

# BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 4 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 PM

### Present

Cllr M Munday - Chairman      Mrs J Scott – Clerk      Cllr B Feltwell      Cllr N Moxey  
Cllr D Schumacher      Cllr A Thomas      Cllr D Jones      Cllr K Spicer  
Cllr J Wheals

Also, in attendance - County Councillor Georgia Hall, District Councillor Dave Busby, Tree Warden, Speedwatch Co-ordinator - 4 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence** - Cllr M Bamford, District Councillor Helen Davies & Footpath Warden
2. **To receive Declaration of Interest relating to Agenda items:** - Non received
3. **Dispensations – to consider written requests for dispensation of disclosable pecuniary interest in matters relating to Agenda items** – None received
4. **To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7 December 2023** - The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr D Jones      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1204 item 6b** Village Hall has been booked for Village Meeting 11 January **Page 1205 item 7** – Historic England & Babergh have been contacted re Bentley Barn – **item 8** e-mail sent to Collins Skiphire re the sign & skip lorries – **Page 1206 item 10** – Clubs have been advised of the grants put in the Budget – **item 12** Hastoe has been contacted **Page 1206 item 15** – Babergh have been contacted re naming Former Woodview Nurseries to Woodview Grove – **Page 1207 item 22** Letter sent to resident. Rest covered by agenda items.

## Public Session

**County Councillor G Hall** - Had sent her written report which has been circulated to Councillors – **APPENDIX 1** in the minute book and on the website. Wished everyone a Happy New Year and said that December had been quiet - she highlighted grit bins – if they require filling this can be done via SCC Reporting Tool. County Councillor Hall urged residents to be careful of scams – she has chased up the Weight Restriction request and is awaiting a response from the Community Liaison Officer - an update will be sent as soon as it is received. The Chairman told her that we really appreciate her support re the weight restriction.

**District Councillor D Busby** – Wished everyone a Happy New Year and told the meeting that “budgets are back” Babergh have to find £1½ million which will require some difficult decisions having to be made. He spoke of the parking issue in Sudbury – we are subsidising their car parking £10 per household. Cabinet will be discussing next week – he stressed the need for a balanced budget otherwise they will be issued with a Section 114 Notice and the Government takes over the accounts. We have to look at a better way of doing things. He urged everyone to complete the Library Survey by 26 January – if you don’t use it – it will close.

**Resident:** Thanked everyone who made the effort to attend the Site Meeting (Brockley Wood). He felt it was shambolic – and was appalled with the way SCC carry out their business – still don’t know the outcome or the timeline – he asked if anyone else has received any information. New documents have been uploaded onto the website re the so called Traffic Plan – there is no joined up thinking. He was concerned as the clearing of the vegetation has started – if there is

another site visit it will be more obvious. The Clerk was asked to clarify with Andrew Sierakowski when the revised documentation will be uploaded on the website and when the re-Consultation Period is going to start. It was suggested that once the application has been determined a complaint be sent on the way it has been handled.

Action: Clerk to contact Andrew Sierakowski
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**6. Planning Applications –**

a) To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications

<b>DC/21/01857</b>	Little Dodnash Farm, Bergholt Road	<b>Approved Conditions</b>
<b>DC/23/03652</b>	Land East of Capel Road	<b>Permission refused</b>
<b>DC/23/04760</b>	Land East of Grove Road	<b>Approved Conditions</b>
<b>DC/23/05321</b>	Land adjacent to Earlwood House, Capel Road	<b>Permission granted</b>
<b>DC/20/04409</b>	Little Dodnash Farm, Bergholt Road	<b>Approved conditions</b>

b) To give comments on any new applications in hand –

<b>DC/23/05656</b>	Land at Grove Farm & Land East of the Railway Line	Construction of photovoltaic Solar Array, Ancillary Infrastructure, DNO Substation, Customer Substation, Grid Connection & Landscaping
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**Extension until 2 February meeting**

<b>DC/23/04242</b>	11 Highfields	Erection of a single storey rear extension & a two storey side of dwelling house <b>Re-Consultation: Amended plans received by Planning Authority on the 7 December 2023</b>
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**RECOMMEND APPROVAL** - Subject to it complying with the Design Guide Line of the Neighbourhood Plan – Policy BEN3

Proposed Cllr N Moxey      Seconded Cllr K Spicer      All in favour      CU

The Chairman informed the meeting of the Public Meeting re the Land at Grove Farm on Thursday 11 January at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. It is being held to get the majority view of residents. Posters will be put up in the pub and around to village to make residents aware.

c) **SCC/0105/22B - Brockley Wood application** – See Public Session above.

