

Bentley - Annual Parish Meeting - 16 April 2026 - Club Reports

BENTLEY BLUEBELLS WI -2026

Bentley Bluebells have grown in membership this year and celebrated our 76th year in April 2025. We supported the national WI resolution of 'bystanders can be lifesavers.' Several of our meetings and talks have been opened evening, and it's been nice to see different faces. We have continued to publish items in the Bugle and had our annual fundraising lunch in May, celebrating VE day with the village and our fellow members from the Constable group: Hadleigh, Capel St Mary, Brantham and East Bergholt WIs. Sadly we saw our Tattingstone WI close this year too.

We have had several talks over the year and outings, s, plus a regular monthly lunch outing.

Our talks and outings :

- A flowers Farmer journey with Helen Finham in April
- East Anglia Air Ambulance by Wendy Wootton in May
- Suffolk museum in June
- Ukulele Band of Felixstowe in July
- Afternoon tea at the WI President'shouse in August
- Flora sands by Janette Robinson September
- November saw our AGM and a small party
- Constable group WI Christmas Party with a Magician for December
- Glad rags dinner in January to kick of the new year
- A story teller Dorothy O'Grady in February
- Sculptor, Sean Hedges-Quinn in March.

We've certainly had a fun packed year, and appreciate the support of the entire village. We are currently working to support the Constable exhibition this summer in East Bergholt and will have exhibits at Suffolk Suffolk.

Emma Finney-Hewitson
Secretary Bentley Bluebells

Report from Bentley Village Hall – 2026

Bentley Village Hall continues to be both well used and well cared for by its regular hirers. As hirers must be Bentley residents or have a strong connection to the village, we rarely experience the hall being misused or left in a poor condition. This helps us keep the booking charges to (as far as we know) the lowest in the area and avoid overloading the voluntary charity trustees.

However, wear and tear is inevitable and in the past year the hall floor was renovated, the carpets and chairs deep-cleaned and some fencing replaced.

Grateful thanks are extended to several non-trustees who have contributed their time and expertise to the hall.

Waste collection processes will soon change and the glass recycling containers will disappear, as will, presumably, the blue cardboard recycling bin. We thank those who have used these facilities and thereby helped raise funds for the hall.

Report from Bentley Horticultural Society

Speedwatch Annual Report - 2026

The number of sessions is considerably down this year due to my unavailability. My wish is to step down, but to preserve a Speed Watch scheme in Bentley I have continued to organise sessions when available.

The total number of sessions this year is only seven but a total of 41 vehicles were reported, with a highest speed of 46 mph.

I am prepared to continue as the 'figure head' for the scheme but desperately need help in organising and running sessions. Anyone who is interested in helping please contact the Parish Clerk.

Bentley Scrabble Club – 2026 report

The Scrabble Club meets at 2.30pm in the Village Hall Blackmore Room on the second and fourth Thursday of each month.

New members are welcome to join us in passing an afternoon with a few friendly games of scrabble, a chat and a cup of tea

Thank You

Robin Owen (secretary)

Bentley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School Governance **16th April 2026**

Governance

The governors share their collective role in both Bentley and Copdock Primary Schools through a federation arrangement. They are drawn from the community, the local authority and the parents. In addition Bentley has two church Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocese. The governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. They also hold the leaders of the school to account for efficiency and effectiveness of the school and oversee its financial performance to make sure its money is well spent.

Governors' meetings continue face to face with the option to attend on line if necessary. During the past year as well as meeting in committee, e.g. finance, and as a whole body, the governors have visited both schools to monitor what is going on, sometimes as individuals but also as a group all on one day. These governors' visiting days have enabled us to compare notes and gain a wider balanced view. At Bentley the Foundation Governors, together with Rachael Cutts, the new Diocesan religious education advisor, have particularly monitored the ethos of the school, to ensure that it reflects Christian belief and practice, not only in

assemblies and religious education lessons but also in the way the members of the school conduct themselves and relate to each other. This has proved rewarding; the children and staff support each other well and can relate how they act to aspects of Jesus' life and work as well as to comparable beliefs in other religions. The children have their own worship leadership team who, with guidance from their teachers, plan and conduct worship events, some in the parish church, and prayer days at school, designed to provide opportunities to reflect on what God is doing, e.g. in the wonder and beauty of nature, so evident on the school site and the surroundings.

The school has developed its links to the village community through the parents' involvement, the activities of the PTA, and several charity activities. The pupils and staff also joined with members of the British Legion and local residents for a Remembrance Service at the War Memorial on Tuesday, 11th November. The church has responded through governance, hosting school services in church, e.g. Easter and Christmas and the Rector, Rev. Christopher Willis taking some assemblies at school.

The Past Year

The adjustments made during 2024 for leading and staffing the school together with Copdock Primary School, are working well and changes are ongoing as the number of pupils on roll alter because of family moves, and alternative provision being made for some pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. [SEND] Many of the children come from other places as the parents choose Bentley school instead of their own local primary school. During 2025 a combination of circumstances, e.g. family moves and parental career changes, have caused some children to be enrolled elsewhere. A considerable number of children come from other villages, attracted by the character of the school and the provision of the breakfast club etc. to meet the needs of families bringing children from greater distances. Attendance remains good but two new problems have arisen this year. One is the effect of frequent closures of the Orwell Bridge caused by high winds, repairs and accidents. This has necessitated some withdrawals to shorten the journey to school, which is often tightly timed to enable the parents to get to work punctually. The other problem is common to many schools: fewer children being born! As finance follows the child further adjustments to staffing can be expected to fit the budget.

For more details of school activities I would refer you to the regular reports and notifications provided in the 'Bentley Bugle,' the 'In Touch' magazine, Bentley's Facebook page, the school website and the presentation by the pupils at this meeting.

Both Ofsted and the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools [SIAMS], rate Bentley School favourably and the improved descriptors used by these organisations may reflect of the outstanding work being done at the school better than the simplistic ones formerly employed. Staff and Governors and pupils have kept working to ensure good outcomes to support and encourage progress. Through the various changes our vision remains unchanged: for all the children to be confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens who are well equipped for future life, whatever that may hold, knowing God is with us always. [cf.Matthew 28:20]

Don Mehen [Foundation Governor]

Case is Altered – Bentley Community Pub Ltd - 2026



Bentley Community Pub Limited

2025 was another busy year for the Case. We currently have around 25 bar volunteers on our bar rota mailing list and other volunteers who help with the day to day running of the pub.

Events for 2025

We started 2025 with more live music during the winter months. Then in the spring we had the first of our Charity Afternoon Teas. In June the Colchester Morris Men visited us. Although we had to postpone our mid summer music event due to inclement weather we were able to hold a late summer event and BBQ, which was very well received. In September we held a Children's End of Summer Party but due (again) to poor weather it was not well attended. Again in September we also took part in the Cask Marque 'Cask Ale Week'. Autumn saw the return of more live music in doors, plus for the first time in many years a disco. For New Years Eve we held another disco which was very well received and enjoyed by all those who came along.

Our regular weekly, monthly and yearly events continue to be very popular.

- Friday Coffee Mornings
- Visiting Street Food Vendors
- Macmillan Coffee Morning
- Open Mic Nights
- Summer Garden Party
- Christmas Carols
- Quiz Nights
- Club Meetings

Charity Fundraising

In April 2025 we started to fund raise for our new Charity of the Year, **East Anglia's Children's Hospice**. So far we have raised around **£5,200** through our monthly quiz nights and raffles. The autumn Posh Afternoon Tea also raised £1000 towards this total! For 2026 our Charity of the Year will be The Ipswich Diabetes and Endocrine Centre – Ipswich Hospital.

Food

2025 saw our monthly Community Lunches restart. They have been very well attended and very much appreciated by all those who have come along. For 2026 they will be every second Wednesday of each month, regardless of any other food events that may be happening. The Catering Team are also planning more Afternoon Teas. Disappointingly some of our Street Food vendors have experienced low numbers and this has caused them to decide not to return.

Maintenance and Refurbishment

General maintenance and refurbishment around the pub continued during 2025 but no big projects were undertaken.

The Future

In the last 5 years over 2000 pubs have permanently closed. These are buildings that have been repurposed (i.e. converted to housing or demolished), not just shut temporarily. The good news is that in England and Wales the rate of pub closures has marginally slowed. Although it has still meant that in 2025, 366 pubs still closed. That's one a day!

Fortunately we are still around but we can not be complacent. Succession is still very important - more events mean more support – **more volunteers!** More people are needed and especially to join the committee.

Our current working model relies heavily on our volunteers. It has worked well for a number of years – and costs nothing! We know that everyone loves this model but finding new volunteers, especially those prepared to work behind the bar is difficult and retaining the ones we have is getting harder. Volunteer drop off and fatigue is real.

With many of our volunteers now in their 70's and some in their 80's, common sense tells us that the current set of volunteers can not (will not) be able to sustain the level of work or commitment they currently carry out. If you or anyone you know is able to offer any support for the Case and would like to become involved we would love to hear from you.

Footpath Society

Carpet bowls report for Annual Parish Meeting - 2026

The team has been very successful this season finishing up runners up in Division two to gain promotion to the First Division again after a one year absence. Also they reached the semi-final of the Chairman's Plate before being beaten by Belstead.

It has been difficult at times with a few players missing owing to long term illness. The Club is always looking for new players to join us. We practice on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday afternoon.

We will soon be playing a couple of friendlies and also the summer league matches will start in June.

David Howe - Chairperson

BENTLEY BOWLS CLUB - Report to the Parish Council Annual Meeting - 16 April 2026

This report summarises what has been happening at Bentley Outdoor Bowls Club, reflecting on the last year and looking forward to the coming season.

Competitions

Our club entered two league competitions, the Monday 2 wood Samford league and the Wednesday 3 wood (triples) Ipswich and District League, and have done so again for 2026. We maintained our league positions last year and have ambitions to do the same this coming season – a charge for promotions might be beyond us!

Colin Rose, Kevin Benton and Bill Slegg entered the Samford cup competition (2 wood, triples) and reached the final, only to be defeated by Norbridge; a great effort. We entered a team into one off competitions at East Bergholt and Sproughton Bowling Clubs. In our own internal club competitions, Barry Ford was the standout player, winning both the singles (individual) competitions.

Annual Dinner

Our annual dinner was held at Brantham Bull in November, attended by 19 members and guests. Presentations for our internal competitions were made and the evening was enjoyed by all.

Club Officers

We report that during 2025 our secretary and treasurer Lillian Calvert decided to retire, though she remains a member and hopes to play this year. We celebrated Lillian's retirement as secretary/treasurer at our annual dinner and are grateful for her many, many years of work on behalf of the Club. Mark is now treasurer and Simon is secretary.

Finance

Colin and the team of helpers keep the green in good order and this is our key asset. However, we remain a club with few facilities (two sheds that are older than most of the members, a Portaloo and mains water supply). Upkeep of the green and the repair and maintenance of machinery requires considerable expenditure and as all will be aware, although most of the work is done by members, the costs have increased dramatically for fertiliser, machinery repairs and maintenance, and insurance (without which we would be unable to play in competitions).

Subscriptions and match fees are kept as low as possible to ensure that bowls is something that can be enjoyed by all the village at modest cost, but this means we are dependent on:

(a) our two sponsors (Energypeople limited and, new for this year, Tattingstone Garden Machinery);

(b) annual support from the Parish Council in the form of a grant (for which we are very grateful); and

(c) fund raising with typically two main fund raisers each year – the annual quiz (this year taking place on the evening of Saturday 9 May) and a race night in the Autumn.

We are very grateful to the village who generously support our fundraising events; without the income from these we could not continue.

Finally, now spring is with us, do come and give lawn bowls a try. There is a 'roll up' each Friday evening during the season (weather permitting) from about 6.30 pm. All you need is a pair of flat soled shoes; there are bowls to use at the green in Grove Road, ready for you to give the game a try.

Affiliated to the Suffolk Bowls Association
Green: Grove Road, Bentley, IP9 2DD
email: bentleysuffolkbowlsclub@gmail.com

Your Bentley Village Community Shop 2025

Bentley Community Shop CIC, reg number 09542114)

Bentley Annual Parish meeting April 16th, 2026 Tree Warden Report (TW): April 2025 to April 2026

The Tree Warden's activities given below are not always in chronological order.

TPO Trees: The BaberghMidSuffolk Tree Officer David Pizzey, informs the TW of work to be carried out on TPO trees. The TW then, with the owner's permission, checks these trees to confirm that the work needs doing. Two trees have been checked and work carried out

Community Orchard: The TW makes monthly visits to the orchard, and very dry weather visits more often. During the year the trees have grown well; they were pruned during the winter months, and on the 15th April 2026, they were all flower. Sadly, we lost two apple trees due to very strong winds that broke their stakes supports, which fell and took the trees down with them. Sandra Bond, owner of the land, continues to water the trees in dry weather, and

mows the grass between the rows of trees. There are now seven spare spaces to plant fruit trees (the three that failed, two broken off at the base by strong wind, and the two empty spaces when first planting the orchard trees.

Copse: The TW and Bob Feltwell (BF) have been involved in setting up the Copse, having the conifers, their stumps and the top soil removed. The Parish Council paid for the grass seed, which BF collected. The TW, with the help of BF's grass seed spreader, spread grass seed throughout the Copse three times, then as the grass grew the TW spread seed over any bare patches. Since then, TW has removed some small holly trees that spread due to holly berries germinating from the dropped berries of larger holly trees. A very spindly tall ash tree was also removed, as were overhanging conifer branches from the adjacent garden in West Mill Green (Thank you Tim Hampstead). A pile of cut trees and branches is stacked on the western edge of the copse.

Entrance through the large gate to the Copse and School Playing Field from West Mill Green: The TW removed all the brambles and ivy from the gate and the wooden fence extending to the concrete post. The removed vegetation is stacked about a metre into the field.

NOTE: the entrance through large gate MUST NOT BE IMPEDED BY PARKED CARS because it is used by cars and large vehicles when events or other activities take place on either the school field or the parish field.

Suffolk Tree Warden Network (STWN): This Network is very useful it brings together information on tree health, tree diseases, tree planting, and providing trees for planting through the Woodland Trust. It also runs its own tree nursery. The TW, when required, orders trees for hedges, plus other trees, and recently ordered six Black Poplar saplings (three female trees and three male trees) (we have possibly two of these trees in Bentley). This species is of conservation concern. The lead for its conservation is Sue Hooton who lives in Holbrook. The TW attends the STWN annual AGM. The TW has a few trees left over for gapping up hedgerows of for anyone who would like to have them.

Quarry: The TW strongly objected to this application by writing to Suffolk County Council, especially concerning the Hazel Dormouse that lives, nests and breeds in Brockley Wood adjacent to the planned quarry. The Government's Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2010, states that; "In the UK it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb Hazel Dormice in a place they use for shelter". This was ignored.

Black Bin on Village Playing Field: The TW has organised the use of the bin on the playing field. TW puts in Case Lane on Tuesday evening (an agreement with Paul Willis) for the bin men to empty, and returns it to the field on Wednesday morning after it has been emptied.

Millennium Seed Bank (MSB): TW has been contacted by Kew concerning the Millennium Seed Bank. This year they are planning to collect seed from Butchers Broom. TW will be collecting seed from Bentley's woods when informed by MSB.

Horse Chestnut tree in the 'triangle' at the entrance to Grove Road: Suffolk County Council Highways have informed the Parish Council that the 'triangle' is their property and responsibility. The TW therefore suggested that the Horse Chestnut tree must also be Highway's responsibility.

Bentley House, Church Road: Planning Application for work to be carried out on trees. The TW visited Bentley House on the 9th of March, 2026 and was treated to an interesting walk around the large grounds, ending at the trees referred to in the application. Having talked with owner about the planned work, TW agreed, without reservation, that the work should be carried out. TW contacted David Pizzey to inform him of the outcome. He then agreed to the work being carried out.

Tree Surveys, measuring girth, photographing, recorded using GPS: The TW is a member of a small team recording veteran and notable trees in Bentley. TW recorded trees in Engry Wood, Pedlars Grove and Tare Grove (all in the north of the village). Then with other members of the team began recording trees south of Potash Lane; recording is ongoing.

Tree diseases: TW reported three tree diseases/infestations that have recently been recorded in England: Sweet Chestnut Blight, Sooty Bark on Maples (primarily Sycamores), and Lace Bug on Plane trees.

Trees and mowing grass verges and Silver Leys Green: TW has emailed Richard Parmee, Environment Officer at Babergh District Council, to inform him that the men mowing the grass verges are not being careful when cutting around the trees; bark is being chipped off; one Rowan tree is almost ringed.

Free trees: Richard has also emailed the parish council to inform them that **free trees** to plant are available.

Colin Hawes, Tree Warden

The Friends of Capel Library



Report for the Annual Meeting of Bentley Parish Council
16 April, 2026

The schedule for 2025 events followed a familiar pattern to previous years. The aim of the 'friends' group is to hold inclusive, community events in the library with a wide appeal. In addition to this we of course support the library team in all they do.

At the start of 2025 the agreement was reached that Suffolk County Council would take back responsibility for the county libraries which had been run by Suffolk Libraries for 12 years. This led to a period of change and disruption behind the scenes but we can say that our library manager Sarah and the whole library team worked very hard to maintain all of the services the library offers and customers would have been unaware of any difficulties with the changeover.

Our focus last year remained the same - supporting our community in a variety of ways in the hope that we provide services which are welcomed and used by those who live locally.

An important stream of our income continues to be our friends' membership and the 100 club. Membership numbers presently are 89 and the 100 club members totalled 68.

Our cinema evenings continue to be supported by a small, but loyal group of 'friends' as it remains a sociable community event. Costs for this event have increased and whilst numbers are lower than we would like we do have the funds to support this event for all of 2026.

As in previous years at the end of 2025 we applied for funding from Bentley Parish Council and we very grateful for their continued support.

Our financial position enables us to support the library and the activities and events which are offered to the local community.

Our library is in the fortunate position of being a well-equipped modern space which welcomes everyone from the surrounding areas.