

PAUL CLOVER/MARGARET MAYBURY DISTRICT
COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR LAVENHAM PARISH
COUNCIL MEETING 5TH MARCH 2026.

Local County Council Elections

Following new legal advice that elections can only be postponed once, the Govt has announced that the County Council elections must now go ahead in May, albeit for a shortened term of just two years prior to the implementation of LGR. The situation has now been further complicated by the leader of Norfolk County Council announcing that they intend to withdraw from the LGR process. Norfolk are partnering up with Suffolk under one mayor with an equal number of Unitary Authorities for each County. What is certain is that the Mayoral elections will go forward. It is within the Govt's gift to cancel Unitary Authority elections and impose whatever system they decide although this would require an Act of Parliament. The pre-election period (purdah) will begin on 27th March.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Call for Sites

Due to the recent publication of the latest Call for Sites map, a number of residents have expressed concern over the latest potential developments. There have been two Babergh Call for Sites. One at the beginning of 2024 where just over 580 were identified and their Assessment is to be found in the SHLAA section on the Babergh website.

The second Call for Sites occurred between October 2025 and January 2026. A map of these 500 additional sites is again to be found on the Babergh website. Babergh have decided to deploy a slightly different methodology to assess the suitability of these sites, both the original 580 and the most recent 500 sites, so as to ensure fairness.

BDC hope to publish the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) around May and this will assign each site an overall Red/Amber/Green rating. Following this, further assessment work will be carried out working with experts from heritage, highways and sustainability to select a list of preferred sites which will then be published for public consultation. Objections from Lavenham and Acton residents have already been received, however no decisions have yet been made as to which sites will be allocated for development.

No Smoking Day support

Feel Good Suffolk is promoting the benefits of not smoking with media campaigns to help support residents. One campaign is targeted at paid 'Carers' where incidence of smoking is much higher than the national average. Feel Good Suffolk are also offering free vape kits to help people begin their journey to quitting smoking.

Lavenham Butcher's Culvert

Following correspondence with Paul West of SCC, as the lead authority for flooding, his office is looking into the potential to allocate funds towards replacing the debris filtering grill protecting the culvert in the brook alongside Lavenham Butchers.

Chilton Fields

Preliminary works is now beginning to clear the site for the construction of the Sports Pavillion at Chilton Fields. This will necessitate the removal of approx. 40 trees, to be replaced by more than 60 trees once the build is complete.

Suffolk Digital Help Finder

This new service has been designed to help residents learn how to use digital services. The tool will allow people to find free local support and make it easier for staff and volunteers to match residents with trusted support, learning opportunities and practical resources.

Business Rates Valuation

The new business rates will come into effect on 1st April 2026. Any business that thinks their current rateable value is wrong have until 31st March to request a change from the Valuation Office Agency.

Good Health at Work

A new online hub promoting good health at work for employees and employers. The tools provide simple steps to support physical and mental wellbeing. Employers can also access free resources to help them navigate their legal responsibilities and guidance on workplace adjustments.

Flooding Advice

The Healthy Suffolk website has been updated to help residents learn more about the risks of flooding, how to respond in an emergency, what they can do to protect themselves and what support is available in the event of a flood.