

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 7th August 2025, commencing at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, August 2025 Meeting Pack.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Iain Lamont, Irene Mitchell, Roy Mawford, Jane Ranzetta, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Seven 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.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

The Clerk reported that Cllrs Falconer and Morrey were not present and had sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk informed Councillors that Cllr Lamont has declared that he considers that he has an interest with respect to 10 Lady St and will not be speaking or voting on that matter. The Clerk informed Councillors that Cllr Sherman had informed him that he no longer has an interest in 44 Spring St and now has an interest in 38 Spring St and that he will shortly update his Register of Members Interests.

The Clerk invited Councillors to declare any interests, none were declared.

3. Requests for Dispensations

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

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the July 3rd 2025 meeting of the Council

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Sherman abstained having not been present at 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. She explained that the Standing Orders of the Council are clear that this public session is for ten minutes and that it is at the discretion of the Chair whether further time is allowed or the session shortened.

A Member of the Public explained that she was speaking on behalf of a number of local residents and businesses who would like to put on a small Christmas event to coincide with the late-night opening of local shops. She emphasised that this was not an attempt to revitalise the Christmas Fair. The intention is that the event be for local people and not be advertised outside Lavenham. Thoughts include live music, a light show and a food truck in the Market Place. Christmas Carols, horse chestnuts and a best dressed elf competition. She appealed to the Parish Council for funding. The Chair replied that this could be considered at the next meeting of Council and urged the Member of the Public to put together a formal proposal. Cllr Mitchell commented that a plan for the management of vehicles and attendees would be required as news of the event would inevitably spread via social media.

A Member of the Public spoke of her concerns with respect to the proposed 'vin van' in the Market Place. She suggested that this will lead to parents drinking in the late afternoon, having collected their children from the school, and so failing to properly supervise their children. She said that the proposal would lead to mess and noise. Lavenham, she said, is a Tudor Village and not Benidorm.

A Member of the Public echoed some of those concerns highlighting that the application restricts public access to the cross with tables and chairs situated adjacent to the Cross. He said that no business or organisation should be able to restrict access to the Scheduled Ancient Monument. He questioned whether the encouragement of alcohol consumption for nine hours a day for six months of the year was appropriate for the Market Place. He expressed concern that it might be difficult for the licensee to stop customers walking around the Market Place with drinks in open containers. He asked if the Parish Council had given permission for this. The Chair replied that the Parish Council has not been formally approached by the applicant.

A Member of the Public expressed concern about the growth of the vegetation along Lower Rd and the size of some of the trees on the High St towards Bury Rd. The Clerk agreed to approach Suffolk Highways.

A Member of the Public asked why Cllr Mitchell considered that the voting on the 20-mph scheme had been influenced by those who live outside the village. Cllr Mitchell replied that she considered that some posts, by those outside the village, on social media had had an influence on the voting.

A Member of the Public explained that the Planning Application for 75 Church St had been developed in consultation with Babergh with the gabled roof being a consequence of that engagement. The applicant had also consulted Historic England. She told Councillors that the proposal did not substantially increase the size of the property.

A Member of the Public informed Councillors that an herb garden had been established next to Second Meadow with the herbs available for the use and consumption of residents and visitors.

6. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reminded all of the VJ Day service which will be held in the Church at 10.00 on Sunday 17th August noting that this is a thanksgiving service to observe the 80th anniversary of the victory over Japan and the end of World War 2.

8. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

District Cllr Clover reported that Babergh has passed a Motion to develop the option of a proposal for three Unitary Councils to serve Suffolk. He commented that, at that time, no costings had been presented precluding any level of informed debate. Some information concerning costs and savings had subsequently been provided.

Babergh has announced that they are currently exploring, consequent of the withdrawal of Central Government funding, what other funding could be made available to those parishes wishing to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

He told Councillors that the Tour of Britain cycle race will pass through Lavenham, the white markings recently painted on various local roads indicate repairs to the road surface required for the race.

County Cllr Lindsay told Councillors that the County Council will spend £1.9million from reserves to fund preparation for unitaries and the Norfolk/Suffolk mayor. He said that £100,000 has already been spent selling the proposal for a single Suffolk mega unitary and attacking the District Councils' rival proposals for three unitaries. He explained that half of this £100,000 is estimated to have gone on a social media campaign and the other half on the costs of delivering a leaflet to every household.

He informed Councillors that at the Council Meeting of July 10th 2025 he had seconded a motion to make it easier to obtain lower speed limits where the community supports one. The motion had been rejected by the Conservative administration on the grounds that they were already planning to do this. He said that he was not hugely optimistic that they will change things enough to make a difference. He suggested that the Council might wish to raise with the cabinet member Chris Chambers their policy on insisting on repeater signs, rather than allowing them just at entrances to a 20mph zone.

8. Planning Register

The Clerk reported that no decisions had been made by Babergh which differed to the Parish Councils recommendations..

9. Planning Applications

DC/25/3120 1 The Maltings, Barn St. Listed Building Consent - Replacement of existing French doors, kitchen window and back door.

Cllr Lamont explained that the application is to replace modern rear ground floor timber French doors, kitchen window and back door with metal framed "Crittall" type. He told Councillors that these replacements are in keeping with the industrial aesthetic of the building.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/3120.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

DC/25/3025 87-88 High St. Removal of small Cheery tree approx'4m high and 30cm diameter at base.

Cllr Lamont commented that the explained that the tree is in a prominent position on the High Street telling Councillors that the application does not include a report from a tree surgeon with evidence it needs to be felled rather than pruning. However, a recent picture of the tree shows that it has died.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/3025.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

DC/25/3022 and 3023 The Old Rectory, Church St. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent. Addition of a painted timber, pedimented doorcase surrounding the existing front door.

Cllr Lamont explained that with respect to the previous application Council had recommended that the timber pediment that was over the door (prior to the pediment being removed by the current occupants because the timber was in poor condition) be replaced by a replica. Council had written that 'LNP 2016 Policy D1 states that 'that proposals must be sympathetic to the setting of any individual heritage asset'. The Rectory front door can be seen from street and is located close to a Grade 1 Church'.

Cllr Lamont told Councillors that this new application is a proposal is for a much larger pediment with dummy columns on either side to give the appearance of columns, even though there is no portico commenting that there is no evidence that the building ever had a door surround of this size.

Cllr Lamont explained that although it does not project from the front of the building the visual aspect would be significantly changed. The removed pediment, he said, was original and reflected the history of this building and should be replicated and replaced as suggested by the pre-application advice in DC/24/00744. No evidence, he said, had been provided that a larger pediment and door surround was ever present on the building. Policy D1, he said, continues to apply.

Cllr Robinson said that buildings should be allowed to evolve.

Cllr Mitchell said that she considered that there will be harm to the setting of the listed building as it will be different, the building will look grander should the applications be approved, than it originally was.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends refusals of applications DC/25/3022 and DC/25/3023

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Bourne and Robinson voted against. Cllr Sherman abstained.

DC/25/2700 and 2701 75 Church St. Single storey extension to the rear following demolition of existing conservatory.

Cllr Lamont outlined the proposal to Councillors and drew Councillors attention to the report written by the Babergh Heritage Officer and quoted from that report.

'Most of the proposed alterations to the house are to later fabric that has no significance, such as the demolition of the late 20th century conservatory and the creation of new openings in later masonry underbuilding that replaced timber framing'.

'There are two proposed alterations where it is uncertain whether historic fabric would be affected. These are the proposed new opening at ground floor of the existing kitchen to the west side and the enlargement of the first floor window opening within the bathroom to the north. I recommend that limited opening up is carried out to establish that these proposals would not involve the cutting or removal of any surviving historic timber framing or infill panels'.

'It is not clear from the submission if the proposed replacement of windows includes those in the whole house, or just to those that would be altered on the rear, north elevation. If other windows are proposed as being replaced, then additional information would be required as part of the application'.

'The form of the proposed extension reflects the discussions and drawings exchanged at pre-application stage. The roof form of the extension reflects that of the 17th century wing to which it is attached, but the materials and detailed design are of a contemporary nature. I recommend that the number of rooflights within the extension be reduced from two to one, to simplify the west roofscape. This minor comment aside, I consider that the proposed extension would be architecturally harmonious with the traditional forms of the house and its historic context whilst expressing the contemporary date of its design in the use of modern materials and detailed design. It would improve the rear aspect of this house and would improve the living standards of the accommodation'

Cllr Robinson commented that the pitch of the proposed roof was consistent with neighbouring buildings.

Motion: the Parish Council recommends approval of the applications subject to the recommendations of the Heritage Officer.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Ranzetta abstained.

10. Licensing Applications

The Clerk explained that two Applications have been made for an alcohol licence and one application for a pavement licence. The pavement licence is related to the application for an alcohol licence in the Market Place.

The Market Place:

The Clerk explained that the proposal is for the siting of a bar trailer in the area in the middle of the Market Place (which is normally surrounded by cars) and four tables each with four chairs to be positioned adjacent to the Market Cross in front of Toll Cottage. The proposal is for operation seven days per week between noon and 9pm from April 1st to 30th September each year. Tables and Chairs will be onsite for an additional 30 minutes at the start and end of the day and will be cleared away, together with any litter, each night.

Cllr Ranzetta questioned whether the location is respectful to the memorials to the fallen.

Cllr Mitchell commented that the tables are not proposed to be placed adjacent to those memorials adding that it must be remembered that the 'Market Place' should be, as the name indicates, a place to conduct business. The economy of the Village is, she said, dependent on visitors. Recognising that the Market Place is also a residential area she drew Councillors attention to the restricted hours proposed and expressed support for the proposal.

Cllr Sherman expressed concerns that the proposal would be deleterious to other vendors of alcohol in the Market Place and could lead to other vendors such as burger van and pizza van being in the Market Place.

Cllr Robinson said that, in his opinion, the majority of the village was opposed to the proposal and so the Parish Council should be too.

Cllr Bourne expressed concern about the serving of alcohol so close to the school at the end of the school day.

Cllr Lamont described the proposal as a continuation of the long established selling of food and alcohol in the Market Place. Cllr Mawford agreed.

Motion: The Parish Council opposes the Applications

Proposed: Cllr Domoney **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Bourne, Domoney, Robinson and Sherman voted in favour. Cllrs Lamont, Mawford and Mitchell voted against. Cllr Ranzetta abstained.

10 Lady St:

Cllr Sherman questioned whether there was an alcohol licence in place for the previous openings of this premise. The Clerk explained that the current licensing situation was unclear.

The Clerk explained that the proposed licensing application was inconsistent with the Planning Permission which permits the consumption of alcohol in the garden (which is not proposed in the licensing application) but does not permit the consumption of alcohol in the driveway. He informed Councillors that the proposed hours of serving are noon to 2300 seven days a week.

Cllr Sherman questioned again whether the current serving of alcohol was legal and queried the character of the applicant. Cllr Mitchell responded that there was possibly a licence in place but Babergh had not updated their website.

Cllr Ranzetta expressed concern about the playing of music in the latter part of the evening. Cllr Bourne replied that with respect these premises concerns had previously been raised concerning music but these concerns had turned out to be largely unfounded. Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell agreed.

Cllr Mawford proposed an amendment to the motion so that it read:

Amended Motion: Council recommends approval of the application with the exclusion of the driveway and urges Babergh Council to ensure that all serving and consumption of alcohol in the premises is appropriately licenced.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Domoney, Mawford, Mitchell and Ranzetta, Cllr Robinson voted against. Cllrs Bourne, Lamont and Sherman abstained.

11. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 3

Cllr Sherman reported that the EGM had been held to allow the preferred supplier to be engaged. Work to develop the Questionnaire continues, pilot studies continue. The Questionnaire will be brought, in due course, to Council for approval. The Chair asked whether a budget for the whole LNP project would be brought to the November meeting of Council. Cllr Sherman confirmed that it would be so brought. He thanked the LNP2 Group for their work saying that much of their work will go unamended into LNP3. Other parts of their work require minor amendment due to the passage of time.

Cllr Sherman said that he would continue to aim to provide a written report in advance.

12. Clerk/RFO report

The Clerk informed Councillors that Babergh Council has told him that the owners off the property on Lower Rd have been given six months to return the land to its original condition.

The Clerk told Councillors that Arthur Charvonia Babergh Chief Exec and Cllr John Ward the Leader of the Council are coming to the Parish Office on August 13th at 6.30 pm. Cllrs Domoney, Mawford, Mitchell, Ranzetta, Robinson and Sherman said that they would like to attend.

The Clerk told Councillors that James Cartlidge MP will be hosting a debate on the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. Mr Cartlidge has written that there will be 'strong speakers from both sides attending to set out their arguments and answer questions. Speaking in favour of a One Suffolk unitary council will, amongst others be Cllr Matthew Hicks Leader of Suffolk County Council and Cllr John Ward and Cllr Deborah Saw the Leader and Deputy Leader of Babergh District Council'. The Clerk explained that the debate will be on September 12th at 2pm in the Hadleigh Town Hall. Due to capacity at Hadleigh Town Hall the Parish Council is limited to two representatives. Cllrs Robinson and Sherman expressed an interest in attending.

The Parish Council has been informed by Babergh Council that a pod for two e-bikes will very shortly be installed in the Babergh owned Cock Inn car park near the bottle bank/glass recycling bins.

He spoke next of Public Realm items telling Councillors that replacement SID batteries were supplied for one of the Melford Road Speed Indicator Devices. The device has however failed again and the supplier has suggested some checks that we can do to the device to ascertain what the problem is. He reported that there have been no further floods in the Prentice St Car Park. This is the longest run for some time. Donations in the car parks remain about £250 per month.

Suffolk Tree Services has been asked to the survey of all Council owned trees and since one of the felled Scots Pines in the cemetery was within the group tree preservation order a quote has been requested for the grinding of the stump and the replanting a new Scots Pine. Additionally, the Box Bushes in the Churchyard have been recently retreated for blight. This should have been done a month or so back, the contractor has apologised.

Accounts:

The Clerk reported that the big Financial news is that Babergh District Council has informed the Parish Council that the Cleaning Grant will be cut by half in 2026/27 and removed entirely from 1 April 2027. This decision was made at a meeting of the Babergh Cabinet in February but not publicised.

The current amount of Cleaning Grant received is approaching £14,000 per year. Council, the Clerk said, has a three year contract with JPB at an annual cost of £18,000 for street cleaning. Our District Councillors are questioning this with Babergh but the Clerk fears that the most likely answer is that Babergh will insist on removing the Grant but continue to empty the street litter bins and cease the current charging to the PC of some £2,000 per annum for this service.

The Clerk said that Cllrs could take this matter up with Cllr Ward and CEO Arthur Charvonja at the meeting with them on 13th August. Cllr Mawford said that this is not a Babergh Grant, it is the Parish Council discharging the responsibilities of the District Council. Cllr Mitchell said that Babergh Council had to recognise that the PC has in good faith entered into a three year contract with the supplier. She urged the Clerk to contact the other effected Parishes.

The effect of the change is therefore to increase the Council's Net Costs by some £12,000 per annum which unless savings are found elsewhere will increase Council Tax by some 10%.

The Clerk spoke next of the June Accounts. He explained that at the last meeting he had said that the likely deficit for the three months to June 30th was £7,500 compared to a budgeted deficit of £1,000 and so our shortfall will have increased to £6,500.

He explained that the actual deficit for the three months to June 30th is £7,250 and so the shortfall is £6,250. The main reason for the deficit, he said, is the £6,800 of legal costs incurred in this Financial Year. Other significant variances to budget at end June were the accrual of the unbudgeted costs for the Parish Poll of £2,000 and savings, which were timing only, of £2,000 in Tree Maintenance Costs.

He spoke next concerning the July Accounts informing Councillors that the July Accounts, which will be presented to Council next month, will likely show a reduced deficit. The deficit for the four months ended July 31st is likely to be about £6,300 because the actual invoice has been received for the Parish Poll. The Poll cost £1,200 not the £2,000 estimated by Babergh as worst case. Additionally, £725 of Burial Income was received in July.

He concluded by telling Councillors that it has been formally confirmed to Council that Neighbourhood CIL can be used to fund the costs of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Council, he said, has just over £50,000 of uncommitted such funds of which some £30,000 expire in 2028 and £20,000 expire in 2029. The Clerk will shortly be inviting Councillors to suggest and comment on the priority items for these funds. In addition to the possibility of spending these funds on a new Neighbourhood plan remembering that the existing one expires in 2031 there are Items such as a further SID for the Bury Rd, Entrance Gates to the Village to discourage speeding, further lorry signage on the Hadleigh side of the village, paths in the Cock Inn car park to replace the desire lines. Other suggestions will be welcomed.

Motion: To approve Accounts for month ending 30th June 2025

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Motion: To approve Receipts and Payments for month ending 30th June 2025

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously

13. VJ Celebration Grant

The Chair reminded Councillors that at the July 3rd 2025 Meeting of Council it had been reported that the Lavenham British Legion committee had met and subsequently told Cllr Morrey that they would be extremely grateful for a £350 grant towards their expenses of holding Celebrations to mark VJ Day.

Motion: that the Parish Council, recognising the significance of VJ Day and the desire of the British Legion to make the day a community day for all Members of the Public to join in, makes a Grant to the British Legion of £350 from the Street Fair Fund.

Cllr Mitchell reminded Councillors that generally the street fair grant is intended to provide working capital for community activities but that the applications for VE and VJ Day grants could be considered exceptional.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Power to make Grants under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

14. Report concerning Railway Walk Allotments

The Clerk read the letter received from the Railway Walk Allotments Association explaining that the organisation now had a constitution and a Bank Account and has been awarded a grant by the Open Gardens committee.

The Group has told the Council that as an unincorporated association it cannot take a legal interest in the site but could assist in the management of it.

The Clerk told Councillors that he would now talk with the Allotments Association, the Group and others to move matters forward.

Meeting ended 9.25pm

Date of next meeting – Thursday 4th September 2025 7pm