

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 2 APRIL 2026 AT 7.30 PM

Present

Cllr M Bamford - Chairman	Mrs J Scott - Clerk	Cllr M Munday	Cllr K Spicer
Cllr B Feltwell	Cllr A Horne	Cllr J Campbell	Cllr J Wheals
Cllr M Whiteman			

Also in attendance District Councillor J Whyman, 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 D Jones, County Councillor Georgia Hall, District Councillor Marc Rowland and Speedwatch Co-Ordinator. Tree Warden sent apologies by e-mail that wasn't picked up until after the meeting. 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:** - Cllr Horne declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7(b) – Appeal - Land East of Capel Road.

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 March 2026-** The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

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

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes –** Invitations were sent to Village Clubs re Annual Parish Meeting on 16 April 2026 Dodnash Bridge – Clerk contacted Anglian Water who said the new pipework could be done in a couple of years – District Councillor Marc Rowland was informed. It looks as though the potholes on the bridge have been fixed. **Page 1326 item 14** Play Inspections will undertake inspection of Play Area/Gym etc at the end of April **Page 1327 item 27** – Primary School was contacted. The children will be coming to the Annual Parish Meeting on 16 April – just need to confirm with parents. Attendance at the next meeting on 14th May should be okay. This will be attended by Miss Lizzy Cooper who leads School Council and a group of children -this is to discuss ideas for the Cope. - Payment to HMRC is to be passed for payment tonight re unpaid NI which is being investigated. 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 – Sent in a Monthly Update which has been circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website.

Cllr Bamford welcomed District Councillor John Whyman to the meeting - and asked him if Babergh might be giving financial support for Neighbourhood Plans. John Wyman replied there could be some support for NHP and introduced himself as District Councillor for Capel St Mary- who was going to stand for election as a County Councillor on 7 May. . He told the meeting that about a month ago Babergh found they had a slight surplus of money which is ring fenced for NH Plans – any Parish Council can make an application (Max £20K) it will be on a first come first served basis. Cllr Munday will e-mail tomorrow. District Councillor Whyman was thanked for the information and also for taking an interest in Bentley

Cllr Munday felt that County Councillor Georgia Hall who was standing down at the next elections should be thanked for all the help she has given Bentley since becoming our County Councillor. She paid for the 30 mph roundels to be re-painted and is paying for the equestrian signage.

Clerk will write a letter of thanks to County Councillor Hall.

Action: Letter of thanks to County Councillor Hall.

6. **To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to co-opt to fill the existing vacancy -** One application for the position of Councillor was received from Mike Whiteman who addressed the meeting. He was asked about his areas of interest that might contribute to the Parish Council - he gave a short resume and told the meeting he had been helping with data capture of the veteran trees in Bentley. It was proposed he be elected onto Bentley Parish Council.

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

Mike Whiteman was therefore elected onto Bentley Parish Council, he signed the necessary Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and was welcomed by Councillors.

- 7 a). **Planning Applications –** To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications –

DC/26/00105	44 Silver Leys	Permission has been granted
DC/26/00226	Windmere, Station Road	Planning Permission without Compliance of conditions(s) has been granted subject to conditions

- b) **To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals –** Non-pecuniary interest declared by Cllr A Horne re Appeal.

Appeal Ref 6005638	Land East of Capel Road	Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved)- Erection of 18no dwellings (including 12 no affordable units & public open space)
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There have been two public consultations on this site and Bentley Parish Council have been consulted on both occasions. The site is outside the village settlement area and the plans were not compliant with BEN1 in the Bentley Neighbourhood Plan. In the past it has been considered as a potential housing site in the village. **Please note;** There are discrepancies for this appeal in the documents as submitted – specifically, the outline plan in the appeal; document is out of date in comparison to the latest version in the latest planning application. It is also not clear that the plan would provide a safe footpath into Bentley village from the site.

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

Planning Permission without compliance of conditions DC/26/01240	Bluebell Oaks, 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 26-2-24 – Submission of Details (Reserved Matters). Application for outline Planning Permission DC/22/04762. Appearance, Scale, Landscaping and layout of the sit for 1no dwelling and cart lodge
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Noted

- c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group – Cllr Bamford reported that he was unable to go to the last meeting but Cllr Jones went in his place. The two issues were traffic going through the village – which can be reported on a Vehicle Report Form on the Brockley Wood Ventures website and the planting along the Southern border which Brockley Wood Ventures should have undertaken last Autumn. They have been in discussion with SCC and have now come to a solution which will happen next year. A discussion followed - TARS, Ipswich Grab Hire are the two companies who should not be going through the village – Collins Skip s are very good - waste lorries coming through the village are the problem. It would be helpful to have a specific contact – Cllr Wheals will ask Collins. The Community Liaison Group meetings are every three months at the moment then they will be six monthly. We need to firm up our reporting process – get people who are interested – it needs to be up and running. It needs to be announced at the Annual Parish Meeting & the Annual Parish Council Meeting to try and get some names and establish a protocol. It will be put on website and Facebook.
- 8.a) Bentley Conservation Area – Signage – Cllr Munday – nothing further at the moment. We are planning to put a sign to replace the finger post on the triangle at the junction – of Bentley Hall Road and Church Road – more quotes are needed. -
- a) Recording Veteran Trees – This is ongoing.
- b) Conservation Area Trail & Information boards – Art work is ongoing - has to be digitised and annotated. Heritage Trails – This again is ongoing with - SCC Public Rights of Way Team – are going to produce leaflets re the walking trails.
9. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch –
Footpath Warden – Told the meeting the two trees at Holly Wood had been cleared. Cllr Wheals asked about footpath by Hubbards Hall – no access to Bentley Manor – no indication how to get onto the rest of the footpath – Footpath Warden will take a look. **Tree warden** – In the absence of the Tree Warden the Clerk read out his report - 9 March Having been invited by the landowner the TW visited Bentley House to examine trees that required pollarding, or height reduction as per the Planning Application received by the Parish Council. After carefully examining these trees I agreed without reservation that the tree work should go ahead. I then reported my findings to the Babergh Mid Suffolk Tree Officer David Pizzey. 1 April – TW continued measuring tree girth at the following locations i) Large Oak in the garden opposite the Village Hall (with owner’s permission). 2) Large Oak on roadside verge outside Little Oaks. 3)
 Four coppiced Oaks with multiple stems and large stools (bases), all of which are **NOTABLE TREES**. All four Oaks are towards the end of the footpath from Bergholt Road to Gt Martins Wood. Cllr Bamford remarked that it was good that we are taking note of these ancient trees.
Bentley Long Barn – The Heritage Officer at Babergh had been contacted and told of tiles missing from the roof etc and the general sorry state of the barn. Babergh were urged to maintain pressure on the landowner. Heritage Officer is stepping down. - This is an ongoing concern and Cllr Bamford will keep up pressure. **Speedwatch- Nothing** to report.
10. To agree & sign Neighbourhood CIL Expenditure Report – Councillors had been sent copies of the Neighbourhood CIL Expenditure Report and it was proposed that it be signed and sent off to Babergh. It will also be put on the website. Clerk was asked to contact Babergh to see if there are any CIL monies outstanding.

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

Action: Sent CIL Report & enquire re any outstanding CIL
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11. To appoint Working Party – Accounts - Cllr Jones has indicated that he cannot carry on – Cllrs Whiteman and Munday both agreed to be on the Working party and it was proposed they be appointed. Cllr Bamford thanked them both for volunteering.

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

12. Consideration of Vexatious Correspondence - Since the November meeting a resident has sent several e-mails on the same subject – The Council have a Vexatious or Persistent Correspondence Policy and after some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk write – we have

answered his questions in full and send him a copy of the policy we have adopted on the strength of his enquiries.

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

Action: Write to resident – send policy

13. **Traffic Diverting through the Village** – Every time there is a closure on the A12 & A14 HGV's come through the village from both directions causing gridlock, damage to the roads and verges. We need to make County Council, Police and Highways England aware and come up with a contingency plan – it is not a diversion route. A discussion followed and it was proposed that Cllr Bamford write to Paul West with a copy to Chris Chambers to discuss the problem of diverting HGV's through Bentley.

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

Action: Cllr Bamford to write to SCC

14. **Monitoring HGV Traffic through the Village** – see above

15. **To discuss the siting of Weight Restriction Signs – Church Road -** Weight restriction signs are being funded by Brockley Wood Ventures – signs suggested on Church Road and back road from A137. Option 1 was chosen by Bentley Parish Council – (Option 2 was just one sign). Cllr Munday was concerned about visual clutter – ie too much signage. Clerk will write and find out what signage is going to be as it is now in a Conservation Area we also need to know what signage is going at the other end – we need to clarify where they propose to put these signs.

Action: Clerk to contact SCC re signage

16. **To receive Internal Control Report -** Councillor Spicer was happy to sign off this report. It was therefore proposed that it be accepted.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell Seconded Cllr J Campbell All in favour CU

17. **Horse & Rider Accident – Capel Road – The** Clerk had e-mailed Suffolk Highways regarding possible sites for equestrian warning signs that County Councillor Georgia Hall has agreed to fund. This morning a SCC Problem report was received on this subject. Clerk will contact Suffolk Highways and County Councillor Hall to ascertain this is going ahead.

Action: Contact Suffolk Highways and County Councillor Georgia Hall

18. **Development in South West Babergh – Update** - Meeting called by District Councillor Helen Davies has taken place with various parishes. This Group of Parishes are concerned about the housing allocations re Ipswich fringe villages. - a meeting is planned with Babergh Officer Robert Hobbs after Easter. Cllrs Bamford, Munday and Horne between them will maintain an interest in the Group.

19. **To ratify payments to T Hill KC - £750 & Places4People £3,510.00** - It was proposed that the payments be ratified. These payments relate to Rule 6 Group and were paid by donations.

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

20. **SID Battery Management - Update** – Cllr Horne told the meeting that the locking rod from ElanCity had arrived – so SID can be attached to the pole. Uploading SID stats onto our website – Councillor Horne and Cllr Munday will get together to complete this.

21. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** - Cllr Munday told the meeting she had been in touch with our Consultant who started NHP Review last year.

22. **Affordable Housing – Update** – We have indicated to CAS and Hastoe re housing needs assessment but they won't do that until we have a site. So, until we know the outcome of the Fruit Farm Appeal there is no point in progressing.

23. **The Copse – Update** – Grass is growing - hedge was mentioned – mainly ivy but needs attention- Suffolk Rural will review the plans suggested by the children at the May Playing Field Society meeting,
24. **Playing Field Society** – Brantham Athletic Youth have indicated they wish to use the field again this season and have verbally agreed to the increase in rent. They wish to use the facilities for training purposes on a Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday evening and occasional use on some Saturday & Sunday mornings for matches. (Not Sunday 5 July) Councillors had been sent a copy of the new agreement and it was proposed that this go ahead at £100 per month. Concern was raised about rubbish on the field - Brantham Athletic will be reminded to make sure that the rubbish is disposed of responsibly. E-mail received from resident re playground upgrade – she was unable to attend the last P F Society meeting due to holiday – May PFS meeting is with Primary School children – Clerk will inform her of the next PFS meeting and send her an agenda.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell Seconded Cllr K Spicer All in favour CU

Action: Send contract to Brantham Athletic with a reminder re rubbish disposal – Contact resident re next PFS meeting.

25. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails:
 1 x Anglian Water re Dodnash Bridge 3 x Brantham Athletic FC key holders& Playing Field hire
 1 District Cllr Marc Rowland – re Dodnash Bridge 1 x Resident Draft minutes 6 November 2025
 1 x Play Inspections – Inspection end of April 2 x Babergh District Council – Spring Litter pick 2026 – Agenda item? /Notice of Election – Suffolk County Council – put on notice boards 4 x Residents – Playground Upgrade/3 Trees blocking Footpath/Food Waste on Potash Lane/Stour Wanderers Girls football team looking for a home

26. **.Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**
 - None.

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

Bentley Village Hall	Hire- Main Hall/Blackmore Room/Broadband	£112.95
GeoXphere Ltd	Parish Online	£90.00
Vertas Group Limited	Grounds Maintenance 1-4-26-30-6-26	£564.30
HMRC	O/S NI contributions due to Threshold	£307.13
	Changing from £9k to £5K	
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£48.40
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - March	£691.97

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell Seconded Cllr J Wheals All in favour

28. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 16 April 7.30 pm - Annual Parish Council Meeting Thursday 14 May 2026 at 7.30 pm.

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

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: