BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Thursday 1 October 2026 commencing at 20:00 in the Bentley Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs M. Munday (Chair), M. Bamford, J. Wheals, B. Feltwell, K. Spicer, J, Campbell, Alan Horne

Also in attendance: L. Agnew (Clerk), Colin Hawes (Tree Warden), Tim Hamstead (footpath warden) members of the public.

CM 10.26.01: OPENING

The meeting started late due to the Clerk being caught in traffic. The meeting was opened by the Chair who welcomed all present and the parish clerk apologized for being late. The Chair noted that the meeting was not being recorded.

CM 10.26.02: DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

i) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, non-registrable interests and other registerable interests as details in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct: **none declared**

ii) To note the determination of requests for dispensations in accordance with the council's Standing Orders: **none declared**

CM 10.26.03: APOLOGIES

i) Council to receive apologies for absence- Apologies were received from Cllr Marc Rowland and Cllr M. Whiteman. **Cllr Munday proposed acceptance of apologies, seconded by Cllr Feltwell, aif.**

CM 10.26.04: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

i) To consider and approve minutes of meeting held on Thursday 3 September 2026 , **Cllr Munday proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Spicer, aif**.

CM 10.26.05: PUBLIC FORUM-TO INCLUDE DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

It was noted that reports had been received from both Cllr Rowland and Cllr Laws. The meeting was informed that the reports had been uploaded on the parish website. The tree warden informed the meeting that the edge of the village field had been cut.

The issue of HGVs using roads in Bentley to access was discussed again. A member of the public questioned whether the new 7.5 tonnes weight restriction signs on the junction of Church Road and Station Road should have additional signage to allow HGVs greater than 7.5 tonnes access for oil deliveries etc. Suffolk Highways had previously advised the Parish Council that HGVs over 7.5 tonnes could still use the road for deliveries such as farm traffic etc. The new sign on the A137 signing the HGV restriction on Church Road is very large and signing traffic to Bentley via this single track Quiet Lane. **Action: clerk to write to the council regarding changes to this sign.**

The tree warden raised the fact that the website needed to be updated as there were still references to the previous parish clerk on it. **Action: the clerk undertook to amend this.**

The tree warden informed the meeting that he had mended a gate in the village which was loose.

CM 10.26.06: CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk informed the meeting of various updates:

- Babergh Council had been informed of the resignation of Cllr Jones and the notice of vacancy had been published. The notice of vacancy was open until 7 October during which time a request for an election to fill the vacancy could be called. If such election were called, it would be held by no later than 10 December 2026.
- The clerk updated the council on the annual insurance, informing the meeting that a 3 year deal had been arranged with a savings of £34.73 for the current insurance year.
- An application had been made for the road closure for the Remembrance Day Service and had been duly acknowledged by Suffolk Highways. The PC is to ensure that adequate provision is in place to formally notify those directly affected as well as the wider public before the event
- Developers had contacted the clerk who had requested a meeting with the Council to discuss their pre-application proposals, as well as to get the councillors' views about the best way to engage the community going forward.
- The clerk had received a response from Highways, regarding the falling bark and rotten tree at the junction of Grove Road and Capel Road. Highways had confirmed that this was not their priority at the moment, and in their opinion did not pose a safety risk to the public.

CM 10. 26.07 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND RELATED MATTERS

i) DC/26/03873: felling of oak tree on Church Farm: The tree warden reported that he had attended Church Farm to inspect the oak tree with the owner. The tree did not display any signs of rot or disease, but the tree warden acknowledged the owners concerns as the roots are close to the house. The tree warden suggested that the situation could be addressed by pollarding the tree. This has been communicated to David Pizzey of the Babergh Council.

ii) DC/26/02597: Waggoners Way: Link Lane, council noted that the application had been refused
iii) DC/26/02369: 5 South View Green, Ipswich, Planning permission granted

CM 10.26.08: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

i) **To note successful bid to Babergh District Council for funding to support the Neighbourhood Plan Review**
The Chair informed the meeting that additional funding for the Neighbourhood Plan of £8000 had been successfully applied for and granted and would be added to the CIL. **Action transfer money to CIL account.**

ii) **Neighbourhood Plan Review- to consider forming a NP Working party and agreeing terms of the Reference**
The Chair advised that as part of the review process, councillors would be required to meet with our consultant, outside of normal PC meetings and suggested the establishment of a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP). It was proposed that a NPWP be formed and if the working party needed to use the village hall, that the PC accept the cost for this**. Proposed by Cllr Munday, seconded by Cllr Campbell, AIF**
Cllr Munday produced a draft terms of reference (TOR) for consideration by the PC, and suggested that at least 2 councillors needed to be on the WP. The Chair invited interested councillors present to express an interest. Cllrs Horne, Spicer, already had experience with the previous NPWP and were willing to be part of the WP. The meeting was informed that Cllr Whiteman had agreed to lead this WP if one was formed . Cllr Bamford proposed that councillors contact Cllr Whiteman to confirm their interest. Cllr Munday also suggested the council should consider advertising to see if any residents were interested in joining the WP.. Cllr Munday noted that the NPWP had an advisory role only, and was not a statutory body and as such would not have powers to bind the PC. Cllr Munday explained the group would report back to the PC at the monthly meetings.

