

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 6th April 2023 at Lavenham Village Hall, Church Street, Lavenham.

Public Attendance

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend. At item 5 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. Planning**
To receive a report and recommendations from the Planning Group
- 9. Men's Shed**
Receive and note Mr Thompson's report.
- 10. Clerk/RFO Report**
Motion: to approve expenditure incurred in March 2023

Updates: Telephone Boxes
Church St Toilets
EV Charging
Street cleaning timetable
Year End Audit Update

11. Finance

11.a Parish Office & Church Street Lease and All Business Rates

Motion: Council is asked to approve leasing of the Parish Office at £1,000 per annum for 5 years.

11.b Replacement of the Kissing Gate Between the Church and Hall Road

Motion: Council is asked to select Contractor A or Contractor B

11.c Proposal for Funding small Heritage Projects

Motion: Council is asked to agree to establishing a Heritage Improvement Fund with a separate Bank Account.

12. Proposal to establish a .gov.uk domain

Receive and note report from Councillor Mitchell.

13. Civic Pride

“Bee Friendly in Lavenham”

Motion: To approve financial support of up to £3,000 for “Bee Friendly in Lavenham”

14. Community Infrastructure

14.a Street Lighting

Motion: Council is recommended to confirm that the partial night-lighting schedule is considered permanent.

14.b Identifying and Utilising Land Suitable for Tree Planting & Allotments

Receive and note report from Councillor Morrey.

15. Date of next meeting – Thursday 27th April 2023



Jane Bellward
Clerk to the Council
Parish Office
Church St
Lavenham

Date: 31st March 2023

Agenda item 8 Planning

Lavenham Parish Council Planning Group.

Planning Applications for consideration at LPC meeting on 6th April 2023

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01044

The Studio Apartment Annexe, Pegtile Court, 3 Church Street, Lavenham Sudbury
Suffolk

Householder Application - Proposed Installation of 12 Solar Panels to be installed to
the roof pitch of existing detached annexe

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01036

2 Granary Cottages, Prentice Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RE

Householder Application - Erection of rear single storey extension and alterations to
include insertion of rooflights, additional window and internal layout changes.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01094

32 Spring Street, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9QR

Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension and front porch for
disabled person.

Agenda Item 9

The Men's Shed

The purpose of Men's Shed is to bring like-minded people together. They were initially started (and still are) for people who are suffering from loneliness, allowing people to deal with mental health issues, general physical health issues and so much more. It allows people to pursue any kind of practical interests at their own pace from woodwork to metal work to needlework, anything that a person has an interest for, they are able to do.

Men's Shed have an Association who do most of the promoting which is done by social media, their own website (www.mensshed.org.uk), print media and forwarding on various materials to the uk wide men's sheds for attracting members etc.

Men's Shed is UK wide. In total there are 558 open Men's Sheds in the UK and a further 130 in the process of being setup, the closest to us would be Hadleigh, Colchester (2), Bury St Edmunds (currently being set up) and Ipswich (2). From these figures, an estimated 13,392 families have benefited directly from the Men's Sheds. I know that I personally would have benefitted from having something like this in recent years.

The group that I'm working with at the minute only consists of myself and two others. At present it is just the 3 of us but we hope that with enough promotion and gaining enough interest, we will be able to make this a success. In terms of charity work, we believe that we will be able to register as a charity and be able to get funding from the necessary areas.

At present, all we require from the council is to mention it in the meeting and see how much interest it gets from, initially, the councillors as something that could be started in Lavenham. As a group we plan to gain interest from social media and hopefully by putting up some information posters to see how much interest we could get. Which leads to my question.....would it be possible to put up a poster of some sort explaining what we're doing and what we hope to do and putting a QR code on there which will lead them to a WhatsApp group that has been set up where they can get more information?!

I am more than happy to come to the meeting (March as I understand it) and answer any questions to the best of my ability.

Something that we do need to find out before we can move on in setting up the Men's Shed is location. This is something that has been the main talking point of our meetings in recent weeks, as I'm sure you can appreciate, and would need to be easily accessible for everyone. Saying that though, a 'Shed' can be anything, not just a shed. They can be a container, portable cabins, empty offices, warehouses, and I've been told of one instance that a disused mortuary was used. It just needs to be affordable.

I hope this helps.

Paul Thompson

Agenda Item 11A

Report to Council: 6th April 2023

Parish Office & Church Street Lease and All Business Rates

1. A Heads of Terms for leasing the Parish Office & Toilets was received in November 2022 and is attached. The annual lease cost proposed by Babergh DC is £1,000.00 per annum. Babergh Estates advise that this has been discounted. The following is an extract from their letter.

“ We have considered the position with regards to the Parish Office & Toilets. We believe a single lease to comprise both entities will work best. This will give you the right to occupy and manage both elements of the building. With regards to the toilets, it is our opinion that there is a limited rent to pay owing to the ongoing management of the facilities for the community benefit. Therefore we would look to charge a peppercorn rent in this instance. Turning to the Parish Office, we have calculated the market rent of the Parish Office as £2,500 per annum. However, we appreciate that the Parish Council has invested time and money into the project directly, alongside the use of CIL funds. Taking this into account we believe the market rent should be adjusted and reduced to £1,000 per annum to reflect the investment by the Parish Council.”

2. The Office is now fully connected with telephone and wi-fi. It has been used to convene Finance and Strategy Group meetings and LNP2 will now start using it. The Parish Office will be the base for all Parish Council contemporary files and most office equipment. It will be the official address of the Council and the Clerk will use it as an office inter-changeable with his home address.

3. Business Rates

Public toilets are not subject to Business Rates.

The Valuation Office was asked in January to provide a valuation for the office and they apparently take some months to respond. The invoice for the Cemetery Chapel for 2023-24 shows a valuation of £3,250 which would attract a business rate of £1,620 but Small Business Rates Relief is claimed and therefore this is discounted in full.

For information only, 2 Lady Street is valued at £4,150. Using **this a guide only**, the valuation for the Parish Office will likely be in the region of £3,500 and business rates will be broadly £1,750 per annum. We have made financial provision for £750.

The Water Street Car Park is also awaiting a valuation. The Cock Inn Car Park valuation is £30,500. This indicates that Water Street Car Park may attract a valuation of around £6,100 (broadly one-fifth of The Cock Inn) with a business rate of just under £3,050 per year.

4. The Government website states:

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If you use more than one property

When you get a second property, you'll keep getting any existing relief on your main property for 12 months. You can still get small business rate relief on your main property after this if both the following apply:

- none of your other properties have a rateable value above £2,899
 - the total rateable value of all your properties is less than £20,000 (£28,000 in London)
5. In the Autumn Statement 2022, further guidance was announced which suggests further reliefs may be applicable, but the guidance does not replace existing legislation. This is likely to mean the conditions set out in 4 above are extant. It is possible that we may be able to claim relief for a period for some or all of the business rates but this cannot be certain until all valuations are confirmed.
6. Council is asked to note the potential additional costs to the spending plan arising from the application of Business Rates.

Motion: Council is asked to approve leasing of the Parish Office at £1,000 per annum for 5 years

Proposer: Irene Mitchell

Secunder:

Agenda Item 11 b

Replacement of the Kissing Gate Between the Church and Hall Road

Reconstruction:

Three local contractors were invited to meet Jane Bellward as Clerk to Council and myself as a Councillor to discuss the replacement of the very dilapidated Kissing Gate at the east end of the Church and the top of the path which runs down to Hall Road. All contractors received the Specification of Works drawn up for the project.

Two of the Contractors met Jane and myself. One was an unsuccessful bidder for the contract to build the double gates and the single gate from the churchyard onto Church Street. The other Contractor was the successful contractor. The third Contractor declined to meet us on site although he too was local. Instead, he sent photographs of another Kissing Gate for a Church elsewhere in Suffolk which, although the same basic design, was constructed from plain palings. Jane went to inspect that gate and found it to be soundly and professionally constructed.

The Terms sent to each Contractor were

- To prepare the site and dispose of the debris.
- To construct the Gate as it is at presently designed.
- To reinstate the site and clear all debris on completion.
- To accept that the Council would retain 2.5% against incomplete installation or snags which would be released on inspection post construction.

Contractor A estimated: £5,044.00

This contractor still has the templates for the pales from the previously unsuccessful bid.

Contractor B estimated: £4,368.00

This Contractor would not accept a retainer against workmanship on the grounds that at the time of installing the gates onto Church Street, the previous Council waived it and post completion work was completed to the Council's full satisfaction.

Contractor C estimated: £3,950.00

I hesitate to recommend this Contractor to the Council as he has declined to meet us on site, although he has received the specification of works drawn up by the Parish Council, and has not discussed the plans any further.

-

I suggest we consider Contractor A and B only on the basis of best value.

Matters to Discuss

A is 15% more in cost than B. Contractor A accepts Council's terms in full. Contractor B declines to accept a retention but has undertaken satisfactory work for the Council in the past. Recent history with projects has shown where retentions have not been applied it has proven difficult, if not impossible to get Contractors to return to complete work when problems have arisen.

Motion:

Council is asked to select Contractor A or Contractor B

Proposed: Councillor Mary Morrey

St Peter and St Paul Church Lavenham

Replacement of the Kissing Gate to the East of the Church

The client will be The Parish Council of Lavenham.

All works are to be to the entire satisfaction of Lavenham Parish Council (LPC) and The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The appointed Contractor shall have insurance to provide cover in the event of operative incidents and public liability, absolving the Parish Council & the Parochial Church Council of any claims whatsoever during the course of the works. A copy of said Insurance Certificate is to be provided to the Parish Council.

All materials and workmanship are to be of best quality befitting the location and standing of the buildings and surroundings.

Payment methods to be agreed between the contractor and the PC prior to commencement of works. **There is to be a 2.5% retention for a period of six months to cover any remedial works as may arise.**

Should it be found that additional works are necessary they must be agreed by Parish Council prior to carrying out, failure to so do may result in non-payment of same.

If a site visit is desired prior to tendering this can be arranged by contacting Church Warden/Parish Councillor Mary Morrey: 07889 035251

Works

Kissing gate on footpath at rear of Churchyard

Carefully survey and record details of design and configuration, ensuring no damage occurs to adjacent walls/fences etc remove existing gate, fence and posts, salvage and hand to PCC all complete decorative upright pails, and foot path signs for possible reuse, set aside any metal work for possible re use. Remove from site and responsibly dispose of all remaining debris etc.

Using prime quality air dried English oak, manufacture and install gate, fence and posts, whilst some consideration to manufacturing detail can be accepted they are to match completely the original design, including depth of posts into ground, all being mindful of proposed ironmongery.

Reinstate any disturbed paving surfaces with materials to match existing.

Any new ironwork considered necessary must match the original. All metal fixings iron work and ironmongery to be galvanized or similar rust resistant material.

Apply suitable primer 1- undercoat 1- matt black finish to all metal work.

Agenda Item 11C

Report to Lavenham Parish Council Proposal for Funding small Heritage Projects

Background

The Council's revenue budget for 2023/2024 is very constrained and this is likely to continue for some time. The Council has briefly discussed not committing (NCIL) to small or 'cosmetic' projects, in order to protect that fund for larger projects.

Proposal

The Council looks to fund small public Heritage-repairs or replacements from a combination of public donations (including organisations) and Council reserves or NCIL, on a **matched** funding basis. Decisions between reserves and NCIL would be on case by case basis. I suggest 'small' is defined as less than £10,000.00

A separate bank account is to be opened to be administered by the Clerk to the Council. The account should be named the LPC Heritage Protection Fund, details of which will be widely published throughout the village and on social media so that people minded to donate can do so via their own bank accounts. I am reluctant to suggest that cash collection points are made available in the village because it adds to the burden of security already carried in places like the Visitor Information Point, the Church and the Village Hall. We can however, accept cheques by post.

Each small Heritage project would have a reference number to be completed on bank transfer details so that donations received are allocated to the correct project.

The Council can also make direct appeals to various community bodies and heritage sites for grants and are more likely to be successful, if the whole project is to be funded on a matched basis.

Motion

Council is asked to agree to establishing a Heritage Improvement Fund with a separate Bank Account.

Proposed: Councillor Mary Morrey

Agenda Item 12

Report to Council 6th April 2023

Proposal to Establish a [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) domain

Council has been aware for some time, that the current system of Councillors using their personal email addresses for Council business is not appropriate. It is also not appropriate that the official Council email address is supplied by a commercial platform. Councillors have been briefed about this and the consensus was reached was that a gov.uk domain should be pursued. Gov.uk domains can only be issued by Registered Providers – 3rd party providers.

Proposals have been invited from two Providers.

Provider A

Has been recommended by a neighbouring Parish Council.

Provider B

Known local supplier quotation awaited.

Proposal from Provider A

We are a small company with a team of 6. I have identified a 3rd Party who is registered with the Government to register a gov.uk domain. This 3rd party provider is a relatively small company based in Lincoln. They have excellent experience and apply for a [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) at least every 2 days. We would need to decide on a domain name, however they need to be in a strict format (again, to comply with regulations from the government). Due to this, we suggest [Lavenham-pc.gov.uk](https://www.lavenham-pc.gov.uk).

My company and the 3rd Party will handle all the forms that need to be completed and will set up all users on the new domain.

Emails

Once we have the domain in our account, we can begin to look at setting up emails. There are 2 options

1. use IMAP mailboxes hosted with the 3rd Party or
2. set-up Microsoft 365 for the Parish Council.

The upside of IMAP mailboxes is they are cheap and will do the job (send / receive emails), However, they can be quite unreliable for a number of reasons and are quite outdated. They also do not have a large amount of features which the Microsoft 365 mailboxes do.

Microsoft 365 is the solution recommended.

Microsoft 365 is an enterprise level email system with a host of features available, not just for emails, but also for file sharing, security and a lot more. It is also a lot more reliable and secure when compared to IMAP mailboxes. Microsoft 365 would be great for the future, if you're planning on taking a closer look and implementing changes to the IT Setup at the Parish council this would be the best option. Even if you were to

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look at implementing some changes in the next 2/3 years. 365 will update with the times and add new features, free of charge. The only downside to 365 is that it is marginally more expensive than IMAP mailboxes.

Costings

We propose an account in our name to host the domain on your behalf. The Parish Clerk's contact information would be listed as the main contact for the domain. (it is a requirement when applying for a [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) domain that contact details for the parish council clerk are listed on WHOIS for the public to view should they wish)

Gov.uk domain would cost £60 + VAT per year

IMAP mailboxes - £2.49 + VAT per mailbox per month

Microsoft 365 mailboxes - £4.99 + VAT per user per month

The hosting cost would be billed annually and the email costs monthly.

In terms of setup, there is no set price for work such as this. Charges are by the hour. Our rate is £65 + VAT per hour for IT Support fees. We estimate the above work to take no more than 3 hours of labour. Those 3 hours include the setup for either of the email systems, and the setup of mailboxes. We would also set these up on local PCs if required. The 'consultancy' time for applying for the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) would not be charged for.

We are also available on a pay as you go basis for IT support and/or consultancy. The same rate of £65 per hour applies for call outs or remote work. We aim to resolve everything remotely as it is much easier and cheaper for the both of us. Remote support is guaranteed within 1 hour, and we aim to be onsite within 2 hours if required.

We have 6 members of staff here available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. One of the team would be reachable within these hours to solve any problems that may arise.

Summary of Costs ex VAT (Microsoft 365)

	Implementation	Annual Recurring
Purchase/hosting of domain	£60	£60
Set-up	£195 est.	
Email x 12 addresses		£720
Totals	£255	£780

Agenda Item 13

“Bee Friendly in Lavenham”

Lavenham Parish Council are requested to consider supporting the following proposal including providing some financial support.

As part of the Council’s Civic Pride initiative, some consideration has been given to participating in Anglia in Bloom. It does appear however that this involves considerable administration and it is suggested that perhaps instead a more focussed local initiative is pursued, which would be a similar approach to that taken by Long Melford.

It would great to encourage residents and businesses to enhance the legacy of historical architecture of which we are the caretakers, making the village even more welcoming for visitors and wildlife alike.

It is suggested that we name our initiative **“Bee Friendly in Lavenham”**.

Objectives would include:

- identifying sites for planters and potentially larger planting areas, making sure the sites chosen are appropriate and accessible for watering
- Encouraging property owners to have their own planters where space allows
- Providing information with regard to plants which support and encourage bees and other pollinators

Points for consideration would include

- Volunteers
- Watering - this is done by a mobile bowser in Long Melford
- Funding – to include purchase of planters, plants, watering etc

Janey Auchincloss is happy to be involved with helping the PC set up something similar to Long Melford, and has identified willing volunteers already.

A Long Melford Parish Councillor has advised Janey that Long Melford PC provided funding and have suggested other funding sources, including:

- Locality grants from councillors
- CIL grants
- Suffolk Community Grants

Additionally as one of the organisers of Hidden Gardens, Janey has stated that a yearly donation to ‘Bee Friendly in Lavenham ’ has been agreed on; the figure to be identified at a later date.

A number of businesses have also intimated that they would be interested in being involved.

Janey has spoken to a local Plant Nursery re costs for watering, they will be sending her details and are happy to help.

The attached image shows reservoir barrel planters at Long Melford. The larger planters will likely be preferable as they will be more drought tolerant.

The prices for these are:

- 630mm barrels £99.79 each
- 860mm £205.80 each

It is suggested that initially a sum of up to £3,000 be made available as first year costs will be higher due to the purchase of planters.

If funding is available, planters can be in situ for planting in May this year.

I would be interested to hear the Councils views with regard to this initiative.

Motion: To approve financial support of up to £3,000 for “Bee Friendly in Lavenham” Civic Pride initiative.

Councillor Janice Muckian



Bee Friendly in Lavenham



Pollinator friendly planting in the colours of Lavenhams coat of arms

These planters set in Long Melford historic High Street are self watering which mean they need minimum maintenance

Agenda Item 14A

Report to Council: 6th April 2023 - Streetlighting

1. Council was informed in October 2022, that energy costs had increased by over 100% in the period April to August 2022. In December Council decided to switch off overnight streetlighting and to review this arrangement at the end of March 2023. Council also made financial provision for a significantly higher annual cost than the budget confirmed in April 2022.
2. The annual invoice from Suffolk County Council has been received. In their covering letter, SCC advised:

“ The energy cost for period above is 36 pence per unit; As we highlighted at the end of last year, we have seen a significant rise in the price of energy, but we are unfortunately unable to provide any predictions on the cost of energy going forwards into 2023-24 financial year, but it is unlikely energy prices will fall again to pre 2022-23 levels.”

“With regards to the street lighting maintenance costs, due to the rise in materials and fuel and the knock-on effects to manufacturing, delivery and travel costs you will notice that the annual street lighting maintenance rates have also seen a sizable rise compared with previous years. We are currently in the final few months of the current street lighting maintenance contract with Kier Highways Services therefore we are in the procurement stage for our new street lighting contractor who will begin on 1st October 2023. Once the new contractor is in place, we will have more idea of the maintenance costs for the forthcoming financial year.”

3. The annual bills for 2021-22, 2022-23 and assumptions of costs in 2023-24 are shown below. The 2022-23 invoice includes a **reduced** energy administration fee which may not be repeated and a fortuitous saving on energy of £2,200.00. This unexpected annual cost is the result of taking action partway through the year to change to partial night-lighting. As the system is only capable of calculating charges for full years or partial years, we have only been charged for partial lighting for the whole year. **This will not be repeated.**

	2021-22 FNL	2022-23 PNL	2022-23 FNL if no change had occurred	2023-24 assumption PNL	2023-24 assumption FNL
Maintenance	£1385	£1796	£1796	£2000*	£2000*
Maintenance Administration	£139	£179	£179	£200*	£200*
Energy	£2318	£2029	£4225	£2029	£4225
Energy Administration	£231	£101	£422	£203	£422
Private Cable Maintenance	£11	£0	£0	£0	£0
Private Cable Administration	£1	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total	£4085	£4105	£6622	£4432	£6847

LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

Based on the SCC advice about energy prices, no inflation uplift has been applied for 2023-24. * A 10% uplift has been applied to Maintenance for 2023-24.

4. Future Costs

Maintenance costs are entirely un-predictable, depending on need. Energy cost per unit is subject to fluctuation. The letter from SCC highlighted above in (2) states clearly that they cannot give advice about future energy costs. The only element of the contract that the Parish Council can influence is the volume of operating hours but this is also influenced by daylight. However, we can now be more confident about the costs of full or partial night lighting versus full night. The change to partial night lighting has not generated any complaints no problems have been recorded. The spending plan for 2023-24 agreed by Council in January 2023 includes £8000.00 for this contract. Council is asked to note an expectation of an underspend in 2023-24 against the Spending Plan agreed in January 2023 but review of this budget provision is not advised at this time.

MOTION

5. On the basis of the above advice from SCC and the outcome of partial night-lighting from January 2023, Council is recommended to confirm that the partial night-lighting schedule is considered permanent.

Proposer: Irene Mitchell

Secunder

Agenda Item 14.B

Report to Lavenham Parish Council On Identifying and Utilising Land Suitable for Tree Planting & Allotments

I have spoken with a Land Agent who lives locally and knows Lavenham well. His advice was invaluable. He suggested:

- a) That we contact Babergh Planning Department and make it clear that as a condition of Planning Consent be favourably considered by LPC in respect of any planning application for housing development – land suitable for planting appropriate trees – broad-leafed, long-lived, indigenous trees – must be included in each development. I am advised that this is a Section 106 Agreement.
- b) That we could ask that provision of an area of the proposed development suitable for allotments be included in any large planning application.
- c) That we lobby farmers whose land surrounds Lavenham to see if they have any corners, strips or small areas of land appropriate for planting suitable trees. He thinks this would be a fruitful exercise because ELMS (Environmental Land Management Subsidies) is on the horizon and farmers may well be looking to increase their environmental credentials in exchange for subsidies.
- d) That concerning allotments – we could also lobby farmers for any areas of their farmland suitable for allotments – giving indications of size requirements, water needs and parking facilities. We must make it clear to farmers and land-owners that we would expect them to hedge and fence this land if that is what would be necessary. We would expect this land to be leased to the Council so that it could be become available again to the landowners and farmers when the need arises.

Using his extensive address book, the Agent says that he could arrange such a meeting and chair it, if we hire the venue – say, the Village Hall. His fees for this would be £200.00 per hour.

Mary Morrey
Parish Councillor
15FEB23