

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL FRIDAY 9 MAY 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Present

Cllr J Wheals - Chairman Mrs J Scott – Clerk Cllr M Munday Cllr K Spicer
Cllr D Schumacher Cllr J Campbell

Also in attendance: Tree Warden, Footpath Warden, Speedwatch & 3 members of the public.

The outgoing Chairman Cllr Munday welcomed everyone to Bentley's Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To Elect Chairman for Forthcoming Year** – Cllr Munday told Councillors that she did not intend to stand as Chairman and would like to step down and let someone else chair the meetings. Cllr Bamford had offered to take over the responsibility but unfortunately he is stuck in Delhi at the moment and has sent his apologies. He will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office on his return. It was therefore proposed that he be duly elected.

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

- a. **To appoint Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year –** Cllr Feltwell had also decided to step down as Vice Chairman. No nominations had been received and Cllr J Wheals agreed to take on the role. It was therefore proposed that he be duly elected. Cllr Wheals took over the running of the meeting in the absence of the Chairman. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms were duly signed and witnessed.

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

3. **To record apologies for absence:** Cllr M Bamford, Cllr D Jones, Cllr B Feltwell Cllr A Thomas, County Councillor Georgia Hall and District Councillor D Busby

4. **To Receive Declarations of Interest relating to Agenda. Items** – None received

5. **Dispensations – to consider written requests for dispensation of disclosable pecuniary interest in matters relating to Agenda items** – None received.

6. **To appoint Council Representatives** – The Tree Warden, Footpath Warden, Cllr Munday and Cllr Wheals were all willing to carry on and it was proposed they be elected en bloc.

Mr C Hawes – Tree Warden

Mr T Hamstead – Footpath Warden

Cllr M Munday – Website/ Village Correspondent

Cllr J Wheals – Folly Farm Representative

Proposed: Cllr J Wheals Seconded Cllr M Munday All in favour CU

7. **To approve payment of subscriptions for 2025/26 -** It was proposed that the SALC membership fee be paid

SALC £392.37 Community Action Suffolk Membership free

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

9. **To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3 April 2025** – The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed: Cllr K Spicer Seconded: Cllr J Campbell All in favour CU

10. **Matters Arising from the minutes:** – Thanks received from Pam Rayment re her presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting – the draft minutes and reports received will be put on the website. **Item 6 c)** Letter was sent to Public Rights of Way team in response to

application DC/24/05240 **Page 1273 item 10** SID and new post have been ordered – **item 15**. CIL report has been put on the website. **Page 1274 item 21** – various potholes have been reported to SCC – some had already been done Rest covered by agenda items

Public Session

County Councillor Georgia Hall had sent her written report which has been circulated to Councillors – **APPENDIX 1** in the minute book and on the website.

District Councillor David Busby - Babergh's Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils report has been circulated to Councillors – **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website.

Resident: Reported a dead badger on the road outside the church it had been pulled to the side of the road but he felt it should be reported as it was a protected species. Clerk will report to SCC.

Action: Report badger on SCC Reporting Tool
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Planning Applications

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

DC/25/00961	Angel Cottage, Capel Road	Permission has been granted.
DC/25/01363	13 West Mill Green	Prior approval is not required.

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

DC/25/00961	Windmere, Station Road	Erection of two storey rear extension & first floor side extension
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RECOMMEND APPROVAL -

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

DC/25/01934	Hazel Shrub House,	Replacement of 1 No first floor window with a Juliet Balcony to the rear elevation
	Hazel Shrub	

RECOMMEND APPROVAL -

Proposed: Cllr M Munday Seconded: Cllr J Wheals All in favour CU

- c) **Brockley Wood** - E-mail received informing us that the application has gone out for re-consultation again. This is as a result of the Conservation Area being designated. We have until 9 June to respond. They are long documents to look at – the applicant seems to have taken note of Bentley Parish Council's objections – the concrete crushing plant has now been taken out of the interim plan.

11. **Bentley Historic Core Conservation Area – Update** - This has now been designated and Babergh are going through all the processes. Residents need to be made aware that additional work needs to be done on the Management Plan.

12. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Long Barn/Footpath Warden & Speedwatch– Tree Warden** – Still has a few woodland trees that will be used to gap up hedgerows or given free to anyone in the parish who has room to plant one or more. He gave an update on the Community Orchard and Bantu Farm (who removed trees they had planted in the Community Orchard) – a notice will be put up on the water tank for use of CO only. He has visited the Copse several time to check flowering of the trees (oaks, walnut, Holly and cherry) - all have flowered successfully. Half a black bag of litter was collected and put in the bin on the Playing Field. The next step with the copse is item 19 on tonight's agenda. Plane tree Lace bug disease is native to America but has spread around the world and first found in the UK in 2006. It has been seen more recently in 2024 on Plane trees in Central London. The bug can drop from trees and has been said to bite – look online and you will see why it's called the lace bug. Please report it to The Forestry Commission is you see it. - **Footpath Warden** –

Footpath 68 has been strimmed so people don't have to walk on the farm track. **Bentley Long Barn** – No further news - **Speedwatch** -One session on Good Friday – very busy – nearly every vehicle was over 30mph and two were doing 50 plus. – Stephen Williamson is trying to arrange sessions when he can and C Daldy is still liaising with the police. Cllr Wheals thanked Speedwatch volunteers.

13. **Change of Bank – Update** – Clerk told the meeting that the main account has been switched to Lloyds and Bentley Parish Council are now doing online banking. It looks as though the PC Tracker account has also been switched.

14. **To Review Neighbourhood Plan – Update** – Cllr Munday told the meeting that we have received an e-mail from our Consultant today who has carried out the planned review and is preparing a report for the policies which need to be changed. We are also hoping our Consultant will meet with Babergh to get some clarity on what the sustainable level of growth of the village will be.

15. **To Award Grants to Village Organisations for Financial Year 2024/25** – It was proposed that the following grants be paid.

Bentley Outdoor Bowls	S19	£200
Bentley Bluebells WI	S137	£200
Friends of Chapel Library	S137	£200
Tuesday Club	S137	£200

Proposed: Cllr J Wheals Seconded: Cllr D Schmacher All in favour CU

16. **To Award Grants to Other Organisations for Financial Year 2024/25 –**

Citizens Advice	S142	£100
Headway	S137	£100
Lighthouse Women's' Aid	S137	£100

It was proposed that the following grants be paid.

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

Action: Inform Clubs & Organisations – Get banking details

17. **To discuss Annual Playground Inspection Reports-** Councillors had been issued with a copy of the Inspection Reports. Clerk read out work required which was noted and will be acted upon. It was proposed that the report be accepted – cheque (£148) to be passed for payment at tonight's meeting.

Proposed: Cllr J Wheals Seconded: Cllr D Schumacher All in favour CU

18. **To discuss protocol for reporting absences from meetings from Councillors -** It was agreed to defer this item until it can be discussed with a full Council.

19. **The Copse – Decision on next Stage -** Cllr Spicer told the meeting that the Copse had been cleared – Stage 1 - funded by Babergh. The next stage is to make this area usable in the short term whilst we consult widely with School pupils, residents and Suffolk Rural -This is likely to take up to a year so are asking Bentley Parish Council to fund this work out of CIL funds as it would be wise to complete this work sooner than later so it does not return to a “new wilderness area” Following a short discussion it was proposed that £1,200 CIL money be made available for this project.

Proposed: Cllr D Schumacher Seconded: Cllr J Campbell All in favour CU

20. **Affordable Housing – Update** – Sunila Osborne – Housing Enabling Officer – Babergh contacted the Clerk suggesting a meeting to catch up where we are up to with the project and next stages etc. Clerk will arrange meeting with Councillors asap.

Action: Clerk to contact Housing Enabling Officer
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21. **To adopt Updated Version of Model Standing Orders** - Clerk has downloaded the document but has not yet tailored it to Bentley Parish Council – defer to June meeting.
22. **Playing Field Society – To confirm written agreement with Brantham Athletic** - The Agreement has not yet been signed – need to confer with Cllr Bamford – this will be done as soon as possible.
23. **To discuss Suffolk Highways proposals re Not Suitable for HGV signs** – Cllr Munday told the meeting that she and a few Councillors attended an online presentation with Officers from Suffolk Highways and it was agreed that none of our roads were suitable for HGV traffic. Highways could not agree a weight restriction but felt Not Suitable for HGV signs were appropriate. However, things have now changed - they are happy to put one at the A12 end of Bentley Hall Road and the A137 end of Church Road. They are proposing that we put signs on the A137 to warn any traffic that they should not be using Church Road if they are HGV's. We would be funding £3K for signs but the Brockley Wood applicant has agreed to put £20K towards weight restrictions on that road – do we want to wait. Highways confirm that single track roads are unsuitable for HGV's. There should be better signage outside Folly Farm to restrict HGV's from using our village road. After some discussion it was agreed that we go back to Highways and say we don't want to go ahead with this – we are not happy with their solution. We will continue to review.
24. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following –1 x Bentley Primary School – Sports Day 18 June – 1 x County Councillor Hall re Financial contribution Brockley Wood £3K 1 x resident thanks for forwarding comments from PC meeting, 1 x Suffolk Highways HGV weight limit review Meeting CR464939 2 x e-mails SALC re Cllr Training for Cllr J Campbell - 1 x Play Inspections re Annual Inspection 1 x SCC Invitation to SCC Briefing on Local Government 1 x thanks from Pam Rayment & 1 x Babergh -a re Leslie View - given the low volume of vehicles retained on site – insufficient to warrant further action.
25. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future meetings** – Cllr Munday –Commented on how nice the playing fields and play area look since Vertas have taken over grass cutting. Clerk will contact Vertas.
26. **To Authorise Payments** - The following payments were authorised.

Handforth	Heritage	Response to 3rd Party	£720.00
Consulting Ltd		Representations - Paid 12-4-25	
Cllr M Munday		McAfee Subs renewal	£79.99
SALC		Membership Subs 2025/26	£392.37
David Bracey		Annual Play Inspections	£148.00
J Scott		Expenses Annual Parish Meeting	£11.55
P Baldwin		Grass Cut/trim Closed Churchyard	£150.00
HMRC		Clerk's Tax	£38.80
Mrs J Scott		Salary - April	£615.76
		Minus tax	<u>-£38.80</u>
			£733.27
		Plus Expenses	<u>£156.31</u>
			£733.27

It was proposed that these be paid en bloc.

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

27. **To confirm Date of Next Scheduled Meeting – Thursday 5 June 2025**
28. **To consider the exclusion of the public & press interest due to the confidential nature of business to be transacted** - It was proposed that the public and press be excluded. The public left the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr D Schumacher

Seconded: Cllr J Campbell

All in favour

CU

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