

# **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 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 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 local matters. This item will generally be limited to 10 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 (10 minutes)**
- 6. Chairman's Announcements**
- 7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports**
- 8. Planning**

**Planning Group: To receive reports and recommendations.**

- 9. Clerk/RFO report**
  - 9.a Motion to approve Accounts for month ending 31 October 2024.**
  - 9.b Motion to approve Receipts and Payments for month ending 31 October 2024.**
  - 9.c Motion to approve Reforecast 2 of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025.**
  - 9.d Motion to approve the Budget for 2025/26 adopt and set the precept for 2025/26 at £122,332.**

**10. Motion to purchase a second weekly emptying of street litter bins, by Babergh Council, during the summer months at a cost not exceeding £800 per annum.**

**11. Motion to advertise for quotations for green maintenance and street cleaning.**

**12. Motion concerning how the Parish Council assesses Planning Applications.**

**13. Motion to create a Working Group to lead on safeguarding, maintaining and improving the network of footpaths and bridleways around Lavenham.**

**14. Date of next meeting – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Smith  
Clerk to the Council  
Parish Office  
Church St  
Lavenham

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 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, November 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. Eighteen 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 all Councillors were present.

### **2. Co-option of Lizzie Falconer or Alison Sherman as Councillor**

The Clerk explained that legal position is that there is one Councillor vacancy and that Babergh Council has advised that the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

Alison Sherman has withdrawn her application and therefore Lizzie Falconer is the only candidate.

Since she is the only candidate there is no need for Lizzie to outline her suitability and for this to be compared to other candidates.

He informed Councillors that Lizzie Falconer has provided evidence of her eligibility, completed the required Register of Interests form, has received a copy of the Code of Conduct and has been directed to the other Parish Council policies published on the Parish Council website.

He told Councillors that Lizzie Falconer has not requested a dispensation on any matter.

He informed Councillors that SALC and NALC advice is that when there are the same number or fewer candidates than vacancies then the legal position is that Council shall resolve to co-opt them to Council.

The Clerk explained that consequent of the legal position there is no vote but that Council practice, as followed when Cllrs Mawford, Robinson and Sherman joined, is that the motion to welcome Lizzie Falconer to Council is proposed and seconded.

**Proposal:** That the Parish Council welcomes Lizzie Falconer to the Council and asks Ms Falconer to sign the Acceptance of office with the Clerk instructed to a) inform Babergh District Council and b) lodge with Babergh District Council the 'Register of Members Interests' form.

**Proposed:** Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Morrey

Cllr Robinson asked why Alison Sherman had withdrawn her application. The Chair replied that she had given a reason but that she did not know whether Mrs Sherman wanted her reasoning made public. Cllr Robinson asked Cllr Sherman if he could explain why Mrs Sherman had withdrawn her application. The Chair asked Cllr Robinson if this question was relevant to the proceedings. Cllr Robinson replied that it was not. He then added that he considered it relevant to the meeting that Councillors be told why she has decided to withdraw. The Chair informed Cllr Robinson that this reasoning was not relevant and that the meeting would 'move on'.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

The Clerk reported that Cllr Robinson has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in respect of Second Meadow and Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell have declared a DPI in respect of Rowan Cottage. He explained that these Councillors would need to leave the room whenever these matters were discussed including during Public Participation.

### **4. Requests for Dispensations**

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

### **5. To approve as accurate minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 meeting of the Council**

**Motion:** to approve as accurate the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 meeting of Council.

Cllr Domoney asked why the reasons he left the meeting had not been included.

He said that he had been asked by people to attend the meeting to object to the appointment of Mr Mawford, Cllr Mitchells' husband, on grounds of propriety explaining that, in his opinion, since there had not been a vote, there had been no point in him remaining at the meeting because, had he remained, he would have appeared to acquiesce to impropriety and nepotism. He asked whether we are on the slippery slope to playing by either 'Belfast or Dublin rules'.

The Chair asked Cllr Domoney to moderate his language.

The Clerk explained that the tape records that Cllr Domoney said 'Will you excuse me? There is no point in me being here anymore, I was very strongly urged to attend, I'll be in touch, have a good day'.

The Chair intervened saying that whilst Cllr Domoney may have wished to say more that the Minutes can only record what was actually said. Cllr Domoney and the Clerk agreed to amend the minutes to record what Cllr Domoney actually said.

**Proposed:** Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Decision:** The minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 meeting of the Council were approved as accurate. Cllrs Domoney, Falconer, Robinson and Sherman abstained.

### **6. 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. Cllr Robinson left the room.

A Member of the Public asked why a Consultant had been engaged to help Council assess the application for the Wellness Centre on Second Meadow when Consultants had not been employed in the past even in connection with contentious applications. He asked what the cost incurred was.

The Chair responded that Consultants had been engaged in the past where the issues are complex and that the cost was £1,150.

A Member of the Public expressed his concerns about the proposed Wellness Centre saying that he was concerned about the flooding issues. He referred to recent storms recalling that Brent Eleigh Rd had flooded, that water in neighbouring areas had been up to 1.5m deep and Lavenham Studios had nearly flooded. He described the proposed development as un-needed and said it will reduce the size of the flood catchments and create a partial dam which will further raise the risk of flooding.

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.

A Member of the Public said that she had raised two Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests, one on the Parish Council and the second on Babergh. Across these bodies she said the total cost of LNP2 will be £93,000. Explaining that LNP2, should it be adopted, will be the roadmap for future development in Lavenham she said that there is little in the Plan which encourages new businesses to move to the area saying that new investment and expansion is key to sustainability and growth. As someone who is thinking of investing £2million she said that she needs to be sure that Lavenham is the best place to invest in and she asked the Parish Council to explain its vision, approach and specific plans to promote and support small businesses and encourage investment to ensure that Lavenham remains a vibrant and flourishing community. She concluded by asking how the income will be raised to cover the costs of preparing LNP2.

The Clerk responded that he had not seen the FOI response from Babergh but could detail the Parish Council's costs. These he explained were likely to be £37,000 with a Grant received from Central Government of about £18,000 meaning that the Parish Council will have spent £19,000. This he said had been spent over four years and had been funded by the Parish Council's income during that period.

The Chair said that the Member of the Public's other questions will be responded to in writing within 28 days but after the end of the Referendum period.

## **7. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair gave further information to Councillors concerning the report that had been commissioned costing £1,150 regarding the Planning Application for a Wellness Centre. She said the purpose was to provide objective expert advice. She explained that the decision to seek this advice had been made by the Clerk and was due to the complex nature of this application. The decision, she said, had been made with her approval and was in accordance with Council's standing orders.

She reminded Councillors that Babergh has announced that the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum will take place 28<sup>th</sup> November. She urged residents to read the document and urged those who are registered to vote to make the effort to exercise their democratic right.

The Chair informed Councillors that it had been anticipated that costings for the 20mph scheme would be received this week but that nothing had been received.

Council she said had noticed the recent reduction in opening hours of the Surgery, the Clerk has written to the Practice Manager seeking further clarifications and will publish any information made available.

She concluded by welcoming the new Village Pharmacist Anusha Deshmi. Anusha, she explained is licensed to prescribe and plans to offer other options to supplement and support local GP services.

## **8. Local Authority Councillors' Reports**

County Cllr Lindsay highlighted the key items in his report.

Efforts to progress the Green Willows footpath continue. He explained that until the new political regime took over at Babergh in May 2023, Babergh always refused to provide CIL money to communities for Highways purposes such as cycling and walking infrastructure. The new leadership at Babergh he said had over-turned this but Babergh officers have not worked with Highways before on infrastructure projects and are now having to build a relationship with Highways officers to work out what happens should costs overshoot Highway's estimate. Green Willows he said has become a bit of a test case. He said that he wished to allow Babergh officers some time to try to find a way forward with Highways but that he had made it clear to them that time is of the essence. He is prepared to contribute to the £5,000 costs of obtaining a firmer estimate if this will satisfy Babergh and allow the CIL bid to succeed.

The County's Cabinet will, he said, on November 5<sup>th</sup> allocate an extra £1.5m to deliver flood prevention work it has identified in the parish-based investigations it has by law to conduct (seven out of an estimated fifty total investigations done so far). It is asking for another £20 million from government. The Council has already committed £12.25m but only £2.25m of this was related to Babet directly. A further £10m was allocated over three years to try to address the massive ten-year backlog of drainage repair work it already had, even before Babet.

Separately, Cabinet in October agreed to contribute £2m to a scheme to protect Benacre, south of Lowestoft. The Environment Agency is contributing £30m and Sizewell C £27m.

The scheme will protect the A12 with a bank but will allow the valley, drained years ago, to be reflooded by the sea, creating hundreds of acres of saltmarsh habitat which will also act as a powerful carbon sink.

Suffolk County Council has announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to home owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest.

<https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>

Unlike the earlier Warm Homes grants, which failed to get adequate take up, these loans are not means tested.

His political group had brought forward a motion that the County review its priorities for repairing pavement defects in order to ensure quicker interventions where tripping incidents are most likely. He explained that if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more this will be repaired. His political group had argued that in areas of high footfall, or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high.

He said that since most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65 it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the Council had he said voted down our motion saying that a review of highways processes is being undertaken.

His group will try to input into this. He also considers that there ought also to be some flexibility over the maximum width of pavement that highways will clear of encroaching vegetation – currently no more than 50cm.

After the new Government scrapped Suffolk's plan for devolution, it is now "exploring" whether to put the County in charge of some £9.4million a year (60% of the £16m a year on offer in the original devolution deal) to have control of adult education schemes. That includes funding the three Suffolk further education colleges – currently directly funded by Central Government. A cabinet report is recommending the Council take up the offer of an annual "Adult Skills Fund" and officers have drawn up a "Strategic Skills Plan".

Cllr Mitchell asked if Highways usually deliver projects within budget. Cllr Lindsay replied that in general Highways execute projects very close to budget. This project he said is complicated by below ground BT cables.

Cllr Mitchell asked if the plans for a directly elected Mayor had been put on hold by the new Government. Cllr Lindsay confirmed that this is the case.

Cllr Domoney asked if Suffolk has any interest in Quantum Science and Artificial Intelligence. He is interested in setting up a training organisation. He asked if Suffolk is interested in setting up a Quantum cluster suggesting he might have to go to Germany, Morocco or Egypt. The Chair asked Cllr Domoney to email Cllr Lindsay.

District Cllr Clover said that he and Cllr Maybury both support the Green Willows Footpath and will continue to push Babergh Council to resolve the issues.

District Cllr Clover highlighted the key points from his report.

Despite previous assurances that the Cork's lane development of the old Council Offices in Hadleigh would return a profit the latest forecast is that it will produce a £3-3.5m loss.

Following extensive repair work to the roof, the Kingfisher pool is now due to reopen on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

Babergh District Council is inviting residents, groups and businesses in Stour Valley to find out more about creating community energy schemes. More information is on the Babergh website.

## **9. Planning Applications for Consideration**

The Clerk informed Cllrs that Babergh had refused permission for the part-demolition of a wall and construction of an off street parking Bay on Prentice St largely due to heritage considerations. The Parish Council had recommended approval.

The Chair introduced this part of the meeting reminding 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. With respect to the first application the Planning Groups overview is she said 'helpful' but as always it is up to individual Councillors to make up their own minds based upon the facts available to them.

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/24/04224**

Cllr Robinson left the room.

Second Meadow Stables, Brent Eleigh Rd  
Application for Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved. Erection of Wellness Centre (sui generis use). Removal of existing structures.

Cllr Lamont began by saying that it was unusual for this Council to consider sui generis use, the last time was concerning Number 10 Lady St, he informed Councillors that a professional report had also been obtained with respect to that application.

He explained that the previous application DC/23/02659 was refused for three reasons: Contrary to Policy SP03 Joint Local Plan, Accessibility and Flood Risk.

The application is, he said, for Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved at this stage meaning that the actual details of the buildings will be applied for later. This is an application, he said, for putting something on that site, the detail of what goes on in those buildings is not the subject matter of this application.

Cllr Lamont explained that policy Joint Local Plan SP03 is clear that development will only be permitted outside the settlement boundary when:

- a) The site is allocated for development, or
- b) It is in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan, or
- c) It is in accordance with one of the policies of this Plan (the JLP) listed in Table 5 or
- d) It is in accordance with paragraph NPPF 2023 para 84.

The site he said is not in accordance with a) or d) and that following detailed consideration of policies SP07 and LP12(2) the Planning Group considers the proposal not in compliance with point c).

He then explained that the site is in a 'Special Landscape Area' as described in LNP1 and is an 'Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity' as described in LNP2. LNP2 he explained (Policy LAV13) says that 'Outside the Settlement Boundary, development will be restricted to:

- a) Rural exception sites that are well connected to the settlement and key services and community-led developments adjacent to the settlement, where such a scheme accords with Policy LAV 17 of this Plan.
- b) Development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor recreation, essential education infrastructure and other uses that need to be located in the countryside.
- c) Replacement dwellings or residential extensions or annexes or conversions allowed for in the Local Plan.

- d) Uses appropriate to supporting a rural economy (rural employment uses) where such uses need to be located in the countryside and where they comply with other provisions in the development plan.
- e) Residential development that complies with one or more of the exceptional circumstances set out in paragraph 84 of the NPPF 2023

This application, he told Councillors is not for a community-led development and does not accord with LAV 17. It does not, he said, fit the purposes stated in (b) above and in (d), a Wellness Centre need not be in the countryside.

Cllr Lamont next considered Accessibility explaining that the current pedestrian access is by the River Brett along a muddy path, the only alternative pedestrian access is to walk in the carriageway of the A1141 in a section which is both unlit and subject to the National Speed Limit (60mph). Access he said was extremely difficult for those with mobility issues and non-compliant with Policy LAV41 in LNP2 which requires 'provision of safe, attractive paths, routes within the development site suitable for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or walking frame or using a mobility scooter.'

Lastly Cllr Lamont considered flooding describing this as a very technical area, he directed Councillors to the expert Consultee comments reporting to Councillors that these comments appeared contradictory and suggested that Council was not technically qualified to resolve such matters.

Cllr Lamont concluded by saying that since the previous rejection the land parcel proposed for the development of a Wellness Centre has not moved. It is still beyond the built-up area boundary defined in the Neighbourhood Plan 2016 and is not adjacent to it. It is beyond the proposed settlement boundary set out in the draft revised Neighbourhood Plan 2023 (LNP2). No overwhelming community need, he said, for a Wellness Centre in this location has been identified.

Pedestrian access on a routine and year round basis has not been identified. The proposal is contrary to policies LAV 13 and LAV 41 of LNP2.

Cllr Sherman asked why the footpath is described in LNP2 as an excellent footpath but is criticised in this report and whether the Consultant was appropriately qualified. The Clerk responded that Consultant was a Chartered Town Planner, an MRTPI.

Cllr Mitchell asked whether need has been established saying that she could not see evidence of a full survey. She noted the petition but said that it could not be considered that this evidenced a need, only a desire, adding that in general she supports providing more services in Lavenham but that it has to be on the basis of evidenced need and that other needs may take priority.

She drew attention to the Planning Statement on pages 54 and 55 where the application states it would be another attraction for residents and visitors but then says it would be unlikely to encourage more visitors to the area.

She questioned the impact on other local businesses since the applicant suggests that there will be few additional visitors to Lavenham.

She explained that it had to be considered whether the proposal, when considered collectively, brings more benefits than harm and therefore tilts the balance in favour of development outside the settlement boundary. She commented that such factors might be tangible health and welfare benefits that cannot be achieved anywhere else. The countryside, she said, cannot be recreated once lost.

Cllr Ranzetta described Cllr Mitchells comments as thorough and interesting expressing concern that this application is not necessarily for a wellness centre.

Cllr Domoney reminded all that LAV13 restricts development outside the Settlement Boundary to:

- a) Rural exception sites that are well connected to the settlement and key services and community-led developments adjacent to the settlement, where such a scheme accords with Policy LAV 17 of this Plan.
- b) Development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor recreation, essential education infrastructure and other uses that need to be located in the countryside.
- c) Replacement dwellings or residential extensions or annexes or conversions allowed for in the Local Plan.



Cllr Domoney expressed concerns that Lavenham Parish Council stops things from happening.

Cllr Mawford noted that there are some significant positives from the application such as the potential employment activities, potential improvements to the footpath and indeed the Wellness Centre itself.

He spoke of a number of what he considered to be factual errors in the Planning Application concerning the state of the footpath, the location as not being within a special landscape area and that the development will not directly impact village traffic flows. He questioned the way that the Sequential Test had been carried out.

He said that he wished the application had not been 'all matters reserved' He said he did not share Cllr Ranzetta's concern that this might not be an application for a Wellness Centre but that the plans give no idea as to what the Wellness Centre might look like.

Cllr Falconer highlighted the possible economic impact on a Community facility, the Village Hall. Cllr Lamont echoed these thoughts.

Cllr Bourne expressed her concerns about potential flooding.

Cllr Ranzetta explained that in her opinion the site is only safely accessible by car. The path she said, is unlit, muddy and unusable by those with a mobility scooter, wheelchair, pushchair etc and is therefore unsafe.

Cllr Mitchell spoke of the comments from other statutory consultees highlighting the Babergh Council Ecological Assessment Holding Objection "we are not satisfied sufficient information in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain has been provided prior to determination" and the Babergh Communities team comment "We feel some of the arguments of the section assessing need [for a Wellness Centre] versus desire for the facility are overstated.". "The proposed facility is unlikely to be transformational in reducing health inequalities". "The proportion of visitors to the Wellness Centre by foot rather than car has not been modelled and public transport not factored. Other factors, such as accessibility of the facility and cost relative to income are likely to be as significant."

Cllr Sherman asked whether people would consider investing such money without checking everything out.

Cllr Mawford said that in some way the application is unfair in that it does not contain detailed building heights etc to permit Council to take more a rounded view of the impact on the Community. A different application he said might be much easier to support.

Cllr Domoney suggested that refusing this application might give the impression that this village does not want to change from being a place where rich people buy expensive houses and wait to die.

Cllr Mitchell said that she was not clear if the applicant wants a Wellness Centre as her first priority or whether she wishes to build on the countryside.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/04224 not be recommended for approval

**Proposed:** Cllr Lamont

**Seconded:** Cllr Mawford

**Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Sherman and Domoney abstained.

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.

#### **DC/24/04658 and 04659**

The Crooked House, 7 High St, Lavenham CO10 9PR  
Householder Application and Application for Listed Building Consent for the erection of single storey rear extension (following demolition of existing single storey rear extension); Replacement of render on rear elevation with lime render; Installation of external boiler; Construction of garden room.

The applications were considered together.

Cllr Lamont explained that this is a landmark historic building.

The rear of the house is covered with cement render and the rear extension is a single skinned modern brick building. He told Councillors that the cement render is totally inappropriate for a timber framed building as it traps moisture and causes the timbers underneath to be damp and prone to rot. This application restores and re-renders these sections with traditional lime plaster.

This application demolishes a poorly built 20th century extension and replaces this with a new, timber frame extension and additionally constructs a single-room traditional-style outbuilding as a home office.

Both the extension and garden room are to be clad with timber weatherboard, painted black. Slate roofed. The extension has Conservation rooflights and the Garden room has solar panels on the west facing roof, the solar panels not visible from the Crooked house.

The new buildings will not be visible from the high street and are sympathetic to the surrounding buildings.

Cllr Muckian asked whether the work will reduce the light available to adjacent properties.

Cllr Mitchell noted that neighbours have lodged an objection but that from the street it is difficult to determine the precise locations of the properties and the consequent effect of the proposed works on access to light.

Cllr Mawford asked whether the solar panels would be visible noting that they are within the curtilage of a listed building. Cllr Mitchell said that the panels would not be visible from the street.

Cllr Robinson said that the matter was being considered too deeply, we are not Planning Specialists.

**Motion:** that Applications DC/24/04658 and 04659 be recommended for approval on the condition that Slate Roof tiles are specified on the extension and garden room as indicated on the elevation drawings and Planning Statement

**Proposed:** Cllr Robinson

**Seconded:** Cllr Sherman.

**Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Ranzetta and Mitchell abstained.

#### **DC/24/04664**

5 White Gates, Lavenham CO10 9FL

Application for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS41/A1. Fell 3 silver birch trees.

Cllr Lamont explained that the reasoning provided is that they currently need reducing again and will probably need doing every 3-4 years which is an ongoing cost". He said that there is no indication that these trees are diseased.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/04664 be refused, the trees should be pruned rather than felled.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Bourne.

**Decision:** Approved. Cllr Robinson abstained.

#### **DC/24/04672**

Mole Cottage, 32 Prentice St, Lavenham CO10 9RD

Notification of works to trees in a conservation area. Reduce Goat Willow by 50% and reduce the overhang over No 30 back to the boundary.

Cllr Lamont explained that this work represents ongoing maintenance to a tree.

**Motion:** that Application DC/24/04672 be approved.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Sherman

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**DC/23/05658**

Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell left the room.

Rowan Cottage, The Common, Lavenham CO10 9RL

Discharge of Conditions Application. Conditions 3 (External Finishes) and 4 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures).

Cllr Lamont explained that a decision had already been made by Babergh concerning this application.

The Clerk explained that Babergh did not consult the Parish Council on this because it's a Discharge of Conditions only. Cllr Lamont had however noticed the matter and so had included it on the Planning List. Because the Council had not been consulted on this the Clerk had not requested that Babergh allow the Parish Council an extension and so the consultation had concluded the previous day and Babergh had already approved the discharge of conditions.

The Clerk explained that Council could have had a view on this Discharge but the matter was now closed.

Cllr Robinson asked the minutes to include that this reflects a breach of planning not just a discharge of conditions.

Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell returned to the room.

**10. Clerk/RFO Report**

The Clerk explained that he would keep the Accounts portion short for this meeting saying that the next meeting of council will be 'finance heavy' because of the need, at the next meeting, to set a precept.

He reported that he has received a formal complaint concerning the work of the Planning Group specifically 'the procedures and administration of the collation of the information contained within the Parish Councils recommendation for a planning application'. Informal discussions between the Clerk and the Complainant had been unable to resolve the matter.

He explained that it was most likely that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be held to give the Complainant a full opportunity to detail the complaint, accompanied by their chosen representatives, to Councillors. At that meeting Councillors will decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made.

He said that he will propose dates and so find a date convenient to Councillors and the Complainant and asked all Councillors to make themselves available as much as they can saying that the complaint is a serious matter and the Complainant deserves the attention of as full a Council as possible. Councillors will decide, at that meeting, whether to exclude Members of the Public from that meeting.

He then reported concerning Complaints to the Monitoring Officer. He has been advised by the Monitoring Officer at Babergh Council that he should report to Council any Complaints to the Monitoring Officer where the Monitoring Officer has found that the Code of Conduct has been breached and that it is best practice to report to Council complaints which the Monitoring Officer has dismissed.

No Complaints have been upheld. Complaints have been raised against Cllrs Mitchell, Ranzetta and Sherman, the Monitoring Officer has dismissed these complaints. As far as he is aware there are no outstanding complaints.

The Clerk explained that he had included in his letter to the Practice Manager of the Surgery the arrangement that the Village Hall had secured with Babergh Council concerning concessionary car parking but no reply had yet been received. Cllr Mitchell reported that she had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Community Council and congratulated them on increasing the concession from two hours to three hours.

He has answered two Freedom of Information Act requests.

**Accounts for September 2024:**

The Clerk reported that variances compared to the reforecast were insignificant. The minor cost savings were largely timing as some maintenance tasks are taking a little longer to get going than had been anticipated. There had been no unanticipated changes in reserves. He added that whilst the October Accounts were not finalised he could report that October is likely to report a small surplus of £1,000 to £2,000 compared to the reforecast with key reasons being that the LNP group has so far spent considerably less than the £2,000 allocated to it for publicity and there has been some burial income.

**Receipts and Payments for September 2024:**

He explained the most significant payments and receipts made in the month.

**Motion:** to approve the accounts for the month ended 30 September 2024.

**Proposed:** Cllr Sherman

**Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**Motion:** to approve the Receipts and Payments for the month ended 30 September 2024

**Proposed:** Cllr Lamont

**Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**Annual Pay rise for the Clerk:**

The Chair explained that the pay of Local Government Staff is agreed between the Employers and the relevant Trades Unions. These negotiations are usually protracted and only in the last few weeks has the pay rise, effective 1 April 2024, been agreed. For employees on Spinal Point 42 such as the Clerk the pay rise is £1,290 per annum.

**Motion:** Council acknowledges its legal obligations to increase the Clerk's salary to £36,124 backdated to 1 April 2024 and the Chair is instructed to inform the payroll bureau.

**Proposed:** Cllr Morrey

**Seconded:** Cllr Falconer

**Decision:** Approved unanimously.

**11. The Parish Newsletter**

The Clerk explained that Council has frequently distributed a Christmas Newsletter written by the Chair of the Parish Council, together with a free copy of Lavenham Life, to every household. The December issue of Lavenham Life will contain the minutes of this meeting. The cost of purchasing the required 1,600 copies of Lavenham Life will depend on the final size of the Christmas issue but is likely to be between £1,100 and £1,400. The cost of printing the newsletter is likely to be approximately £200.

Cllr Lamont asked if there would still be a copy of December Lavenham Life if this motion fails, the Clerk explained that there would, the question is the whether each resident receives a free copy and a newsletter from the Chair.

Cllr Ranzetta spoke in support of this as being a way in which the community is drawn together and understand the work of the Parish Council. Cllr Sherman described it as a waste of money as most copies will be just thrown in the bin. Cllr Morrey spoke in support of the motion saying that the Christmas issue is likely to be read. The Clerk was asked to consider Lavenham Press for this printing work.

**Motion:** Council works with the publishers of Lavenham Life to ensure that every household in Lavenham receives a free copy of Lavenham Life together with a Parish Council newsletter at a maximum cost of £1,700. Section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972 'Publicity' gives the Parish Council the power to provide information about matters concerning local government.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Bourne

**Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Sherman, Robinson, Lamont, Domoney voted against. Cllr Mawford abstained.

## **12. Lorry Signage**

The Clerk explained that as per the motion passed at the meeting held on 5th September 2024 he had asked Suffolk Highways for a quote for only one of the proposed signs i.e. the large sign on the A134 at the Cockfield junction. That quote is £8,798.

Cllr Robinson supported the sign but expressed disappointment at the price quoted. Cllr Mitchell agreed but pointed out that Highways were the only supplier. Cllr Lamont pointed that the sign would need significant foundations.

Cllrs Sherman and Robinson emphasised that signs before the village is reached are important.

The Chair reminded Councillors that Council has asked Suffolk to consider funding signs on the Hadleigh side of Lavenham and to not fund this sign would undermine that initiative.

**Motion:** that the Parish Council accepts the quote for a replacement sign at a cost of £8,797.95 plus VAT to be paid for by Neighbourhood CIL funds using Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, section 72 which permits Parish Councils the 'Power to provide traffic signs and other notices'

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Falconer

**Decision:** Approved unanimously

## **13. Second Melford Rd Speed Indicator Device**

The Clerk read his report to the meeting.

**Motion:** that the Clerk order a Messagemaker device at a cost of £3,500 plus VAT using the power under Section 274A Highways Act 1980. Neighbourhood CIL will be used to fund this.

**Proposed:** Cllr Ranzetta

**Seconded:** Cllr Lamont

**Decision:** Approved unanimously

## **13. First Meadow Playground Equipment**

The Clerk explained that the Contractor has advised that the repair works to the multi play unit and the swings for £2,366 and £965 totalling £3,331 should be done immediately saying that there is a lot of rust on the equipment and if possible, it would be good to get it protected before the winter. The Contractor has advised that the re-surfacing work items of £5,600 and £3,765 totalling £9,365 could be delayed until Spring 2025. He says that surfacing materials have improved and a 'wet pour' is used rather than the tiles which are damaged by expanding in the summer sun and then contracting in the winter and the winter frosts. Should Council wish the work could be done over winter.

Cllr Robinson advised that the wet pour should be delayed until Spring.

**Motion:** that the Clerk instruct the contractor to carry out both works at a cost of £12,696, the repair works to be done as soon as possible and the resurfacing work in Spring 2025 using the powers referred to in Appendix A with Neighbourhood CIL used to fund this.

**Proposed:** Cllr Mitchell

**Seconded:** Cllr Mawford

**Decision:** Approved unanimously

## **Date of next meeting**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. The Meeting closed at 10.03pm.

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8a

BDC

LPC

October:

03988	The Grove, 5 Lady St	Reduce Oak Tree protected by TPO	Approval	Approval
04270	19D Shilling St	Fell Tree	Approval	No decision
03400	The Guildhall	Fire Protection	Approval	Approval
01661	Mole Cottage 32 Prentice St	Part demolition wall and provision of off-street parking	Refusal	Approval
01662	Mole Cottage 32 Prentice St	Part demolition wall and provision of off-street parking	Refusal	Approval

November:

03268	Coppers, Sudbury Rd	Side and Rear extensions and demolition of garage	Approval	Approval
04672	Mole Cottage, 32 Prentice St	Reduce Tree	Approval	Approval
04664	5 White Gates	Fell 3 Silver Birch	Approval	Approval

Open items:

03337	Mill Cottage, Bears Lane	Erection of timber fence following removal of hedge	Ongoing	Approval	
04037	Balsdon Hall, Bridge St Rd	Listed Building Consent: Repairs and replacements	Ongoing	Approval	
04224	Second Meadow	Wellness Centre	Ongoing	Refusal	
04658	Crooked House, 7 High St	Planning Permission: Rear extension	Ongoing	Approval	
04659	Crooked House, 7 High St	Listed Building Consent: Rear extension	Ongoing	Approval	
04787	22 The Glebe	Prune Maple	Ongoing	Ongoing	06-Dec
04939	The Old Manse, Barn St	Reduce Oak, pollard Hazel	Ongoing	Ongoing	06-Dec

## Lavenham Parish Council Planning Group.

### Planning Applications for consideration at LPC meeting on 5th December 2024 – Planning Group Recommendations

**Application for works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order BT166/A2 - T1 (Field Maple) to prune back to the previous points approximately 1.5m all around reduction The tree will be left with a smaller more compact crown**

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Westlands 22 The Glebe Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9SN

**Application. No:** DC/24/04787 | Received: Tue 29 Oct 2024 | Validated: Wed 30 Oct 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

This application represents regular maintenance to protected tree.

**Recommend Approval**

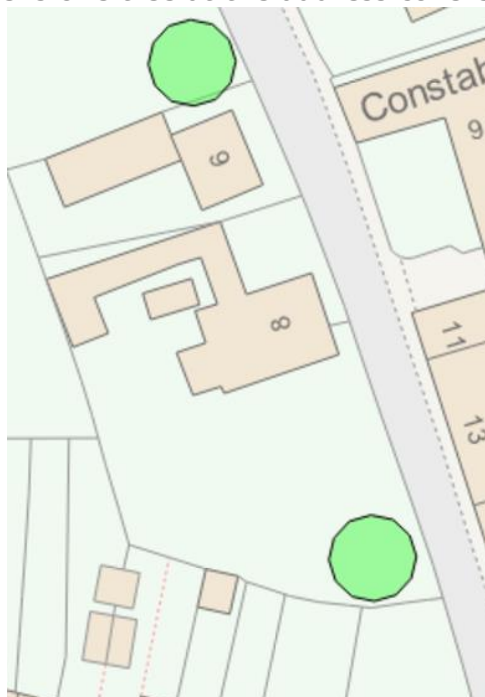
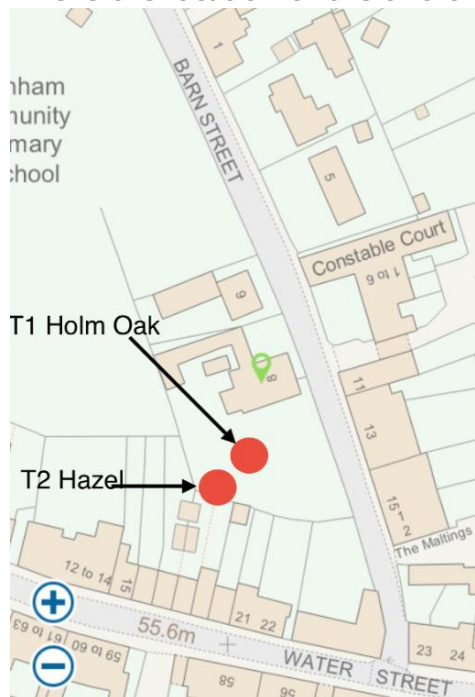
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**Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce Holm Oak (T1) by 40% and Pollard Hazel (T2) to approximately 1.5 metres above ground level.**

The Old Manse Barn Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RB

**Application. No:** DC/24/04939 | Received: Sat 09 Nov 2024 | Validated: Mon 11 Nov 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision

This is the location of the two trees There is one tree at the address covered by a TPO



These trees are not covered by a TPO, but are in the conservation area. The request is to prune to reduce the size as maintenance.

**Recommend Approval**

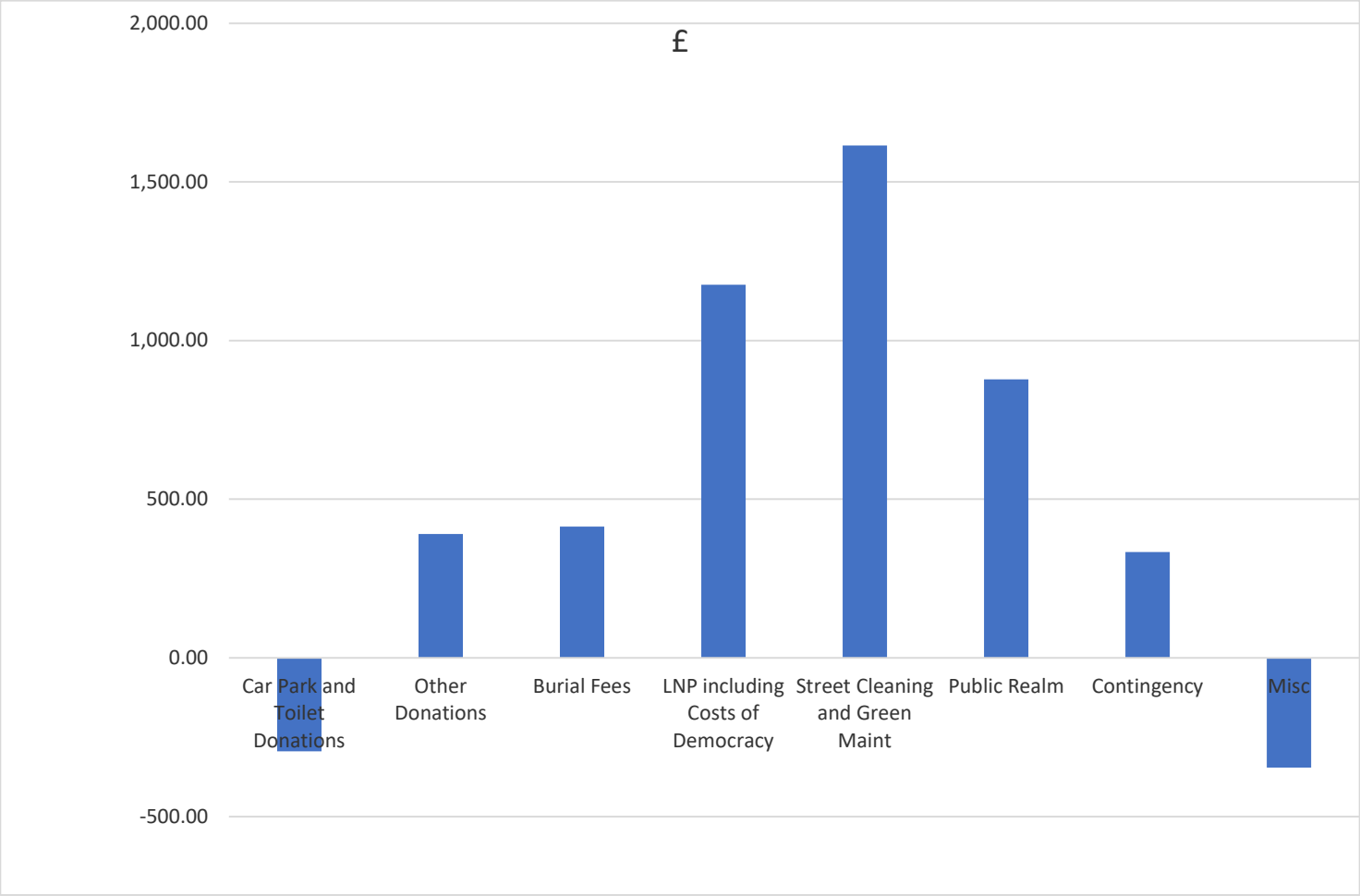
**Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/03084 - Conditions 8 (Boundary Treatment) and 9 (Outbuilding Repairs)**

The Hall Hall Road Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9QX

**Application. No:** DC/24/04869 | Received: Tue 05 Nov 2024 | Validated: Tue 05 Nov 2024 | Status: Awaiting decision **Consultation closure date 26/11/24**

Reviewing the documents the boundary treatments & repairs look to be in keeping with the existing buildings – e.g. matching brick & black weatherboarding.





	April Actual Mth	May Actual Mth	Jun Actual Mth	Jul Actual Mth	Aug Actual Mth	Sep Actual Mth	Oct Actual Mth	Actual YTD	Forecast YTD	Favourable /(Adverse)	Notes
Precept	9,916.67	9,916.67	9,916.67	9,916.67	9,916.67	9,916.67	9,916.67	69,416.67	69,416.67	0.00	No variance
Babergh Cleansing Grant	1,041.04	1,041.04	1,041.04	1,041.04	1,041.04	1,041.04	1,041.04	7,287.28	7,287.28	0.00	No variance
Fixed Income	10,957.71	10,957.71	10,957.71	10,957.71	10,957.71	10,957.71	10,957.71	76,703.95	76,703.95	0.00	
Burial Fees	753.00	400.00	778.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	914.00	3,345.00	2,931.00	414.00	Variable depending on number of deaths
Car Park and Toilet Donations	1,311.25	1,323.96	1,225.30	1,528.07	1,767.75	1,255.76	907.10	9,319.19	9,613.33	-294.14	Running below even reduced expectations
Other Donations	40.00	10.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	90.00	470.00	80.00	390.00	Hire of Lights and Sudbury Cycle Club
EV Charging Income	72.91	81.82	74.48	27.70	23.21	67.96	283.08	631.16	360.12	271.04	Very overdue revenue from 2023 received from Anglia Charging
Interest Received	400.00	726.04	400.00	400.00	760.87	400.00	400.00	3,486.91	3,486.91	0.00	No variance
Variable Income	2,577.16	2,541.82	2,507.78	1,955.77	2,551.83	2,523.72	2,594.18	17,252.26	16,471.36	780.90	
Total Income	13,534.87	13,499.53	13,465.49	12,913.48	13,509.54	13,481.43	13,551.89	93,956.21	93,175.31	780.90	Misc items, none significant
Management Costs	3,459.00	3,539.00	3,576.33	3,473.44	3,554.44	3,554.44	4,567.37	25,724.01	25,465.63	-258.38	£1,150 spent on specialist Planning advice.
Office costs	814.98	708.99	613.48	608.93	831.99	657.60	884.37	5,120.34	5,228.06	107.72	Negligible Cllr Training Costs incurred
LNP including Costs of Democracy	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	505.00	56.25	1,042.26	1,823.51	3,000.00	1,176.49	Publicity Budget underspent, possibly timing.
Street Cleaning and Green Maint	3,051.04	2,880.51	2,907.30	2,577.30	3,357.75	5,193.38	2,487.30	22,454.55	24,069.37	1,614.82	£1,000 budgeted as Playground routine repairs, replaced by the NCIL major repairs.
Public Realm	686.00	794.00	596.00	591.78	1,343.36	934.32	731.78	5,677.25	6,555.13	877.88	Some progress made but forecast assumed faster progress eg pump repainting.
Toilet Costs	1,193.69	1,407.15	1,742.79	918.34	1,474.82	1,137.40	1,126.68	9,000.84	9,098.30	97.46	Minor phasing of invoices
Water St	351.02	351.02	351.02	-1,755.92	313.08	313.08	313.08	236.38	236.38	0.00	No variance
Community Events including Grants	0.00	1,128.86	0.00	2,530.80	118.80	260.80	0.00	4,039.26	3,878.46	-160.80	Lavenham Airfield Plaques
EV Costs	65.99	23.85	63.83	37.70	41.76	49.55	436.71	719.39	316.65	-402.74	Very overdue costs from 2023 received from Anglia Charging
Sinking Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	No variance
Contingency	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	333.34	333.34	Contingency
Total Costs	9,676.70	10,888.36	9,905.73	9,037.37	11,541.00	13,156.82	12,589.54	76,795.53	80,181.31	3,385.78	
Surplus/(Deficit)	3,858.16	2,611.16	3,559.75	3,876.11	1,968.54	324.61	962.34	17,160.68	12,994.00	4,166.68	

	April Actual Mth	May Actual Mth	Jun Actual Mth	Jul Actual Mth	Aug Actual Mth	Sep Actual Mth	Oct Actual Mth	Actual YTD	Forecast YTD	Favourable /(Adverse)
Staff salaries and Other Consultancy Costs	3,403.00	3,403.00	3,440.33	3,415.44	3,415.44	3,415.44	4,428.37	24,921.01	24,662.63	-258.38
Audit and Payroll bureau costs	56.00	136.00	136.00	58.00	139.00	139.00	139.00	803.00	803.00	0.00
Management Costs	3,459.00	3,539.00	3,576.33	3,473.44	3,554.44	3,554.44	4,567.37	25,724.01	25,465.63	-258.38
Telephone & broadband	95.05	82.06	82.06	82.06	82.06	82.06	90.43	595.78	587.41	-8.37
Website Dev and .gov	59.40	59.40	59.40	59.40	149.40	59.40	114.80	561.20	505.80	-55.40
Accounting software & computer	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Office Materials	9.99	9.99	9.99	27.93	204.99	9.99	9.99	282.87	342.89	60.02
Data Protection	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	-35.00
Subscriptions & Insurance	211.16	211.16	211.16	211.16	211.16	277.77	277.77	1,611.33	1,605.80	-5.53
All Training/Cllr expenses	0.00	140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	150.00	290.00	340.00	50.00
Room hire PC meetings	105.00	22.00	44.00	44.00	0.00	44.00	22.00	281.00	303.00	22.00
Office Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Digital mapping	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00
Parish Office business rates	101.05	101.05	101.05	101.05	101.05	101.05	101.05	707.33	707.33	0.00
Parish Office rent	83.33	83.33	83.33	83.33	83.33	83.33	83.33	583.33	583.33	0.00
Office Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	22.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.49	102.49	80.00
Office costs	814.98	708.99	613.48	608.93	831.99	657.60	884.37	5,120.34	5,228.06	107.72
LNP Costs incl Cost of Democracy	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	505.00	56.25	1,042.26	1,823.51	3,000.00	1,176.49
Green Maintenance	958.75	1,183.75	958.75	958.75	958.75	958.75	958.75	6,936.25	7,436.25	500.00
Tree Maintenance and Care	380.00	0.00	420.00	0.00	760.00	2,300.00	0.00	3,860.00	3,860.00	0.00
Street cleansing	1,278.40	1,278.40	1,278.40	1,278.40	1,278.40	1,278.40	1,278.40	8,948.80	8,948.80	0.00
Refuse collection bins & dog bins	298.74	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	253.08	115.00	1,126.82	988.74	-138.08
Chapel Business Rates	135.15	135.15	135.15	135.15	135.15	135.15	135.15	946.02	946.02	0.00
All cemetery management	0.00	168.21	0.00	90.00	110.45	0.00	0.00	368.66	589.56	220.90
Play equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	268.00	0.00	268.00	1,300.00	1,032.00
Street Cleaning and Green Maint	3,051.04	2,880.51	2,907.30	2,577.30	3,357.75	5,193.38	2,487.30	22,454.55	24,069.37	1,614.82
Street furniture	90.00	198.00	0.00	0.00	751.58	342.54	140.00	1,522.12	2,400.00	877.88
Street Lighting energy	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
PWLB interest	96.00	96.00	96.00	91.78	91.78	91.78	91.78	655.13	655.13	0.00
Public Realm	686.00	794.00	596.00	591.78	1,343.36	934.32	731.78	5,677.25	6,555.13	877.88
Church Street energy	116.23	82.97	73.53	66.05	66.21	65.05	85.96	556.00	604.99	48.99
Church Street water	0.00	279.82	0.00	0.00	370.73	0.00	0.00	650.55	650.55	0.00
Church St Toilets Business Rates	67.37	67.36	67.37	67.37	67.36	67.37	67.37	471.56	471.56	0.00
Prentice St Water	0.00	98.55	0.00	0.00	173.69	0.00	0.00	272.24	272.24	0.00
Prentice St non EV energy	38.34	36.69	40.22	37.05	37.00	36.93	35.48	261.71	269.30	7.59
Donation Points	35.90	35.90	35.90	35.90	35.90	35.90	35.90	251.30	251.30	0.00
Washroom Cleaning & Consumables	660.85	660.85	1,200.77	711.97	723.92	932.15	711.97	5,602.48	5,558.36	-44.12
Washroom Minor Maintenance	275.00	145.00	325.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	190.00	935.00	1,020.00	85.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Toilet Costs	1,193.69	1,407.15	1,742.79	918.34	1,474.82	1,137.40	1,126.68	9,000.84	9,098.30	97.46
Water Street green maintenance	96.85	96.85	96.85	96.85	96.85	96.85	96.85	677.95	677.95	0.00
Water Street Business Rates	254.17	254.17	254.17	-1,852.77	216.23	216.23	216.23	-441.57	-441.57	0.00
Water St	351.02	351.02	351.02	-1,755.92	313.08	313.08	313.08	236.38	236.38	0.00
Small Grants (combined)	0.00	500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Christmas trees/lighting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xmas Eve Community Carols	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1st Meadow summer facilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.80	118.80	30.80	0.00	180.40	249.60	69.20
Misc	0.00	628.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	230.00	0.00	858.86	628.86	-230.00
Bellward Award	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Events including Grants	0.00	1,128.86	0.00	2,530.80	118.80	260.80	0.00	4,039.26	3,878.46	-160.80
EV Costs	65.99	23.85	63.83	37.70	41.76	49.55	436.71	719.39	316.65	-402.74
Sinking Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Contingency	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	333.34	333.34
Total Expenses	9,676.70	10,888.36	9,905.73	9,037.37	11,541.00	13,156.82	12,589.54	76,795.53	80,181.31	3,385.78

	Mar 24	Oct 24	Increase/(decrease)	Notes
Fixed Assets	150,968.05	146,934.44	-4,033.61	Pump Ct Cancellation
Debtors	0.00	0.00	0.00	None
Accrued Income	3,732.86	1,225.15	-2,507.71	Interest and car park donation. March included 3 mth Cleaning Grant
Prepayments	762.95	5,658.77	4,895.83	Mainly Business Rates and Insurance
VAT Refunds	2,091.70	2,502.30	410.60	Purchase dependent
	6,587.50	9,386.22	2,798.72	
Cash at Bank	377,684.76	444,214.74		
Bus Prem	7,223.42	3,535.75		
Current Acc	0.00	0.00		
Petty Cash	384,908.18	447,750.49	62,842.31	Precept and Cleaning Grant for whole year received
Trade Creditors	-13,083.74	-6,379.99	-6,703.75	Payment of Suffolk Annual Lights bill of £5k
Accruals	-15,071.07	-16,006.22	935.15	Insignificant
Deferred Income	0.00	-54,788.53	54,788.53	Precept and Cleaning Grant for whole year received
Lights Creditor	-133,633.91	-129,600.30	-4,033.61	Pump Ct Cancellation
	-161,788.72	-206,775.04	44,986.32	
Loans	-72,452.44	-69,268.65	-3,183.79	Capital Repayments made
Net Assets	308,222.57	328,027.45	19,804.88	
General Funds	159,753.32	185,660.26	25,906.94	Surplus and release of Cemetery and telephone earmarks
Ballot Fund	4,800.00	4,800.00	0.00	No change
Public Realm	869.09	0.00	-869.09	Released earmark as now spent
Cemetery Clean Up	5,000.00	0.00	-5,000.00	Released Aug 2024
Telephone Box Maintenance	6,000.00	0.00	-6,000.00	Telephone Boxes paid for using NCIL
Lavenham Funds in Trust	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	No change
Street Fair Fund	6,265.37	6,265.37	0.00	No change
Sinking Fund	36,872.80	41,995.64	5,122.84	Being increased by £1,000 per month
NCIL	87,161.99	87,806.19	644.20	£21k received, £20k spent (£5k SID, £9k Bridge. £6k phone boxes)
Total Reserves	308,222.57	328,027.45	19,804.88	
Imbalance	0.00	0.00	0.00	

	B/F	Per I and E contains no earmarks	In lieu dep'n lighting earmark	NCIL Cash received	NCIL Cash Spent	Cemetery Release	Public Realm items Capitalised	C/F	
General Funds	159,753.32	17,160.68	-3,122.84	0.00	6,000.00	5,000.00	869.09	185,660.26	0.00
Ballot Fund	4,800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,800.00	0.00
Public Realm	869.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-869.09	0.00	0.00
NCIL	87,161.99	0.00	0.00	20,967.20	-20,323.00	0.00	0.00	87,806.19	0.00
Lavenham Funds in Trust	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
Cemetery Clean Up	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-5,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Telephone Box Maintenance	6,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-6,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sinking Fund	36,872.80	2,000.00	3,122.84	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	41,995.64	0.00
Street Fair Fund	6,265.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,265.37	0.00
Total Reserves	308,222.57	19,160.68	0.00	20,967.20	-20,323.00	0.00	0.00	328,027.45	0.00

Stocksigns	-3,500.00	-601.58 Glasdon
Playquip	-9,187.43	-77.54 Glasdon
L Carr Phone Box	-6,200.00	-265.00 Paul Holland
1st Meadow Bridge Rd	-235.57	-944.12
SID Posts Accrual	-1,200.00	
	-20,323.00	

Check 0.00

Current

30/09/2024	Balance Brought Forward	3,857.35
01/10/2024	Donation: Sudbury Cycle Group	90.00
04/10/2024	NEST: Pension Contributions	-166.79
07/10/2024	Car Parking: Card Payments	93.10
08/10/2024	Supplier Payment: British Gas	-52.02
08/10/2024	Car Parking: Cash Payments	210.00
09/10/2024	HMRC: PAYE	-2,507.83
09/10/2024	Andrew Smith Net Wages	-2,288.33
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Bartlett's Tree Surgeons	-2,760.00
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Command Pest Control	-159.00
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: JPB Landscapes	-2,800.80
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Paul Holland	-265.00
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Playquip Leisure	-11,024.92
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Onsite IT	-71.28
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Infinity Cleaning	-872.58
09/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Glasdon Limited	-93.05
09/10/2024	Transfer from Deposit Account	25,000.00
10/10/2024	Transfer from Deposit Account	5,000.00
10/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Friends of Lavenham Airfield	-230.00
10/10/2024	Supplier Payment: L Carr Phone Boxes	-7,440.00
10/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Seago and Stopps	-140.40
11/10/2024	Supplier Payment: British Gas	-38.81
11/10/2024	EV Income Fuuse	40.94
14/10/2024	Car Parking: Cash Payments	120.00
14/10/2024	Burial: Halstead Memorial	85.00
14/10/2024	Burial: Halstead Memorial	260.00
14/10/2024	Car Parking: Card Payments	107.35
14/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Deborah Sullivan LNP Leaflet Printing	-303.43
14/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Glasscubes	-31.50
14/10/2024	Burial: Luxsigns	484.00
15/10/2024	Supplier Payment: British Gas	-68.42
21/10/2024	Supplier Payment: BT	-83.66
21/10/2024	Car Parking: Card Payments	76.95
15/10/2024	Burial: Spencer Wix	85.00
22/10/2024	Car Parking: Cash Payments	140.00
28/10/2024	Car Parking: Cash Payments	100.00
28/10/2024	Supplier Payment: EE	-10.04
28/10/2024	Car Parking: Card Payments	77.90
25/10/2024	Supplier Payment: BT	-14.81
25/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Information Commissioner	-35.00
29/10/2024	Supplier Payment: HP Inks	-11.99
30/10/2024	Supplier Payment: OutDesign	-500.00
30/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Bannerbuzz	-37.10
30/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Paul Holland	-140.00
30/10/2024	Supplier Payment: Community Action Suffolk	-102.00
30/10/2024	Supplier Payment: PAYA Cardless	-43.08
31/10/2024	Balance Carried Forward	3,535.75

31/10/2024	Per Bank Statement	3,535.75
		0.00

Premium

30/09/2024	Balance Brought Forward	460,532.47
09/10/2024	Transfer to Current Account	-25,000.00
10/10/2024	Transfer to Current Account	-5,000.00
14/10/2024	NCIL Received	10,451.90
14/10/2024	VAT Refund	3,230.37
31/10/2024	Balance Carried Forward	444,214.74
31/10/2024	Per Bank Statement	444,214.74
		0.00



Transactions

COMMUNITY 20-83-50 00567094

Available balance	£5,613.18
Last night's balance	£5,613.18
Overdraft limit	£0.00

Showing 7 transactions between 30/10/2024 and 04/11/2024 from 30/10/2024 to 04/11/2024

Date	Description	Money in	Money out	Balance
04/11/2024	Direct Debit NEST IT000007669739 DDR		-£166.79	£3,463.96
04/11/2024	Counter Credit CHARITIES TRUST CP14679 BGC	£95.00		£3,630.75
30/10/2024	Bill Payment OUT DESIGN 344 BBP		-£500.00	£3,535.75
30/10/2024	Bill Payment DEBORAH SULLIVAN BANNERBUZZ BBP		-£37.10	£4,035.75
30/10/2024	Bill Payment PAUL HOLLAND LPC BBP		-£140.00	£4,072.85
30/10/2024	Bill Payment COMMUNITY ACTION S INVS 5014 + 5127 BBP		-£102.00	£4,212.85
30/10/2024	Direct Debit GOCARDLESS CORNERSTONEM-HNTFP DD R		-£43.08	£4,314.85

3,535.75



MR ANDREW JOHN SMITH

Transactions

Business Premium ME 20-83-50 20567116

Available balance	£436,237.28
Last night's balance	£436,237.28
Overdraft limit	n/a

Showing 6 transactions between 09/10/2024 and 18/11/2024 from 01/10/2024 to 22/11/2024

Date	Description	Money in	Money out	Balance
18/11/2024	Funds Transfer 208350 00567094 FT 208350 00567094 FT		-£10,000.00	£436,237.28
12/11/2024	Counter Credit HMRC VTR XSV126000100262 BGC	£2,022.54		£446,237.28
14/10/2024	Counter Credit BABERGH PAYMENTS 0 BGC	£10,451.90		£444,214.74

44,214.74

## Agenda Item 9

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Reforecast for 2024-25, Budget Setting and Precept for 2025-26

1. Council is required to effectively manage its financial responsibilities. This means:
  - Preparing a budget based on best evidence of need
  - Setting a precept at the appropriate level to ensure that known obligations are met
  - Ensuring that the Council retains a sufficient reserve at an acceptable level
2. General guidance from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils is shown below:
  - *“All local councils need to produce an annual revenue budget which sets out the financial requirements for the forthcoming year. This becomes the basis upon which spending policy is approved and the amount of cash required to finance spending plans is calculated.”* SALC Module 2
  - *“Every council needs to retain a ‘working balance’ which is sufficient to avoid a cash overdraft during the year and which will provide adequate cover against contingencies. This balance is held on behalf of the local council taxpayer and, where possible, any excess should be used to reduce future council tax bills. On the other hand, depleted balances (or reserves) will need to be built up to an acceptable level. The level of the ‘working balance’ should therefore be reviewed as part of the budget setting process each year”* SALC Module 2
3. *The Good Councillors Guide on Finance 2017* (NALC) sets out the key stages in the budgeting process:
  - a. review of current year budget and spending
  - b. determine the cost of spending plans
  - c. assess levels of anticipated income
  - d. provide for contingencies and the need for reserves
  - e. approve the budget
  - f. set the precept

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

### 4. Review of Current year 2024–25

In December 2024, the following budget was set:

<b>Income £142,500</b>	<b>Expenditure £140,500</b>	<b>Contingency £2,000</b>	<b>Surplus £Nil</b>
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Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> October approved Reforecast 1 based on actual financial information to end August.

The key change was the inclusion of £10,000 of Car Parking Donations as it was clear that these were going to be received for much of 2024/25. Together with various less significant changes these changes increased Total Income to £153,400.

Council took the decision to invest this extra income into the building up of a sinking fund at a cost of £7,000 and the funding of the publicity and final preparation costs of the LNP of £3,000.

Expenditure remained at £140,000 due to the Water St business rates coming in less than assumed (£3,000), the correction of a budgeting error for Green Maintenance (£2,000), the cancellation of the Bellward Award, the Cemetery maintenance work being done by volunteers and a reduced estimate as to likely spend on Councillor Training (each £1,000) being the most significant items.

### At Re-forecast 1 the revised financial plan was set as:

<b>Income £153,400</b>	<b>Expenditure £140,304</b>	<b>Contingency £1,167</b>	<b>Surplus £11,929</b>
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## LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

In preparation for annual precept setting, a 2nd Reforecast based on actual financial information to end October 2024 has been prepared.

**At Reforecast 2 the proposed revised financial plan is:**

<b>Income £154,111</b>	<b>Expenditure £138,776</b>	<b>Contingency £833</b>	<b>Surplus £14,502</b>
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The changes in estimated income are insignificant. The only significant changes in costs are a reduction of £2,700 in Street Cleaning and Green Maintenance largely because £1,500 had been forecast for minor playground equipment repairs and this was replaced by much more significant spending financed by Neighbourhood CIL. Estimates of spend on toilet repairs and Christmas festivities have been marginally increased. The toilets have an underfloor leak and some replacement Christmas lights may be required.

**Motion: Council is asked to approve Reforecast 2 for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

### **5. Consideration of contingencies and the need for reserves**

As the Guidance in Point 2) above says: 'Every council needs to retain a 'working balance' which is sufficient to avoid a cash overdraft during the year and which will provide adequate cover against contingencies'.

#### **General Cash Reserve:**

Our Cash General Reserve is satisfactory for a Council of this size and fixed income.

Whilst there is no definitive guidance, 6 to 9 months is considered a norm for Councils such as Lavenham. The Parish Council has long aimed for 8 months. Calculated by dividing the free cash by the 2024/25 expenditure the General Cash Reserve as at 31 March 2025 is anticipated to be 10.4 months.

The purpose of the Cash General Reserve is to ensure the Council can continue to meet its obligations, in the event of a sudden increase in operational costs or reduction in income and have a sufficient source of ready funds to meet unforeseen relatively minor costs of maintaining existing assets or enable the Council to take opportunities to enhance facilities for residents as they arise.

This level of Cash Reserves is sufficient to 'keep the show on the road; but leaves no scope to pay or contribute towards sizeable capital items.

#### **Sinking Fund:**

The purpose of the Sinking Fund is to have funds immediately available to repair or replace Council Assets. Assets are insured where possible but will not pay out for expenditure required simply because of age-related deterioration.

The Council's main assets are the Street Lights, Play Equipment (generally 20 years old), the Water St Car Park, the Prentice St toilet block, the Fixtures and Fittings of the Church St toilets, No 2 Lady St, the Cemetery, and the Churchyard wall and gates.

These assets have a total historic cost of £665,000. The fund held by Council is scheduled to be £47,000 at 31 March 2025. Council has previously expressed a desire to raise this to £70,000.



**Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy:**

Council and residents have been fortunate to have been awarded substantial capital in recent years from the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Neighbourhood Infrastructure awards arising from developments in the village.

Receipts from Neighbourhood CIL will likely reduce to negligible amounts from next year.

Whilst Council will still be able to bid for funds from the District held Community Infrastructure Levy, 25% of the costs of each award will have to be met from Cash General Reserves once the current NCIL fund has been spent. Other sources of external grants are possible but, in most cases, there is almost always a requirement to provide Council resources to support an external award. Grants, whether from CIL or other organisations are not a given, either in securing awards or in their perpetuity.

Council is expected to have NCIL funds of some £63,000 at 31 March 2025 of which some £10,000 will be required for the Green Willows streetlight.

**6. Risk Appraisal of Precept Options**

The setting of the Precept for 2025/26 is dominated by two issues:

a) Toilet Donations.

The extent to which people wish to donate for toilets is unknown, almost certainly they will not wish to donate the minimum £3 currently required at the card donation points. It is likely that most donations will be between 50p and £2 as is currently the average coin box donation.

£2,250 has been included in the forecast which would require 10 donations of £1 per day between Easter and the November half term break. This is some £8,000 lower than in 2024/25.

b) Uncertainty concerning the costs of Green Maintenance and Street Cleaning

The current three year contract expires March 31 2025. It might have been expected that three years inflation would be 10% and so an increased cost of 10% might be anticipated.

However, since the renewal there has been one year of 10% inflation and minimum wage has risen from £8.91 per hour in 2021/22 to £11.44 per hour in 2025/26. An increase of 28%.

Reflecting the governments priorities and its policies of making Employers responsible for funding it's Public Spending plans (e.g. the recent rise in Employers NI) it is highly likely that an increase of 25% to 30% will be requested. An increase of 25% has been forecast costing £8,000.

Should the increase be 30% the extra cost would be £10,000.

The Parish Council 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 stable or in line with inflation.

## LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

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)

### 7. Precept Considerations

Council reserves are estimated to drop from 10.4 months to 8.6 months should Option 1 be passed. This 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.

The provisional tax base (number of households paying Council Tax) for 2025-26 is 980.27 households. This is 27 households (2.8%) higher than in 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 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%

#### Motion:

**Council is asked to approve the Budget for 2025/26 adopt Option 1 and accordingly sets the precept for 2025-2026 at £122,332.**

	Budget 24/25	Fcast 1 2024/25	Fcast 2 2024/25	Budget 25/26	Favourable /(Adverse)	Change	Notes
Precept	119,000.00	119,000.00	119,000.00	122,332.00	3,332.00	3%	2.8 percent increase in tax base so no increase per household.
Babergh Cleansing Grant	12,000.00	12,492.48	12,492.48	13,117.10	624.62	5%	5 percent increase, tied to minimum wage
Fixed Income	131,000.00	131,492.48	131,492.48	135,449.10	3,956.62	3%	
Burial Fees	9,000.00	5,431.00	5,431.00	5,760.00	329.00	6%	Fee Increase of 5%
Car Park and Toilet Donations	0.00	10,099.29	10,099.29	2,250.00	-7,849.29	-78%	Big decline, unknown what donations will be.
Other Donations	0.00	330.00	720.00	720.00	0.00	0%	No change
EV Charging Income	500.00	560.12	881.16	600.00	-281.16	-32%	Very overdue revenue from 2023 received from Anglia Charging
Interest Received	2,000.00	5,486.91	5,486.91	2,400.00	-3,086.91	-56%	Falling Interest Rates
Variable Income	11,500.00	21,907.32	22,618.36	11,730.00	-10,888.36	-48%	
Total Income	142,500.00	153,399.80	154,110.84	147,179.10	-6,931.74	-4%	Misc items, none significant
Management Costs	45,124.20	45,124.20	45,124.20	48,000.03	-2,875.83	6%	7% increase for Employers NI, payrise and increment
Office costs	11,840.00	9,652.26	8,931.09	9,275.53	-344.44	4%	3% increase
LNP including Costs of Democracy	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	-100%	No further LNP spend
Street Cleaning and Green Maint	39,895.80	36,683.10	33,947.78	42,174.81	-8,227.03	24%	25% increase assumed
Public Realm	9,600.00	9,501.28	9,336.16	9,780.00	-443.85	5%	£7,000 of this is Street Lighting and loan Interest
Toilet Costs	15,640.00	15,953.46	16,817.16	17,809.65	-992.49	6%	7% Increase Employers NI and Minimum Wage
Water St	4,500.00	1,414.40	1,511.25	3,466.45	-1,955.20	129%	The Business Rates Saving was a one-off windfall
Community Events including Grants	12,700.00	11,449.60	12,139.26	12,139.26	0.00	0%	No variance
EV Costs	1,200.00	525.45	969.39	600.00	369.39	-38%	No late invoicing by Anglia Charging
Sinking Fund	0.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	12,000.00	-5,000.00	71%	12 Months contributions
Contingency	2,000.00	1,166.69	833.35	2,000.00	-1,166.65	N/A	Standard Contingency
Total Costs	142,500.00	141,470.44	139,609.63	157,245.73	-17,636.10	13%	
Surplus/(Deficit)	0.00	11,929.36	14,501.21	-10,066.63	-24,567.84	N/A	

LNP including Costs of Democracy 3,000.00

Street Cleaning and Green Maint -8,227.03

Car Park and Toilet Donations -7,849.29

Sinking Fund -5,000.00

Interest Received -3,086.91

Wages -2,875.83

Water St -1,955.20

Contingency -1,166.65

Toilet Costs -992.49

Other 253.56

Precept 3,332.00

-24,567.84

				Cash at 31 Mar 2025	365,342.48	
				Loss for 25/26	-10,066.63	
				Add Sinking Fund	12,000.00	
Cash at 31 October 2024	447,750.49		Cash at 31 Mar 2025	365,342.48	Cash at 31 Mar 2026	367,275.85
Surplus/Deficit Nov to Mar	-2,659.48					
Add Sinking Fund	5,000.00	2,340.52	NCIL	-62,806.19	NCIL	-62,806.19
			Lavenham Funds in Trust	-1,500.00	Lavenham Funds in Trust	-1,500.00
Deduct 5 months precept	-49,583.33		Capital Sinking Fund	-46,995.64	Capital Sinking Fund	-58,995.64
Deduct 5 mths cleaning grant	-5,205.20		Street Fair Fund	-6,265.37	Street Fair Fund	-6,265.37
	-54,788.53	-54,788.53	Council Election	-2,800.00	Council Election	-2,800.00
			Lights	-129,600.30	Lights	-129,600.30
			Free Cash	115,374.98		105,308.35
Lorry Signage	-8,800.00					
Melford Rd Sid and Posts	-4,700.00		Annual Spend excl Sinking Fund (23/24)	132,609.63	Annual Spend excl Sinking Fund (24/25)	145,245.73
Playground Equipment Repair	-12,700.00		Months	10.4		8.7
	-26,200.00	-26,200.00				
			NCIL 24/25	20,967.20		
Loan Repay	-3,760.00	-3,760.00	NCIL 23/24	41,838.99		
			NCIL 22/23	62,806.19		
Cash at 31 Mar 2025	365,342.48					

	Budget 24/25	Fcast 1 2024/25	Fcast 2 2024/25	Budget 25/26	Favourable /(Adverse)	Change	Notes
Staff salaries and Other Consultancy Costs	43,624.20	43,626.20	43,626.20	46,680.03	-3,053.83	7%	7 percent increase, annual wage rise and Increment
Audit and Payroll bureau costs	1,500.00	1,498.00	1,498.00	1,320.00	178.00	-12%	Shift to SALC as payroll bureau
Management Costs	45,124.20	45,124.20	45,124.20	48,000.03	-2,875.83	6%	
Telephone & broadband	1,200.00	997.71	995.78	900.00	95.78	-10%	Not Material
Website Dev and .gov	1,200.00	802.80	911.20	840.00	71.20	-8%	Not Material
Accounting software & computer	720.00	300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	#DIV/0!	Not Material
Office Materials	300.00	542.89	432.87	240.00	192.87	-45%	Not Material
Data Protection	0.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	0%	Not Material
Subscriptions & Insurance	2,700.00	2,980.80	3,000.18	3,444.35	-444.16	15%	Largely higher Insurance for whole year
All Training/Cllr expenses	2,000.00	840.00	540.00	600.00	-60.00	11%	Not Material
Room hire PC meetings	600.00	523.00	531.00	600.00	-69.00	13%	Not Material
Office Maintenance	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	#DIV/0!	Not Material
Digital mapping	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	0%	Not Material
Parish Office business rates	1,440.00	1,212.57	1,212.58	1,212.58	0.00	0%	Not Material
Parish Office rent	1,000.00	1,000.00	999.98	999.98	0.00	0%	Not Material
Office Miscellaneous	280.00	302.49	122.49	253.62	-131.13	107%	Not Material
Office costs	11,840.00	9,652.26	8,931.09	9,275.53	-344.44	4%	
LNP Costs incl Cost of Democracy	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	-100%	No Spend
Green Maintenance	11,505.00	9,775.00	9,888.75	12,079.69	-2,190.94	22%	25 percent increase
Tree Maintenance and Care	4,200.00	4,240.00	4,240.00	5,355.80	-1,115.80	26%	3 percent increase and £1,000 one-off
Street cleansing	16,590.80	16,340.80	15,340.80	19,176.00	-3,835.20	25%	25 percent increase
Refuse collection bins & dog bins	2,000.00	1,563.74	1,701.82	1,786.91	-85.09	5%	5 percent increase
Chapel Business Rates	1,800.00	1,621.75	1,621.75	1,621.75	0.00	0%	No Change
All cemetery management	1,800.00	1,141.81	618.66	618.66	0.00	0%	No Change
Play equipment	2,000.00	2,000.00	536.00	1,536.00	-1,000.00	187%	Minor repair items £1,000
Street Cleaning and Green Maint	39,895.80	36,683.10	33,947.78	42,174.81	-8,227.03	24%	
Street furniture	2,400.00	2,400.00	2,222.12	2,400.00	-177.88	8%	Insignificant Change
Street Lighting energy	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,360.00	-360.00	6%	6% Wage rise for local govt staff
PWLB interest	1,200.00	1,101.28	1,114.04	1,020.00	94.04	-8%	Reduction in capital owed
Public Realm	9,600.00	9,501.28	9,336.16	9,780.00	-443.85	5%	
Church Street energy	1,500.00	1,104.99	1,556.00	1,633.80	-77.80	5%	5 percent increase
Church Street water	1,200.00	1,392.01	1,350.55	1,418.08	-67.53	5%	5 percent increase
Church St Toilets Business Rates	960.00	808.38	808.38	808.38	0.00	0%	No Change
Prentice St Water	400.00	619.62	672.24	705.85	-33.61	5%	5 percent increase
Prentice St non EV energy	300.00	469.30	461.71	484.80	-23.09	5%	5 percent increase
Donation Points	480.00	430.80	430.80	452.34	-21.54	5%	5 percent increase
Washroom Cleaning & Consumables	9,600.00	9,558.36	9,602.48	10,274.65	-672.17	7%	7 percent increase
Washroom Minor Maintenance	1,200.00	1,570.00	1,935.00	2,031.75	-96.75	5%	5 percent increase
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	#DIV/0!	No Change
Toilet Costs	15,640.00	15,953.46	16,817.16	17,809.65	-992.49	6%	
Water Street green maintenance	1,200.00	774.80	871.65	871.65	0.00	0%	No increase
Water Street Business Rates	3,300.00	639.60	639.60	2,594.80	-1,955.20	306%	No one-off Saving
Water St	4,500.00	1,414.40	1,511.25	3,466.45	-1,955.20	129%	
Small Grants (combined)	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00	0%	Unchanged
Christmas trees/lighting	3,600.00	3,600.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.00	0%	Unchanged
Xmas Eve Community Carols	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	0%	Unchanged
1st Meadow summer facilities	500.00	249.60	180.40	180.40	0.00	0%	Unchanged
Misc	1,000.00	1,000.00	858.86	858.86	0.00	0%	Unchanged
Bellward Award	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	#DIV/0!	Unchanged
Community Events including Grants	12,700.00	11,449.60	12,139.26	12,139.26	0.00	0%	
EV Costs	1,200.00	525.45	969.39	600.00	369.39	-38%	Overdue costs from 2023 received from Anglia Charging
Sinking Fund	0.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	12,000.00	-5,000.00	71%	Whole Yr
Contingency	2,000.00	1,166.69	833.35	2,000.00	-1,166.65	140%	Whole Yr
Total Expenses	142,500.00	141,470.44	139,609.63	157,245.73	-17,636.10	13%	
Surplus/(deficit)	0.00	11,929.36	14,501.21	-10,066.63	24,567.84	-169%	

**Purchasing a second weekly emptying of street litter bins, by Babergh Council, during the summer months**

**Background:**

The street litter bins frequently overflow during the summer months.

Consideration has been given to purchasing extra bins but also to asking whether Babergh Council can empty these more regularly.

The Babergh Operations Officer has replied that an extra empty of some of the bins in Lavenham between the months of March/April (Easter) – 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.

This is preferable to purchasing more bins as the street scape is not additionally cluttered.

A small number of bins are in a poor condition, these will be replaced in due course.

**Motion:**

**To purchase a second weekly emptying of street litter bins, by Babergh Council, during the summer months at a cost not exceeding £800 per annum. The Clerk to provide a list of the bins selected for extra emptying.**

**Green Maintenance and Street Cleaning**

**Background:**

The Council contract for these items expires on 31 March 2025.

Council currently pays:

£9,050 per annum for Green Maintenance

£15,341 per annum for Street Cleaning

£775 per annum for Water St Car Park Maintenance

The total cost is therefore £25,166 per annum

**Green Maintenance:**

The schedule detailing the work to be done is attached as Appendix A.

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.

**Street Maintenance:**

This 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
  - Twice-yearly spray weed killer on pavement edges followed, after appropriate period, by removal of dead plant material

The current weekly schedule is attached as Appendix B.

**Street Maintenance Complaints:**

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.

## **LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:**

### **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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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. I did not walk entirely around Meadow Close.
- d) Verges on Sudbury Rd and Bury Rd and to a lesser extent Melford Rd contain litter.
- e) It is not reasonable to suggest the contractor manually sweep all streets in Lavenham and the costs of mechanised sweeping cannot be justified.
- f) Weeds and moss are more of an issue.

### **Weeds and Moss:**

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 a Babergh responsibility.

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

It is 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
- 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.

### **Pricing Suggestions:**

The Contractor 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.

### **Contract Suggestions:**

The Contractor gives prices for a three year contract and a one year contract.



## Tender Regulations:

Public contracts, with an estimated value (including VAT, since 1 January 2022):

- over £214,904 (previously £213,477) for goods or services, or
- over £5,372,609 (previously £5,336,937) for public works (construction),

must comply with the full requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (which will be replaced by the Procurement Act, when it takes effect later in 2024). These include specific tendering methods and timescales, as well as a requirement to advertise on both the [Contracts Finder website](#) and [Find-a-Tender](#) (the UK e-notification service).

Where a contract will run for several years, it is the total (not annual) value that matters.

Where the estimated total value (including VAT) is below these thresholds, but exceeds £30,000 (after 21 December 2022), a council is required to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder if they publish an open invitation to quote/tender. If they are inviting specific firms and not opening it up to wider competition, they don't have to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Reg. 110(5)(b)).

## Appendix A:

**Provide skilled operatives with relevant training, and certification where appropriate, using Contractor's equipment, to carry out and/or inspect for the following duties over the course of the year:**

### **LAVENHAM CEMETERY, Bridge Street Road, CO10 9SJ**

Pick litter in all areas

Cut and strim all grassed areas on a fortnightly schedule from March to October

Cut and collect grass in the lawn cemetery area

Blow, sweep, collect all hard-standing areas as and when required

Weed ashes burial area shingle

Treat/spray all hard-standing and paths for weeds and moss and remove all weeds growing after spraying has taken effect

Prune any low branches and remove any fallen branches from site

Twice yearly, lightly trim all hedges, last 6 months growth only,

including low Box hedging around ashes burial area

(collect and remove from site all arisings)

Empty and remove from site all litter in wheelie/rubbish bins and dispose

**On edges and verges where there are wildflowers, strim after flowering has ceased**

Visit site every two weeks throughout the growing season March to October

**Total for the above 18 visits per year .. .. .**

### **Extras upon request of the Parish Council:**

**Price per grave**, making good/turfing as appropriate

following burial

.. .. . **per grave**

**Hourly rate** for extra work, if and when it arises,

(minimum 2 hours work) as requested/directed by Parish Council .. .. . **per hour**

### **THE CHURCHYARD, Church Street, CO10 9QT**

#### Rear of the Church

Cut grass and leave arisings, includes strimming of the bank (full length, front to rear)

**Avoid cutting growing bulbs and wildflowers on the bank**

**Strim bank after flowering has ceased**

#### Front Churchyard

Cut and collect all grass within 3 m. of paths and walkways,

cut and discharge the centre areas

Visit site every two weeks throughout the growing season March to October

**Total for the above 18 visits per year .. .. .**

## **Routine winter maintenance of Churchyard and Cemetery (4 visits)**

### **Monthly through the off season, November to February**

Prune any low branches and remove any fallen branches from site

Lightly trim all hedges (last 6 months growth only)

Collect all leaf litter, remove arisings from site

Report any damage

In Cemetery treat/spray all hard-standing and paths for weeds and moss

- remove all weeds growing after spraying has taken effect

Remove all waste, cuttings and arisings from site (Cemetery wheelie/rubbish bins)

**Total for the above 4 visits per year .. .. .**

## **THE COMMON (Water Street/Lower Road) see Fig. 1, areas outlined in green**

Cut all grass marked on the map supplied, throughout the season

Visit site every two weeks throughout the growing season March to October

**Total for the above 18 visits per year .. .. .**

## **FIRST MEADOW, Brent Eleigh Road, CO10 9PE see Fig 2, areas outlined in red**

Cut as sports field, including strimming around all obstacles and play equipment

Visit site every two weeks throughout the growing season March to October

### **Maintain pathway through the site**

**Allow wildflowers towards back of meadow to fully grow and remove once flowering season has ended**

**Total for the above 18 visits per year .. .. .**

### **Strimming of First Meadow**

Strim all perimeter fence line to First Meadow, 6 visits (every 3<sup>rd</sup> cut to main area)

**Total for the above 6 visits per year .. .. .**

**Although all areas are combined in one contract please quote annual cost per area. All prices quoted should be exclusive of VAT.**

***Insurance***

*The Contractor is required to have professional and public liability insurance and a current Certificate of Insurance to this effect must be produced to the Parish Clerk prior to commencement of the contract. The Contractor shall indemnify the Council against any claim or proceedings for any injury or damage to any property or persons or animals as a result of negligence, poor workmanship or failure to notify the Council of any action likely to cause injury or damage to a third party.*

***Health and Safety***

*The Contractor shall accept full responsibility for compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act and all other Acts and Regulations in respect of the work comprised in this schedule.*

## LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL – STREET CLEANING SCHEDULE 2022-25

### 2022-25

The contract will operate on a 4-weekly basis, in 2023/24 Week 1 is week beginning Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Some streets require weekly cleaning, others on a 1 in 4 basis and others only 3 times per year. April will be Cycle 1 and March Cycle 13. Week 4 in Cycle 12 is not included in the schedule – assumed to be Christmas/New Year.

Weekly	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4 Cycle 1,5,9	Week 4 Cycle 2,6,10	Week 4 Cycle 3,7,11	Week 4 Cycle 4,8,13
Market Place & Market Lane	Prentice Street	Bears Lane	Spring Street/Lane	Green Willows	Lower Road. (Bolton Street to junction Water Street)	Bury Road (continuation of High Street)	Frogs Hall Road to the end of dwellings
High Street	Bolton Street	Meadow Close	Hall Road	Peek Close	Brent Eleigh Road to end of pavement	Old Station Close (was The Halt)	Preston Road to the end of dwellings
Church Street	Barn Street	Tenterpiece	Harwood Place All	Artesian Close		Ropers Court	Trinity Gild
Water Street (High Street to Brent Eleigh Road)	Lady Street	Sudbury Road	Bridge Street Road	The Glebe		Park Road	Weavers Close
	Shilling Street		Melford Road	Butfield			Lower Road (Preston Road to Bolton Street)

Tasks to achieve the necessary level of cleanliness are sweeping pavements, removing dog excrement from pavements, picking up litter and twice-yearly spraying weed killer on pavement edges ie where the pavement meets a house frontage and where the pavement meets the kerb. The Council is not responsible for the cleaning and removal of weeds from the street gutter. That is a Suffolk County Council responsibility.

**How the Parish Council assesses Planning Applications**

**Background:**

At the Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 the Council formalised its long standing policy and procedure for assessing Planning Applications.

That policy did not contain any guidance concerning how site visits should be conducted despite Council having long standing rules concerning how these should be done.

**Subsequent Events:**

This document has been updated to include:

- a) Site visit rules. This is Appendix A in the document.
- b) A section which sets out the legal position and Government Guidance concerning how applications must be considered including explaining what 'Material Planning Considerations' actually are.
- c) Guidance to Councillors concerning interaction with the Public and the issue of pre-determination.

Council's long-standing approach to pre-application engagement has not been changed.

**Motion:** that the revised Policy and Procedure 'How the Parish Council assesses Planning Applications' is adopted with the Clerk Instructed to add the revised document to the Parish Council website.

## LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### The Role of the Parish Council in Planning Matters

#### 1. Introduction

The Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee. As such, it is invited to consider and give an opinion on every planning application. Parish Council recommendations generally carry more weight than public comments. The purpose of this note is to set out exactly what the Parish Council's role is in all planning matters.

#### 2. Considering Planning Applications

Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, when read as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Comments from residents and members of the public can of course be material considerations and can include consideration of economic (inc. local employment), social (inc. health and wellbeing) or environmental impacts and effects. The planning officer, and indeed the Parish Council, will need to review the relevant planning policies and 'balance' all of these considerations and reach a view on whether to support a proposal or not.

Further advice is contained in Government Guidance 'Determining a planning application' last updated on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. It states:

How must elected councillors and other members of the local authority consider planning applications?

Local authority members are involved in planning matters to represent the interests of the whole community and must maintain an open mind when considering planning applications. Where members take decisions on planning applications they must do so in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Members must only take into account material planning considerations, which can include public views where they relate to relevant planning matters. Local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission, unless it is founded upon valid material planning reasons.

*Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 21b-016-20140306*

So those public views that should be taken into account relate to planning reasons - not necessarily just policy reasons.

There is no set list defining material considerations, the Local Planning Authority will decide what is deemed to be 'material'.

'Material considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of light or overshadowing
- Parking

- Highway safety
- Traffic
- Noise
- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- Layout and density of building
- Design, appearance and materials
- Government policy
- Disabled persons' access
- Proposals in the Development Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Nature conservation

However, issues such as loss of view, or negative effect on the value of properties are not material considerations.

The Parish Council must recognise the limitations of its technical knowledge. When deemed necessary the Parish Council will obtain expert advice in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

All Parish Councillors, especially those on the Planning Group, are encouraged to take advantage of all available SALC training including Refresher courses.

### 3. **Planning Hierarchy**

Planning process and decisions are governed by the planning framework which includes:

- The National Planning and Policy Framework which sets Government direction
- Local Planning Authorities plans e.g., BMSDC Joint Local Plan which sets local district planning policy
- Neighbourhood Plans which are tailored to Parish aspirations but must reconcile to Local Plans. Emerging Neighbourhood Plans and current Neighbourhood Plans must be referenced and considered.

### 4. **Pre-application Engagement and Engagement with the Public**

The Parish Council may be invited to hear of plans from a prospective applicant before a formal planning application for Outline Planning Permission. This is known as a pre-application engagement. This normally arises for larger developments which may have a village wide impact. Applicants sometimes also approach near neighbours to the proposed development to inform them of the plans.

The Parish Council's role in this is **not** to comment or offer opinion **but** to listen.

The Parish Council encourages pre-application engagement, **but this must take place before a formal application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority.**

Councillors and the Clerk need to exercise care when meeting and communicating with any third parties including via social media. For this purpose, third parties include Members of the Public, Councillors and Officials of other authorities, applicants, developers and contractors.



The Babergh Monitoring Officer has advised that Councillors should 'not make any posts on social media, either in their personal or councillor capacity, about **any** potential planning applications that could be interpreted as them supporting / opposing the matter. Whilst they are permitted to show a certain level of general disposition and ask public questions, they are under no circumstances entitled to share their final views on a matter especially if they are one of the decision-makers / involved in the planning process'.

Councillors will meet and communicate with residents in their role as an individual Councillor on many occasions. Input from the public is important to ensure that Councillors understand public views when taking decisions. Nothing in these guidelines should be seen to restrict the openness of Councillors to public input. Councillors should report any concerns eg predetermination to the Clerk who may consider contacting Babergh District Council or Suffolk County Council and other statutory authorities.

## **5. Applications for Outline Planning Permission**

Once a formal planning application for Outline Planning Permission has been submitted, the Parish Council cannot discuss the matter with the Applicant. At the meeting of the Parish Council where the Outline Planning Permission is to be considered, the Applicant (or Agent) may attend and speak in Public Time. The Planning Working Group examines the Outline Planning application and reports its finding to Council. This may include a recommendation to Council to support or reject the application.

## **6. Listed Building Consent**

Lavenham has one of the highest concentrations of listed buildings in the country therefore listed building consent applications are quite common. Alterations to listed buildings almost always require consent. This also applies to non-listed buildings within the curtilage of listed buildings. It is advisable that Listed Building Consent is considered before any Planning Permission Application is made, to ensure a full understanding of the constraints. Generally Listed Building Consent applications are submitted at the same time as the Planning Application and considered by the Parish Council in parallel.

The documents and drawings attached to the Listed Building Consent Applications are similar to those required for planning applications, with additional details provided showing how the existing heritage structure is begin affected, what materials are being used, construction methods and preservation techniques etc.

The process for assessing Listed Building Consents follows that for Planning Applications, as shown in Sections 7 and 8. The Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan provides polices protecting Heritage Assets, Protected Views and effect on the Setting of Listed Buildings.

## **7. Guidance to owners of Listed Buildings**

It is advised to first check with the Babergh Conservation Officer whether or not consent will be needed for what the applicant plans to do. The applicant should also get an outline of what might be acceptable and find out whether ideas need to be adapted to make them more likely to succeed. This simple step could save considerable time and money. When the Babergh Case Officer considers whether to grant or to refuse an application, the officer must give

particular attention to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and those features which make it special. The constraints on changes are dependent on the Grade of the property listing e.g., Grade I listed properties have tighter constraints than Grade II listed properties.

## **8. Council Processing of Applications for Planning Permission**

All planning applications are listed on the BMSDC planning portal which is found here.

<https://planning.baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

- i. Notification of the application is received by the Parish Council Clerk and circulated to all Councillors simultaneously, to enable each to interrogate the Planning Portal in order that they are aware of the application before the Council meeting.
- ii. Where the application Consultation Expiry Date is prior to the next council meeting, the Clerk requests an extension to give the Parish council time to consider the application. This is usually granted.
- iii. Prior to the Council meeting the Planning Working Group does a detailed assessment on each application. This is done to inform the public attending the Council meeting of the content of each application and to ensure that all relevant matters are considered. A site visit may be considered appropriate. See Appendix A 'Site Visits'.
- iv. The Planning Working Group (see 8 below) prepares a report for Council, on each application with recommendations to Council. This is included in the agenda and associated documents, published before each Council meeting. Applications received after publication of the agenda cannot be considered and are deferred to the next meeting of the full Council.
- v. The full Council considers the applications and the Planning Working Group recommendations, discusses and votes to recommend approval or refusal. This is recorded in the minutes.
- vi. Following the Council decision, the Clerk submits our comments and recommendations to the Planning Portal and the Case Officer. These comments appear on the Babergh Planning Portal, along with all the application documents and all other public comments.

## **9 Procedure for Planning Working Group**

There are three main groups of applications.

### **9.1 Works to trees**

- i. Study the Planning Application form and drawing, explaining location of trees and details of proposed works.
- ii. Check the Babergh Interactive Mapping Service website to see if any affected trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders.
- iii. Review any comments made by consultants or the public and take those into consideration.
- iv. If the tree/s cannot be viewed clearly from the street, arrange a site visit.
- v. Prepare a report and recommendations for Council for decision to support or object to the application.

*Guidance Notes*

- Regular Maintenance works on trees is normally considered to not be an issue.
- Trees in the conservation area need special consideration as detailed on the application form.
- Trees covered by Tree Preservation Order are subject to additional consideration.

## 9.2 Applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

- i. Review of the application form and associated documents.
- ii. Download application documents and review scope .
- iii. Check the Babergh Interactive Mapping Service website to confirm if the application
  - involves listed buildings,
  - affects trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders,
  - is in the Conservation Area
  - identify the location in relation to the Built-up Area Boundary
- iv. Review the Related Cases and Constraints. Have there been any similar applications that have been refused on the same site. Is this an amendment to a previous application? Have any permitted development rights been removed.
- v. Review any precedents for other similar applications.
- vi. Consider whether a site visit is indicated. Site visits are not always necessary, particularly when there have been previous applications for the same site. Where a visit is indicated, arrangements are made through the Clerk to the Council, for the Planning Working Group to attend the site.
- vii. Review the application proposal against policies in Lavenham Local Neighbour Plan 2016. Assess if the application conflicts with any of these policies. The documents that should be attached to applications would normally include:
  - Site location plan
  - Existing plans and elevations
  - Proposed plans and elevations
  - Proposed site plan
  - Proposed site elevations
- viii. Review the attachments to ensure the appropriate reports have been produced. They may include such documents as
  - Design and access statement
  - Visual impact assessment
  - Land contamination questionnaire
  - Land contamination report
  - Ecology report

Some documents are mandatory - **for example in a conservation area a “Design and access statement “is always required.**

- viii. The planning officer will have requested reports from statutory consultees. These reports are also examined by the Planning Working Group, in particular to see if they support the application or if they object. Typical consultees (Application dependent):
  - BDC - Planning Policy Team. In practice this means reference to the latest plan which is now the Joint Local Plan 2023

- Environmental Health - Land Contamination
- SCC - Archaeological Service
- SCC - Rights of Way Department
- SCC - Fire & Rescue
- Suffolk Preservation Society
- SCC - Rights of Way Department
- SCC – Highways
- SCC - Archaeological Service
- Heritage Team
- Arboricultural Officer
- Ecology - Place Services
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Suffolk Preservation Society

*Guidance note:* Not all of the above functions or organisations will be consulted on every application.

- ix. Following review of statutory consultees, public comments are considered. Those that carry weight are from residents and contain valid planning policy reasons for supporting or objecting. It is not a case of counting the number of Supports or Objects, but the strength of arguments, particularly those that make direct reference to Neighbourhood Plans or Babergh planning policies.

Once all of the documents have been considered, the Planning Working Group forms a written recommendation for the Parish council to consider. This will include justifications for the recommendations and references to policies to support the arguments.

## **10. Council Consideration**

Councillors will consider the application, the recommendations, and any comments and reports placed on the planning portal up to 5pm on the day of the meeting. Statements offered from the public during the participation part of the meeting, will be listened to and taken into account. The vote will be recorded as a **recommendation to approve or refuse an application**.

Councillor Iain Lamont

Chair  
Planning Working Group  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## **Appendix A Site Visits:**

Not every planning issue will require a site visit, however sometimes it is necessary for Councillors to gain further information before submitting a formal response to the Local Planning Authority.

During site visits any contact with applicants or members of the public should be treated with caution so as to avoid lobbying or the perception of lobbying. Councillors must be allowed to view the site and to discuss the application in private whilst on site without the applicant being able to hear or contribute to Councillors conversations.

### **PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The Clerk should obtain permission from the site owner for the council to visit the site.

### **PROCEDURE**

- i. The Planning Working Group and the Clerk will have determined the need for a site visit and the names of those Councillors to attend.
- ii. Members of the Planning Group will be notified by the Clerk of the time and place of the site visit, and it is recommended that the Clerk is present.
- iii. The applicant and/or landowner may be present if the site visit takes place on-site.
- iv. Members of the Public should not attend site visits, unless invited to do so by the Planning Group or Clerk.
- v. The Code of Conduct applies: Interests should be declared and Councillors should not attend if they have a disclosable interest.
- vi. The Chair of the Planning Working Group should ensure that the site visit is properly carried out, taking advice from the Clerk.
- vii. Councillors and the Clerk must be aware that the site may be covered by CCTV and other recording devices and so their conversations may be recorded with or without their knowledge.
- viii. There must be no debate, representations from groups or individuals, or decision at the site visit.
- ix. Councillors may ask the Clerk to take notes on the issues raised and the information gained on site.
- x. All points should be objective, relevant and material.
- xi. Councillors must be very careful not to express any opinions about the proposal whilst on the site.
- xii. When the chair of the Planning Working Group deems the site visit closed, all Councillors and Clerk will leave.
- xiii. The site visit will be reported to the Council.
- xiv. The Clerk or the Chair of the Planning Working Group will report to Council on any information-gathering as a result of questions raised at the site visit. The Council will take the report into account when coming to its decision.

## **To the Clerk of Lavenham Parish Council**

I would like to put the following motion forward for discussion at the December 24 Lavenham Parish Council Meeting.

### **Motion:**

Creation of a Working Group to lead on safeguarding, maintaining and improving the network of footpaths and bridleways around Lavenham.

This is very relevant within both LNPs.

### **Background:**

In the 2016 LNP it references "In order to maintain Lavenham's close links to the countryside development proposals will be expected to utilise opportunities to link into the wider footpath and bridleway network where applicable". There is even a specific project which says "Project P10: Footpaths; The Parish Council will ensure that the extensive network of statutory footpaths, sections of which form part of the long-distance St Edmund Way, in the Parish is adequately sign posted, regularly inspected and maintained. Should further divestment of the responsibility for these footpaths take place then the Parish Council will use its best endeavours to ensure continuity of safe access for the public."

In the LNP2 the importance of the footpath network gets promoted to: "Lavenham has an excellent network of public footpaths.."

And likewise there is continued commitment to improve the network of footpaths:

Objective Ten – Open Spaces and Outdoor Activities: To safeguard and improve our open spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation activities.

Community Initiative 2.3 – Footpaths and Byways: a. Identify opportunities to improve Lavenham's network of footpaths, including on roads where footways are not provided, and work with landowners to secure these improvements, in order to enhance non-vehicular routes around the village, and thereby to enable safe access and increased mobility.

This is an established commitment that the Parish Council should be seen to be proactively supporting and progressing.

In this context I was very pleased to hear about the passion and concern displayed by various parish councillors at the Parish Council meeting on 7th Nov 2024 around the condition, accessibility and maintenance of the Parish's public footpaths.

There are several known issues around access and maintenance within the existing network of footpaths. This is obviously detrimental to the parish's vision.

### **Proposal:**

I would like to propose that a working group is established and ideally led by one of the parish councillors who are so troubled by the condition of some of the main public footpaths.

Whilst it is the landowner's responsibility to maintain the footpaths that run through their land, the parish council can play a key role in leading on gaining assurance that the footpaths are maintained.

I think it would be a great community idea if a working group could be set up with the parish council taking the lead on liaising with landowners, reminding them of their obligations, working with groups to establish volunteers to help carry out the maintenance and providing support and possible funding if necessary to ensure that the Parish council keeps its commitments to the public.

Obviously as the parish council is a statutory body it would make sense if there were any issues that needed to be raised by the highways then this could be done collectively with hopefully more influence than a member of the public reporting concerns.

This article is very helpful clarifying the community role that the parish council can take to support maintenance of public footpaths.

<https://www.oss.org.uk/need-to-know-more/information-hub/what-to-do-about-overgrown-paths/#parish>

Likewise these links provide useful background around clarifying roles and responsibilities and groups that can give support.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-rights-of-way-landowner-responsibilities>

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/rights-and-responsibilities#:~:text=Suffolk%20County%20Council%20responsibilities&text=Signpost%20all%20public%20rights%20of,surface%20growth%2C%20including%20field%20headlands>.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk?nodeId=c9ea6443-1c5e-5795-9b88-b3510e9d543f&entryId=f43da10c-7fd1-5ca0-8d63-b0c9746d3086>

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk?nodeId=c9ea6443-1c5e-5795-9b88-b3510e9d543f&entryId=f43da10c-7fd1-5ca0-8d63-b0c9746d3086>

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

### **Conclusion:**

The parish council accepts this motion and one of the parish councillors agrees to lead the working group.