

# BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON AT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL ON -THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2026 AT 7.30 PM

### Present

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

Also, in attendance - Speedwatch Co-Ordinator & 7 members of the public

Cllr Bamford welcomed everyone to the meeting wished them a Happy New Year 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**, County Councillor Georgia Hall. District Councillor Marc Rowland, Tree Warden and Footpath 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 4 December 2025-**  
Following an alteration to item 22 to the draft minutes published on the website – Date of next meeting 5 February 2026 - to 8 January 2026 - the minutes were approved as a true record and were duly signed.

Proposed Cllr A Horne      Seconded Cllr B Feltwell      All in favour      CU

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes –** The Clerk told the meeting that most of the items were covered on the agenda but that she had contacted resident re notices on the Playing Field fence and also invited another resident to the next Playing Field Society meeting to discuss play area equipment. Also CAS Business Services Limited (PC Insurers) were changing their company name to CAS Insurance Services Limited. Cllr Bamford said that efforts to divert water from the bottom of the slope (Station Road) had not made a lot of difference – at the moment it was very icy. 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 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.

**Resident:** Horse riders were extremely concerned regarding road safety - especially in light of the accident that happened near the Village Hall between a car and a horse. Horse bolted, rider was thrown and horse received cuts – it could have been much worse. More signs need to be displayed a lot of horses use the roads through the village to get to the bridleways. Cllr Campbell told the meeting that another incident with a horse had occurred outside his house with an HGV. Cllr Jones told the meeting he had been in correspondence with County Councillor Georgia Hall about the incident at the Village Hall and she had agreed to pay for signs. We have several vacant poles around the village that these signs could go on.

Cllr Bamford mentioned Local Government Re-organisation – One Council or three Councils for the whole of Suffolk. Responses need to be in by 11 January. Should we respond as a Council? County Council elections next year – express your thoughts.

6. **Planning Applications –**

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

**DC/25/00901** Application for non material **Amendment details Refused**  
amendment  
Windmere, Station Road

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

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78  
APP/D3505/X/26/3377214ION 78

Windy Farm, Capel Road Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use or Operation or Activity including those in breach of a Planning Condition. Town & County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) – Confirmation of use of annexe/outbuilding as a separate dwelling

- c) Brockley Wood – Information re Community Liaison Group – Cllr Bamford had attended the first meeting of the Brockley Wood Quarry Liaison Group held on 18 December 2025. The access track has been completed along with Footpath 64 – he had queried the enormous pile of aggregate (9-10 metres high) which is being stored for future sale and the fact that planting between Brockley Wood and Old Hall Wood had not yet taken place – apparently this is still under negotiation. There is a Reporting page on the front page of the BWV website [www.brockleywood.co.uk](http://www.brockleywood.co.uk) for reporting any of their lorries going through the village – but they will need times and number plates. A discussion followed. Next meeting end of March.

**Resident-** Remarked on the tree planting – it's disappointing that SCC/BWV have missed the best part of the year for planting by failing to agree on species. – they should not have wasted the planting season. The Parish Council should urge them to approve a species so that we don't miss another planting opportunity. Cllr Bamford will write with a copy to County Councillor Georgia Hall asking them to expedite this asap.

- d) Appeal Site at Grove Solar Farm - The Public enquiry by the Planning Inspectorate starts on 20 January at Wherstead and takes place over two weeks. The public can attend and speak but need to be there on the first day if they wish to speak when the Planning Inspector will give a timetable. It starts at 10 am and a notice has been put in the Bugle and on social media - it was hoped that as many residents as possible would attend.

- 7.a) **Bentley Conservation Area – Revision of Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan** – Babergh District Council have made a couple of amendments to the final adopted CAAMP which has now been published with errata.

- b) Siting of information board & signage for the Conservation Area – Work is still progressing a local artist is producing an illustrated map – draft drawings will hopefully be available at the next Parish Council meeting. Talks are ongoing re siting of the board in the shelter by the roadside at the Church.

8. **Report by Exception – Tree Warden/Footpath Warden/Bentley Barn /Speedwatch – Tree warden** – No report available. Vintage and ancient trees are being documented in the Conservation Area. **Footpath Warden** – Footpath Warden nothing to report. **Footpath Society:** Cllr Wheals reported that there were 15 people and a dog on the recent New Year's Day walk. **Bentley Long Barn** – No further information but it's been upscaled. **Speedwatch-** Nothing to report on sessions held. Due to the Christmas break - still waiting for Police clearance for the new volunteer. Current volunteers have agreed to carry on in 2026. Cllr Bamford thanked Cliff for his continued input.

9. **To Review & Agree Draft Budget** – Councillors had been issued with budget figures for 2026/27 for any comment at the December meeting. Councillors were happy with the uplifts made in the Draft Budget and it was therefore proposed that the budget for 2026/27 be accepted.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell      Seconded Cllr D Jones      All in favour      CU

10. **To set Precept & Sign Precept Charging Authority Form** - The Clerk told the meeting the Precept had also been reviewed and recommended that Councillors consider an uplift to the Precept again this year of £1K bringing the Precept to £16,500 as we begin to see the downstream impact of inflationary pressure on committed expenditure. A discussion followed re our increased Responsibility for the Playing Field, School Field and Copse – our Precept is very low. Cllr Bamford and the Clerk pointed out that Council Tax charges will be increasing but it was proposed that the Precept be uplifted by £1,500 to £17,000 and the Precept Charging Authority Form be duly signed.

Proposed Cllr B Feltwell      Seconded Cllr K Spicer      8 in favour      1 abstention

11. **To discuss Horse & Rider Accident – Capel Road** – See Public Session above. – There is a pole in Bergholt Road and one outside the Village Hall that could be used for signage. Resident told the meeting that most horse riders have cameras- so could help re Brockley Wood traffic. Keep on agenda – Equestrian Signage.

12. **To discuss Development in South West Babergh** – It was agreed that Parish Councils should get together for a unified approach and Bentley needs to be part of that unified group. Co-operation between Parish Councils is very valuable. A representative needs to be agreed to attend these meetings.

13. **To ratify payments to Freethought Internet Ltd - £38.50 & Places4People £4,134.00** – Cllr Munday explained that the Places4People payment was an Expert Witness payment – paid for by donation.

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

14. **Open Reach Telegraph Poles –Update** - Cllr Bamford had written to Open Reach re these four telegraph poles – they have come back and said they are “appropriately sited”. Take off agenda.

15. **SID Battery Management - Update** – Battery now installed – Cllr Bamford thanked Cllr Horne. Cllr Horne told the meeting he had downloaded data from both SIDs. There is a padlock on the Highfields SID need one for the Capel Road one – cost about £10-£20. Cllr Horne will build a history of the data and report at the Annual Parish Meeting.

16. **Change of Bank and Online Banking – Update** - Clerk told the meeting she had visited the Colchester Branch but the funds had still not been transferred – she had since been advised by phone to send the signed letter (already sent to them twice) by Recorded Delivery as they were unable to transfer funds over the phone due to complex signing arrangements. Cllrs agreed that a letter of complaint should be sent to Barclays with the copy letter. Cllr Spicer said the Pub had experienced the same difficulties - Clerk will run letter past Cllr Spicer before sending.

<b>Action:</b> Letter of complaint to Barclays
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17. **Neighbourhood Plan Review–Update** - Nothing to report.

18. **Affordable Housing – Update** – A meeting took place on 7 January 2026 with Hastoe (our preferred provider), CAS and BDC – a rural exemption site – outside the village envelope - needs to be identified that would be suitable for Local Needs Housing.

19. **The Copse – Update** – The grass is growing a and Cllr Spicer will soon be going to talk to the school. The meeting was told the hedge was collapsing onto the pavement.

20. **Playing Field Society** – Signs have been done – Cllr Bamford to put up sign by Play Area. Clerk – not yet got key from Brantham Athletic for the units. She will chase.

**Action:** Contact Brantham Athletic re keys to units

21. **To receive Correspondence** – The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to the following E-mails:  
– 4 x e-mails from residents 2 re playing field fence/Query re November draft minutes re Co-option/agenda item? 1x Horse & Rider accident. 1 x Open Reach reply re Pole objection Ref C116940201 1 x District Cllr Helen Davies Development South West Babergh & 1 from Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council on the same subject 1 x Transport made Simple – Suffolk Bus Service Improvement Plan – Call for proposals 1 x Babergh District Council Confirmation of Council Tax Base 2026/27.

Clerk was told to send Resident procedures re Co-option.

**Action:** Write to resident

22. **Exchange of information by Councillors and matters for consideration at future Meetings**  
– **Cllr Munday , Cllr Bamford** - Told meeting the reason for writing to EADT re article on Quiet Lanes. **Cllr Spicer:** - Large pothole – Case Lane.

**Action:** Report potholes – Case Lane/Capel Road/Bergholt Road

23. **To Authorise Payments-** The following payments were authorised en bloc

L Alston	Bentley Heritage Survey – <b>to be ratified</b>	£750.00
Freethought Internet Ltd	. gov.uk Domain name- <b>to be ratified</b>	£38.50
Places4People	Planning Appeal Support Fee – <b>to be ratified</b>	£4,134.00
Healeys Printers	Printing – Solar Farm Appeal	£526.00
Vertas Group Limited	Grounds Maintenance	£513.00
SLCC	Clerk’s Membership	£158.00
Bentley Village Hall	Hall Hire – 3 Sessions - Broadband	£102.95
Cllr Bamford	Playing Field Sign	£64.85
Cllr Munday	Post printed proofs to PINS	£18.35
P Baldwin	Leaf Clear – Closed Churchyard	£170.00
HMRC/PAYE	Clerks Tax	£48.40
Mrs J Scott	Clerks Salary/Expenses - December	£721.80

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

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

**CHAIRMAN:**

**DATE:**