**7. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Capel Library/ Bentley Long Barn /Footpath Warden & Speedwatch - Tree Warden**

– Visited The Oaks, Capel Road to check that the TPO T1 Oak tree needed reducing by 2m. This was agreed. Tree Warden has been contacted by parishioners concerning the trees being cut down in Dodnash Wood. This ‘thinning’ of Birch trees is taking place to allow more space for long lived trees such as Oak and Sweet Chestnut to grow on. The Birch trees having served their purpose of ‘drawing-up/increasing the height of the other deciduous trees. The removal of the Birch will allow more light to reach to ground so that shrubs & woodland flora can grow. This afternoon the Tree Warden visited the owner of Dodnash Wood to ask when the ‘thinning’ would be completed & when the public footpath would be reinstated. No definite date was given but it is estimated that the felling should be finished in a week’s time, after which the footpath would be made good, the fence replaced & two deep depressions further along the footpath filled in with hard core topped with soil. .

**Friends of Capel Library** – No further news. **Footpath Warden** – 1) Stile at the back of the village hall modified - the meeting was told the step on the style needs to be lowered – not good for short people. 2) Route besides Nelson Potter that was reported as overgrown now clear 3) Finger post Capel Road reported 00439531. **Speedwatch** – no report other to say no sessions have been held due to a mixture of Xmas, the weather and the road being closed. Hoping to restart once the weather has improved. - **Bentley Long Barn** – Babergh are still in discussions with the owner regarding the condition and use of the barn, along with David Eve, who is now Historic England’s Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas covering Suffolk -. due to have a meeting

with the chief planner early in the New Year and will be in touch to provide an update following that meeting. Historic England (David Eve) reported they are presently engaged in discussions with the owner about a new use for the building which would involve its repair and are hopeful these will make good progress. However, these discussions are confidential so cannot say more, although the Parish Council could contact the owner directly.

8. **Transfer of Land to Bentley Parish Council** – The Chairman was happy to announce that Bentley Parish Council is now the owner of the School Field, Play Area and Copse. The licences for use by the School and Maritime will continue. Residents whose properties about the Playing Field have been advised. Cllr Moxey proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Munday, Cllr Feltwell and the Clerk. A Working Party – Cllrs Munday, Feltwell, Spicer and the Clerk - was proposed to look at signage and minutiae.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell      Seconded Cllr A Thomas      All in favour      CU

9. **To discuss Call for Land for Nature Recovery** – The Clerk read out e-mail from Babergh District Council re Call for Land for Nature Recovery. After some discussion it was thought that the Copse could be considered as a project - The Clerk will contact Babergh and will be the initial contact.

**Action:** Contact Babergh District Council

10. **To discuss newly planted hedge – Footpath 40** – The meeting was told that the Public Rights of Way document states that any hedge needs to be 10 metres away from the public right of way – this hedge has been planted too close to the footpath – it was proposed that the Clerk contact SCC to draw their attention to it.

Proposed Cllr M Munday      Seconded Cllr N Moxey      All in favour      CU

**Action:** Contact SCC

11. **To Review & Agree Draft Budget** – Councillors were happy with the uplifts made in the Draft Budget and it was therefore proposed that the budget for 2024/25 be accepted.

Proposed Cllr M Munday      Seconded Cllr D Jones      All in favour      CU

12. **To set Precept & Sign Precept Charging Authority Form** - At the December meeting it was agreed the Precept should be raised The Clerk and Cllrs Schumacher were of the opinion we should go for a one off 5% for 2024/25, to cover the impact over the last 12 months and then go for an annual 2% uplift from 2025/26 onwards. That way we will slowly recoup the shortfall from CIL monies. giving a Council Tax increase for 2024/25 of 5.19%. Cllr Schumacher did think an increase of 10% might be in order - a discussion followed regarding how much the precept could be increased & whether we might need a referendum – Clerk will clarify. It was therefore, proposed that the Precept be set at £15,000 and that the Precept Charging Authority Form be signed shortly after the meeting with the minutes.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer      Seconded Cllr D Schumacher      All in favour      CU

13. **To discuss Affordable Housing** - The Clerk had contacted Hastoe and Eddie Bacon had replied - I joined Hastoe in 2022 to replace Sophie as she has moved on. I cover Suffolk and look forward to working with you all to explore a rural affordable housing development in Bentley. The Housing Needs Survey was carried out June 2015 and typically are valid for 5 years so another survey will be needed, it would also be worth exploring the potential sites and housing need with Babergh Mid Suffolk before we go any further. Would it be possible to meet you and other members of the Parish Council with Sue from CAS in the new year so we can have a review of the work previously carried out and discuss how we can move forward. I have the following dates free: 19<sup>th</sup> January anytime · 25<sup>th</sup> January anytime · 6<sup>th</sup> Feb anytime – A meeting will be arranged asap.

**Action:** Contact Hastoe to arrange meeting

14. **To discuss Goddard Fencing Quote – West Mill Green entrance to Playing Field –** Cllr Feltwell told the meeting that the Parish Council had agreed to pay half the cost of the Goddard Fencing quote received by the Primary School and it seemed sensible to get a pedestrian gate to the Play Area – Goddard have quoted £750 plus VAT - Councillors proposed that the quote be accepted.

Proposed Cllr N Moxey      Seconded Cllr K Spicer      All in favour      CU

15. **To agree fee to review Landscape & Visual Review -** Alison Farmer’s fee to review the Landscape and Visual Review is £950 - it was proposed that this fee be accepted.

Proposed Cllr N Moxey      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

16. **Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) – To discuss suggested items** – It was agreed to defer this until March.

It was suggested that a notice be put in the Bugle advising that the Parish Council now own the School Field and Copse.

17. **To discuss 20s Plenty Campaign -** Cllr Jones told the meeting that it seems it’s a YES to the 20s Plenty Campaign. It was therefore proposed that we join the 20s Plenty with the other parishes. Weight Restriction – see Public Session above.

Proposed Cllr N Moxey      Seconded Cllr D Jones      All in favour      CU

<b>Action:</b> Join the 20s Plenty campaign
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18. **Traffic Calming – SID – Update -** SID is back at Highfields.

19. **Playing Field Society- Maritime – Grass Cutting -Update** – Invoices for grass cutting the Play and Gym area are to be passed for payment at tonight’s meeting. Clerk to contact Maritime for copies of the agreements they have with the school so they can be moved over to the Parish Council.

<b>Action:</b> Contact Maritime for Agreements
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20. **To receive Correspondence** –The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails. Suffolk CC x 3 plus residents x 3 plus District Cllr Busby x 2 re Development & Regulation Committee (Brockley Wood) – BDC x 1 & Historic England x 2 – re Bentley Barn – Hastoe x 1 – Rural Exception sites - Alison Farmer x 1, Thos Hill KC x 1 Solar Farm- Suffolk Police x 1 – Precept survey PCC proposes increase in precept to fund Constabulary in 2024/25 -e-mails from Headway, Citizens Advice, FoCL, Bentley Bluebells WI - Thanks re grants inserted in Budget. 2 x Babergh District Council Consultation on Draft Scrap Metal policy 2024-29 and Consultation on draft Sexual Entertainment Policy 2022/29.

21. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings** – **Cllr K Spicer** - Was concerned about the clearing work being done at Hazel Shrub there had been several large fires and a couple of large Oaks had had branches removed – bearing in mind there is asbestos on the site – and the removal of the Oak last year - the Clerk was asked to contact Babergh Enforcement and David Pizzey.

22. **To Authorise Payments-** The following payments were authorised

101723	Maritime FC	Annual Grass Cutting		£350.00
101724	Peter Baldwin	Leaf Clearance November & December		£340.00
101725	HMRC	Clerks Tax		£30.00
101726	Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary – December	£572.43	
		Minus tax	<u>-£30.00</u>	
			£542.43	£665.20
		Plus, Expenses	<u>£122.77</u>	
			<u>£665.20</u>	

It was proposed that these be paid en bloc.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer

Seconded: Cllr A Thomas

All in favour CU

23. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** - Thursday 1 February 2024. Preceded by a Playing Field Society Meeting at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE:**