

# BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 2 OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.30 PM

### Present

Cllr M Bamford - Chairman    Mrs J Scott - Clerk    Cllr J Wheals  
Cllr M Munday    Cllr D Jones    Cllr J Campbell    Cllr A Thomas

Also, in attendance, Footpath Warden, Tree Warden, Speedwatch & 18 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting - he noted the number of residents in attendance who were here regarding the Solar Farm Appeal and told them that rather than discuss the Appeal in the Public Session – he would open the meeting at that planning item so it could be discussed before Councillors made their comments. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence**, Cllr K Spicer – Cllr B Feltwell It was proposed that their 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 4 September 2025-**  
The minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

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

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1298** – Vertas - we haven't been invoiced as we were set up as a customer – Form has been completed – quote awaited re Copse **Page 1300 item 12** – Babergh were informed of Cllr Schumacher's resignation and the necessary notice was put on the notice board - No requests for an election have been received by Babergh so the vacancy can be filled by co-option. Vacancy will now be advertised for 4 weeks or such other period as the Parish Council may agree on the Parish Council notice boards and website Clerk will advise Babergh District Council that the co-option policy has been instigated. **Page 1301 item 13** The Insurance Policy has been renewed. 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 H Davies** – Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils have been received and circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website.

Cllr Bamford told the meeting that a Casual Vacancy on Bentley Parish Council would be advertised. Notices had been put up from Babergh who hadn't received any requests for an election so we are able to fill the vacancy by co-option.

**Resident:** Asked if Parish Council had replied to the Bowls Club request for assistance which is adversely affecting the green – a laurel hedge which has reached such a height that it is having a detrimental affect on the green which will cost £6K-£10K to put right. He was told that the Parish Council cannot get involved in neighbour disputes directly - they could try the District Council for advice.

**Resident:** Told the meeting that work had been started on the footpath - and plan to close the Station Footpath in two to three weeks' time.

**6. Planning Applications –**

a) To note decisions of Planning Authority on previous applications –

<b>DC/25/02303</b>	Ruseley, Hazel Shrub	<b>Approved Conditions</b>
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b) To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals –

<b>DC/25/04243</b>	Malting Farm, Church Road	<b>Application for planning permission:</b> Demolition of existing conservatory & modern single storey extension, removal of cement render to walls & replacement with lime render, replacement windows & doors; new window to front port; replacement of dormer; extension to single storey extension & flat roofed link; erection of bay window; renovation of outbuilding; replacement windows; conversion of garage into home office; Erection of new fence a& flag pole
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**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

Proposed Cllr M Munday	Seconded Cllr A Thomas	All in favour CU
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<b>DC/25/04244</b>	Malting Farm, Church Road	<b>Application for a Listed Building Consent –</b> Demolition of existing conservatory & modern single storey extension; removal of cement render to walls & replacement with lime render, replacement windows & doors; new window to front port; replacement of dormer; extension to single storey extension & flat roofed link; renovation of outbuilding; replacement windows; internal alterations to dwelling;; internal insulation & conversion of garage into home office.
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**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

Proposed Cllr J Wheals	Seconded Cllr D Jones	All in favour CU
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DC/25/03935	Outside 1 The Link	Development by a Statutory Undertaker – Erection of 1 No Pole
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Clerk drew Councillors attention to this item which was on the Weekly Planning List

<b>APPEAL REFERENCE</b> <b>APP/D3505/W/25/3370515</b> <b>DC/23/05656</b>	Land at Grove Farm & Land East Of the Railway Line <b>Inquiry 20 January 2026 for six days</b>	Construction of a solar farm (up to 40 M~W export capacity) with ancillary infrastructure & cabling, DNO substation, customer substation & construction of new & altered vehicular accesses.
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**All representations must be received by 20 October & must quote the appeal reference**

Everyone who has been involved in the process should have been notified of the appeal. The Parish Council represents the residents and the majority of residents objected to the solar farm so are now looking to oppose it in the best way we can. We have been advised to undertake Rule 6 party status which would combine various interested parties granting them rights of a main participant – it would give us a Statutory Presence within the process. Babergh will be representing their own opposition.

**Resident:** There is co-ordinated support and a co-ordinated approach – if the Parish Council feels that residents can help with paying any costs we are at your disposal.

**Resident:** What are the grounds for appeal? – Statement of Case because it was refused on those particular grounds are there any additional grounds we wish to object on?

**Resident:** Had read SCC plan and couldn't see that there was any benefit to the local community.

Cllr Munday told the meeting there was a proposal by the developer for a Community Fund that could be accessed by the Community but we would have to apply for community projects. SCC are only involved in the minerals and waste planning This application was decided by the District Council. As a Rule 6 party we could call expert witnesses to speak for us. A long discussion followed and it was proposed that the Parish Council agree to form a Rule 6 Party with interested Community Groups to represent the Village for the Public Enquiry and limit costs for the Parish Council to £1K.

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

- c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group SCC/0105/22B/ARTc55 Brockley Wood Quarry Land off A12 Belstead Discharge of Condition 55 – Community Liaison Group – Cllr Bamford explained that as part of the Conditions there should be a Community Liaison Group established between the parties ie SCC, the Contractor, Bentley and Copdock & Washbrook Parish Councils – for us to present any problems or concerns that might arise with traffic movements relating to the quarry that we will have to monitor.. The Group will meet four times a year for the first year and then six monthly. Was there any mention of the £20K for weight restriction- there is an S106 Agreement for a maximum of £20K. It was proposed that the document be accepted.

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

7. a) Bentley Conservation Area – Revision of Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan – Ongoing.

- b) Siting of information board & signage for the Conservation Area – Clerk has e-mailed PCC for permission to site aluminium outdoor lectern in A2 size in the Closed Churchyard.

8. Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – Tree warden –Tree Warden will be attending the Annual Tree Warden Forum to be held at Cockfield, Suffolk on the 1 November. Most afternoons the TW has been working in the Copse cutting down young holly trees that were spreading across the Copse. Where possible the holly tree roots were removed. Tim Hamstead helped by using his chain saw to remove overhanging conifer branches that were out of reach. TW spread grass seed throughout the Copse and this has grown well, leaving just a few bare patches that will be re-seeded after the weeds have been killed off (see below). Bob Feltwell arranged for the weeds to be cut down so that Deben Tree Services can spray these with weed killer on 6 October. TW has removed all the brambles, ivy and other vegetation overgrowth from the wooden fence that extends from the West Mill Green large gate. Wildflower patches will be mapped out in the Copse as soon as possible. **Footpath Society:** There was a village walk on 28 September and it is intended to have one per month October one will be on the Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> at 2.30. **Footpath Warden** – Nothing to report - have reported Footpath 50 – three finger posts are now outstanding. When the Island modification is finished will have to get a finger post put there. Footpath along side A12 needs cutting back – looks as though a fence is being put along there. – the back of Tawneys Farm and Holly Wood is blocked Footpath Warden has done some clearing. **Bentley Long Barn** – Is high priority now with

Babergh they are looking at renovations. **Speedwatch**- Two sessions have been held since last report, both on Capel Road. Nineteen vehicles were reported. The highest recorded speed was 46 mph. C Daldy was thanked for his continued support – still not had any volunteers –Notice was in the Bugle and is on the notice boards.

9. **SID Battery Management & change of site from Highfields** – Cllr Munday told the meeting that the SID battery charge is not lasting as long as it did. The pole is to be replaced on the Highfields site sometime between now and December so we need to agree where we are going to move the SID temporarily. Cllr Bamford was asked about the code for the lock. After some discussion it was agreed that to transfer it to Bergholt Road would be a good idea. SID will have more impact from Nelson Potter into the Village and will support residents on Bergholt Road – we also need someone to help download the SID data – that might be a consideration if we get a new Councillor who could get involved. It was therefore proposed to move SID to Bergholt Road.

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

The solar panel on Capel Road needs some bigger jubilee clips. A Horne was thanked for helping Cllr Bamford try to move the solar panel.

10. **To approve External Audit** - Councillors had been issued with a copy of the Accounts for Year End 31 March 2025 which have now been signed off by the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn). who have stated *On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation & regulatory requirements have not been met.* Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority – NONE. Notices have been posted on Notice Boards and Website. It was therefore proposed that the audit be accepted.

Proposed Cllr D Jones      Seconded Cllr A Thomas      All in favour      CU

11. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - The completed form had been taken to Barclays in Colchester by the Clerk- Nothing has happened to date – Clerk will chase.

12. **To ratify payments – PKF Littlejohn- £378.00 – CAS Insurance - £698.42** – It was proposed that these two payments be ratified.

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

13. **Road Safety** - Clerk told to take this off the agenda

14. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** We have had a quote from our NHP Consultant – he has provided us with costs to write a new draft plan, manage the consultant stage to ensure it meets NHP Regulations, review comments received and any changes - submit plan to District Council on behalf of the Parish Council – Cost £6,505. – We have had confirmation from Babergh that we can use our CIL funds. Optional Costs: would be if we wanted to include Housing Allocation – we would get profession support to ensure that any allocation would be appropriate for Bentley at an additional costs of £1,845. – if we want a Site Master Plan £825. Cllr Munday read out an e-mail from P Bryant- Babergh re funding. Babergh have been involved in the call for sites – three sites have been submitted by land owners in Bentley which could potentially accommodate 110 houses. The Conservation Area needs to be included in the NHP. After some discussion it was proposed that we instruct Places4People our NHP Consultant to start the NHP Review based on their quote dated September 2025 at a cost of £6,500 to be paid for out of CIL funds.

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

15. **To Review Risk Assessment** - Councillors had been issued with a copy of the Risk Assessment – assets had been uplifted. The Maritime Units have been added to the list and it was proposed that the document be approved.

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

16. **Hedge at side of 28 West Mill Green** – Three quotes were received - Countryside Tree & Garden Services (Nick Taylor) - £500, Daniel Meacock- £450 and Conah Rivers -£180 - to cut hedge down to 4 feet. Cllr Bamford told the meeting that as Conah's quote was a lot cheaper than the other two he had instructed him to go ahead - he has given a start date of 17 October. Councillors agreed with this decision and proposed that the cheapest quote be accepted

Proposed Cllr J Wheals      Seconded Cllr A Thomas      All in favour      CU

Resident told Councillors that the brambles are back by 28 West Mill Green – Cllr Bamford said that he had scythed it – resident says it is coming through from playing field side – the Parish Council paid £560 in April to have this cleared. It was agreed this needs to be discussed further – leave on agenda

<b>Action:</b> Contact Nick Taylor and Daniel Meacock to thank them for quoting
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17. **Affordable Housing – Update** – We need to see if Hastoe will fund a Housing Needs Survey to identify if there is a need in the village and the establishment of a plan to provide for those needs.
18. **The Copse – Update** - The Copse weedkilling will take place on Monday 6th October, Cllr Feltwell was able to arrange the cutting earlier. We will need to get the area on the regular cutting by Vertas until the spring when we hear from the School.
19. **Playing Field Society –Case Lane Playing Field entrance “kissing gate”** – On the Parish field the new gate set back from Case Lane, Cllr Feltwell is just agreeing the installation date.
20. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following E-mails: x PKF Littlejohn – AGAR -completion of Audit 1 x Places4People – NHP grants 2 x Vertas – we haven't been invoiced as we were not set up as a customer – Form has been completed – quote awaited for Copse. Babergh District Council x 5 Successful CIL Bid – Notification/Help share our Rural Coffee Caravan reels with your residents/Financial help with consultancy fees for NHP/Cllr Resignation – No requests for al election vacancy can be filled by co-option/Grove Farm Solar Appeal update – Village Hall unable to accommodate the appeal enquiry. 1 x Community Action Suffolk - Rural Housing Network Forum 22 October 14.00-15.00 invite - Resident x 1 re Playground Update.

Correspondence from resident re Playground Update - This will be on the Agenda of the Playing Field Society Meeting in November to discuss – wants to make it more like the one at Capel.

<b>Action:</b> Children's Play Area – Agenda item Playing Field Society Meeting November
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22. **To Authorise Payments-** The following payments were authorised en bloc

PKF Littlejohn	External Audit Fee - <b>Ratified</b>	£378.00
Community Action Suffolk	Insurance Renewal - <b>Ratified</b>	£698.42
Tuesday Club	Donation – June list - just received Bank details	£200.00
ElanCity	Solar Panel for SID	£521.08
Bentley Village Hall	Hall hire – 2 Sessions + Broadband	£87.95
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£96.20
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - September	£874.94

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

21. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**– None
23. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Meeting Thursday 6 November 2025 Preceded by a Playing Field Society Meeting @ 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE:**

DRAFT