

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2026 AT 7.30 PM

Present

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

Also in attendance - District Councillor Marc Rowland, Tree Warden, Footpath Warden & 6 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. To record apologies for absence, Cllr B Feltwell, County Councillor Georgia Hall and Speedwatch Co-Ordinator. It was proposed that 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 5 February 2026-. The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr A Horne Seconded Cllr M Munday All in favour CU

5. Matters arising from the Minutes –. Written to resident re November Minutes. **Page 1322 item 11** Instructed Julie Lawes to undertake Bentley Internal Audit– **Page 1323 item 23**. Contacted Brantham Athletic re keys and if they want to use field this year – keys are to be returned and they will want to use the field again this year. **Item 25**. Letter sent to Alley Thomas re resignation. - No election has been requested so we can Co-opt. 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. District Councillor Rowland told the meeting that he had spoken to Highways re the state of Bergholt Road – bridge – where huge potholes have appeared and been reported several times. Apparently, he was told that Anglian Water are due to replace the main pipe between April this year and May next year and Highways will not repair the road until that replacement takes place. He had also had a word re A137 surface – replacing with something stronger.

Resident: Put a proposal to the Parish Council at the February Playing Field Society Meeting re the use of the playing field for a vehicle show – free to enter – free to visit – the Trustees asked for further information and he had sent them a Project Plan and Risk Assessment and he was seeking formal consent to use the field on Sunday 5 July. There has been a lot of interest especially from The Case who are sponsoring the event and are looking at their insurance policy. Cllr Bamford said the Trustees had agreed they were in favour of the event – Councillors will formally agree under item 28.

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 –

DC/26/00637 Bentley House, Church Road Application for works to trees in a conservation area – 1 Holm Oak (Large specimen) Reduction in size to historic pollarded position 2 Sycamore Trees (6 No) Reduction in size and/or removal as appropriate

Tree Warden visited but no one was home – he will try again and let Clerk know if he has any comments – Babergh deadline for comments is 12 March.

- c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group – Cllr Bamford reported there were two ongoing items – planting along the southern boundary has not yet happened and the issue of traffic – restriction signs. Unfortunately, Cllr Bamford will be away for the next meeting – 26 March and asked if someone could attend on behalf of the village – Cllr Jones volunteered to go.

- 7.a) Bentley Conservation Area – Signage – Cllr Munday – nothing further at the moment. We have got the funding for the proposed fingerpost road sign and installation at the junction of Bentley Hall Road and Church Road

- b) Recording Veteran Trees – This is ongoing – any tree – any size that has got damage on it. Tree Warden and Group are measuring trees 3.2 metres girth measured at height of 1.3m from the ground. The Tree Warden told the meeting that the group have done quite a lot along Potash Lane – recording and photographing - but there is still a lot to do – Engry Wood, Tare Grove, Pedlars Grove, Long Wood and Dodnash Wood – The data has been put on the Woodland Trust website – they need to be recorded for the Neighbourhood Plan.

- c) Conservation Area Trail & Information boards – Heritage Trails – This again is ongoing -item 10 relates to art work re the map. SCC have been contacted – Public Rights of Way Team – who are going to produce leaflets re the walking trails. The board is going to be put in the shelter – got to make it vandal proof.

8. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – **Tree warden** – See 7 b) above. He was also asked by the Clerk to investigate tree overhanging the road – it is not the tree it is ivy – Clerk will contact SCC via Reporting Tool. Cllr Bamford was pleased to see the **Footpath Warden** – who had not received any reports – he was told about the tree across the path opposite Earlwood and will investigate. Concerns were expressed about the large Oak behind the Village Hall the Tree Warden said it would eventually become hollow as it has Acute Oak Disease. **Bentley Long Barn** – Nothing to report. Cllr Bamford will contact Babergh Heritage as this is now in the Conservation Area. **Speedwatch**- One session has been held at the War Memorial with one vehicle reported. The speed was 36mph.'

9. To ratify Acceptance of Councillor Resignation – It was proposed that this decision be ratified. Babergh District Council have informed us that we are now in a position to Co-opt. Notices have been put on notice boards and website and a decision will be made at the next meeting.

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

10. To agree increased payment for Artwork - This was originally going to be done on A3 size but because of the special buildings it has increased to A1 size which means additional work and extra work to show some of the buildings concentrated around the Church. The original price was £300 but £550 should cover the increased work. It was proposed that the extra cost be accepted.

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

11. Monitoring HGV Traffic through the Village – Cllr Bamford had drawn up an outline proposal for the Monitoring Group. Volunteers would monitor key routes and record details of any inappropriate HGV traffic – including date, time direction of travel and registration numbers – especially Brockley Wood and Collins traffic. Volunteers would be asked to commit to hour long monitoring sessions during peak traffic times. This will need to be publicised in the Bugle.

Cllr Wheals will contact Collins before the next meeting. The proposal is to proceed and publicise – It was proposed that we go ahead with this.

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

12. **To discuss the siting of Weight Restriction Signs – Church Road -** We have formally had notification of the 7.5T HGV Weight Restriction Consultation which starts from 7th March and runs for 21 days. Notices have been put on notice boards. This should be discussed - could we ask for a delay to allow for us to make an official proposal at the next PC meeting. A discussion followed on the signage. It was proposed that we ask what they are proposing to do with the signage so we can discuss at our next meeting.

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

13. **20 Mph – to discuss where and funding -** There was an indication from Suffolk County Council that they were considering making it easier to get 20 mph restrictions. After some discussion it was agreed not to take this further. Take off agenda.

14. **Play Area/Gym Equipment Annual Inspection -** It was proposed Play Safety Inspections be instructed to undertake the Annual Inspection.

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

Action: Instruct Play Safety Inspections re Annual Inspection

15. **To approve changes to the Six-Month Accounts -** Error on 6-month accounts - £200 paid twice to FoC Library- cheque received from them. Tuesday Club had not sent in their banking details so they had not been paid £200. Accounts all agreed. However, in October Tuesday Club and were paid – so 9-month accounts had £200 too much!!! After a lot of searching the mistake was found in the 6 month accounts. It was proposed that the changes be accepted and duly signed.

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

16. **To approve Nine Month Accounts—** April-December 2025 – Councillors had been sent copies of the Receipts and Payments, Cash Book and Bank Accounts – the Clerk went through the figures and it was proposed the accounts be accepted.

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

17. **To Adopt Co-option Policy -** This policy clarifies the situation when there are more candidates than vacancies in terms of the co-option process. It was proposed that the Bentley PC adopt this policy and make it available on the website.

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

18. **To review Standing Orders & Financial Regulations –** These documents have been reviewed and there has been no changes/updates to date.

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

19. **To receive Internal Control Report -** The Clerk told the meeting that a new signatory needed to be appointed to sign off this report. Cllr Spicer agreed to become the signatory. The report will be signed off at the April meeting.

20. **To discuss Horse & Rider Accident – Capel Road –** Cost of signage has been offered by our County Councillor. A discussion followed on the placement of signs – Station Road and Capel Road.? Main road through the village needs to be looked at. It was agreed to send round suggestions so they can be considered at the April meeting.

21. **Development in South West Babergh – Update -** This meeting was called by District Councillor Helen Davies re proposed land for development which encompasses the parishes of Belstead, Wherstead, Copdock, East Bergholt, Sproughton and Bentley. There are concerns

about disproportionate housing development in our villages – time scales – how sites are selected and whether they are suitable. Co-operation between Parish Councils is very valuable and there will be another meeting to list the things they would like to do as a Group.

22. **To ratify payments to A Farmer £20,937.00 & Cllr A Horne £17.99** - It was proposed that the payments be ratified. The payment to A Farmer was met by donations.

Proposed Cllr M Munday Seconded Cllr A Horne All in favour CU

23. **SID Battery Management - Update** – Cllr Horne told the meeting that everything is working fine. He requested agreement from Councillors re the locking rod which costs £36 - (£15 delivery charge). It was proposed that the locking rod be purchased. Councillor Horne told the meeting he proposed uploading the SID stats onto our website.

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

24. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - Clerk finally managed to get the funds in the two Barclays Bank Accounts transferred to the new Lloyds accounts. It has only taken a year!! It was proposed that we write a formal letter of complaint to the Banking Ombudsman. A new account has been opened with Lloyds for Cil money – we now have four accounts with Lloyds

Proposed Cllr K Spicer Seconded Cllr A Horne All in favour CU

Action: Formal letter to Bank Ombudsman

25. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** - Nothing to report. Waiting for further information from Babergh in the next month or so.

26. **Affordable Housing – Update** – Not yet heard from Hastoe re rural exemption site.

27. **The Copse – Update** – Need to set a date with the school to receive their ideas for the Copse.

Action: Contact Primary School re date for their presentation

28. **Playing Field Society** – Request by resident re Car Rally – see Public Session above – We welcome it and are pleased for the involvement. It was therefore proposed that we take up the offer of a Car Show on Sunday 5 July 2026. Cllr Bamford has removed signs from the Playing Field Poles – they belong to SCC – they are in his garage.

Proposed Cllr J Wheals Seconded Cllr D Jones All in favour CU

29. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails: 3 x Vehicle Report Forms re Brockley Wood received. 2 x County Councillor Georgia Hall 20 MPH CBN43618 and Report for March – 3 x Babergh Bin Price increase letter/no requests for election/Parish Liaison Meeting - 6 x Suffolk County Council re 7.5 Weight limit mitigation – Option 1 Notices put on N/B /Changes to definitive map Bentley Footpath 18 1 x Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch – Invitation to Meeting Tuesday 10 March. – Suffolk Preservation Society – Neighbourhood Planning Study Day 16 May. 1 x Resident Draft Minutes November item 6. 1 x Brantham Athletic Would like to use field from April-September -keys are going to .be returned

30. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**
Cllr Munday - We need to take action re HGV traffic diverting through the village when there is a closure on the A14. There was a closure last night and it was utter chaos – lorries are unable to pass each other in Station Road by the railway crossing as the road is too narrow. This is not a prescribed diversion route. Agenda item at the April meeting.

Action: Agenda item – Traffic diverting through the village

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

Alison Farmer Associates	Expert Witness – Solar Farm Enquiry -	£20,937.00
	Ratified	
Cllr A Horne	Clips/Straps etc SID - Ratified	£17.99

Alison Farmer Associates	Expert Witness – Solar Farm Enquiry	£1,194.00
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£48.40
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - February	£693.25

Proposed Cllr J Wheals Seconded Cllr M Bamford All in favour

32. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Council Meeting Thursday 2 April 2026 at 7.30 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: