

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Present

Cllr M Bamford - Chairman Mrs J Scott - Clerk Cllr M Munday Cllr B Feltwell
Cllr A Thomas Cllr A Horne

Also, in attendance, District Councillor Marc Rowland, Tree Warden, Speedwatch Co-Ordinator & 3 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting with a special welcome to our new District Councillor Marc Rowland.. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. To record apologies for absence, Cllr D Jones, Cllr K Spicer, Cllr J Wheals, Cllr J Campbell, Footpath Warden, County Councillor Georgia Hall. It was proposed that their apologies be accepted.

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

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 6 November 2025 -.
The draft minutes published on the website had Speedwatch as being present at the meeting when that was not the case. The altered minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

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

5. Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1308 item 6 – Babergh were informed the vacancy on Bentley Parish Council had been filled – Cllr Horne has completed the Register of Interests Form which has been uploaded onto Babergh’s website. Cllr Horne has been sent copies of Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regs etc. Rest covered by agenda items.

Public Session

County Councillor G Hall – sent her report which has been circulated to Councillors **Appendix 1** in the minute book and on the website.

District Councillor M Rowland – Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils had been received and circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website. Cllr Bamford welcomed our new District Councillor Marc Rowland - he also welcomed our new Parish Councillor Alan Horne. District Councillor Rowland spoke of the Local Government Review and encouraged everyone to respond by 11 January. SCC want one Unitary Council - Babergh want three as a minimum. He told the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Food Fund which provides grants to small scale food initiatives such as community pantries etc. The money is there and is available. Councillor Munday told District Councillor Rowland she had put the paperwork through re Locality Budget grant which had been increased to £500 – and thanked him for his help. Councillor Bamford asked that the Clerk record our thanks for the contribution to the Conservation area information board and sign. The Government have deferred the Mayoral Election until 2028.

Resident: Told the meeting that a man from Holbrook who wished to remain anonymous had diverted the water that was all over the road near the railway crossing, into the ditch. Councillors were very grateful for his efforts.

6. Planning Applications –

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

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| DC/25/04319 | Bentley Old Hall, Old Hall Lane | Babergh does not wish to object |
| DC/25/02303 | Ruseley, Hazel Shrub | Approved Conditions |
| DC/25/04243 | Malting Farm, Church Road | Permission has been granted |
| DC/25/04244 | Malting Farm, Church Road | Listed Building Consent has been granted |

- b) To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals – None received

- c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group – Date set for first meeting 18 December 2025 to agree Constitution and agenda. Cllr Bamford has a meeting with Suffolk County Councillor next week to fill him in on our concerns with this project – as there is rather more going on than was discussed. – massive amounts of spoil along the boundary. A discussion followed re reporting traffic on their Reporting Tool which requires the registration, location, date and time – this is almost impossible to collect on the off chance. It needs an organised system to get volunteers. This will be an agenda item at the January meeting Monitoring HGV traffic through the village. The £20K due to be paid by Brockley Wood Ventures to Suffolk Highways for the implementation of a Weight Restriction Traffic Order on Bentley Hall Road/Church Road has not yet been received.

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| Action: Agenda item Monitoring HGV traffic through the village |
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- d) Appeal Site at Grove Solar Farm - The Public enquiry by the Planning Inspectorate starts on 20 January at Wherstead and takes place over six to eight days. The public can attend and speak. A notice has been put in the Bugle. The Parish Council are part of a Rule 6 Party so can call on expert witnesses to speak for us. The Parish Council has agreed funds for Expert Witnesses of £1K with donations towards the rest of the costs.

- 7.a) **Bentley Conservation Area – Revision of Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan** – The revised Bentley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) was adopted unanimously by Babergh District Council. Compliments on the quality of the work and detail in the CAAMP were made by members of the Council.

- b) Siting of information board & signage for the Conservation Area – Progress is being made on the information board – thank you to our District Councillor for a contribution from his Locality Budget towards these costs. We are working with the PCC as to where it will go – so it can be protected and accessible. We have also had a £5K donation from the Ganzoni Trust which will go towards the cost of the board and signage. We are looking to engage a local artist to see if they can produce an illustrated map of the area at a cost of £300. Cllr Bamford thanked Cllr Munday for all her work on this.

8. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – Tree warden** – Nothing to report. **Footpath Warden** – Footpath Warden received no report with regards to footpaths – just one request re the ownership of Link Lane passed on to Councillor Bamford. – No one owns it -it's a bridleway. **Bentley Long Barn** – The situation was explained to District Councillor Rowland – It has been left to deteriorate and is now on Babergh's threatened buildings list. Costs will be significant but it is high priority now the Conservation Area has been designated, with Babergh looking at possible solutions to renovate. **Speedwatch-** Nothing to report. One person has responded to the advert in the Bugle who wishes to become a member of the Team but not the Co-ordinator. Cliff is to meet him next week.

9. **To approve six month accounts** – The Clerk and Councillor Jones had a remote meeting to go through the accounts. Councillors had been issued with - copies of the Receipts and Payments, Cash Book and Bank Accounts – the Clerk went through the figures and it was proposed the accounts be approved

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| Proposed Cllr B Feltwell | Seconded Cllr A Horne | All in favour | CU |
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Clerk was asked about transfer of the two savings accounts from Barclays to Lloyds – this still had not happened. The letter had been sent a month ago. It was agreed that a letter of complaint be sent to Barclays CEO.

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| Action: Letter to Barclays |
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10. **To consider Grant Applications for insertion into the Budget -** The Clerk told the meeting that she had received applications from Friends of Capel Library, Bentley Bluebells WI, Bentley Outdoor Bowls Tuesday Club and Lighthouse Women's Aid. After some discussion it was proposed to allocate £200 each to the Village Clubs.

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

11. **To discuss draft Budget/Precept -** Councillors had been sent copies of the draft budget – and the Clerk went through the figures, she told Councillors that admin costs were rising, grass cutting was our biggest outlay now that we had responsibility for the school field and copse as well as the village field and the closed churchyard. She felt that Councillors should consider increasing the Precept by at least £1K which would increase a Band D Council tax by £2.48. Councillors will vote on the budget and Precept at the January meeting.

12. **To discuss Open Reach Telegraph Poles –** Cllr Munday told the meeting that a huge telegraph pole had been erected by Open Reach at Highfields which was sited beside the SID pole. We have a right to object to the apparatus under paragraph 77 of the Code and we may exercise that right by giving notice of objection under paragraph 78 of the Code within 12 months of installation. After some discussion it was proposed that we write to Open Reach and state that the poles are not appropriate in two areas of the village

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

13. **SID Battery Management & change of site from Highfields –** Cllr Bamford apologised he had intended to move and erect with new solar panel but not got around to it. The SID battery in Bergholt Road has run down - - it will be left until it is moved.

14. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update -** See 9 above,

15. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** - Nothing to report.

16. **Affordable Housing – Update –** A meeting is being arranged in the New Year.

17. **The Copse – Update –** The grass is growing and bare patches have been re-seeded. Cllr Feltwell explained to Marc Rowland the role of the Playing Field Society Trustees and that the Copse and the School Playing Field was now the responsibility of the Parish Council who now manage the field. Cllr Spicer is talking to the school re the Copse.

18. **Playing Field Society –** Sign needs to be replaced – Cllr Bamford will take down the current sign and re-word it. Playing Field Entrance – gate replaced.

19. **To receive Correspondence –** The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following E-mails: Grant applications received from Bentley Bluebells WI, Friends of Capel Library, Tuesday Club, Bentley Outdoor Bowls & St Elizabeth's Hospice - 2 x Babergh District Council Precept ~Forms/Locality Award Payment £500 1 x Speedwatch – New Volunteer 3 x Suffolk County Council – Delay in Suffolk & Norfolk Mayoral Elections/County Councillor Georgia Hall – Monthly Report/ Development & Regulation Committee 16 December - Public Speaking Case CPM1015 Footpath 55 – Bentley PC didn't need to speak at the meeting.

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

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

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| A W Goddard Fencing Ltd | Bentley Field - Case Lane Entrance - Gate | £1,560.00 |
| P Baldwin | Grass/Leaf Clear – Closed Churchyard | £320.00 |
| HMRC/PAYE | Clerks Tax | £48.40 |

Mrs J Scott

Clerks Salary/Expenses - November

£784.91

Clerk's expenses include cheque for Royal British Legion £100. Unable to pay by BACS.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell

Seconded Cllr M Bamford

All in favour CU

22. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Council Meeting Thursday 5 February 2026 at 7.30 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: