

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 27th April 2023, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.
Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, April 2023 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.

Present:

Cllr Irene Mitchell, Chairman.
Cllrs Lizzie Falconer (Vice Chairman) Rob Macro, Mary Morrey, Janice Muckian, Iain Lamont
Babergh District Cllrs Margaret Maybury, Clive Arthey
10 members of the public.

2. Apologies and approval of absences

Cllrs Michael Sherman, Matt Chick.
County Councillor Robert Lindsey

Proposed by Cllr Muckian, seconded by Cllr Macro, carried.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Requests for Dispensation

None

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the Council

Proposed by Cllr Muckian, seconded by Cllr Macro, agreed.

5. Public participation session

A parishioner commented that, in his opinion, many of the public are unaware of the 20mph scheme and urged the Council to communicate with the public beyond the statutory requirements. Cllr Mitchell responded saying that his comments have been noted.

A parishioner thanked the clerk for the prompt hand-delivery of letters to those interested in Allotments, with a view towards establishing an Allotments Association. He also explained that he was still trying to get a plan from the Developer of The Paddocks and asked about the large nearby tree.

Cllr Mitchell responded that she had visited the site with the Clerk to meet the Developer adding that the involvement of any Allotment Association was not, at this point, a given. She thanked the parishioner for his preparatory work but emphasised that due process must be followed.

6. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

Cllr Maybury explained that consequent of the pre-election period (previously known as 'purdah') there was little to report.

She had visited the Long Melford 'Mens Shed'. The day she visited 17 people were in attendance and renovations to the building were underway. She commended their efforts.

Cllr Maybury reminded everyone that the Consultation period on the Babergh-Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan ends at 5pm on May 3 and informed everyone that there is a meeting of the Traffic Working Group on April 28.

Cllr Maybury thanked those who had worked so hard to draft the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Arthey echoed Cllr Maybury's thanks to the Neighbourhood Plan team. Cllr Mitchell thanked both Councillors for their contributions over the last four years.

7. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman updated those present on efforts to plan for the construction of a footpath and footbridge at Green Willows. She explained that she had written to Anglia Water who own the land to enquire as to whether a path could be created over their land but that disappointingly they had refused as they have already given an easement re Electricity and do not wish to give a second easement. The Chair added that this will be pursued with Anglia Water.

Anglia Water has also been contacted concerning the intermittent flooding in the Prentice St car park. Anglia Water have responded suggesting the flooding is caused by recent developments in the car park. The Chair noted that intermittent flooding had been a feature prior to recent work and will respond to Anglia Water.

Next the Chair explained that Anglia Water had, in principle, approved the planting of a hedgerow on Brent Leigh Rd adjacent to their sewer.

Lastly the Chairman updated all present that the Babergh CIL team had turned down our bid for a Community Play area at Harwood Place explaining that the site is not suitable and suggesting a community garden which was rejected by the community.

8. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 2

Roy Mawford thanked all those who had contributed to the development of our revised Neighbourhood Plan. He said there had been a good response to public consultation on the previous (pre-submission) version of our revised Plan that took place between December 2022 and February 2023. This good response included comments from Babergh and Suffolk Councils and other Statutory Consultees which had been both supportive and constructive.

Additional information had also become available since December 2022. Time had been taken both to consider the results of a Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2022 by Lavenham Community Land Trust (CLT), and to analyse very recent parish level data from the 2021 Census. This new information augmented earlier findings from other sources, particularly the 2021 Neighbourhood Planning Questionnaire responses completed by Lavenham residents and businesses.

Taking all these responses and sources of information into account, the previous version of our Plan was reviewed and, where appropriate, amended. The most recent (submission) version of our revised Plan and its supporting documents are currently available to access from Mr Mawford's report on the Parish Council website.

Mr Mawford then outlined the next steps in revising our Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in his report. Babergh Council will conduct a further period of public consultation (likely June and July 2023) and will appoint an Examiner to review the Plan. If there is a successful conclusion to the Plan's examination, the final stage will be a referendum of Lavenham Parishioners. This referendum could be held in late 2023 or early 2024.

Mr Mawford explained that the current Neighbourhood Plan remains in force but the significance of the new plan grows as it goes through the process particularly as the new plan is aligned with the current National Planning Policy Framework

Councillors took the opportunity to thank Mr Mawford and his colleagues for the work done.

Cllr Lamont asked whether the views of the Community Land Trust (CLT) regarding the strongly preferred maximum number of dwellings per development had been considered. Mr Mawford replied that they had. In the context of all comments received on this subject.

It was noted that the community had spoken clearly during public engagement in 2021, prior to the revised Plan being drafted. By a large majority, respondents to the questionnaire had expressed a preference for no further development. But planning experts had advised that there would not be a successful outcome to the draft revised Plan's examination unless it contained a policy to permit some development.

Further comments from Councillors noted that, rather than recent schemes of around 24 homes, smaller sized developments were more in keeping with the character of the village. And affordable housing should be provided in this way, as is currently being planned in Southwold.



In summing up, Cllr Mitchell acknowledged that there is a need to continually develop social and/or affordable housing to re-balance the village population and noted that the 2021 census data shows a 30% increase in the number of residents aged 65 plus since 2011. Some of this growth would be residents recorded in 2011 growing older but there is strong evidence that recent housing developments had attracted older people to move to the village.

Motion: The Council approves 'Regulation 15' Submission of the above Plan, and its accompanying submission documents, to the local planning authority (Babergh District Council).

Proposed by Cllr Macro, seconded by Cllr Morrey, unanimously agreed.

9. Planning

To receive a report and recommendations from the Planning Group

APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01344

Land West Of, Bury Road, Lavenham, Suffolk
Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access points to be considered, Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Erection of 6 no. dwellings and creation of new vehicular access

Cllr Lamont explained that this proposal is ribbon development and contrary to the NPPF, Policy H1 of the LNP, Policy D1 of the LNP, Policy CR08 of the Babergh Local Plan, Policy CS11 of the LNP, Policy CS15 of the Babergh Core Strategy and Policies LP01 and SP03 of the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan. Cllr Lamont added that the site is on a ridge and any building would be highly visible from most if not all directions.

DC/23/01344 has been considered and is not supported and refusal is recommended.
Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Morrey, motion carried.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01688

Church Cottage, 45 - 46 Church Street, Lavenham.
To replace failing cracked sand and cement-based render with new hair lime render, front and side (gable) elevations.

Cllr Lamont explained that this application improves the construction of the walls using traditional material. Full details are attached to the application and are appropriate.

DC/23/01688 has been considered and is supported.
Proposed by Cllr Macro, seconded by Cllr Muckian, motion carried.

Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS41 DC/23/01753

Little Beeches Bears Lane Lavenham.
Reduce 3 No. Ash (T1, T2 and T4) to previous points, Fell 1No. Ash (T3) to ground level, Raise crown of 1No. Ash (T5) to where the trunk forks, to then reduce the crown back to the previous points

Cllr Lamont explained that application is for routine maintenance of trees, including felling T3 to make space for T2 & T4.

DC/23/01753 has been considered and is supported.
Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Macro, motion carried.

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01821

Caustons, Bolton Street, Lavenham.
Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce crown of 1No. Pittosporum by 2m (T1), Reduce crown/height of 1No. Bay by 2m

Cllr Lamont explained that application is for routine maintenance of trees.

DC/23/01821 has been considered and is supported.
Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Macro, motion carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/23/01094 32 Spring St, Lavenham. Approval as recommended by LPC.
DC/23/ 01036 Granary Cottages Prentice St, Lavenham. Approval as recommended by LPC.

Clerk Commented that no response had been received from Cllr Arthey as to why LPC recommendations as to replacement tree planting were not being taken up by Babergh. Cllr Macro commented that this could be because of space and light issues and suggested that LPC could recommend the planting of replacement trees away from the particular sites. Cllr Mitchell responded that this was an idea worth considering in future recommendations.

10. Clerk/RFO Report

10.a Motion: to approve Draft Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Clerk displayed and explained the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, Reserves position and draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023. The clerk explained that the Actual Surplus was very close to that forecast, with no substantial variations within that, and that there had been no changes to the Financial position of the Council to that previously advised.

Proposed by Cllr Macro, seconded by Cllr Muckian, motion carried.

10.b Motion to approve Appointment of Heelis and Lodge as Internal Auditors for the year ended 31 March 2023 at a cost of £400 plus VAT

Proposed by Cllr Macro, seconded by Cllr Muckian, motion carried.

10.c Motion to approve Financial Reporting Format for year ended 31 March 2024

The clerk explained that each month Councillors will receive:

- 1) Detailed Income and Expenditure Report comparing to Budget with explanations as to variances.
- 2) Balance Sheet
- 3) Analysis of Movements on all Reserves
- 4) List of monies received and monies paid out.
- 5) Statement of Cash Flows and reconciliation to Bank Statement

Proposed by Cllr Morrey, seconded by Cllr Macro, motion carried.

Cllr Macro asked whether the monthly accounts would include looking forward to see tracking for the whole year. The Clerk responded that the Accounts would be done on an accruals basis and that a full re-forecast would be done after periods 4 and 8.

Cllr Mitchell asked what Donations Income had been received this year. The Clerk replied that the Car Park Donations income received in April 2023 had been higher than received in April 2022 but that it remained the case that Babergh could remove this stream of income at six months' notice and so it was not a Fixed Income and that to budget for it to continue and match it to Fixed Costs was not sensible.

10.d Motion to approve the Risk Register

The Clerk displayed and explained the Risk Register. the key risks identified and how these risks were mitigated.

The Clerk explained that the risks in connection with the Water Street Gasworks and Car Park were still being assessed and worked through with the Insurers.

The motion was amended to '**approve the Risk Register with it being updated with respect to Water St in due course**'

Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Morrey, motion carried.

The Clerk explained that the key documents which set out the rules as to how the Council operates were due for renewal and that he had started to review these and would shortly be arranging a meeting of the Finance and Strategy Group to discuss these and propose amendments.

11. Finance

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

Cllr Mitchell explained that negotiations were ongoing with Babergh and that she would report further when the situation was clearer.

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

Cllr Morrey explained that she was still talking with the possible Contractors.

11.c Proposal for Funding small Heritage Projects

The clerk explained that a constitution had been drafted and would be presented to the new Council.

12. Proposal to establish a 20mph and a 40mph zone

Cllr Lamont displayed the latest plans received from Suffolk CC explaining that they now covered a wider area. Cllr Falconer expressed concern that the limit did not extend further out from the Village core to other areas where young children lived. Cllr Lamont explained that a 20mph limit could only include areas where the measured speeds were less than 24 mph or so.

Discussion followed as to whether representation could or should be made to Suffolk CC to expand the zone and concluded that the 20mph scheme and specific site road safety measures such as crossings were a separate issue which could be explored.

Motion:

To approve the draft Speed Limit Zone design drawing dated March 2023 provided by Suffolk Highways to allow for design consultation with Statutory Consultees to proceed. This drawing may change further during the consultation process, so this should not be seen as the final approval of the design.

Proposed by Cllr Lamont, seconded by Cllr Morrey, carried with one Councillor voting against.

13. Proposal to establish a .gov.uk domain

Clerk explained that satisfactory answers had been received from one supplier in connection with follow up questions and that, working with Cllr Chick, two further quotations were being sought.

14. Report to Council Lavenham Walk and Allotments

Cllr Mitchell explained that Developer was looking to hand over the allotments to the PC in early 2024 and this would require the attention of Council in the coming months.

Cllr Muckian stated that she was extremely concerned about the vehicular access across the Lavenham Walk as it was perceived by the community as a safe space particularly for children and dogs. Cllr Mitchell noted that at the time of the Outline Planning the Parish Council had stated a strong preference for no vehicular access across the Lavenham Walk.

Cllr Mitchell explained that she was waiting for information from the Developer as to the Planning consents but that it was likely that these had been given.

15. Report to Council Community Energy

Cllr Mitchell briefly reported an opportunity for Lavenham to be supported by an external organisation free of charge, in the setting up of a Community Energy Scheme and at this point she is seeking Council's approval to invite interest from volunteers. Cllr Lamont asked if this would incur costs. Cllr Mitchell responded that this action would lead to no costs at this time and that passing this motion did not commit the council to any costs.

Motion: The Parish Council agrees to seek expressions of interest from the community in forming a Lavenham Community Energy Scheme (LACE)

Proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Falconer, carried with one Councillor voting against.

16. Report to Council Telephone Boxes

Cllr Mitchell explained that the repair of such boxes, which are Grade 2 listed, is expensive and complex and must be done off-site. Lead-based paint a particular issue. Local tradesfolk will not quote for such work.

Cllr Mitchell explained that the renovation of these might be something for the local heritage fund but that she wanted to report fully so that Parishioners are informed as to the difficulties.

17. Date of next meeting

Thursday 18th May, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr Mitchell concluded the meeting by thanking Cllr Macro for his service and all Councillors for their time and efforts explaining that she had written to Tony Shepherd and would write to Michael Sherman. She welcomed the new Councillors who will join the Council at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.58 pm.

Ceryn

18th May 2023