Action: consider formalising the TOR at the next council meeting, and advertise to the community in to invite involvement in the working party.

CM 10.26.09: BENTLEY CONSERVATION AREA

i) **To discuss conservation area trail and information boards: update:**

Cllr Munday informed the PC that there were no available CIL funds for additional notice boards in the Village to include a Conservation Area Information board at the moment. She suggested that the issue of the use of notice boards be discussed in the November meeting.

ii) To discuss official opening of information board: update

Cllr Munday suggested that the unveiling of the board be postponed until the spring, when weather is warmer. The council discussed this proposal, and Cllr Bamford suggested it be held sooner and that the official unveiling of the Board, be combined with a Footpath Society walk. Cllr Wheals suggested that the official unveiling could be done at the beginning of the walk at the end of October, and that the artist, Footpath Society members, Cllr Rowland, and parish councillors be invited.

Action: Cllrs Munday and Wheals to liaise and arrange.

CM 10.26.10: REPORT BY EXCEPTION

i) **Tree warden and footpath warden:** The tree warden update was given under planning applications. The footpath warden advised that there were no updates, except around the old posts. He informed the meeting that he would follow up on the 4 posts which are still outstanding on the Highways map.

ii) **Bentley Barn**: Cllr Munday informed the meeting that there were still no updates on Bentley Barn. The Council expressed their concern at the lack of action in this regard. It was agreed that Cllr Munday try to arrange a meeting with Babergh officers and appropriate Members to discuss the state of the barn. **Action Cllrs Munday and Whiteman were tasked with setting up a meeting:**

CM 10.26.11 TRAFFIC MATTERS

i) **Discuss traffic through the village:** Cllr Munday advised the meeting that she had written to Highways and was yet to receive a response.

ii) Monitoring HGV traffic through the village: the meeting discussed the increase in HGVs coming through the village. As part of the HGV Monitoring Plan, it was suggested that photos and registration numbers of HGVs be taken by Cllrs Horne, Bamford and Whiteman so that evidence could be presented to the County Councillor. Cllr Munday also suggested that there was a need to prove to Highways that the roads in Bentley were not suitable for HGVs as the roads are too narrow,. Faded road markings, needed to be addressed.

Action: Cllr Munday to write to Councillor Laws and ask for road markings to be repainted up to the level crossing. Action: Cllr Horne to review monitoring plan and obtain evidence to show lack of enforcement and set up a formal monitoring mechanism.

Cllr Munday mentioned that there had been another visit by Suffolk Highways ANPR camera, but that there had been no feedback from Highways about the traffic data captured. **Action Clerk to write to Suffolk Highways, requesting data.**

CM 10.26.12 FINANCIAL

i) The PC received and noted the external auditor's report and certificate for the year ending 31 March 2026, and Notice of Conclusion of audit. The council reviewed the quarterly accounts to 30 June 2026,

ii) The clerk presented the payments for ratification and approval: **proposed by Cll'r Spicer, seconded by Cll'r Munday, aif**

iii) The clerk suggested that the council consider purchasing accounting software Scribe, but noted that she would first compare various software packages. She explained the benefits of the software which would include much more efficient financial management. This matter will be discussed in the next meeting.

CM 10.26.13 POLICIES AND RELATED MATTERS

i) Due to Cllr Whiteman's absence at the meeting this matter was postponed for update for the November meeting.

ii) Promotion of Councillors on website: there was nothing to report.

CM 10.26.14: STATUTORY BUSINESS

i) The clerk noted that under section 65 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act and section 32A of the Localism Act 2011, that Councillors were no longer legally required to display their usual residential addresses on the publicly accessible register of interests. The PC duly noted this.

CM 10.26.15: Exchange of information:

The Chair suggested that the use of the PC notice boards and positioning be discussed at the next meeting.

CM 10.26.16: CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:

The PC discussed a confidential staffing matter**. To discuss Clerk's Salary – NALC April 2025 National Salary Award - Cllr Munday proposed and seconded by Cllr ? to award the Clerk the increase as agreed by NALC in the 2026 National Salary Award, aif**

Council confirmed the date of the next meeting as **5 November 2026 at 19:30** at the Bentley Village Hall. Meeting closed at 21:30

Signed:_____ **Date:_____**