated works.

**Proposal** to clear scrub 4m back from the frontage to Jenny Lane and introduce logs for ‘woodland’ play Cllr Dixon (in attendance) was invited to describe the proposal. A new fence would be erected along the frontage and vegetation cleared, logs placed to facilitate play. Cllr Dixon stress that written permission from the landowner would be needed before work progressed. There was overall support for this proposal.

**ENV2324/23** Environment Committee resolved to contribute up to £2,200 from 23/24 Green Spaces budget to create a small natural woodlands play area at the frontage with Jenny Lane and adjacent to the play area (see map attached), subject to all the appropriate permissions being received from the landowner and Bradford Council, and this spend is delegated to the Clerk so as to allow payment at the appropriate time within the project. Further resources may be needed and insurance and maintenance issues may need to be considered, in relation to the landowner, in the implementation of this project.

**A proposal to create a gate in the car park to the play area**. This would circumvent the need for parents arriving by car to walk back out on the footpath and along the road to the existing entrance. Cllr Turner raised concerns that most people walk to the play area anyway and that warning signs would be needed when the public crossed over the track which carried vehicular traffic and could be very busy at times. Also ground works may be needed as there were changes of level. Had DDA been considered re width of gate? Cllr Ashton also voiced concerns that there may not be the budget to do this associated project properly. It would need two DDA compliant gates and so it might just be too ambitious**.**

**ENV2324/24** Resolved: the proposal was not approved.

**ENV2324/25** It was resolved to approve a small contingency fund of £1000 from footpaths budget line, delegated to the Clerk, to manage any unforeseen costs which arise during implementation of the project (ie. 10.1 above).

With regard to the proposal to ‘approve virement from unspent 23/24 budgets to give effect to the above if required but agrees that any unspent funds are returned to the original budgets if unspent at the conclusion’. No vote was taken as this related now only to 10.2 and so this was not required as budget had reduced.

**Proposal**: To resolve to initiate a “Friends of Jenny Lane play area” informal group.

Cllr Ashton felt that this could be difficult to implement and BTC would not want to lead on it. However, the Environment Committee noted that, should a Friends of Jenny Lane Group emerge, then BTC would be supportive.

**ENV24224/26** It was resolved unanimously that the Clerk provides a written progress report to the next Environment Committee meeting, including a full breakdown of expenditure incurred and proposed.

**ENV2324/27 Baildon Horticultural Society. To consider two quotes for work to be undertaken at the Thompson Lane allotments.**

Resolved to commission the work for £2850 from Gardenscape subject to all the appropriate permissions being received.

# ENV2324/28 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Committee resolved to exclude press and public under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S1(2), whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

**ENV2324/29 Bracken Hall Countryside Centre**

Cllr Turner introduced this item with a description of the feedback received during the review and that this had been distilled into this report. He welcomed comments.

It was suggested that a clear focus was needed on what ‘environmental issues’ meant in the context of Bracken Hall – local countryside or eco issues for the planet.

Cllr Ashton agreed that a new name might be a good idea for a relaunch but that there would need to be market research to test out public reaction and understanding. The option to move to the new library was entirely dependent on factors out of our control so that would need to be reviewed and should be described as a back-up plan. Overall, there needed to be more clarity about the order of implementation.

There needed to be closer monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations before October 2024. The resolution needed re-wording to be more specific.

Cllr Turner stressed that the volunteers were absolutely critical to Bracken Hall improving and that support was essential from the Friends to assist in the process. The Centre can not carry on by itself. BTC needed a better recruitment strategy for volunteers, better marketing and the onus was not just on staff but volunteers as well.

Concerns were raised about whether the new Library and Town Council Offices would have space.

Cllr Dixon (in attendance) reminded the Committee that BTC had faced the challenges of Bracken Hall for many years and they were complex. She queried the creation of a 2K reserve.

Cllr Turner invited the Committee to vote on the resolutions as follows:

**ENV2324/29** Environment Committee resolved to approve the recommendations of the Working Group.

**ENV2324/29.1** Environment Committee resolved to approve the formation of a Change Group comprising the Chair of Environment Committee, the Clerk, a volunteer and a representative of the Friends to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

* Cllr Ashton proposed an amended to the second part of the resolution as follows:

**ENV2324/29.2** It was resolved that the implementation is delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Environment Committee: the implementation being of Option B with consideration of Option C as part of Option B and to consider the feasibility of Option E by April 2024 as a fallback. A review of progress would be received at the next Environment Committee and there would be further review at a later date and no later than October 2024.

**Resolved:** Amendment was approved.

**ENV2324/29.3** Environment Committee resolved to recommend to the next Full Council the allocation of a one-off reserve of £2,000 in support of Option B and to delegate its spending to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Environment Committee.

# ENV2324/30 Committee Budget

The Committee considered the **2023/2024** budget. The following adjustments resolved in agenda item 10 above:

* £2,200 to be spent from Green Spaces Fund thus leaving £800.
* £1,000 to be spent from Footpaths thus leaving £2,000.
* Grit bins budget was online to spend as winter was approaching.
* Baildon in Bloom had recently spent up so there was a nil in that budget.
* The Future of Baildon Moor budget line was queried. Cllr Sharkey described the purpose of the budget as covering the whole moor but at the moment there was focus on Baildon Reservoir and a meeting was coming up.

**ENV2324/30.1** It was resolved that an update report on the Reservoir be brought by Cllr Sharkey to the next meeting and any further expense be mapped out.

**ENV2324/30.2** As regards the Street Furniture budget - it was resolved to delegate to the Clerk to obtain costings for painting the railings near the new Browgate crossing and near the library and advise the Environment Committee.

The Committee considered the **2024/2025** budget.

The Clerk/RFO presented a proposal for the 2024/25 budget. This consisted of:

* Reducing the Footpaths budget from £3,000 to £2,000 as not as much budget was needed to implement projects.
* Reducing the Green and Clean budget from £9,000 to £8,000 as not as much budget was needed to maintain an appropriate level of service.
* Reduce the Street furniture/BT boxes from £1,000 to £500 as the BT boxes project was completed.
* Delete the Jubilee Bench budget line as not relevant anymore.
* The Clerk indicated that cost of living rises had hit Baildon in Bloom’s ability to purchase plants.

**ENV2324/31** Given the contribution made by the planting around Baildon to the community, it was resolved to increase the Baildon in Bloom budget from £3,500 to £4,000.

Cllr Ashton proposed that the Green Spaces budget in 2024/25 be allocated to a project to sort out the gardens in front of the post office ‘station Road Gardens’.

**ENV2324/31.1** It was resolved to support the use of the Green Spaces budget for the Station Road Gardens subject to quotes for the work and all relevant permissions being received. Delegated to the Clerk to progress this work in consultation with the Chair of Environment Committee.

**ENV2324/31.2** It was resolved to recommend to the Governance Committee on 20th November the 2024/25 budget as amended above.

**ENV2324/32 Public Participation**

It was resolved that Cllr Sharkey produce a piece on the Jenny Lane Play Area refurbishment plans for the December newsletter.

**ENV2324/33 To notify the Clerk of any items for future agenda.**

The Clerk would provide a review of progress at Bracken Hall Countryside Centre

Cllr Sharkey would provide an update on Baildon Reservoir

The Clerk provides a written progress report on Jenny Lane Playground refurbishment including a full breakdown of expenditure incurred and proposed.

**ENV2324/34 Next meeting date(s)**

5th March 2024