

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

To: Members of Lavenham Parish Council

You are duly summoned to attend the next meeting of Lavenham Parish Council to be held at 7.30 pm on Thursday 5th January 2023 at Lavenham Village Hall, Church Street, Lavenham

Public Attendance

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend. At item the public will be invited to give their views/question the Parish Council on issues on the agenda, or raise issues for consideration of inclusion at future meetings. This item will generally be limited to 15 mins. duration.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies and approval of absences**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. To consider requests for dispensations**
- 4. To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the Council**
- 5. Public participation session (15 minutes)**
- 6. Local Authority Councillors' Reports**
- 7. Chairman's Announcements**
- 8. Outcome of Phone Box competition**
Motion: Council approves seeking of quotes for the refurbishment of two Telephone Boxes
- 9. Planning**
To receive a report and recommendations from the Planning Group
- 10. RFO Report**
Motion: to approve expenditure incurred in December 2022

11. Finance

11a Income and Expenditure to December 2022

11b Budget Setting and Precept 2023-24

Motions:

Council is asked to approve earmarking to reserves, underspends in 2022-23

Council is invited to set a Budget for 2023-24

Council is invited to set a Precept for 2023-24

12. Date of next meeting – Thursday 2nd February 2023



Jane Bellward
Clerk to the Council
13 Weavers Close
Lavenham

Date: 29th December 2022

Agenda item 9

Planning Applications for consideration at the meeting on Thursday 5th January 2023

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/22/06053

25 Prentice Street, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RD

Householder Planning Application - Erection of cartlodge (following demolition of existing garage), reconstruction of conservatory from plinth level, replace rear windows and doors.

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/22/06052

25 Prentice Street, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RD

Application for Listed Building Consent - Reconstruction of conservatory from plinth level, replace rear windows and doors, reconfigure internal layout with partition walls.

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/22/06123

1 Bolton Street, Lavenham, CO10 9RG,

Application for Listed Building Consent - Removal of existing garden shed and erection of new garden office/storage space

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/22/06122

1 Bolton Street, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RG

Householder Application - Removal of existing garden shed and erection of new garden office/storage space

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO TREE(S) PROTECTED BY A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - DC/22/06157

High Parsons, Sudbury Road, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9SB

Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS41/A1 - Fell 1No. Ash (T1), Remove side shoots on main stem of 1No. Oak (T2), Prune and reduce 1No. Apple (T3) by up to 1m and remove rubbing and crossing branches, Fell 1No. Eucalyptus (T4), Prune overhanging branches of 1No. Yew (T5) by 1-2m and trim back regrowth from lower stem

APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/22/06249

The Grove, 5 Lady Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RA

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce 1 group of Yew by 5-6ft and clear next doors property by 1m.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/22/06072

Ponders, Barn Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RB

Householder Planning Application - Erection of rear extension (following demolition of existing extension), construction of dormer windows, installation of new window to replace existing and installation of handrail

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/22/06073

Ponders, Barn Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RB

Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of rear extension (following demolition of existing extension), construction of dormer windows, installation of new window to replace existing, installation of handrail, installation of new staircase and alterations to internal layout

Planning Applications for consideration at LPC meeting on 2nd February 2023

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT- DC/22/05986 & DC/22/05987

10 Lady Street, Lavenham, CO10 9RA

Decision deferred to Lavenham Parish Council meeting on Thursday 2nd February 2023 as agreed with planning officer, to allow time for full consideration.

INCOME	Planned Income	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	3 months of accruals to YE	YTD	over/(-under)
		Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9			
Precept	87433	43717					43717					87434	1
Grants LA cleansing	9730					2594			2594		5188	10375	645
Burials	5500	290	530	690	70	860	420	440	0	420	1260	4980	-520
Car Park donations	8000	674	1585	1133	1082	1927	1644	1455	829	616	1000	11945	3945
Grants other											0	0	0
Donations				375					275			650	650
Interest received							101			199	200	500	500
Supplier Refunds	637											0	-637
Other refunds			4475			58						4533	4533
EV charging												0	0
Miscellaneous			5					25				30	30
Totals	111300	44681	6595	2198	1152	5438	45882	1921	3697	1235	7648	120446	9146

EXPENDITURE		Budget confirmed June 2022	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	3 months of accruals to YE	YTD	remaining Balance
Loans	PWLB: street lights	7520	0	0	0	3760	0	0				3760	7520	0
Staff costs	Payroll	24250	743	820	756	756	4097	936	936	936	1513	7438	18930	5320
	Audit, payroll service/employer costs	2500		92			96	2114		96	1042	1938	5378	-2878
Administration	Telephone & broadband	750	66	65	163	83	82	84	64	105	85	300	1098	-348
	Office materials & petty cash	1200	182	100	100		73		131		376	300	1263	-63
	Data Protection	100							40				40	60
	Subscriptions & Insurance	3000	668					1662					2330	670
	All Training/Cllr expenses	2000		600		40		130					770	1230
	Room hire PC meetings	300	56		48	98	38			154	67	150	609	-309
	Buildings Maintenance	0											0	0
	Digital mapping	150	140										140	10
	Parish Office business rates	750												750
	Parish Office rent													
earmarked	Elections	600											0	600
	Miscellaneous	500		349						227.7	79		656	-156
	Sub total	43620	1856	2026	1067	4736	4386	4926	1171	1519	3161	13886	38735	4885
Public Realm	Green Maintenance AND		929	959	959	959	959	959	959	959	345	1035	9020	-9020
	Street cleansing	26500	1253	1278	1278	1278	1278	1278	1278	1278	1278	3834	15315	11185
	Refuse collection bins & dog bins	1500			838		138						976	524
	Tree Maintenance and Care	1500										1500	1500	0
	All cemetery management	1600			910			17			14	30	971	629
	Play equipment	500					268					268	536	-36
	Street furniture	0											0	0
	Street Lighting energy	4000										8000	8000	-4000
	sub-total	35600	2182	2237	3985	2237	2643	2254	2237	2237	1637	14667	36318	-718
Public Facilities														
Church Street	Church Street energy	1100	19	22	32	31	28	29	36	34	65	270	566	534
	Church Street water	1000						129			243	250	621	379
Prentice Street	Prentice St Water	500			39			41			94	100	275	225
	Prentice St non EV energy	400					171					200	371	30
	Donation Points	430		72	51		72	36	36	36	36	108	323	107
Water Street	Water Street green maintenance	500										250	250	250
All	Washroom Cleaning & Consumables	14000	620	1440	1436	1172	1171	1215	1381	1689	1594	2200	13919	81
	Minor Maintenance	2000	390		30	419						1000	1839	161
	Miscellaneous	1000										200	200	800
	Sub total	20930	1029	1534	1588	1622	1441	1450	1453	1760	2032	4578	18364	2566
Exception items	Website development	1000											500	500
	Accounting software & computer	2000										2000	2000	0
	Security system 2 Lady Street							750					750	-750
Earmarked	support 2 Lady Street											3000	3000	-3000
	Sub total	3000						750				5500	6250	-3250
Grants/ Events	Small Grants (combined)	750	750										750	0
	Christmas trees/lighting	2200									1000	1200	2200	0
	Xmas Eve Community Carols	500												500
	1st Meadow summer facilities	500										500	500	0
	Platinum Jubilee/small events	2000	2000										2000	0
	Sub total	5950	2750								1000	1700	5450	500
Water Street	Energy Standing charge/lighting/EV	1200		12		16	12	80	93	67	68	80	428	772
Feb & March 23	Energy Standing charge/lighting/EV											200	200	572
	Business Rates(added December 2022)	250											0	
	sub-total	1450		12		16	12	80	93	67	68	280	628	822
Contingency		750										0	0	750

	Totals	111300	7816	5809	6641	8611	8483	9459	4955	5583	7899	40611	105745	5555
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REMARKS

All receipts and spending up to 29.12.22 are included.

opening balance 2022	5496				
	Income	Expenditure	Balance	Supplier	Project
Month 1	78438		83934		
Month 2		69	83865	Birketts	Gas Works
Month 2		650	83215	Sweco	Gas Works
Month 3		116	83099	Babergh	Gas Works
Month 3		2700	80399	Sweco	Gas Works
Month 5	58	6147	74310	county washrooms	church st
		290	74020	devon disability	Gas Works
Month 6		523	73497	Professional charges	Gas Works
Month7	26336.1	240	99594	Sweco	Gas Works
		4198	95396	20mph trial	
		4182	91214	county washrooms	church st
Month 8		2629	88585	water street trial survey	Build-outs
		124	88461	plumbing completion	Prentice Street
		200	88261	parking marks	Prentice Street
		522	87739	railings	Prentice Street
Month 9		9296	78443	county washrooms	church st

	Income	Expenditure	Balance
opening balance	10233		
Month 1		552	9681
Month 2		0	9681
Month 3		0	9681
Month 4		0	9681
Month 5		0	9681
Month 6		2000	7681
Month 7		38	9643
Month 8		189	9492
		29	7652
		1000	8643
		1556	7936
Month 9		45	7607
		72	8570
		454	7482

	Income	Income Source	Expenditure	Item	Balance
opening balance	7405				
2021-22	1000	private Jubilee donation			8405
Month 1	2000	Grant from LPC			10405
	60	donations for Jubilee			10465
			1271	various for Jubilee event	9194
Month 2	50	donations for Jubilee			9244
			1649	various for Jubilee event	7595
Month 3	605	Public collection			8200
			1207	various for Jubilee event	6993
	50	donations for Jubilee			7043
Month 4	0		705	various for Jubilee event	6338
Month 5	0		72	Care of Jubilee trees	6266
Month 6	0				
Month 7					
Month 8					
Month 9					
Month 10					
Month 11					
Month 12					
Total	11170		4904		6266

Agenda Item 10b

Budget Setting and Precept for 2023-24

1. Council is required to effectively manage its financial responsibilities. This means:
 - Preparing a budget based on best evidence of need
 - Setting a precept at the appropriate level to ensure that obligations are met

2. General guidance from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils is shown below:
 - *“All local councils need to produce an annual revenue budget which sets out the financial requirements for the forthcoming year. This becomes the basis upon which spending policy is approved and the amount of cash required to finance spending plans is calculated.”* SALC Module 2

 - *“Every council needs to retain a ‘working balance’ which is sufficient to avoid a cash overdraft during the year and which will provide adequate cover against contingencies. This balance is held on behalf of the local council taxpayer and, where possible, any excess should be used to reduce future council tax bills. On the other hand, depleted balances (or reserves) will need to be built up to an acceptable level. The level of the ‘working balance’ should therefore be reviewed as part of the budget setting process each year”* SALC Module 2

3. *The Good Councillors Guide on Finance 2017* (NALC) sets out the key stages in the budgeting process
 - a. review of current year budget and spending
 - b. determine the cost of spending plans
 - c. assess levels of anticipated income
 - d. provide for contingencies and the need for reserves
 - e. approve the budget
 - f. set the precept

The process set out by NALC above in a-f is followed in the remainder of this paper.

4. Review of Current year 2022-23 – reference 3a above

In January 2022, the following budget was set:

Income	Expenditure	Contingency
£123298	£120204	£2697

In May/June 2022 this was revised when it became apparent that the £20,000 donation income target would not be reached. Donation income planned was reduced to £8000 but in the subsequent months, the level of donations improved, and our year end expectation is now around £12,000. Council also decided to recruit a full time clerk at a higher grade which is necessary to fully conduct the operational management of the Council rather than this being achieved through

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

diminishing input by Councillors. The realignment added to some budget headings but lowered or removed others with a net effect of a reduction of £10,000 in planned spending. The revised budget was set as:

Income	Expenditure	Contingency
£111300	£110300	£1000

In December 2022, taking into account all spending decisions up to 29.12.22, contractual obligations and provision for the period January-March 2023, the year-end forecast is:

Income	Estimated Full Year Expenditure*	Surplus**
£120160	£105745	£14700

* Subject to change until 31.03.22

** Subject to change until 31.03.22

The estimated annual expenditure takes account of a re-instatement of £4000 to the Streetlighting budget removed in May/June 2022 and £3000 to be earmarked for CBS agreed by Council in December 2022.

Expenditure estimates to year end take into account all known factors at 29 December 2022. Although the actual year end position will not be known until 31.03.22, all known spending obligations have been taken into account and donation income for the remaining 3 months has been reduced to £1000.

This healthy outcome arises from:

- Car park donation income expected to be £4000 above the planned figure
- Net refunds of £3900
- Underspending on salaries and training due to the length of time it has taken to recruit a full-time clerk
- Zero spend on the Public Realm which has been the subject of considerable and justifiable criticism of the Council
- Removal of most grant giving in 2022-23
- Public conveniences being out of action from April to November thereby avoiding costs for cleaning, electricity, water and routine maintenance

The predicted year end position provides the opportunity to earmark sums now to reserves for items that will or are likely to arise in 2023-24, thereby reducing the spending requirement for the forthcoming year. Depending on the final outcome for this year, there may also be some opportunity to carry forward residual revenue funds but this cannot be guaranteed and therefore cannot be assumed.

Motion 1:

Council is asked to approve in the following order of priority, in accordance with the National Association of Local Council guidance set out in 3 above:

- 1) Earmarking £2800 to general reserves for Elections
- 2) Earmarking £2000 to general reserves for LNP referendum 2023
- 3) Earmarking £5000 to general reserves for Public Realm improvements
- 4) Applying 50% of residual funds to general reserves
- 5) Carrying forward 50% of residual funds to the 2023-24 revenue budget

Proposer: Councillor Mary Morrey

Secunder:

6. Determining Spending Plans 2023-24 -reference 3b above

Council decided in June 2022 to Transform the Council and this meant the appointment of a full-time clerk, who would either possess the Certificate in Local Council Management or be willing to take the necessary qualification. This is necessary for two reasons *before* the objective of pursuing the General Power of Competence. The workload of the clerk has grown over the years to a full time position and is now a much more technical role than when the current clerk embarked on her lengthy period of service to this community. The clerk has indicated she wishes to retire and therefore *there was no choice* about appointing a replacement. During the past 2 years, the part-time clerk has been assisted on a daily basis by the Chair. This cannot continue as there is no guarantee that any future Chair will be able to offer this level of support and it is also not appropriate for Councillors to be undertaking this role.

There can be no doubt that the Spending Plan for 2023-24 is very heavily influenced by the cost of a full-time clerk at a salary level set to attract quality candidates. Many local Councils have vacancies for clerks for months and sometimes years. That scenario is not acceptable.

There are also other additional costs beyond salary, that the Council will now have to bear which are:

- increased Employer's NI and pension contributions
- training costs for the new clerk and the new Council from May 2023
- rent and rates for an office

Together, the additional cost of new clerk arrangements is around £18,000 bringing the amount needed for 2023-24 to around £128,000.

Through rigorous management of the current budget and scrutiny of need for 2023-24, some budget lines have been increased and some have been reduced. No provision is made for expenditure lines removed in June 2022.

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

The result is that some underlying figures within that total may be overstated and some may understated. This applies to Energy costs and unknown factors in particular Business Rates. Most costs are known and

where possible, supplier prices for 2023-24 have been used in the preparation of the budget. Where it has not been possible to secure firm information, *reasoned* assumptions have been applied. The net effect of

this management exercise is that the spending plan proposed is broadly neutral to the budget set in June 2022.

7. Anticipated Income 2023-24 – reference 3c above

The Council has relied upon donation income and burials income in recent years to increase the amount of service provided whilst maintaining precept uplifts at a low level. This worked well until 2020-21 when donation income was £21,000. In 2021-22 this shrunk to £3,500. In 2022-23 the year end forecast is around £13,000. The movement in donation income over the past 3 years, demonstrates that this source of funds is not robust. A pandemic could not be predicted but the current economic climate of inflationary pressures and outlook, indicates strongly that donation income is highly likely to reduce in 2023-24. Evidence for this possibility is:

“nearly one in ten people (9%) said that in September (2022) they held back from donating as a result of the cost of living crisis, and 6% said they had reduced or stopped a regular payment to charity because of increased living costs. ”

Probonoconomics *The Outlook for Charities After The Autumn Statement*
17.11.22

It is almost impossible to predict what may happen as we have little or no data to support any argument, but a donation **is always through choice**. A view of how much donated income we could reasonably predict, will therefore be a matter of opinion rather than evidence, based on a range of £0 to £20,000. It is therefore considered **a very High Risk** to include assumptions about income from donations in determining the level of precept. This assumption is formed from 2021-22 when donations fell to around £3500.

Burial income also varies but in broad terms, income of around £5000 per annum is a reasonable basis from which to work. There will be a small income from EV charging (as yet unknown) but this will mirror the costs of providing electricity so is effectively neutral.

This leads to the conclusion that the only income we can anticipate for certain, other than the precept, is the Babergh Grant and a reasoned estimate for Burials.

8. Reserves and Contingencies 2023-24 – reference 3d above

A spending budget of approximately £128,000 leads to the requirement for a general reserve of between £32,000 and £96,000. Council's non earmarked

Options for the precept are offered for consideration in Attachment 2. All options will cost Council Taxpayers increases of less than £0.50 per week for a Band D property.

11. Risk Appraisal of Precept Options

Option 1: Is considered **High Risk** because of the unknown factor of donated income. If the planned income of £10,000 is not reached, the general reserves would have to support spending or further cuts of a non-Statutory nature would have to be applied such as cutting spending on Christmas celebrations. The percentage increase in precept is marginally below the underlying rate of inflation of 10.1% at September 2022.

Option 2: Takes into account donation income of £5000. The assessed risk is **High-Medium**. If the donation income fell below £5000 and prices over which we have no control continue to rise, there will likely be a need to draw on reserves. However, strenuous efforts will be made to mitigate this possibility.

Option 3: Assumes £0-5000 donation income. It is considered **Medium- Low** risk. If donation income is not forthcoming, there will be a substantially reduced likelihood of having to rely on reserves. If donations are received, this will provide a safety net against unknown price increases

Option 4: Is **Medium - Low** risk and includes a possibility of reduced income from Burials but also provides an additional buffer against unexpected price increases

12. Council is invited to consider all options for a precept for 2023-24:

Motion:

Council adopts Option 3 and accordingly sets the precept for 2023-24 at £110,100.00

Proposer: Councillor Rob Macro

Seconder:

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

Irene Mitchell
Jane Bellward
Chair
Responsible Financial Officer
29th December 2022

How the Precept is calculated

In November each year, Babergh DC estimate the tax base - the number of dwellings liable for Council Tax but this is subject to change.

The tax base is the average of all properties liable for Council Tax across bands A-G

The amount of annual precept to each household is based on Band D

Changes to the provisional tax base usually occur in January.

This occurs when a higher number of Council tax payers claim Tax Reduction or the rate of collections is reduced. This has happened **once**.

For 2023-24 the Tax base has increased by around 40 properties

The Parish Council must advise Babergh of our precept requirements by 31st January 2023

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Spending requirement	£128,000.00	£128,000.00	£128,000.00	£128,000.00
Babergh grant assumed	£10,700.00	£10,700.00	£10,700.00	£10,700.00
Burial Income assumed	£6,000.00	£6,000.00	£6,000.00	£4,000.00
EV Income (broadly equals energy expenditure)	£1,200.00	£1,200.00	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
Donation Income assumed	£10,000.00	£5,000.00	£0-£5000	£0.00
Total Income before Precept	£27,900.00	£22,900.00	£17,900.00	£15,900.00
Precept required to balance budget	£100,100.00	£105,100.00	£110,100.00	
Precept to provide safety net against further energy costs				£115,000.00
% average increase shown on tax bill	9.79	15.27	20.65	26.13
estimated £s increase per annum from 2022-23- based on Band D	£9.30	£14.50	£19.71	£24.81
estimated £s increase per month from 2022-23- based on Band D	£0.77	£1.20	£1.64	£2.07
estimated £s increase per week from 2022-23- based on Band D	£0.18	£0.28	£0.38	£0.48
Assessed Risk Level	High	Medium	Medium-Low	Medium to Low
Rationale for assessed level of risk	8% of spending requirement dependent upon donations AND no safety net against unknown price increases	4% of spending requirement dependent upon donations AND no safety net against unknown price increases	Worst case is Zero donation income AND no safety net against unknown price increases Best case is £5000 donation income which would provide a safety net	Donation income not required. Burial income reduces WITH additional safety net of 2% of spending plan. All risks considered

EXPENDITURE		Budget confirmed June 2022	Est. Spend at Year End 2022-23	Proposed 2023-24
Loans	PWLB: street lights	7520	7520	7520
Staff costs	Payroll	24250	18930	38200
	Audit, payroll services etc	2500	5378	7000
Administration	Telephone & broadband	750	1093	1200
	Office materials & petty cash	1200	1263	1300
	Data Protection	100	40	50
	Subscriptions & Insurance	3000	2330	2700
	All Training/Cllr expenses	2000	770	2000
	Room hire PC meetings	300	609	800
	Digital mapping	150	140	150
	Parish Office business rates	750	0	750
	Parish Office rent	0	0	1000
	Elections	600		0
	Miscellaneous	500	656	1000
	Sub total	43620	38729	63670
Public Realm	Green Maintenance AND			
	Street cleansing	26500	24335	26000
	Refuse collection bins & dog bins	1500	976	1050
	Tree Maintenance and Care	1500	1500	1800
	All cemetery management	1600	971	1100
	Play equipment	500	268	300
	Street Lighting energy	4000	8000	8000
	sub-total	35600	36050	38250
Public Facilities				
Church Street	Church Street energy	1100	566	3500
	Church Street water	1000	621	1000
Prentice Street	Prentice St Water	500	275	400
	Prentice St non EV energy	400	371	600
	Donation Points	430	324	500
Water Street	Water Street green maintenance	500	250	500
All	Washroom Cleaning & Consumables	14000	13962	10000
	Minor Maintenance	2000	1839	1000

	Miscellaneous	1000	200	500
	Sub total	20930	18408	18000
Exception items	Website development/updating	1000	500	200
	Accounting software & computer	2000	2000	300
	Security system 2 Lady Street		750	0
	Earmarked support 2 Lady Street		3000	0
	Sub total	3000	6250	500
Grants/ Events	Small Grants (combined)	750	750	0
	Christmas trees/lighting	2200	2200	2500
	Xmas Eve Community Carols	500	0	500
	1st Meadow summer facilities	500	500	500
	Platinum Jubilee/small events	2000	2000	0
	Sub total	5950	5450	3500
EV	EV energy costs			
Water Street	Energy Standing charge/lighting/EV	1200	628	1200
	Business Rates	250	0	500
	sub-total	1450	628	1700
contingency		750	0	2500
	Totals	111300	105515	128120