

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2024 AT 7.30 PM

Present

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

Also, in attendance -, District Councillor D Busby, Tree Warden, Footpath Warden, Speedwatch Co-ordinator - 8 members of the public

Cllr Monday welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence** - Cllr B Feltwell, Cllr D Jones, Cllr A Thomas, County Councillor Georgia Hall & District Councillor H Davies.
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 Thursday 9 May 2024**
- The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

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

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1230 item 14** – Action Play & Leisure have been contacted again re the knobs for the Springy Prancers (they were ordered on 31 August 2022!!!) now been re-ordered– Clubs & organisations have been informed of grants and the cheques are to be passed for payment tonight. Capel Clerk has been contacted regarding the lorry parked on left hand side of the road just before Bentley turning which was hit by an elderly resident.

Public Session

District Councillor D Busby - Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils for March had been received and circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 1** in the minute book and on the website.

County Councillor G Hall – Had sent her apologies – no written report received.

Resident: Told the meeting that Footpath 12 (91 meters long) is completely overgrown and impassable so walkers are using his private entrance which large agricultural machinery and lorries use on a regular basis– he has contacted SCC who own the land who have told him there are no funds available to do the work. The resident told the meeting that if the footpath was on his property and become overgrown he would be issued with a 14 day notice to correct and reinstate it otherwise the Council would recover costs incurred from the landowner and potential fines. – SCC offered to pay him 7 pence per metre which would total £6.37p for the 91 metres - He felt this was now a matter of principle and asked if the Parish Council could help. Photographs had been sent to the Clerk who had forwarded them to Councillors – she told the meeting she had contacted SCC but as yet they had not got back to her. It is in our interest to keep the footpaths open and it will be followed up and be an agenda item at the July meeting. Clerk will contact County Councillor Hall.

Action – Agenda item July Meeting - Clerk to contact County Councillor Hall

Resident: Asked who was responsible for cutting the School field – 7 years ago he took over the maintenance of hedge near his property and is not able to continue doing it – it is now very overgrown and he can't get down the side of his property – he wanted to know if there was any chance that it could now be maintained. He also mentioned dogs on the field. He was told there

are plans to put up signs and we are putting together rules for this field but this is still a work in progress.

The perimeter of the field was also discussed – this is very overgrown but is a wildlife area – Russel Abbott told the meeting that he would be more than happy to flail the area free of charge. There is a meeting tomorrow to discuss these issues.

Resident – Had told Councillors at last month’s meeting about his accident on his way back from Capel to Bentley. A lorry had been parked on the left hand side – he was blinded by the sun and hit the lorry. He was told that the Clerk had spoken with Capel Clerk and also sent her an e-mail explaining what had happened and she will see what can be done.

6. Planning Applications –

a) To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications

DC/24/01265	Dodnash Fruit Farm, Hazel Shrub	Permission has been granted
DC/24/01531	Eleanor Gate, Capel Road	Permission has been granted

b) To give comments on any new applications in hand – None received

c) Solar Farm - No news to date.

7. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Capel Library/ Bentley Long Barn

/Footpath Warden & Speedwatch - Tree Warden - Told the meeting there was not a lot to add since the last meeting – he has still got lots of trees from two years ago – however three are spoken for. He asked the Clerk if she had contacted Babergh regarding the Birch Tree on the green at Silver Leys (by No 15) which needs topping. The Clerk could not recall being told about it and will contact Babergh asap. **Footpath Warden** – Nothing to report until tonight’s Public Session. **Speedwatch** – Have had a long break but are hoping to start tomorrow weather permitting. Co-Ordinator asked if there had been any response to the notice in the Bugle for volunteers – No one had contacted the Clerk. - **Bentley Long Barn** – Nothing to report.

Action: Clerk to contact Babergh re Birch Tree – Silver Leys

8. To approve Audited End of Year Accounts for Smaller Authorities – 2023/2024.- 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 30 June. The Notice of Public Rights will be put on the notice boards and website 14 June 2024.

i) To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 – (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 2023/24 be accepted.

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

ii) To approve Audited end of year accounts for Smaller Authorities Accounting statements 2022/23 Section 2. – Page 5 – Receipts for the End of Year 2023/24 amount to £25,005.76 this figure includes precept £14,500, VAT repayment £3,315.24, interest (£187.76), Tudor Fair (£757.56) Locality Payment to Case (£500) = £1257.86 and £5,593.46 CIL monies – two cheques were cancelled £136.00 Applewood Acres £100 Hilo Print & Graphics £36 & a refund of £15.44 on our Insurance. **Total payments over the 12 months** were £30,108.29 this figure includes general admin £9,433.93 - Clerks salary/expenses etc, grants under the power of S137 (£850.00) – S19 (£900) – S142 citizens Advice (£100), S138B Royal British Legion (£100) – grass cutting/leaf clearance –closed churchyard £1,240.00. – Lest we Forget Bench (£1,520) - Play Area/Gym equipment Inspection/grass cutting & equipment –(£1,897.41) Dog & Litter bin Emptying (£465.26) , Training - (£620) – VAT (£2,490.96) **unplanned expenditure** – Mortimer Contracts – Installation of Litter bin & benches – War Memorial & Silver Leys £1,115.00 – Hedge Cut – £100- Six Walks Booklet £465 , Clerk’s Laptop & Accessories £331.78 & Gotelee £2,122.01 re School Playing Field- Fencing costs etc - otherwise payments are within budget. There is one uncleared cheque amounting to £45.00. **Current Account Balance at**

29 March 2024- total £25,937.26 – Family Fun Day Tracker Account £5,945.49 which includes firework accounts and Parish Council Tracker account £9,837.70. The Clerk told the meeting that the unplanned expenditure amounted to £8,501.29 which had to be taken out of reserves – The Internal Audit therefore shows our reserves £499.61 – she explained she had been unable to transfer money from the Fun Day Tracker account for the equipment for the Playing Field, the VAT repayment £1,832.99 was in the April Bank account and she had been able to claim £2,894.41 from CIL monies re gym equipment – the reserves are there and CIL money will be shown on the Receipts & Payments document in future. It was proposed that the audited end of year accounts be accepted and change of bank and online banking be an agenda item at the July meeting.

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

Action: Agenda item – Change of Bank and Online Banking
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9. **To discuss Internal Audit Report - Financial Control** - ~Receipts & Payments for 9 Month accounts – now changed to read December - 6 month accounts were not agreed until December meeting. - **Reserves** – We had an £8,500 unplanned expenditure in 2023/24 and had to dip into reserves – We were unable to transfer monies – re equipment from Family Fun Day Tracker account – into the current account, VAT reclaim and a CIL payment re gym equipment - we have almost re-gained our reserves. **17.** The reason the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were not reviewed – the SALC bulletin 22 January told us a new Model was coming out – procurement Thresholds were changed in 29 January news Bulletin – on 7 May the new Model was pre-released but Clerks were advised not to use it in case of any final changes – hence it has been on our agenda for the last three months but will be agreed at tonight’s meeting. **Policies & Procedures** – We need to periodically check GDPR documents for compliance & relevance to Council. We need to ensure the school field/play area & copse go on the Council’s Asset register – Clerk to contact CAS. It was proposed that the Internal Audit Report be accepted

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

10. **To ratify payment to SCC re Survey (Weight Restriction)** - SCC confirmed we would need 4 surveys which would cost £855 for two weeks data, 2 on Station Road and 2 on Bentley Hall Road (1 each side of Church Road). This is the first stage – SCC survey to see whether we agree we should have a weight restriction. These surveys were originally booked for 2 July – 17 July but SCC are unable to undertake until September - this will be on the September agenda.
11. **Lorry Watch - Update** - No information available in Cllr Thomas’s absence. A reply had been received from Collin Skiphire confirming that their lorries should not go through the village unless they are delivering within the village. A discussion followed – they are very difficult to photograph but we need a description of the vehicle, its direction, location, registration number, date and time.
12. **Changes to Procurement Thresholds – Standing Orders (Section 18) & Financial Regulations (Section 11)** – Councillors had been sent copies of the reviewed Standing Orders with changes to Page 20 & 21. The New Model Financial Regulations had been reviewed and tailored to Bentley Parish Council – it was therefore proposed that the documents be accepted.

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

13. **Dangerous trees in the copse** – Cllrs Feltwell and Spicer are working on a grant for clearing the area - this is the first stage of a long term project.
14. **Affordable Housing – Update** - A response has been received from Void so we are still hopeful we might get some affordable housing. A Housing Needs Survey will have to be undertaken by CAS with no cost to the Parish Council so things are moving forward.
15. **To discuss 20s Plenty Campaign** – The Motion has now been sent to Suffolk County Council. This campaign is political.

16. **Traffic Calming – Weight Restriction– Update -** The Chairman told the meeting she had a visit from two SCC Officer last month to look at issues with our roads. The second visit was with a SCC Highways Officer looking as signage, potholes, problems with road widths and the junction at Bergholt Road, Bentley Hall Road and Church Road (including Brockley Wood entrance). SCC are going to replace the signage coming into the village (covered in graffiti) and also the 30 mph sign at the Tattingsstone end of the village that is faded. They haven't got the money to replace the faded 30mph road markings – anything that is advisory they don't fund anymore – but we can pay with CIL money. We have got SCC liaising with us. As far as the weight restriction is concerned we shall just have to wait and see.
17. **Playing Field Society –** Maritime have been contacted – they have been unable to use the field for most of this Season due to flooded pitch – Jon was informed of the litter bin and grass and this has now been cut and strimmed (with the exception of a small area near the children's play area, which will be done on Wednesday). The field is actually still very wet in areas. They are looking to do a little bit of football training over the coming weeks; only small Maritime groups so no full-scale football having been away for circa 5-6 months. Cllr Bamford told the meeting he had cut down nettles under the equipment. Footpath Warden told the meeting that the School are borrowing the tables, chairs and gazebos for the School Fete.
18. **To receive Correspondence–** The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following E-mails: 3 x Maritime – golf on PF/waterlogging/field grass & training. 2 X District Cllr H Davies results of Babergh call for residential sites/Media Release Cllr D Saw New Council Leader 1 x Cllr D Jones – Response from James Cartlidge MP – heavy vehicles in Bentley 1 x CAS Hastoe Feedback on site selections for affordable housing 1 x Collins Skiphire HGV lorries in Bentley – Collins Response 2 x SCC Bentley Survey dates change/Problem Report pothole in Bergholt Road 3 x Residents Dogs on School Field/Bergholt Road closure 1st July for 11 days/February minutes/Footpath 12 Overgrown & 1 x Capel Clerk re Parked lorry resident complaint.
19. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings– Cllr Spicer-** As the pub has requested opening up the field – re parking it might be worthwhile to put a gate directly into the field. She wondered if it would be possible to discuss this with the Parish Council. This will be an agenda item for discussion at the July meeting – Gate into School field from The Case. The Clerk told the meeting that we had to get planning permission for the existing gate – this needs to be checked with a Planning Officer.

Action: Agenda item – to discuss gate into School Field from The Case
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20. **To Authorise Payments-** The following payments were authorised

101749	J Wyatt (Planet Law Serv)	Professional Services		£1,200.00
101750	Julie Lawes	Internal Audit Fee		£250.00
101751	Bentley Carpet Bowls	Donation		£100.00
101752	Friends of Capel Library	Donation		£200.00
101753	Tuesday Club	Donation		£200.00
101754	Outdoor Bowls	Donation		£200.00
101755	Bentley Bluebells WI	Donation		£200.00
101756	SARS	Donation		£100.00
101757	Headway	Donation		£100.00
101758	Citizens Advice Ipswich	Donation		£100.00
101759	HMRC	Clerks Tax		£25.00
101760	Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary – May	£572.43	
		Minus tax	<u>-£25.00</u>	
			£547.43	£615.28
		Plus Expenses	<u>£67.85</u>	
			£615.28	

It was proposed that these be paid en bloc.

Proposed Cllr M Munday

Seconded: Cllr M Bamford

All in favour

CU

21. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** - Parish Meeting Thursday 11 July 2024. Preceded by Playing Field Society Meeting at 7pm. Cllr Bamford gave his apologies for the July meeting.
22. **To discuss Clerk's Salary – NALC 2023/24 National Salary Award** -
- 23 **To consider the exclusion of the public & press in the public interest for consideration of item 22, 24, & 25** – It was proposed that the public be excluded & items 24 & 25 be discussed before item 22. The public left the meeting.

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

- 24 **To approve Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 11 May 2024** – The Confidential minutes were approved as a true record.

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

25. **Matters Arising from Confidential Minutes** – There were no matters arising.

22. **To discuss Clerk's Salary – NALC 2023/24 National Salary Award** – It was agreed unanimously that the Clerk does a fantastic job and fully deserves the small increase as agreed by NALC in the 2023/24 National Salary Award.

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: