

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August 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, August 2024 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.*

**Present:**

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Iain Lamont, Irene Mitchell, Mary Morrey (from 7.50pm), Jane Ranzetta, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Four 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 the 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.

**1. Apologies and approval of Absences**

The Clerk explained that Councillors Bourne and Domoney had sent their apologies.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

No Councillor declared an interest.

**3. Requests for Dispensations**

The Clerk reported that none had been received other than those previously reported.

**4. To approve as accurate minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting of the Council**

The Chair introduced the minutes which have been on the Parish Council website for two weeks.

**Motion:** to approve as accurate the minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting of Council.

**Proposed:** Cllr Sherman

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** The minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting of the Council were approved as accurate with no votes against. Cllr Ranzetta abstained having not been present at that meeting. Cllr Morrey had not yet joined the meeting.

**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.

A Member of the Public expressed concern about the proposed light in Pump Passage, item 9 on the agenda, saying that the light is extremely near his property and will shine into it. He and his neighbours are concerned that damage to their properties, many of which are listed and without foundations, might be caused by the proposed installation. He detailed the proposed works as explained to him by Suffolk Highways staff carrying out a site survey. The alley, he said, is little used at night with many walkers carrying torches. He concluded by saying that in his opinion the work is un-necessary and he urged the Parish Council to cancel this project.

A Member of the Public asked if a decision would be taken tonight on the 20mph project without a costing. The Chair said that tonight's agenda contained a report but no motion requiring a decision.



A Member of the Public expressed his concerns with respect to some of the views expressed by some of the Councillors at the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting of Council. He said that the decision to enter into final negotiations with Babergh concerning the detail of the charges to be introduced had been made by a slim majority of Councillors with not all Councillors either present for the vote or having attended the Public Meeting. He said that to make such a decision in contradiction to the views expressed at the Public Meeting would harm relations between the Council and the Village. He said he felt insulted by the views expressed and language used by a Councillor not understanding the contribution made by local businesses and that many local business owners do pay Council Tax within the Parish. He questioned the way the concept of 'fairness' had been applied in the Council's decision-making arguing that just because all residents do not use a service should not mean that the service should be charged for; whilst not a user of children's play equipment he did not object to contribute to paying for the provision of this. He asked whether local businesses had been asked for financial contributions.

The Chair responded that the Parish Council remained opposed to charges for car parking but that the timetable imposed by Babergh meant that the Council could delay the decision no further. She reminded all that whilst the Public Meeting has been attended by many people, the attendance was not necessarily representative of the village as a whole and that the purpose of that Meeting was to give residents an opportunity to speak, contribute ideas and hear the views of others but not to determine the final decision of Council. The PC made contact with the Lavenham Business Group when the charges were announced and no financial contribution had been offered.

A Member of the Public asked why a question from a Councillor at the previous meeting of the Council concerning his attire had not been included in the minutes of the meeting. He said that he understood that the Pump Court Alley light issue went back as far as 2014 and asked how many other such issues were still to emerge. He concluded by asking why the most of the documents concerning car parking charges had been removed from the Parish Council Noticeboard. The Chair replied that the minutes are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting and that this Council had not been aware of the Pump Court Alley issue until very recently. The Clerk replied that the car parking charges information had been displayed for many months and had been removed in order to display legally required notices.

## **6. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair began by explaining that in July, Lee Morris from the Hub, and Cllr Morrey attended the launch of the Wool Towns Walk, hosted by Suffolk Ramblers. This is a fully waymarked 50 mile circular walk divided into stages which showcases the notable villages in our area including Lavenham. Guides are available on line and the Hub will have a stock of their literature.

The Chair reported that in regards to improving the energy performance of listed buildings, Babergh Councils has reported that, with the support of Historic England, they are amending their planning rules. A Local Listed Building Consent Order will allow Grade II listed property owners to upgrade or replace windows without having to make individual applications (subject to conditions). A Local Development Order allowing solar PV and other renewable technologies to be installed on unlisted buildings within the curtilage of a Grade II listed property (subject to conditions). The Chair explained that the details are now being drafted and will be subject to Public Consultation prior to being officially adopted.

The Chair told Councillors that a Member of the Public had contacted her regarding dog fouling and urination in public areas of the village. Fouling she said is illegal and enforced by the District Council, urination by dogs whilst unpleasant in inappropriate areas, is not unlawful. She reported that additional anti-fouling signage had been requested from and installed by Babergh and that she had included this subject in her announcements to further raise awareness of the issue.

The Chair concluded by reporting that she together with Cllr Mitchell and the Clerk had met with County Cllr Paul West who is the Cabinet Member for Operational Highways and Flooding. The meeting also included representatives from Transport strategy and Network Assurance.

The PC asked Cllr West to expedite the installation of the additional signage at the Cockfield turn-off from Bury and it was agreed that Highways representatives will investigate amending the signage at the junction of the A1071 and the A1141 from Hadleigh. This would emphasise that HGVs should go straight-on rather than turning off and cutting through Lavenham.





## **7. Local Authority Councillors' Report**

County Cllr Lindsay talked through his report highlighting and welcomed the County Council decision to approve the proposed 20 mph scheme. He regretted that the scheme, due to the County Council rules, did not cover a wider area. He acknowledged the disquiet concerning the number of repeater signs.

He reported that the Council has decided to invest a further £9.1 million from reserves into Suffolk's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) service.

The service, he said, needs extra staff and capacity mainly to speed up its production of children's Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and is currently failing to meet its statutory duty to complete them all within 20 weeks. Investment in extra staff already made has brought the proportion completed in time from 0% a year ago to 16% now. They have a target of getting to 100% by September 2025. The Council's recently completed Accounts for the 2023-24 year, he said, showed a near £15 million drop in the Council's useable reserves – their 'savings for a rainy day' – to £180 million adding that whilst the last Government did increase funding to Councils for special needs, the Council Officers say it is not enough to meet growing need.

He reported that the Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee had recently met to discuss the state of the roads in the county, how much was spent annually and how works were prioritised.

Officers from Highways, he said, had explained how roads are categorised from Green to Red (poor condition), that the optimal resurfacing programme would require around £50 million per year in funding, whereas the current amount available for resurfacing works was more like £17 million per year.

He said that his political group are pressing for a review of the county's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) which sets out the parameters on what defects Highways respond to and the timeframe for response and believe that the reporting systems for defects are not working correctly.

All of the committee, he said, agreed that better communication with residents and timely fixes for road defects would be beneficial to the public perception of Suffolk's roads – as overall, according to the figures provided by Officers, the number of roads rated Red (in poor condition) has dropped since 2012, and the number of roads rated Green (in good condition) has risen.

Cllr Lamont asked if all the speed repeater signs had to be installed, Cllr Lindsay said they had to be. Cllr Mitchell pointed out that the County whilst insisting on all the speed repeater signs then refuse to replace any that get damaged/removed suggesting that this is an inconsistent policy that could possibly get amended after the May 2025 Suffolk County Council elections.

Cllr Morrey referred to the report provided by the District Councillors, who unfortunately were both unable to attend the meeting, commenting that the support received from the District Councillors opposing the car parking charges, had made it possible for Lavenham to negotiate a compromise. She wished to thank them for their efforts.

## **8. Planning Applications for Consideration**

The Clerk informed Cllrs that no decisions had recently been received from Babergh Council contrary to the PC's recommendations. The Clerk added that the PC had been asked for a response to an application for a pavement licence by The Great House. The time limit for PC response imposed by Babergh Council had not permitted a PC response. He was aware that a majority of Councillors had written to Babergh Council in support of the application.

### **DC/24/00776**

Patch Cottage 84 High Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9PT  
Application for Listed Building Consent to replace fallen section of the wall in the same style and materials.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/00776 be recommended for approval

**Proposed:** Cllr Mitchell

**Seconded:** Cllr Robinson

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.



**DC/24/02715**

6 Shilling Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RH

Application for Listed Building Consent. Removal of existing render, repairs to sole plate and replacement of rotten timber.

Retrospective application for work already undertaken.

Savolit Wood Wool Breathable membrane fixed and covered with Lime plaster.

The Chair reported that she considered the repairs to be essential and been done in a manner suitable for a listed building. Cllr Mitchell suggested that the PC should approve this subject to the materials being acceptable to the Heritage Officer.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/02715 be recommended for approval subjected to being acceptable to the Babergh Heritage Officer

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Sherman was not present in the room.

**DC/24/03084**

Land And Outbuildings at The Hall, Hall Road, Lavenham CO10 9QX

Application for Listed Building Consent - Works to facilitate change of use of stables, existing home office/gallery to 1no dwelling including sub-division of yard area, car port parking, new studio and storage areas. Works to include rear extension link-attached to the stables served by new terrace area, erection of free-standing pergola, installation of windows, doors, rooflights, railings etc and solar panels and landscaping works.

The Clerk confirmed that an application for Planning Permission had subsequently received, it was agreed that application would be discussed at the next meeting of Council. Cllr Mitchell commented that it is standard Babergh procedure to validate the Listing Building Consent first, should Listed Building Consent not be granted then the application for Planning Permission will automatically be rejected.

Cllr Lamont reported that this application is converting an existing building inside the conservation area, but outside the settlement boundary. The buildings being converted are not listed but are in the curtilage of the Grade II listed Hall. There is a small new building to be used as a bedroom suite, this is flat roofed and will not be visible from the street. The conversion uses traditional style materials with black barn style weather boarding. The existing roof is being kept which was recently restored with the same materials. He concluded by saying that as far as we are aware there is no loss of employment and that Babergh pre-application advice was sought and amendments made following this consultation.

It was noted by Councillors that solar panels are planned within the curtilage of a listed building (a matter currently being reviewed by Babergh) and that the application is compliant with the proposed LNP2 and with JLP1.

**Motion:** that the Parish Council supports Application DC/24/03084 but has concerns that solar panels are proposed within the curtilage of a Grade 2 building visible from a Grade 1 building (the church).

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**DC/24/03114 and DC/24/03115**

Shilling Grange Shilling Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RH

Householder application and Application for Listed Building Consent for replacement of timber posts.

Proposal is to replace existing rotting posts with similar in the same locations, the proposed timber posts will be made of oak to match the existing size, the existing metal chain would be reinstated.

Cllr Ranzetta expressed surprise that permission was being sought since it was like for like replacement.





**Motion:** that Applications DC/24/03114 and 5 be recommended for approval

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Robinson

**Decision:** Approved unanimously

**DC/24/03174**

4 Deacons Close Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9TT

Householder Application – Erection of single storey extension (following demolition of conservatory)

This replaces an existing conservatory with a more permanent structure, the outline of the building is of a similar size and proportions and the materials are complementary.

Cllr Morrey expressed concerns that the more permanent structure might deprive neighbouring properties of light but in the context that no objections had been received from neighbours was not opposed to the application. The Chair commented on the improved thermal nature of the property.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/03174 be recommended for approval

**Proposed:** Cllr Robinson

**Seconded:** Cllr Sherman

**Decision:** Approved unanimously, Cllrs Morrey and Ranzetta abstained. Cllr Ranzetta was not in the room.

**9. Motion that the Parish Council cancel the Pump Passage light and negotiate a financial settlement with Suffolk County Council**

The Clerk explained that two Public Consultation meetings were held in 2014 concerning the LED street lighting proposals. Consequent of these a bollard style light was proposed for the alley between Pump Court and the Market Place and was ordered from Suffolk Highways by the PC at a cost of £4,034.

The light was repeatedly chased up by Cllr Lamont and the Clerk and in October 2023 a revised quote of £5,720.34 was received. The Clerk and Cllr Mitchell together negotiated this down to £4,664.02.

The Clerk told Councillors that Suffolk Street lighting conducted site meetings and surveys in May to July 2024 which brought the proposed installation to the attention of local residents who have expressed their concerns both verbally and in writing to the Parish. The local residents are concerned of the potential damage to the walls and buildings that such works would inflict.

The bollard style light, to be situated immediately at the exit of the covered alleyway, will get power from the street light in Pump Court necessitating the digging of an approximately 30m long trench under the concrete path surface. The digging will be between old flint and brick walls which join onto listed buildings. Neither the walls nor the houses have foundations.

Following the concerns raised by residents the Clerk wrote to Highways receiving the following reply:

‘Because of the footpath being narrow, it will require a full footpath closure for H&S reasons, and also it would be easier to reinstate the whole footpath which would leave a much neater finish rather than trying to patch up just the trench works.

In my untrained opinion I do have concerns with regards to the lack of foundations to the old buildings, clearly, we (SCC) or the contractor would not want to leave ourselves open to any possible future structural issues or insurance claims in the event of any possible shift in the foundations due to ground disturbance for these works, whether it be hairline cracks in the walls etc to anything more substantial which could affect the integrity of the building. I would also suggest that any current cracks or damage to the building is noted and photographed by the PC prior to the works commencing as to avoid any potential blame or claims by the resident

As the works have been requested by the PC, then this is something that you would also need to consider, as we would need to be certain that all concerns have been correctly addressed before this work is carried out, it could be that (local resident name redacted) insists that a structural engineer is brought in to give expert advice and opinions on what can and can't be done with regards to excavations and reinstatement.



On a separate note, since the latest information has been brought to our attention by (local resident name redacted), I am concerned that the costs will start to increase due to the possible additional reinstatement of the whole footpath, additional excavation works surrounding the hand digging close buildings etc. I appreciate that this work has been ongoing for a long time and the PC have been patient about this, however had the works been completed sooner then the same issues would have been brought to our attention at that time resulting in additional costs being added'.

The Clerk told Councillors that this light has been an incomplete project for nearly ten years, there has been little or no adverse comment received concerning this delay and the absence of the light. The proposed light is clearly of concern to local residents and an already expensive project is likely to become more expensive and complicated.

From a legal perspective, he said, Council has decided to install this light and has contracted with Suffolk to install it, should Council wish to cancel the project a motion needs to be passed instructing the Clerk to a) inform Suffolk County Council of the cancellation and b) to negotiate a financial settlement with Suffolk County Council.

Cllr Mitchell commented that she had had no idea until very recently this project was so complicated and confirmed that during her time as Chair of the Council she had received no communication from Members of the Public concerning the delay to the project.

The Clerk concluded by saying that there may be cancellation costs imposed by Suffolk Highways but these would certainly be less than completing the project.

Cllr Ranzetta suggested that possibly the proposed light could be replaced by a light in the pavement itself but acknowledged that would not remove the need to dig the potentially damaging trench. She asked whether the area would be adequately lit should the project be cancelled. Cllr Lamont responded that there was an LED light on top of a pole approximately 20 metres away.

Cllr Robinson suggested that a proper survey would be required for the project to go ahead. Cllr Lamont said that he would be disappointed should the project be cancelled it having emerged from two consultations.

**Proposed:** Cllr Robinson

**Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Decision:** Approved. Cllr Lamont voted against.

**10. Motion that the Parish Council approve the application from the Lavenham Woodland Project for a grant of £2,500 as a contribution towards building a shelter in the Outdoor Activities/Forest School area.**

The Clerk explained that Council invites applications twice a year for Grants and that the annual budget is £6,000 and that there had been no deterioration in the financial position of the Council meaning that the Grant expenditure budget does not need reconsideration.

The Clerk explained that only one application had been received and highlighted the key elements of the proposal, displayed a photograph of the proposed shelter and explained that the project met the criteria for financial support. The Woodland Project he said was clearly well supported locally and legally constituted, solvent but not in a financial position that it could clearly entirely pay for the project from its own resources.

Cllrs Ranzetta and Mitchell commented on the effort put in by so many people to establish and develop the Lavenham Woodland Project and how well supported it is in the village. Other Councillors concurred.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** Approved unanimously





**11. Motion that the Parish Council purchase a replacement 1<sup>st</sup> Meadow Bridge.**

The Clerk detailed the Council's decision at its meeting of March 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 that together with Cllr Robinson the Clerk have further discussions with two possible suppliers to understand the differences between the quotes and return to Council with a recommendation.

The Clerk explained that early in the following weeks it had become clear that a steel base would be considerably more durable. Supplier B replied that they were unable to fully quote for a bridge with a steel base whilst Supplier A confirmed that the quote for the bridge with a steel base involved the use of fully galvanised steel not steel painted with galvafrond making their price considerably more understandable.

Additionally close reading of the quote from Supplier A showed that Supplier A had quoted for steel handrails which would be visually unattractive and poorly suited to the setting. Supplier A has re-quoted changing the proposed design to a steel based bridge with wooden hand rails which slot (for ease of repair and replacement) into metal box sections welded onto the steel base. The hand rails in a design to reduce the likelihood of accidents.

Supplier A commented that raw material prices have increased since the issue of the original quote on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The final quote is £9,423 plus VAT an increase of £455. The 2.5% retention amount included in that quote to be paid the later of a) 90 days after installation and b) any teething problems having been rectified'.

The Clerk showed Councillors photographs illustrating the proposed design. Cllr Robinson added that the bridge was being designed to facilitate access by those less mobile. The Clerk and Cllr Robinson told Councillors that discussion on-site with Supplier B had been most satisfactory.

Cllr Lamont asked why the proposal why Neighbourhood CIL was not proposed as the funding method as Neighbourhood CIL funds expire after 5 years. The Clerk replied that should Neighbourhood CIL be used for this there would be an inadequate amount left for the 20mph scheme and that should that scheme not go ahead the scheme could be charged to Neighbourhood CIL.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** Approved unanimously

**12. Proposal to adopt a 20 mph scheme: update from Clerk**

The Clerk highlighted the key points from the working paper updated for recent developments.


The Suffolk Highways Officer recommendation is that the Scheme go ahead and the report has now been approved by the Head of Transport Strategy and the Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

The plans are unchanged from those previously issued, there will be 44 repeater signs which Highways will insist upon.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the last motion passed by Council was to 'approve the Version 3 preliminary design prepared by Suffolk County Council and to issue an order to proceed to public consultation' what Council had not decided to do was implement the scheme. That implementation will he said will need a motion at a future meeting of Council.

The Clerk concluded by explaining that in response to request for a ball-park cost estimate Suffolk had replied that they will start compiling the detailed estimate shortly with the big unknown being the cost of the lighting work to illuminate the two sets of 20mph terminal signs at High St and Brent Eleigh Rd. These costs, they have said, may take some time to obtain from the street lighting contractor and that without this information any estimate could prove to be wildly inaccurate.

Cllr Mitchell commented that it may well be sensible to defer a decision until after the May 2025 Suffolk County Council elections.



**13. Clerk/RFO Report**

The Clerk explained that he had now agreed availability with the Parish handyman and would shortly order the Speed Indicator Device, the replacement dog bins and various other small public realm items.

The Clerk explained that in May 2024 The National Association of Local Councils revised its model Financial Regulations. The revisions improve guidance in a number of areas including risk management but are not substantial. The Lavenham approach is to accept the revised model (and indeed some parts of the model are not negotiable) modifying the wording only where the standard wording is inappropriate to how this Council operates. He thanked Cllr Mitchell for her time spent helping with detailed review of the draft.

He concluded by saying that none of these changes are fundamental highlighting the very sensible change in the regulations which demand that the Bank Mandate is reviewed each year.

**Motion:** to approve the revised Financial Regulations and approve continuation of the current Bank Mandate which requires any two of Cllrs Mitchell, Morrey, Muckian and the RFO to make all transactions other than to move funds between the Council's Bank Accounts.

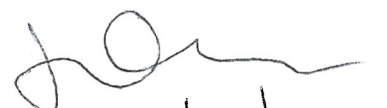
**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Morrey

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**Date of next meeting**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.  
The meeting closed at 9.33pm.

  
12/9/24