

# **BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.30 PM – PRECEDED BY A PLAYING FIELD SOCIETY MEETING AT 7PM**

### **Present**

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

Also, in attendance, Footpath Warden & 6 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting and hoped they had enjoyed the summer break. We should also record our sorrow of the passing of District Councillor Dave Busby who was a great supporter of Bentley Parish Council. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence**, Cllr D Jones– Cllr A Thomas – Tree Warden
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 3 July 2025 -.** Cllr Wheals pointed out that a paragraph in the minutes had been duplicated – once this was struck out the minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr M Munday      Seconded Cllr B Feltwell      All in favour      CU

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes –** Page 1294 SALC was contacted to clarify confidential items and a reply was sent to resident. **Page 1296 item 20** Trench was reported to Suffolk County Council who unfortunately are unable to take any action at this time as it does not meet their intervention criteria– they will continue to monitor the location as part of their routine inspection. Vertas have been contacted as we haven't received any invoices for the work done – they are looking into it. Hedges along East End Road have been reported. Rest covered by agenda items.

### ***Public Session***

**County Councillor G Hall** – Spoke about Brockley Wood application – it has been through the process and the outcome is not what we wanted but we must move forward via the Brockley Wood Liaison Group. Bus Routes – more funding is coming through – she was told that Bentley no longer have a bus – booking for Connecting Communities is two days in advance fare is £5 and pensioners cannot use their bus pass. Devolution – SCC are recommending one Unitary Council – the Business Plan is being voted on 16 September – it is all going to take time.

Babergh have taken a different view

**District Councillor H Davies** - Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils had been received and Cllr Davies had sent her report both of which have been circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 1 & 2** in the minute book and on the website. She told the meeting that Babergh prefer a three unitary option that still offers savings but also has sufficient levels of local representation. Babergh are trying to get a lot of input from people. She will mention bus situation at her Sustainable Travel meeting.

**Resident:** Asked about the hedge at the side to 28 West Mill Green on behalf of his father in law who was unwell – he was told that quotes are being sought.

**Resident:** Thanked the PC for getting back to him on the questions he asked at the July meeting. He asked about cheque numbers missing from September 2024 minutes and asked if a system could be instigated to be able to track parish expenditure now Online Banking had been adopted by the Council and asked the PC to report on the cost of the Conservation Area application process in total including the upcoming cost of the Management Plan and signage.

<b>Action</b> – Hedge quotes – reply to resident
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## 6. **Planning Applications –**

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

<b>SCC/0105/22B</b>	Brockley Wood Land off A12 Belstead Suffolk IP8 3JS	<b>The Committee resolved to grant consent</b>
<b>DC/24/04947</b>	Redwoods, Bergholt Road	<b>Permission has been granted</b>
<b>DC/25/01934</b>	Hazel Shrub House, Hazel Shrub	<b>Approved Conditions</b>

### b) **To give comments on any new applications in hand & discuss appeals –**

Appeal Ref <b>APPD3505/W/3370515</b> <b>DC/23/05656</b>	Land at Grove Farm & Land East of the Railway Line	Construction of a solar farm (up to 40 MW export capacity) with ancillary infrastructure & cabling, DNO substation, customer substation & construction of new & altered vehicular accesses.
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<b>DC/24/05240</b>	Land East of Capel Road	Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered all other matters reserved) Erection of 18 no dwellings (including 12 no affordable units and public open space)
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Previous comments on this application by Bentley Parish Council apply -  
It does not meet the requirements of BEN 1 Policy in our Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors are concerned that there is no mention of a Housing Association to manage the affordable allocation. No Local Needs Assessment has been done and there is no guarantee that the 12 affordable houses will be used for people in the village.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer	Seconded Cllr J Wheals	All in favour	CU
<b>DC/25/03923</b>	2 Nursery Cottages	Erection of a single storey rear extension	

## **RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell	Seconded Cllr J Campbell	All in favour	CU
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### c) **Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group –** One of the conditions for approval of the gravel pit was to establish a Liaison Group with Copdock to meet with the developer. Conditions relate to traffic, signage and a lot of concerns about traffic. Cllr Bamford attended an initial meeting with Copdock & Washbrook and the developers – B W Ventures - held to encourage SCC to enforce any conditions -. someone from the Enforcement Team will be in the Group. They have agreed to meet quarterly at the moment and then six monthly and there may have to be a named Councillor to be the representative. We want to make sure they stick to the lorry routes in particular. - all traffic should use the A12 and specific signage will be used – there is the possibility of getting a weight limit determined on some of the routes. We should start to look at signage for outside the quarry site.

### d) **Consultation CPM1015 – Upgrade of Footpath 55 –** This has been discussed in the past and the Parish Council is not in favour. This new consultation requires evidence we need to involve Tree Warden to follow up on the effect on ecology such as stag beetles – it could have protection if it was a local green space in the NHP -it's an important part of the walking network. Resident told

the meeting the request has come from the British Horse Society and the response needs to be in by 13 September. It would be difficult for walkers to make way for horses and cyclists – at the moment the local Police are dealing with off road bikes on bridleways/footpaths in Bentley and surrounding area. It would also be dangerous for horses to cross a busy farmyard.

7. a) **Bentley Conservation Area – Revision of Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan** – Babergh’s revision of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) is ongoing. One of the Management Plan actions is how Bentley Parish Council will publicise the Conservation Area and one proposal is that we provide an information board. Siting of the board needs to be considered where it can be viewed safely – maybe the churchyard would be a good place – it was agreed that the PCC would need to be approached for permission. Cllr Feltwell declared a non pecuniary interest re approaching the PCC.
- b) **To discuss funding and siting of information board & signage for the Conservation Area** Boards and road signage were discussed. Dave Busby’s Locality Budget may be available - some of this money may be used for signage & boards. We could also apply for District CIL.

<b>Action:</b> PCC to be approached for permission
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8. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – Tree warden** –The Community Orchard has been checked weekly during the very dry spell of weather. The fruit trees are all surviving but have shed their fruit in response to the dryness, - Entrance to copse from West Mill Green. Tree Warden has cleared all the ivy, brambles and conifer branches away from the wooden fence which extends from the large gate, and has cut back the conifers impeding the footpath. In the Copse the TW has cut down the invasive holly trees and their small offspring, he has also cut off the lower branches of the row of conifers alongside the wire fence. On the 26 August Footpath Warden used his chainsaw to cut off the high branches of the conifers mentioned above. The TW has stacked the cut off material near to edge of the Copse. **Footpath Warden** – Nothing has been reported but two finger posts have been reported to SCC who will come and do them. Footpath Warden was told that a post Capel Road opposite Earlwood was down – he will investigate. **Bentley Long Barn** – Action is going to be taken to conserve the barn. **Speedwatch**- In the absence of Speedwatch the Clerk read out the report – After prolonged communication and a meeting with the officer in charge of Speedwatch in Suffolk I am pleased to say he has agreed to reinstate the SW site on Capel Road. One session has been held at the Village Hall when eight vehicles were reported. The highest recorded speed was 46 mph. In order to continue with Speedwatch in Bentley he will continue to run the scheme at a minimum until a replacement has been identified.

<b>Action:</b> Notice in Bugle - Speedwatch Co-ordinator urgently required. Agenda item – Road Safety
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9. **To discuss Government Devolution in Suffolk** – Discussed in Public Session see above.
10. **To approve External Audit** - Defer not yet received.
11. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - New form completed – to be signed at this meeting.
12. **To accept Councillor Resignation** – The Chairman was very sorry to have received Councillor Schumacher’s resignation from Bentley Parish Council he has been finding it increasingly difficult due to work and family commitment. Damion has been a very valued member of the Council since being elected in 2019 and we are very grateful for his input and the work he has done helping with the SID’s and Parish Council Accounts. The Clerk was instructed to send a letter of thanks to Councillor Schumacher and it was proposed that his resignation be accepted.

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

<b>Action:</b> Send letter to Damion Schumacher – Inform Babergh of his resignation
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13. **Insurance Policy Renewal** - Cllrs had been sent the Insurance documents – Renewal for this year is £698.42 (last year £640.89). The Clerk told the meeting she had e-mailed CAS at the beginning of August with the asset list and the Fidelity Insurance mentioned by the Internal Auditor. It was proposed that the quote be accepted.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell      Seconded Cllr M Munday      All in favour      CU

14. **To discuss purchase of Chaplet for Remembrance Sunday** - It was proposed that a donation of £100 be made to the Royal British Legion for a chaplet.

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

15. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** We are awaiting a quote for costs from our Consultant – Ian Poole. Conservation Area needs to be incorporated in our NHP review.

16. **To approve Quarterly Accounts** - Bentley PC Financial Working Party - Cllr Jones and the Clerk had a remote meeting to go through the Quarterly Accounts – April-June 2025 – Councillors had been sent copies of the Receipts and Payments, Cash Book and Bank Accounts – the Clerk went through the figures and it was proposed the accounts be accepted. There is a £20 discrepancy – David Bracey invoiced us for £148 but with VAT and it should have been £168 – he has sent an invoice for £20 which is on the payments list for this meeting.

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

17. **To discuss quotes re hedge at side of 28 West Mill Green** – Nick Taylor has sent a quote for £500 to cut the hedge down to 4 feet. Daniel Meacock is coming to Village Hall on 11 August Cllr Campbell has agreed to meet him at 1pm. Clerk was told to contact Connor Rivers for a quote.

<b>Action:</b> Contact Connor Rivers
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18. **Affordable Housing – Update** – Team Meeting was held on 15 July. CAS were approached re cost of Housing Needs Survey – Cost £2K plus costs – Stationery/postage/printing/data input. Clerk to forward to Hastoe asking if it would be accepted from their point of view and to arrange another Teams Meeting.

<b>Action:</b> E-mail Hastoe re quote and arrange meeting
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19. **The Copse – Update** - Cllr Feltwell told the meeting that a quote had been received from Dedham Vale Tree Surgery to supply weed killer £500 plus VAT. Tree Warden has got more grass seed. The Copse needs to be included in the Vertas contract – Clerk told the meeting we haven't yet received an invoice from Vertas – she has chased. It was proposed that the quote for £500 be accepted. Hedge needs cutting.

Proposed Cllr K Spicer      Seconded Cllr J Campbell      All in favour      CU

20. **Playing Field Society –Case Lane Playing Field entrance “kissing gate”** – Discussed at Playing Field Society meeting it was proposed to accept quote 7129 Replacement of the gate set further back and rehang existing single field gate £1,560.00.

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

There will be no Firework Display this year.

21. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to the following E-mails: **July/August** – 1 x e-mail from PTA re Colour Run/Donation 2 x Suffolk County Council problem report Hedges East End Road/Pole for Solar SID 2 x Babergh District Council – withdrawal of Government Funding for NHP/invoice for annual dog and litter bin emptying 1 x Brantham Athletic Bentley Playing Field 1 x SALC Salary agreement 25/26 1 x Brockley Wood Ventures Initial meeting dates **August** 1 x Brockley Wood Liaison Committee Meeting 18/8 – 1 Babergh District Council Dead Hawthorn is to be removed (Silver Leys) SCC not taking any action re Silver Birches 1 x Suffolk County Council Community Thermal Imaging Project/SID post ordered should be in place by 5 December – 3 x Residents re church banners on Playing

field fence/Upgrade of Footpath55/bridleway application – letter from James Cartlidge meeting Friday 26 September.

22. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings– Cllr M Munday** - SID at Highfields – the batteries are only lasting three days . Until the pole is replaced with a higher pole to take the solar panel we need to decide whether we need to move it somewhere else temporarily. Charging was originally being done by Damion but Bob Munday has very kindly been doing it for us. Clerk was instructed to contact Damion to get the code for the padlock. SID in Capel Road – Solar Panel loose- needs securing–Alan Horn very kindly agreed to help Cllr Bamford with this. Agenda item

**Action:** Contact Damion for Code – Agenda item SID battery management and change of site from Highfields

23. **To Authorise Payments-** The following payments were authorised en bloc for August & September

Information Commissioner	Data Protection Renewal Fee	£52.00
Babergh District Council	Dog & Litter Bin emptying 2025/26	£1,095.60
Peter Baldwin	Grass Cut	£150.00
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£38.80
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - July	£645.65
Play Safety Inspections	Balance of invoice 2199	£20.00
Cllr B Feltwell	Grass Seed for Copse	£209.25
Peter Baldwin	Grass cut & strimming	£150.00
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£38.80
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - August	£682.13

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

24. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Meeting Thursday 2 October 2025.
25. **To discuss Clerk’s Salary – NALC April 2025 National Salary Award**
26. **To consider the exclusion of the public & press in the public interest for consideration of item 25** - A vote on this was unnecessary as the public had left.
25. **To discuss Clerk’s Salary – NALC April 2025 National Salary Award -** It was agreed to award the Clerk the increase as agreed by NALC in the 2025 National Salary Award.

Proposed Cllr      Seconded: Cllr      All in favour

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE:**