

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 5th December 2024, commencing at 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, December 2024 Meeting Pack.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Iain Lamont, Roy Mawford, Irene Mitchell, Mary Morrey, Jane Ranzetta, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Eleven members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair began by welcoming everyone and introduced herself explaining to all present that this meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute taking only and that after the minutes have been approved this recording will be destroyed. The Chair reminded all that this is not a public meeting, but a meeting of the Council held in public. Members of the Public were respectfully asked to maintain silence during the Council's deliberations and not to approach the Councillors. Councillors were requested not to engage with Members of the Public when Council is in session. All were asked to ensure that their mobile phone was on silent and were reminded to treat all present with respect. The Clerk added that he would not delete the tape of the meeting of 7th November 2024 until all the matters arising from that meeting had been fully resolved.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

The Clerk reported that Cllr Falconer was not present and had reported that she may not be able to attend.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reported that no Declarations of Interest had been made with respect to matters on the Agenda for the Meeting.

3. Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk reported that he had received no further requests for dispensations.

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the 7th November 2024 meeting of the Council

The Clerk read to the meeting a small change to the minutes requested by Cllr Mawford. The change agreed to the recording but explained matters in a little more detail.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford

Seconded: Cllr Mitchell

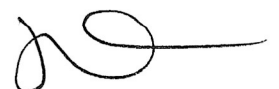
Decision: The minutes of the 7th November meeting of Council were approved as accurate. Cllr Robinson abstained.

5. Public Participation Session

The Chair reminded Members of the Public of the protocol for this session. Those who wish to ask a question or make a statement have three minutes. Matters raised must concern business on the agenda or local matters. If a question cannot be answered tonight Members of the Public should contact the Clerk with their name and contact details and will receive a written response within 28 days. She explained that the Standing Orders of the Council are clear that this public participation session is for ten minutes and that it is at the discretion of the Chair whether further time is allowed.

A Member of the Public asked if the signs at the edge of the village will be changed to reflect that Babergh Council has removed free off-street parking. The Clerk replied that Babergh had committed to correcting any misleading signage but not to replacing the whole, rather dilapidated, signs.

The same member of the Public asked if Pump Court Alley could be added to the street cleaning schedule. The Chair said this request was noted.



He finished by saying that Council needed to look at itself consequent of the LNP vote. A portion of the vote was, he said, a vote of no confidence in the PC and frustration with PC decisions to oppose solar panels in Pegtile Court, to not subsidise Babergh to continue to provide free car parking and to continue to leave open the option of a 20mph zone despite the views expressed at those public meetings.

The Chair replied that the referendum vote was a vote against the updated Plan and not a vote against the PC or the 20mph scheme. The 20mph scheme will be debated by Council when the cost estimate is received from Suffolk CC. She commented that Lavenham still has a Neighbourhood Plan, the 2016 Plan which permits developments of market housing of up to 24 units (not just social housing) adjacent to the settlement boundary saying that it remains to be seen what developments will now be proposed.

Cllr Mitchell explained that the 20mph scheme had been proposed even before the LNP2 Consultation Process had started. She said that whilst the 20mph scheme had been referred to in LNP2 it was a separate question to LNP2.

A Member of the Public said that he had not found the LNP drop-ins helpful, deplored the growth in the number of second homes and asked how the Parish Council is going to represent the views of the village in the future subsequent to the rejection of LNP2. Another Member of the Public said that he was astonished that LNP2 was not on the Agenda for this Meeting and asked what happens next. He reminded Councillors that the 20mph was part of the LNP questionnaire and that consequent of that vote the 20mph scheme should be dropped.

The Chair invited Councillors to comment about what they wanted to do next regarding revising the Neighbourhood Plan. She explained that if, in future, a group of volunteers emerged, who wanted to write a revision that group could only do so, according to the law, with the support of the Parish Council as the 'Qualifying Body'. She wondered whether, considering the emotional nature of the referendum campaign, whether Councillors would wish to try and write another plan expressing doubt that any central government funding would be available.

Councillor Bourne said that the Parish Council needed to talk more with residents and suggested the restart of Councillor surgeries. Councillor Sherman expressed concern about the cost of a revision. Councillor Robinson said that the engagement with the public would have to be better. The Chair commented that the Examiner had commented favourably on the public engagement. Cllr Domoney said that the rejected Plan offered nothing for the development of the village in the 21st Century with respect to autonomous vehicles or industrial and economic development leaving Lavenham just an expensive place for wealthy people to retire to.

Cllr Mawford expressed disappointment with the result and suggested that some aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan might have been acceptable to the village others not but nevertheless any new Plan would have to be a complete restart of the process. He said that a revised National Policy Planning Framework and Part 2 of the Babergh Local Plan were in the pipeline, Part 2 would include housing requirements for Neighbourhood Plans. It might therefore, he suggested, be sensible to wait until 2027 when these documents are likely both to be finalised noting that 2027 is also when the next elections to the Parish Council will be held.

A Member of the Public requested that 'Correspondence' be put back on the Agenda. The Chair explained that 'Correspondence' was removed following SALC guidance received in 2022 and that Councillors email addresses were now public to make it easier to explain their issues to Councillors. The Clerk explained that he considered the idea of the Clerk selecting which correspondence to share with Councillors at a Council Meeting to be undemocratic. The Member of the Public explained that many read the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings and that the inclusion of such an Agenda Item would allow them to see their concerns being considered.

The same Member of the Public asked why the Water St Build Outs were poorly maintained, leaning over and dirty and suggested that those whose properties were protected by them should have the decency to maintain them.

6. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair thanked all the volunteers who spent four years working on the Plan's revision. She informed Councillors that a Supplementary Planning Document concerning Housing has been adopted by Babergh and this will need to be taken into consideration when assessing future planning applications.



The Chair reported that it had been her honour on Remembrance Sunday to lay wreaths on behalf of the Parish Council and attend the Remembrance Service. She thanked the Lavenham branch of the Royal British Legion for the organisation of this important event and the hospitality they extended to all.

The Chair thanked the volunteers who distributed the Christmas Lavenham Life and Christmas newsletter and Bryan Panton who did the layout for printing.

The Chair reminded all that despite what has been posted on a local Facebook page no decision has been made regarding the 20mph scheme. She said that the decision whether or not to proceed will only be made by this Council once the costs are known.

The Chair informed Councillors that the Repair works to the play equipment had been completed and the surfacing works will be done in the spring as discussed in last month's meeting.

The Chair thanked County Cllr Lindsay for financing the initial BT survey required for the Green Willows footpath at a cost of £1,000 from his locality budget. She also thanked Babergh officers for allowing the subsequent Suffolk County Council design costs to be funded, by exception, by the District CIL.

The Chair proposed a motion to defer agenda item number 12 regarding this Council's assessment of planning applications stating that she considers that Councillors have not had sufficient opportunity to familiarise themselves with recent amendments to this document.

Motion: that Agenda Item 12 be deferred.

Proposed: Cllr Muckian **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford

Decision: Approved. Cllr Lamont abstained

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

The Clerk explained that County Cllr Lindsay was unable to be present. He referred Councillors to his report thanking Cllr Lindsay for his contribution towards the Green Willows project.

District Cllr Maybury referred to her report adding that 8 units of the Paddocks development had, as required by the Planning Permission, been handed to Babergh, 2 units are shared ownership, 6 are affordable. These homes, she said, are for people who have a connection to Lavenham or as a second priority people who have a connection to local villages. She informed Councillors that next year the Babergh charge for the weekly emptying of street litter bins will rise from £69 to £83 per annum.

8. Planning Applications for Consideration

The Clerk reported that no decisions had been received contrary to Parish Council recommendations.

The Chair reminded Councillors that any decision they make must be based upon their evaluation of all the documents available to them, including all other Material Considerations including public comments and economic and social consequences. Documents prepared by the planning group, she said, summarise that groups deliberations but do not replace Councillors own due diligence. She reminded Councillors that Council recommendations to Babergh only express the opinion of this Council in the same way others are able to express their opinions; the granting of any planning permission is made by the professional planners employed by Babergh District Council.

DC/24/04787 Westlands, 22 The Glebe

Prune a Maple covered by a Tree Preservation Order to the previous points.

DC/24/04939 The Old Manse, Barn St

Reduce a Horn Oak by 40% and pollard a Hazel Tree to approximately 1.5m above ground level.

These trees are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order but are in a conservation area.

Motion: that Applications DC/24/04787 and 04939 be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson

Seconded: Cllr Bourne

Decision: Approved unanimously.



9. Clerk/RFO Report

Current Month Accounts:

The Clerk explained that the Accounts for the seven months to end October showed no significant adverse variances to the previously published forecast. There were, he said, more significant positive variances to the forecast being a £1,200 underspend on publicity by the Neighbourhood Planning Group for the LNP and £1,600 for Street Cleaning and Green Maintenance. £1,000 of this second variance was because £1,000 had been forecast for regular playground equipment repair which had turned into a much more expensive project funded by Neighbourhood CIL.

The Clerk added that whilst this meeting had come too early to include the November Accounts for discussion at this meeting that these Accounts has now been prepared. The draft Accounts for the eight months ended November show the unanticipated income compared to the forecast rising from £800 in October to £1,000 in November and the savings in costs compared to the forecast rising from £3,400 in October to about £4,000 in November.

He repeated his key message that there was little of concern or interest in the October Accounts. He explained the significant movements in and out of the Bank Accounts.

Motion: to approve the accounts for the month ended 31 October 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Motion: to approve the Receipts and Payments for the month ended 31 October 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Sherman

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Remainder of Year and 2025/26:

The Clerk explained that Council is required to effectively manage its financial responsibilities which means preparing a budget based on need, setting a precept at an appropriate level to ensure that known obligations are met and ensuring that Council retains sufficient reserves.

Referring to the NALC Good Councillors Guide on Finance he began by outlining how the Reforecast for the year, based on August Actuals, passed at the October meeting differed to the Budget and then explained that consequent of the October Accounts he had prepared a revised reforecast for the year.

From the October Accounts, he said, we know that Income is running ahead but very close to forecast and so only a small change needs to be incorporated into the revised reforecast whilst costs are running some £4,000 less than anticipated. The saving in expenditures have been flowed through mitigated by estimates of the cost to repair a leak under the floor of the Church St toilets and the possible replacement of some Christmas lights. The revised expected surplus for the year is now £14,502.

Cllr Robinson offered to help assess the required toilet repairs, the Clerk welcomed this offer.

Motion: to approve the Reforecast 2 of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont


Seconded: Cllr Mawford

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Councillor Ranzetta left the room and did not return.

The Clerk explained that the next stage is to consider our Contingencies and need for Reserves: The General Cash Reserve, the Sinking Fund and the NCIL Fund.

General Cash Reserve: This he explained is satisfactory for a council of this size and fixed income. He said that there is little definitive guidance but 6 to 9 months reserves are considered a norm for a Council such as Lavenham and the Parish Council has long aimed for 8 months. At the end of the year these are estimated to be 10.4 months. A couple of months up. The purpose of this reserve is to meet sudden increases in cost or loss of income.



Sinking Fund: The purpose of the Sinking Fund is to have funds immediately available to repair or to replace Council Assets. He explained that Council does purchase insurance where possible but that Insurance will of course not pay out for Assets that have got old and simply deteriorated. He listed the Council's Assets telling Councillors these have an historic cost of £665,000. The replacement cost is higher. The Sinking Fund is scheduled to be £47,000 at 31 March 2025 adding that Council has previously expressed a desire to increase this to £70,000.

Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Fund (NCIL): Council and residents have he said been fortunate to receive these funds arising from developments in the village. Notwithstanding the recent referendum vote there are, he said, no developments in the pipeline likely to increase these funds. NCIL is not due should the application for the Wellness Centre be approved. This fund is likely to be some £63,000 at March 2025 of which some £10,000 is required for the Green Willows streetlight which, unlike the actual path, will not be funded by Babergh.

He then explained this then led to the nub of setting the Precept and Budget for 2025/26. This setting is dominated by two issues:

Toilet Donations: These are completely uncertain. The Clerk has estimated 10 donations of £1 or so for the 200 or so days of the visitor season i.e. £2,250. A reduction of some £8,000 on the toilet and car parking donations received in 2024/25.

Uncertainty concerning the costs of Green Maintenance and Street Cleaning: He explained that the current 3 year contract expires March 31 2025 and that it might have until recently been expected that a new contract would be possibly 10% more expensive reflecting 3 years inflation. However, since the last renewal there has been one year of 10% inflation and the minimum wage has increased by 28% from £8.91 per hour in 2021/22 to £11.44 per hour in 2025/26. Considering also the recent increases in Employers National Insurance it is highly likely that an increase of 25% to 30% will be requested. An increase of £8,000 in the annual cost has been budgeted, costing £8,000. Should the increase be 30% the total extra cost will be £10,000.

The Parish Council, he said, is not immune to the rise in Employer National Insurance contributions in two other areas: the salary of the Clerk and toilet cleaning costs. Increases of 7% have been forecast in each of these areas. The toilet cleaning costs will inevitably also be increased due to the increase in minimum wage.

Other costs have been held in line with inflation.

He then displayed a reconciliation between this years estimated surplus of £14,502 and an estimated deficit next year, assuming that the precept is £122,332.

Surplus 2024/25		14,502
Reduced Donations	Reduced Income by	(8,000)
Increased Street Cleaning and Green Maintenance	Increased Costs by	(8,000)
Whole year sinking fund	Increased Costs by	(5,000)
Reduced Interest Rates	Reduced Income by	(3,000)
Clerks Wage Increase Including NI Increase	Increased Costs by	(3,000)
Water St Business Rates, over-accrual one-off	Increased Costs by	(2,000)
Toilet Costs	Increased Costs by	(1,000)
Whole Yr Contingency	Increased Costs by	(1,000)
LNP: No new expenditure in 2025/26	Reduced Costs by	3,000
Precept Increase	Increased Income by	3,332
Misc		100
Deficit 2025/26		(10,066)

He then explained that should a precept of £122,322 (Option 1) be agreed then Council reserves are estimated to drop from 10.4 months to 8.6 months. This, he said, is a higher fall, an unwelcome but not significantly different fall, than the previously stated *aim to reduce reserves to 8 months over the next two years* whilst the Sinking Fund is built up to £70,000. The Sinking Fund at March 2026 is proposed to be £59,000.

He then spoke of the provisional estimate provided by Babergh of the tax base (i.e. the number of households paying Council Tax) for 2025-26 of 980.27 households. This is 27 households (2.8%) higher than 2024/25 primarily driven by the Babergh Council decision to charge double Council Tax on second homes. This increased the tax base by 36 households.

Option 1: Is to freeze the charge per Household at 2024/25 amounts. The Precept received by the Council would rise in line with the 2.8% increase in the tax base. The Precept would increase by £3,332 to £122,332. This decision would reflect the unknown costs of the new Green maintenance and street cleaning contract and a desire not to unwittingly overcharge households should the cost increases end up being less than feared. The increase that would appear on Council Tax Bills is 0.0%.

Option 2: Is to increase the Council Tax per household in line with inflation and increases at District and County level by 3% which would keep the Councils General Cash Reserve at much closer to 9% and lead to a precept of £125,902. The increase that would appear on Council Tax Bills is 3.0%

Option 3: Is freeze the precept at £119,000 reflecting the Council's relatively secure financial position. This would however, he said, probably lead to an above inflation rise in 2025/26. More significantly should the new government introduce Council Tax capping (at Parish Level as is currently in place at District and County level where any increase above the government-imposed limit requires a referendum) this would trap the Council at a lower base point which would in the long term mean that services would need to be cut. The decrease that would appear on Council Tax Bills is 2.8%.

Cllr Sherman said that he was in favour of Option 1, delivering a year of no increase to householders, would reflect the hard times faced by householders and help rebuild the reputation of the Parish Council.

Cllr Mitchell noted 122 properties are registered for Business Rates with 109 having a rateable value of below £15,000, the level at which Rates become payable for a single premises business. Included are 22 holiday letting businesses. This has an effect on the tax base. She also expressed concerns that some of the dwellings attracting the Second Home Levy may change ownership and lead to a reduction of the tax base in 2026-27, but considering the strength of the Parish Council finances, expressed cautious support for Option 1.

Cllr Lamont highlighted the fall in reserves and the deficit. The Clerk responded that this was part of the intention to make deficits in both 2025/26 and 2026/27 after charging sinking fund increases of £12,000 in each year and then cease building up the sinking fund in 2027/28 which would bring the Income and Expenditure Account to being a small surplus or deficit without a substantial increase in Council Tax.

Cllr Lamont suggested that it would be prudent not to reduce Council reserves noting that Option 2 would only cost the average household some £4 per year. Cllr Robinson said that Council was good at keeping costs down and purchased items carefully and said that he supported Option 1.

Cllr Mawford proposed an amendment to the Motion, so that it adopted Option 2. He said that the increase to Council Tax payers would be modest and that the Second Home Levy might be a one year only benefit, not a long lasting one, as such households find ways of avoiding this levy. It would, he said, be better to wait a year, and see if the benefit was permanent, before using that money.

Amendment to Motion (so that it recommends Option 2 not Option 1)

Proposed: Cllr Mawford

Seconded: Cllr Lamont

Decision: All Councillors except Cllrs Lamont and Mawford voted against. Amendment rejected.

Motion: Council approves the Budget for 2025/26 and sets the Precept for 3025/26 at £122,332.

Proposed: Cllr Sherman

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

Decision: All Councillors voted for except Cllr Mawford who voted against. Motion passed.



10. Second weekly emptying of bins

The Chair explained that the street litter bins frequently overflow during the summer months. An option was to purchase extra or larger bins but an alternative option, less detrimental to the streetscape, was to purchase additional emptying. The Clerk had received a response from Babergh explaining that an extra empty of some of the bins in Lavenham between Easter and October would be possible.

The bins are currently emptied on a Tuesday therefore the second empty would be each Friday. The rate would be £69.00 per bin per annum increasing annually. In light of the information provided by Cllr Maybury the charge in 2025/26 will be £83 per bin per year.

She concluded by saying that a small number of the bins are in poor condition and will be replaced in due course.

Cllr Mitchell asked if this had been budgeted in 2025/26. The Clerk confirmed that it had and that should the 2025/26 increase been known a slightly higher amount would have been proposed.

Cllr Lamont suggested that a small number of dog bins be included, Cllr Sherman said that none of these overflow.

Amendment to Motion so that it reads 'To purchase a second weekly emptying of street litter bins, by Babergh Council, during the summer months at a cost not exceeding £1,000 per annum. The Clerk to provide Babergh Council a list of the bins selected for extra emptying.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford

Seconded: Cllr Morrey

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Robinson and Sherman voted against.

11. Green Maintenance and Street Cleaning

The Clerk explained that the contract for these items expires on 31 March 2025 and that Council currently pays £9,050 per annum for Green Maintenance, £15,341 per annum for Street Cleaning and £775 per annum for Water St Car Park Maintenance. The total cost is therefore £25,166 per annum.

The Clerk referred Councillors to the Green Maintenance schedule commenting that, in general, the Clerk receives few complaints about the quality of the work done, the complaints that are received tend to be about the length of the first cuts of the First Meadow grass in Spring.

The Clerk explained that Street Maintenance is complained about much more. The contract says that:

- a) the Contractor will provide suitably qualified operative(s) and hand tools, or modern machinery where appropriate, in order to carry out street sweeping/cleaning for a minimum of 60 hours per month all year round and that
- b) the tasks to achieve the necessary level of cleanliness will include sweeping gutters and pavements up to buildings and frontages to remove loose dirt and weeds, picking up litter and removing dog excrement from pavements and twice-yearly spray weed killer on pavement edges followed, after appropriate period, by removal of dead plant material

The complaints received are varied and to some extent contradictory but themes are:

- a) High St is not sufficiently swept around the benches, litter bins and bus stops
- b) The litter picking crews are teams of two who, in many places, finding very little litter to pick up in the end just walk along doing very little.
- c) Sudbury Rd verges are full of litter and detritus from traffic e.g. bits of tyre and wheel trims.
- d) The cleaning is biased towards the centre of the village.

The Clerks observations are:

- a) Litter is picked up from the main streets each week, the bus stops are not full of discarded items which have been there for weeks.
- b) The quality of sweeping is poor.

- c) The amount of litter on the residential streets is minimal and is very often picked up by local residents. A random inspection on 23rd October found four items of litter on Spring St, two items of litter on Lower Rd, two items on Hall Rd, one item in Weavers Close and an insignificant number of items on Meadow Close. Verges on Sudbury Rd and Bury Rd and to a lesser extent Melford Rd contain litter.
- d) It is not reasonable to suggest the contractor manually sweep all streets in Lavenham and the costs of mechanised sweeping cannot be justified.
- e) Weeds and moss are more of an issue.

He then spoke concerning weeds and moss explaining that Suffolk say that they do twice yearly spraying from a quad bike of the kerbs (the road and the pavement sides) and the back of a footpath where a building or wall is present. They do not treat the weeds if the back of the footway is a verge. The sweeping of the gutters of the roads is, he said, a Babergh responsibility.

He explained that all of these tasks come in for regular complaint with allegations that Suffolk do not do the work they say they have done. It is acknowledged that the Suffolk weed removal collapsed in 2023 partly due to a change in the weed spray used which has now been reversed.

The 23rd October random inspection showed weeds and moss on Spring St, High St, Bury Rd by the railway bridge and Meadow Close among other locations.

He suggested that residents are much more likely to pick up a crisp packet etc than find their weed spray, shovel etc to remove weeds.

Suggestion:

- a) No changes to the weekly schedule. All monthly and quarterly litter picking is cancelled.
- b) Sudbury Rd, Bury Rd, Melford Rd as far as the National Speed Limit signs are picked every other week.
- c) Weed spraying and removal is done four times a year (between April 1 and September 30) on all roads on the list with the Contractor submitting a revised list each week to the Clerk detailing which roads have been done in which weeks.

He suggested that the interested Contractors must set out their pricing for each item on the Green Maintenance schedule, each item a) to c) on the street cleaning schedule above and for the Water St maintenance to give Council a full understanding of the costs of each item.

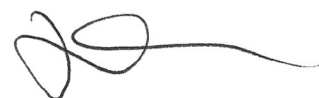
He concluded by explaining that the purpose of this discussion at this meeting was to ascertain what tasks Council should like the contractor to quote for. The outcome of this meeting was not a commitment to doing all those tasks but equally there was no point in asking Contractors to quote for tasks the Council had no intention of purchasing. When the tenders are received for the individual tasks Councillors will decide which parts of the tenders they wish to purchase.

Cllr Robinson asked if the detailed tenders will be made public, the Clerk confirmed that they will but anonymised.

Cllr Lamont asked if the litter picking on Sudbury Rd, Bury Rd, Melford Rd as far as the National Speed Limit signs would include picking items out of the long grass particularly after the end of the pavements. The Clerk replied that was the intention but agreed that this might be prohibitively expensive due to the Health and Safety requirements.

Cllr Sherman said that he supported the idea of obtaining a list of prices for each item. The Chair agreed saying that when the tenders arrive, should they be expensive, Council will need to consider how to proceed.

The Clerk asked if Councillors wanted any of the Green Maintenance specification changing, no Councillors suggested changes.



The Clerk then asked if Councillors wanted to changes to the Street Cleaning schedule. Cllr Morrey expressed concerns about removing quarterly cleaning as it would mean that some streets would consider themselves neglected as then no one would ever go in with a brush and clean. Cllr Lamont agreed. The Clerk responded that in reality currently little sweeping is done in these streets only litter picking. It was agreed that the Clerk will ask Contractors for detailed quotations and then refer to Council. Cllr Mitchell said that she feared that Contractors would be unwilling to provide detailed quotes for such a small contract.

Motion: that the Parish Council requests tenders for the Green Maintenance and Street Cleaning contract.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson. **Seconded:** Cllr Sherman

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Mawford and Lamont abstained

13. Create a Working Group to improve the network of footpaths and bridleways around Lavenham

Cllr Robinson explained that he considered that a Working Group could work to improve the tidiness and maintenance of these.

The Chair reminded Councillors that there is currently a complaint against Council by a Member of the Public much of which concerns the governance of the Council and the governance of its main active Working Group, the Planning Group. She suggested that it might be sensible to wait for that matter to be fully resolved before setting up an additional Working Group.

Cllr Mitchell suggested that this suggested Group was slightly similar to the dormant Open Spaces Working Group noting that such a Group would require detailed Terms of Reference.

Cllr Lamont suggested an amendment to defer any consideration of setting up such a Group until the Complaint has been completely resolved.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont

Seconded: Cllr Domoney

Decision: Approved unanimously, Cllr Robinson abstained.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 18th December 2024 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. The Meeting closed at 10.06pm.

