

BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A REMOTE EXTRA ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2020.

Present

Cllr M Munday - Chairman Mrs J Scott – Clerk Cllr B Feltwell Cllr M Bamford
Cllr N Moxey Cllr D Schumacher Cllr K Spicer Cllr J Wheals
Cllr C Perry

Also in attendance – County Councillor G Jones, District Councillor D Busby, A Cassey - Secretary Quiet Lanes Suffolk, Tree Warden and 23 members of the public.

Cllr Munday welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions.

1. **To record apologies for absence** – Cllr P Cross
2. **To receive Declaration of Interest relating to Agenda items:** Cllr Moxey declared a non pecuniary interest re Neighbourhood Plan.
3. **To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5 November 2020** – It was proposed that this item be deferred until the December meeting so as not to hold up the business of this meeting.

Proposed: Cllr N Moxey Seconded: Cllr K Spicer All in favour CU

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes** – Also deferred

Cllr Munday explained that to assist with the smooth running of the meeting Cllr Bamford was going to take over the running of the meeting and he will go over the arrangements of how to respond etc – Cllr Moxey will be controlling the technical side of things – everyone will be muted until you get your chance to speak then you will be un-muted. Andrew Cassey, Secretary of Quiet Lanes Suffolk was introduced to the meeting. Cllr Bamford thanked Cllr Munday for taking over as Chair of Bentley Parish Council he explained that Councillor Moxey had the power to mute at any time. Cllr Munday will give a presentation which should give some clarification. Councillors will then discuss and vote at the December meeting and Suffolk County Council will be making a final decision if it is decided to take it forward. He asked participants to keep it relevant and precise so the meeting will not take too long – he reminded the meeting that residents can independently make their representations to SCC. He also reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded. Cllr Moxey then took down a list of residents who wished to speak.

Quiet Lanes – Presentation to the Public

The Presentation was shown on the screen and Cllr Munday went through each slide - she explained that as part of the Neighbourhood Plan – (Consultation period which runs up to the 16 November) the 2018 questionnaire (which was the basis of the policies that were put in the plan) - the top priority was Road Safety. The Parish Council have now agreed four SID pole sites with SCC, two poles will be paid for by SCC and two by the Council who are now looking to purchase a SID device similar to the one in Capel to help curb speeding through the village. The presentation covered the importance of public footpaths, village life, countryside, walkers, cyclists and horse riders (Bentley has one of the largest communities of horse riders in the area). The type of road suitable as Quiet Lanes - single track road – which is why only part of Bergholt Road is included – East Bergholt side – East Bergholt Parish Council are very supportive of this project. Road signs will be at the entry and exit of the lane – At the root of this presentation is the road safety initiative.

Public Session

Resident: (1) Read from a statement and objected on three main points – i) Increase in non-local visitors and where they park their cars ii) parking and iii) wildlife – which is not given a mention most of the birds and dormice live in hedges that his family have managed over many years, to enable wild life to prosper. Bentley is mostly agricultural - tomorrow sees the third road closure - it is often used as a “rat run” between A137 and A12 – Quiet lanes are not a means of tackling safety problems.

Resident (2) Remarked that in her working life she had driven all over Suffolk and seeing a Quiet Lane sign made her think that this road is a bit different and subsequently lowered her speed and made her aware of other road users.

Resident: (3) Concerned about the speed anomaly associated with this rat run along Bergholt Road near Dodnash Farm - 30 mph failed. Speed is not specified on the sign – it has not been broadcast specifically on this road – how do we get Highways to agree that presumably speed comes into it?

Resident – (4) Following Cllr Munday’s excellent presentation he felt that anything that has the chance to make the road safer is to be welcomed. Reminders are helpful and in addition to some of these changes in signage from 30 mph to unlimited - he was more concerned about white vans – with the increase in deliveries these vans are far more of a threat than tourists.

Resident: (5) Considered these proposals to be ineffective – you are not going to reduce speed by putting these signs up. Many users are trying to avoid; traffic on the A12 and A137, due to roadworks and closures - these roads are not quiet lanes, they are used by a large number of drivers on a daily basis and are hazardous – by designating them you are encouraging recreational use of these lanes – that they are safe for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. We all want to reduce speed on the road - trade drivers make them less safe - this proposal is misconceived because it mischaracterises busy roads as quiet lanes and therefore invites other users to make inappropriate recreational use of those roads in a manner which exposes those users.

Cllr Munday: –. Remarked that people already use these lanes for recreation so any measures we can take is better than doing nothing at all. Take your point about diversions – but these roads are considered rural.

Resident (5) replied his experience was not the same – every morning I drive on the Bergholt Road and every morning there are near misses for example on the 20 October traffic was increased due to the closure of the A137 and a car was travelling so fast it resulted in an accident with a car going into the hedge – there is no way I would let my children cycle along Church Road.

Resident: (6) As a horse rider has noticed increasingly the traffic problems we have. Horse riders are a big community now and ride with high viz jackets, cameras as there are so many near misses. Horses have to use to roads to get to the bridleways. Church Road is difficult near the school with cars, children and mums so anything that would lower the speed would be very welcome

A Cassey - Drew attention to the report produced in 2004 for Norfolk & Kent – did a review of the impact assessment – Driver attitudes – almost 40% report that the drivers drove more carefully along the lanes. Now the Highway Code is reinforcing the fact that we should give way to more vulnerable road users it is changing driver’s attitudes. Quiet Lanes did maintain the character and tranquillity and this is what we are trying to achieve here. Particular questions asked re the trial – did you have an increase in visitors, did it cause parking difficulties, did the measure improve road safety in your area He read from Bromsgrove and Eyke responses with a similar response to Waldringfield. – an increase in visitors is not borne out by these villages.

Resident (7) - Applauded the work being done towards Quiet Lanes in making it an equal facility not just for cars but for everyone else - he spoke of the speed limit dichotomy and the quiet lane sign – 20 mph speed limit - why not quiet lanes – maybe this is something to think about – it's not only road safety and speeding cars it's also about the protection of the rural environment and keeping it as a rural area.

Andrew Cassey - Speeding issues affect every community and in addition we are a Sat Nav community - if these devices can flag up Q Lanes to make delivery drivers more aware as they do with road works etc this will help. To this end we are actively lobbying for change so drivers can behave more responsibly.

Cllr Munday, in answer to particular questions regarding concerns about increased visitors to our village and parking issues. The following questions were asked of the 2014 trial villages – did you have an increase in visitors, did it cause parking difficulties, did the measure improve road safety in your area? She read from Bromeswell and Eyke Parish Council responses with a similar response from Waldringfield. – an increase in visitors is not borne out by these villages.

Cllr Munday also said that the proposed lanes had had both visual and traffic surveys completed and SCC Highways considered them suitable for designation under the requirements of the Road Traffic Act.

Cllr Moxey asked if anyone else wished to contribute further.

Cllr Munday was thanked for her excellent presentation and all the work she has put in to this project. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting for Councillors to consider whether to proceed with the proposals. If the decision is to proceed all responses received by the PC from residents/business owners will be forwarded to SCC for their consideration. They will make the decision whether to agree to the designations after official proposal notices are posted.

5. To confirm date of next scheduled Remote Meeting – 3 December 2020 – 7.30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE: