

# **BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 2 JANUARY 2025 AT 7.30 PM**

### **Present**

Cllr M Munday - Chairman	Mrs J Scott - Clerk	Cllr K Spicer	Cllr B Feltwell
Cllr M Bamford	Cllr J Campbell	Cllr A Thomas	Cllr J Wheals
Cllr D Jones			

Also in attendance - District Councillor D Busby, Tree Warden, Footpath Warden & Speedwatch Coordinator - 5 members of the public

Cllr Munday welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a Happy New Year she asked that everyone keep their comments brief in the public session. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence** - County Cllr Georgia Hall.
2. **To receive Declaration of Interest relating to Agenda items:** - None 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 Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2024** -  
The Clerk drew Councillors attention to item 16 Page 1259 Richard Palmer had been changed to read Richard Parmee. The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr M Bamford      Seconded Cllr J Campbell      All in favour      CU

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1258 item 9** Trimming trees on Silver Leys Green is on tonight's agenda. Highways have been contacted re ownership of triangle on Grove Road - **item 16** – the Tree Warden was contacted who told me Richard Parmee has said that he will provide a grant of £2,000 to clear the copse but the work has to be completed by the 31st of March 2025. The £200 is to cover the bird and bat boxes and replacement trees. I spoke with our new Locality Officer she talked about funding and the Copse was mentioned – she said it was something she was sure she would be able to help us with. Clerk paid Freethought Invoices via BACS £155 - Rest covered by agenda items.

The Chairman reminded everyone that if they had any comments on agenda items to bring it up in the Public Session – so any information can be used by Councillors when discussing the item.

## ***Public Session***

**County Councillor G Hall** – No report available.

**District Councillor D Busby** – Wished everyone a Happy New Year. He told the meeting that 2025 was going to be a very challenging year. He spoke about Devolution – the Government want to get rid of the two-tier Councils and replace with a Unitary Council - an increase in housing targets to 80% - this means re-visiting the Local Plan Part 1 and 2 (one we have just changed). He urged Bentley Parish Council to keep their NHP up to date and suggested they consider where they would like housing to go if we have to have it – ie update the NHP with housing allocations and where they would go. Babergh increase is 763 instead of 468 which is a considerable uplift. Waste collections are going to change – food collection by 2026 and changes in the way we recycle glass and plastics – three weekly collections. Housing stock - Babergh have three and a half thousand houses which were not in quite as bad condition as they thought but it will still take a lot of money to bring them up to scratch. So Babergh are under enormous financial pressure in the short and medium term.

Cllr Munday told the meeting that Bentley NHP is due for its three year review this year. We will need to review the Infrastructure Plan.

**6. Planning Applications –**

- a) To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications – None received
- b) To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals – No new applications had been received but Chairman had picked up a New Notification on Babergh Planning site – **Development by a Statutory Undertaker – Installation of 2 No 8 M Light poles – Near Martins Hill Cottage, Bergholt Road** - Cllr Munday told the meeting she had written to the Planning Department to ask them to provide details, that Bentley had a Dark Skies Policy (BEN 10) and also pointing out that Martin's Hill Cottage is immediately adjacent to the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape and surrounded by ancient woodland – this enquiry has been put on the website as a comment by Bentley Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to get in touch with the Case Officer Nikki Barrell and ask for details – also to copy in District Councillor Busby.

<b>Action:</b> Clerk to contact Case Officer – cc District Cllr Busby
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- 7. **Bentley Bridge barrier and the re-routing of footpath** -. Babergh Panning have been contacted regarding access – will it be permitted to pedestrians & equestrians during the works on the bridge when the road is closed to vehicles. Arboricultural Officer has been contacted re follow up re removal of the Oak trees alongside the new footpath that is to be diverted. Local landowner said he has been in discussions with contractors who are carrying out works and told the meeting the biggest oak will be saved – a badger set needs to be investigated – it's all quite complicated.
- 8. **Potential designation of a Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area - Update** – Cllr Munday told the meeting that the consultation ends on 24 January and Babergh are holding a public meeting on 16 January in St Mary's Church. All documents relating to this are on the website and notices regarding the meeting will be on the website, notice boards and Social Media. Two bound A4 copies and one A3 copy of Bentley Conservation Plans have been printed at a cost of £28 for the public meeting and it was proposed that this cost be accepted. A copy was taken to the Coffee Morning before Christmas to make people aware.

Proposed Cllr M Munday      Seconded Cllr K Spicer      All in favour      CU

- 9. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch –**  
**Tree warden** - Nothing to Report - The Tree Warden was told about a potential obstruction towards the pub – he will investigate. - **Footpath warden** – Nothing to report. **Bentley Long Barn** - Nothing to report - **Speedwatch-** Three sessions have been held since my last report. Two at the War Memorial where one session was a NIL return and one when one vehicle was reported. One on Capel Road where five vehicles were reported. The highest recorded speed was 39 mph.
- 10. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - Clerk will chase before next meeting.
- 11. **To ratify cheque to Alison Farmer Associates & thank residents for their donations regarding this invoice** – This was for the Appraisal of the LVIA re Brockley Wood – the cost was met by residents – it is hoped SCC will take notice. Residents were thanked for their donations which were considerable.

Proposed Cllr M Bamford      Seconded Cllr A Thomas      All in favour      CU

- 12. **To consider grant applications for insertion into the Budget** - Councillors discussed the applications below and it was proposed that grants of £200 be made to Bentley Clubs & Friends of Capel Library and £100 to Headway and Citizens Advice

Bentley Outdoor Bowls	£200	Headway	£100
Bentley Bluebells WI	£200	Citizens Advice	£100
Friends of Capel Library	£200		

Proposed Cllr M Munday      Seconded Cllr M Bamford      All in favour      CU

13. **To discuss Draft Budget/Precept** – Cllr Schumacher and the Clerk had a remote meeting to go through six month accounts and Budget figures for 2025/26. Councillors had been issued with a copy of the budget for any comment. Councillors were happy with the uplifts made in the Draft Budget and it was therefore proposed that the budget for 2025/26 be accepted.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell      Seconded Cllr D Jones      All in favour      CU

14. **To set Precept & sign Precept Charging Authority Form** - Cllr Schumacher's e-mail stated that the Precept had also been reviewed and he recommended the Councillors consider an uplift to the Precept again this year of £500 bringing the Precept to £15,500 as we begin to see the downstream impact of inflationary pressure on committed expenditure and the departure of Maritime on maintenance costs. It should also be noted that the budget includes a reasonable contingency for unplanned expenditure. There is also an offset against agreed payment by Babergh related to the Conservation expenditure incurred this year which may be removed should payment be received before the budget is finalised. It was therefore proposed that the Precept be uplifted by £500 and the Precept Charging Authority Form be duly signed.

Proposed Cllr M Bamford      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

15. **To discuss contacting Babergh re Trimming Trees on Silver Leys Green** - Birch trees planted by Babergh on Silver Leys Green are getting very big and are very near to houses if they were to come down in a gale. Tree Warden is concerned about the safety of residents. It was agreed to identify the trees to see if they could be removed. Cllr Bamford will meet up with Tree Warden to inspect.

16. **Recognition of Long Service & Commitment – to discuss ideas on how to mark the occasion** - Pam Rayment has run Bentley Toddler Group for 40 years in the Village Hall. A discussion followed and it was proposed a letter of thanks be sent with a garden voucher for £80 on behalf of Bentley Parish Council.

Proposed Cllr M Bamford      Seconded Cllr J Campbell      All in favour      CU

<b>Action:</b> Letter sent & voucher to be purchased.
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17. **Elan City Warranty Extension- Update** - Clerk had sent e-mail asking if the price includes solar panels and batteries. The warranty extension only covers the unit. The battery warranty period is 6 months, and the solar panel warranty period is 2 years. The details of the original quote were not available so this item was deferred until the February meeting.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

18. **To discuss purchase of trees, bird & bat boxes** – See item 5 above.

19. **To Review Risk Assessment** – Deferred until new bank account is up and running.

20. **Stile/footpath update** – Problem has been resolved – Take off Agenda

21. **Replacement tree–Grove Road/Capel Road – Update** - Clerk has contacted Highways re ownership of the triangle. SCC have not yet replied.

22. **Lorry Watch - Update** - Cllr Thomas told the meeting there were more articulated lorries – 1/12/24 to 31/12/24 – total 19 On 20 December between 13.40 and 14.01 12 lorries were observed passing through the village. Checking traffic information there were issues on the Copdock roundabout and the A14 east bound. We need the manpower to cover particular times - it needs to be done on a more formal basis and it is going to be quite a task. Cllr Munday told Cllr Thomas she was not devaluing the work he had done and thanked him for his efforts. See item 25 for more discussion

23. **Affordable Housing – Update –** We may need to look at Affordable Housing when we are updating our Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that we continue to pursue it as a decision was made to do that. Clerk will try for a Zoom meeting in March

**Action:** Arrange Zoom meeting for March

24. **To discuss 20s Plenty Campaign –** Cllr Jones told the meeting that nothing was happening at the moment so it will be taken off the agenda.

25. **Traffic Calming – Weight Restriction– Update -** Cllr Munday told the meeting that from the data collected over a 2-week period by SCC, officers felt there wasn't sufficient HGV traffic coming through the village to justify a Weight Restriction. However, it was agreed that Unsuitable for HGV signs positioned at either end of each of these roads, Station Road/Capel Road and Bentley Hall Road/Church Road, would help drivers keep to the prescribed A road lorry routes. It was agreed that careful placing of a sign would be needed to indicate to drivers exiting the Folly Farm site that they should turn right to access the prescribed route of the A137. The costs for this signage will be in the region of £6,000 for 4 signs. We will need to discuss with our County Councillor Georgia whether she can offer any help with this from her Locality budget -maybe Collins would sponsor.

26. **Playing Field Society –** Cllrs had been sent the Playing Field Rules – Clerk to chase CEVC Primary re use of the notice board. Letter of thanks has been sent to Jon Haines –Councillors need to know what items Jon is taking with him and what sort of price he is looking for re containers.

**Action:** Contact Maritime re price of containers.

27. **To receive Correspondence –** The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following E-mails: 3 x Babergh Introduction to your Locality Officer Sarah Jane Hatt & funding news/ Planning installation of Light Poles Martins Hill Cottage – queried by Chair/Devolution White Paper & Other Government Announcements - 1 x Community Action Suffolk – Rural Housing Network Forum – Zoom meeting 22 January 2-3pm - 1 x Bentley Village Hall AGM 7.30 16 January - 1 x Suffolk Highways Meeting re Bentley HGV & Weight Limit Review 19 December - 1 x Suffolk Police re Burglaries/Theft/Crime Prevention

28. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings–** None

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

101797	Fiona Coley	Stand in Clerk	£80.08
101798	Bentley Village Hall	Hall Hire & 50% Broadband	£98.91
101799	Canon UK Limited	A4 & A3 documents - Conservation	£28.00
101800	SLCC	Clerk's Membership	£150.00
101801	Peter Baldwin	December Leaf Clear	£170.00
101802	HMRC	Clerks Tax	£33.40
101803	Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary – Dec	£615.76
<b>NB- Expenses include 2 x</b>		Minus tax	<u>-£33.40</u>
<b>Freethought Internet Ltd</b>			£582.36
<b>invoices 62922 &amp; 63025</b>		Plus Expenses	<u>£209.46</u>
<b>£155.00</b>			£791.82

It was proposed that these be paid en bloc.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

30. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting -** Parish Council Meeting Thursday 6 February 2025 Preceded by a Playing Field Society Meeting at 7.00 pm. There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE: 02/1/2025**