

Little Bentley 2023 Report

Recorder: Laura Robinson, Tendring District Local History Recorders

2023 in Little Bentley was marked by a number of social events and environmental improvements spearheaded by the Parish Council, the Church, and an Events Committee. The village WhatsApp group continued to serve as a key communication link for villagers and enabled organization of events including regular monthly gatherings of a book club, film club, summer Churchyard maintenance, and pub quiz night. Litter picking sessions increased from twice a year to bi-monthly to address the continuing incidences of littering and fly tipping. Little Bentley entered the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' competition, with Brenda Hirani leading a team of volunteers the 'Little Bentley Bluebells' who planted up a number of tubs and baskets on verges around the village. The RHS and Anglia in Bloom gave the team a Level 4 'Thriving' award for their efforts. A local firm, Rapid Response, sponsored the refit of the kitchen in the Church Hall.

Special events included:

24-26 March – The inaugural Little Bentley Beer Festival was held in the Church, echoing back to the use of churches for ale festivals in pre-Reformation days. The well-attended event benefitted from publicity by CAMRA and barrel sponsorship by local businesses. £2500 was raised by the event, with profits going to local causes, including church repairs and hospital expense assistance for a village child.

6 May – Villagers organised a street party on the green in honour of the Coronation, with a coronation-themed cake baking competition and food supplied by the Bricklayers Arms Pub.

7 May – The church held its annual bluebell service in the Little Bentley Hall woods.

2 September – The Events Committee organised a village fete which was held in field opposite the main row of houses along Rectory Road, with stalls, games, food, beer tent, and music in the evening.

8 September – The gardens and waterways at Little Bentley Hall were open for a 'Son et Lumiere' event, with music provided by a chamber group and singers. 540 people attended, raising £20,000, with money going to local charities including the Alzheimers Society and Harwich Deanery churches.

5 November – Guy Fawkes Firework display and BBQ adjacent to the pub sponsored by the Parish Council.

Planning

Applicants for a commercial development at Clip Hedge Farm succeeded in an appeal to build 3,451 m2 of floorspace (application 21/01523/FUL). The site had a history of several prior applications for development of lesser amounts of floorspace. The Parish Council had objected to all of the applications due to the impact of on local character, open countryside and traffic movements. The Planning Inspector, however, approved the application on the basis that it would provide significant economic benefits; would not harm the rural character of the area; and would not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring dwelling.

Please see <https://littlebentleypc.org.uk> for Parish Council minutes.