

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Present

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

Also, in attendance - County Cllr Georgia Hall, Tree Warden, Speedwatch & 7 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting – he had signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form before the meeting. He said how grateful we should be for Cllr M Munday’s input over the past five years. She has worked tirelessly on the Neighbourhood Plan, Quiet Lanes, Judicial Review and Conservation Area – all these things have been for the greater good of Bentley residents and he for one was extremely grateful – Councillors all agreed with his statement and Cllr Munday was given a round of applause.

The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence**, Footpath Warden – Cllr D Schumacher - absence
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 Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Friday 9 May 2025 -.**
The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer Seconded Cllr J Wheals All in favour CU

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1284** – Dead badger was reported to SCC – The Bergholt Road bridge has been reported (again) to SCC, Enforcement Case Update Oakleigh - applicant has put in pre-application advice to see what options they have **Page 1285** Thanks have been received from Bentley Outdoor Bowls, Bentley Bluebells WI, Friends of Capel Library and Tuesday Club. Citizens Advice, Headway and lighthouse Women’s Aid re donations. With banking details – they will be passed for payment following this meeting. Still waiting for Tuesday Club details – rest covered by agenda items

Public Session

County Councillor G Hall – had sent her report **Appendix 1** in the minute book and on the website. She spoke about the Suffolk Community Awards that recognise and celebrate those who have improved the quality of life for communities across Suffolk, the street lighting upgrade along Ipswich Waterfront which should be installed over the next couple of months, Devolution – SCC commissioned a report to give them figures to explain the financial gain if we have one Council- it will take several years before we see any change -Bentley should have had an invite as a Council from Nicola Beech – so please voice your thoughts on the situation – Babergh favour more than one Council. Quotes have been received for Not Suitable for HGV’s – cost anything from £5-6½K. Brockley Wood re-consultation – she has put in an objection and will try and be at the Committee meeting. Clerk to send County Councillor Hall Problem Report Reference re Bergholt Road Bridge.

Cllr Munday informed County Councillor Hall that we actually voted as a Parish Council not to go ahead with the Not suitable for HGV’s signs at the last meeting as the proposal did not meet what the village needs Signs are particularly needed by the level crossing HGV’s get stuck as its not wide enough – the side of the road has been severely damaged and we really need

something done about that area -it needs to be looked at urgently. Brockley Wood applicant has agreed to put £20K towards weight restrictions on Bentley Hall Road and Church Road connecting the A12 and A137. However, if they don't we may have to come back to SCC – we need to stop HGV's coming through the village – residents living by the level crossing have to walk on the road to get into the village. A discussion followed - cyclists cannot use Bergholt Road as it is very dangerous.

District Councillor D Busby - Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils had been received and circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website.

Resident: Worried about the height of the hedge at the side of his bungalow 28 West Mill Green on the School Playing field. This will be an agenda item on Playing Field Society meeting in July.

Resident: Brockley Wood – Environmental Health Officer will possibly be looking at changing wording in his response.

6. Planning Applications –

a) To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications –

DC/25/00901	Windmere, Station Road	Permission has been granted
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b) To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals –

DC/25/02303	Ruseley, Hazel Shrub	Application under Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 – Variation of Condition 1 (Approved Plans & Documents) of Reserved matters Approval DC/24/00189 dated 26/2/2024 – Submission of Details (Reserved Matters) Application for Outline Planning Permission DC/22/04762. Appearance, Scale Landscaping & Layout of the site for 1 no dwelling & Cart Lodge
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RECOMMEND APPROVAL

Proposed Cllr M Munday	Seconded Cllr C Campbell	All in favour CU
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c) Brockley Wood – To discuss re-Consultation Response – The application has been put out for re-consultation again following the designation of Bentley Conservation Area. Babergh District Council are asking for re-location of the proposed wash plant and a binding obligation not to install a concrete crushing plant. It was proposed that Bentley Parish Council send in a final response.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer	Seconded Cllr A Thomas	All in favour CU
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7. Potential designation of a Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area - Update – This has now been designated as 'Bentley Conservation Area'. Babergh District Council require more work to be done on the Management Plan following consultation responses which will need to be carried out by our Heritage Expert.

8. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – **Tree warden** – Minutes of the Suffolk Tree Warden Network AGM and expenditure accounts had been forwarded to Councillors. Also, the member Inaugural AGM Meeting Notice. The Tree Warden will be attending the AGM in the morning 11 – 1pm for Formal Business followed by and optional guided walk - 14.30 – 16.30 - round Staverton Thicks. The trees in the Community Orchard are fruiting - two things need attention the grass between the trees needs cutting – two buckets used to water the Community Orchard trees that were removed by the Bantu Farm leader have not been returned.. The tree at the Grove Road Triangle was also mentioned this will be an agenda item at the next meeting. **Footpath Warden** – Nothing to report. **Bentley Long Barn** -

Nothing to report- **Speedwatch**- Steven Williamson has held one session, at the Village Hall when five vehicles were reported. The highest speed was 42 mph

SW is unable to take it on due to work commitments but will continue to carry out sessions as and when he can. To repeat Cliff Daldy is willing to get any new person through the process with the Police to become a volunteer and then train them as Coordinator and see them through their first couple of sessions. They will need to go through the process of becoming a volunteer

Action: Tree at Grove Road – Triangle – Advertise for Speedwatch Co-ordinator – Poster on Notice Boards and Social Media

9. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update -** Clerk reported that the payments have been raised ready for authorisation following this meeting. The telephone number for the Switch Team just rings out then disconnects – the two other accounts need to be switched from Barclays to Lloyds.
10. **To approve Audited End of Year Accounts for Smaller Authorities – 2024/2025-** The Clerk stated that she and Cllr Schumacher had a remote meeting to go through the accounts before they were taken to the Internal Auditor. Cllr Jones was unable to attend. Cllrs had been sent copies of the Accounts which need to be approved and sent to P K Littlejohn before 1st July. The Notice of Public Rights will be put on the notice boards and website on 6 June 2025
- i) **To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 – (Section 1) – Page 4 of the AGAR.** - to be signed by Chairman & Clerk and Minute references added - It was proposed that the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 be accepted.
- Proposed Cllr K Spicer Seconded Cllr D Jones All in favour CU
- ii) **To approve Audited end of year accounts for Smaller Authorities Accounting statements 2024/25 Section 2. – Page 5 – Receipts for the End of Year 2024/25 amounted to £51,738.88** this figure includes precept, VAT repayment. Donations from residents, CIL money, Payment from Babergh re Conservation invoices, NH Plan grant, and Fireworks. **Total Payments over the 12 months were £51,583.59** – which includes general admin, VAT, grants, grass cutting, purchase of Maritime Units, Conservation invoices, laptop traffic survey, NH Plan, Planet Law and Fireworks. **Current Account Balance at 29 March** £12,682.83 Family Fun Day Tracker £6,708.66 and Parish Council Tracker £9,983.67 - It was proposed that the audited end of year accounts be accepted.
- Proposed Cllr M Bamford Seconded Cllr D Jones All in favour CU
11. **To review Neighbourhood Plan** – The meeting was told the Neighbourhood Plan review is progressing – policies have been reviewed. Still awaiting advice from Babergh re housing expectations in response to the uplift to housing numbers. Three sites have been submitted by different landowners for possible residential development.
12. **To discuss Internal Audit Report - Financial Control – Page 4** Still been unable to transfer monies re-equipment from Family Fun Day Tracker account because of changing banks - £1,269.58 – VAT reclaim - £5,924.27 - £4,518.44 has been paid by HMRC – **Page 7** Clerk will contact Babergh to clarify their portion of the VAT - so have almost gained back our reserves. – **Page 8** – Re-declaration to the Pension Regulator was done in January - internal auditor has been informed. **Page 9** – New Model Standing orders are to be adopted this evening – Website will be updated, - Councillor Code of Conduct will be an agenda item at the next Annual Parish Council Meeting **Page 10** Website Accessibility Statement will be reviewed and updated. **Page 12** Fidelity Guarantee Insurance will be reviewed. **Page 14** – Direct Link re Councillor Information on Babergh website to be investigated. It was proposed that the Internal Audit Report be accepted.
- Proposed Cllr M Munday Seconded Cllr B Feltwell All in favour CU
13. **To ratify payments made in April/May – Tangent £50, Places4People £3,320.64 & Hand forth Heritage £720.00 – It** was proposed that these payments be ratified.

14. **To discuss protocol for reporting absences from meetings from Councillors** – The Clerk read out Protocol re reporting absences from meetings – Page 67/68 in The Good Councillors Guide. Basically Councillors should give the Clerk apologies with as much notice as possible if unable to attend a meeting, with the reason for the absence. These apologies are usually noted in the minutes – if no apology is offered it is recorded in the minutes as an absence. Failure to attend any meetings for a six month period results in an automatic disqualification from being a Councillor unless a request is made for the Council to grant an extended absence. For this reason, when sending apologies for not attending a meeting Councillors should give an explanation. After some discussion it was proposed that we need a formal approval by Councillors at the PC meeting of any apologies received. The reason for absence does not need to be recorded in the minutes.

Proposed Cllr M Munday

Seconded Cllr K Spicer

All in favour CU

15. **To adopt Updated Version of Model Standing Orders** - Councillors had been sent copies of the New Model Standing Orders that the Clerk had tailored for Bentley Parish Council. It was therefore proposed that they be adopted and put on the Council website.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell

Seconded Cllr J Wheals

All in favour CU

16. **Affordable Housing – Update** – It was agreed by Councillors that this should be a Zoom meeting with three or four Councillors. Clerk will try and arrange for either 3 or 4 July.

Action: Contact Sunila Osborne with dates
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17. **Clearance of Land in the Copse – Update** - The work agreed at the Annual Parish Council meeting has been completed – grass seed has been purchased and will be spread (30 kgs £200). Regular cutting will eliminate any weeds so at the moment we have done as much as we can. Cllr Spicer told the meeting that the school are keen to get involved with this project. Cllr Bamford thanked Cllrs Feltwell & Spicer but was told there was more work to be done.

18. **Traffic Calming – Weight Restriction– Update** – See County Councillor Georgia Hall’s report above.

19. **Playing Field Society – To discuss e-mails from residents re Football, Play Area and repairs to Case Lane Playing Field entrance “kissing gate”** – Cllr Bamford told the meeting that an e-mail had been received from a resident asking for the play area to be updated/modernised – do we want to extend the play area – or replace ageing equipment? It was decided this would be an agenda item at the July Playing Field Society meeting so it can be fully discussed. Football and entrance “kissing gate” will also be agenda items at the July Playing Field Society Meeting.

Action: Agenda items Play area equipment / Football and repairs to Playing Field entrance

20. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails: 3 x Suffolk Highways re Bentley HGV & Weight Limit Review Meeting 1 x County Cllr Hall re Various locations Bentley Unsuitable for HGVs Signage 5 x Babergh Listed building Consultation – Notification works to windows in listed buildings/Local Government Reorganisation Town & Parish Workshops & Survey Launch/Enforcement Case Update Oakleigh put in a pre application advice to see what options they have/ Proposed CIL charging Schedules 6 week consultation 28 May – 9 July/ District wide Community Governance Review 1 x Internal Auditor – Internal Audit Report 1 x BDC objection on Brockley Wood re-consultation 4 x residents re Football and Playground update.

Cllr Munday - SCC are currently consulting on their Local Nature Recovery Strategy - deadline 11/06/2025 - Bentley features very strongly for Areas that Could become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (purple areas on map shown to Councillors). It was agreed we should respond as a Parish Council and it was agreed the Chair would send a response to SCC before 11 June. The vote will be ratified at the July meeting.

Proposed Cllr A Thomas

Seconded Cllr J Campbell

All in favour CU

Action: Ratify this decision at July meeting

21. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**–
Cllr J Wheals – Been approached by residents re rat infestations. Seat in the Community Orchard
needs restoration and is all overgrown. **Cllr J Campbell** – Village Gateways – would calm
traffic – Agenda item

Action: Village Gateways – Agenda item

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

SALC	Training – Cllr J Campbell	£79.20
Bentley Bluebells WI	Donation	£200.00
Bentley Outdoor Bowls	Donation	£200.00
Friends of Capel Library	Donation	£200.00
Tuesday Club	Donation	£200.00
Citizens Advice Ipswich	Donation	£100.00
Headway	Donation	£100.00
Lighthouse Women's Aid	Donation	£100.00
Julie Lawes	Internal Audit	£250.00
Peter Baldwin	Grass cut & strimming	£150.00
HMRC	Clerks Tax	£38.80
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary – May	£615.76
	Minus tax	<u>-£38.80</u>
		£576.96
	Plus Expenses	<u>£67.02</u>
		£643.98

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

23. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Meeting Thursday 3 July 2025 . Preceded
by Playing Field Society Meeting at 7pm.

24. **To consider exclusion of the public & press in the public interest due to the confidential
nature of business to be transacted** It was proposed that the public be excluded

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

No further Confidential minutes to be discussed – take off agenda – Meeting ended at 9.05pm

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: