

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.30 PM PRECEDED BY PLAYING FIELD SOCIETY MEETING AT 7 PM

Present

Cllr M Bamford - Chairman Mrs J Scott - Clerk Cllr M Munday Cllr B Feltwell
Cllr J Campbell Cllr A Horne Cllr D Jones Cllr J Wheals

Also in attendance - County Councillor Georgia Hall, District Councillor Marc Rowland, Speedwatch Co-Ordinator & 3 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for turning out on such a horrible night. The Clerk received no notification of anyone planning to film or record this meeting.

1. **To record apologies for absence**, Cllr K Spicer, Tree Warden and Footpath Warden. It was proposed that 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 8 January 2026-** Following alterations to **Item 6 c)** should read Footpath 64 not 55 and item 12 South West Babergh is incorrect should be East – the minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

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

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes – Page 1314 item 10 Signed** Precept form was sent to Babergh who have confirmed receipt. **Page 1315 item 20** – E-mail sent to Brantham Athletic re return of keys. **Item 22** Potholes reported – SCC reply Work has already been ordered for these locations **Item 21** E-mail sent to resident Rest covered by agenda items

Public Session

Cllr Bamford welcomed County Councillor Hall and District Councillor Rowland.

County Councillor G Hall – sent her report which has been circulated to Councillors **Appendix 1** in the minute book and on the website. County Councillor Hall spoke about the Council Budget 2026/27 £850m budget– 4.99% increase in Council Tax, 20 mph area outside school and the recent accident in Bentley re horse and rider – additional signage – Cllr Jones to send e-mails to Clerk. Lack of bus service in Bentley was also discussed

District Councillor M Rowland – Briefing Notes for Town & Parish Councils had been received and circulated to Councillors - **APPENDIX 2** in the minute book and on the website. District Councillor Rowland told the meeting that Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils are calling for urgent action regarding sewage being spread on agricultural - land they want the Government to look at different options because of serious concerns for public health, farming and the environment. MENTA support for 12-24-year olds – it is free – see their website. Suffolk residents can now borrow a thermal camera from their local library to detect heat escaping from their homes – there is a £5K grant for those who are eligible. Unification goes on.

Resident: Remarked on the condition of the road at Tattingstone – District Councillor Rowland mentioned weight limit on Capel Road – A discussion followed re S106 - weight limit on Bentley Hall Road – Swan Hill Copdock - District Councillor Rowland to speak to Chair Copdock PC. County Councillor Hall will investigate conditions on A137.

6. **Planning Applications –**

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

DC/25/02303 Ruseley, Hazel Shrub **Amendment details Approved**

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

DC/26/00226 **Application for Planning Permission without compliance of Conditions**
Windmere, Station Road
Application under S73 for Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission DC/25/00901 dated 27/5/25 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) – Erection of two storey rear extension & first floor side extension – To Vary Condition 2 (approved plans & documents) amending the proposed roofline

NO COMMENT

c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group – Cllr Bamford reported there had been no more meetings but he had heard indirectly that SCC/BWV have failed to reach agreement on the planting for this season. There is a further meeting in March. If residents see vehicles going through the village with logo TARS- Ipswich Grab Hire – log onto Brockley Wood website and report them. – or let Cllr Bamford know and he will take it forward.

d) Appeal Site at Grove Solar Farm - The Public enquiry continues at Wherstead Park 11th, 12th & 19th February.

7.a) **Bentley Conservation Area – Signage** – Actions required by Bentley Parish Council as per the adopted CAAMP (Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan) – information to the public, signage, recording veteran trees, Conservation Area Heritage Trail and information boards – Signage - Quotes are being obtained for the proposed fingerpost road sign and installation at the junction of Bentley Hall Road and Church Road

b) Recording Veteran Trees - Veteran trees have now been measured, photographed and mapped by a group of residents in the north of the village under the guidance of the Tree Warden. The data, photographs and recorded trees have been put on the Woodland Trust website by a resident – so there will be a publicly accessible record,

c) Conservation Area Trail & Information boards – Heritage Trails - Our resident artist will be updating BPC on progress on the illustrated map for the Information Board. - Heritage Walking Trail – Heritage Expert has suggested we contact SCC PROW team who produce booklets of walking trails for the Discover Suffolk website Contact has been made.

8. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch –** **Tree warden** – Clerk read out Tree Warden report – Tree Warden obtained permission from Don Baker to survey and measure trees in Engry Wood and those along Potash Lane. The wood was visited several times to complete the task. Potash Lane was visited three times. Trees in the following Bentley Woods were also surveyed and measured. Tare Grove and Pedlars Grove. The data collected was passed to Bentley Parish Council and passed on to the Woodland Trust where it has been entered onto the Trust’s Tree Map. The TW has been unable to do much more due to being unwell. No reports have come to his attention. The six Black Poplar saplings have not yet been planted out: planting is dependent on liaison with Tom Hill about a suitable date (both he and I have been rather busy). **Footpath Warden** – No report available. Cllr Horne reported a tree fallen across path opposite Earlwood towards “Murder Lane” Bentley **Long Barn** – Nothing to report. **Speedwatch**- One session has been held at the Village Hall with no vehicles reported. Pleased to say new volunteer has completed training and now on board.

9. **Monitoring HGV Traffic through the Village** – It was agreed we need to keep an eye out for inappropriate HGV's and increased traffic coming through the village. PC should set up an official group with some one responsible for it. After some discussion Cllr Horne volunteered to co-ordinate with Cllr Bamford who agreed to draw up an outline proposal for the Monitoring Group.
10. **To appoint Responsible Financial Officer** - Councillors proposed that the Clerk be appointed the Responsible Financial Officer.
- Proposed Cllr M Bamford Seconded Cllr M Munday All in favour CU
11. **To instruct Julie Lawes to audit End of Year Accounts 2025/26** - The Clerk told the meeting Julie Lawes Internal Audit fees would be the same as last year - £15K-25K = £200 - £25K-£50K = £250 & £50K-£100K = £300.. It was therefore proposed that Julie be instructed to undertake the 2025/26 Internal audit.
- Proposed Cllr D Jones Seconded Cllr J Wheals All in favour CU
- Action:** Contact Julie Lawes
12. **To approve Nine Month Accounts** – Clerk and Cllr Jones had been unable to have a Zoom meeting to go through accounts– it was therefore proposed that this be deferred to the March meeting.
- Proposed Cllr M Bamford Seconded Cllr J Wheals All in favour CU
13. **To Review Council Policies** - The Clerk told the meeting that Council Policies had been reviewed and updated in March 2025 there had been no changes since the last review and it was proposed that they be carried forward.
- Proposed Cllr B Feltwell Seconded Cllr M Munday All in favour CU
14. **To discuss Horse & Rider Accident – Capel Road** – Resident told the meeting that both horse and rider were okay and that most riders wear Go-Pros. The accident was discussed also signage – See Public Session above - It was proposed that adequate signage be installed.
15. **To agree Format of the Annual Parish Meeting** - It was proposed to keep the format the same as last year.
- Proposed Cllr B Feltwell Seconded Cllr D Jones All in favour CU
16. **Development in South West Babergh – Update** Councillor Bamford told the meeting he would liaise when they get back to us.
17. **To ratify payments to L Alston - £750 -** Cllr Munday explained that this payment was paid for by donation. It was proposed that the payment be ratified
- Proposed Cllr M Munday Seconded Cllr J Wheals All in favour CU
18. **SID Battery Management - Update** – Cllr Horne told the meeting that the SIDS are both working - Padlock, clips and strips have been purchased re solar panel (£17.99) but we need to purchase a bar from ElanCity to attach padlock – price unknown. Cllr Horne will prepare a report on SID data for the Annual Parish Council Meeting in April.
19. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - Clerk told the meeting this is still ongoing – if this cannot be resolved within five working days a complaint will be sent to the Banking Ombudsman.
20. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** - Nothing to report.
21. **Affordable Housing – Update** – Waiting to hear from Hastoe re rural exemption site– outcome of Call for Sites – Babergh's Local Plan is being reviewed.

22. **The Copse – Update** – The grass is growing a and Cllr Spicer’s report was read out at the Playing Field Society meeting - the children are very keen to help and are excited to be involved.
23. **Playing Field Society** – Removal of SCC signs -Disabled access to Playing Field, Copse and Car Rally were discussed at the preceding Playing Field Society meeting.
24. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails:
 1 x Resignation e-mail – Cllr A Thomas- 1 x Play Safe Inspections - Inspection due Late April. fee: £150 plus vat (£30) = £180 in total. – Agenda item 1 x Julie Lawes – Audit 2 x residents – Draft Minutes November/Co-option/ Request use of Playing Field – Car Show 2 x Suffolk County Council - Brockley Wood Gravel Pit Planting of Southern Border/Bentley Conservation Area – Heritage Trail Walk 1 x Babergh District Council – Joint Local Plan Review Sustainability Scoping Report.

Clerk was told to reply to Resident – tell him that his correspondence and observations to the Parish Council have been noted.

Action: Agenda item – Play Safety Inspections - Write to resident

25. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**
 –Cllr Munday,- Overnight closures A12/A14 Diversion Route via A Roads – Contact East Proactive Comms (EastProactiveComms@nationalhighways.co.uk/Suffolk) and SCC to see if it is possible that they could put the sign that they used previously ‘not a suitable diversion route’ at the entrance to Station Road on the A137 and the entrance to Bentley Road/Capel Road from the A12 slip road. Agenda item at March Meeting – Increase payment for artwork. **Cllr Feltwell:** Councillor resignation – Should be accepted at tonight’s meeting and the decision ratified at the March meeting – Councillors therefore agreed to accept Councillor Thomas’ resignation at tonight’s meeting – Babergh will be informed of the resignation. -

Action: E-mails - re diversion signs – BDC – Councillor Resignation

To Authorise Payments- The following payments were authorised en bloc

SALC	Cllr Training – Cllr A Horne	£39.60
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£48.40
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses/Room Allowance - February	£1,139.65
Proposed Cllr J Wheals	Seconded Cllr A Horne	All in favour CU

26. **To confirm date of next scheduled meeting** – Parish Council Meeting Thursday 5 March 2026 at 7.30 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: