

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 2nd September 2021, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

Present Ms I Mitchell, Vice-Chairman.

Mrs M Morrey, Ms L Falconer Mr T Sheppard, Mr R Macro, Mr T Ranzetta,

Mr P Thompson, Mr D Wilding, Dr C Posner.

Mr C Arthey, District Councillor for Lavenham.

4 members of the public.

Public Forum

Mr Christopher Churchard firstly asked about the proposals for a 20 mph limit in the village, would this be the village in its entirety, or just parts? If the whole of the village he thought this would be over the top. Mr Lindsay's report said that he was expecting to see a copy of an informal report later this month, this had been held up by pressure of other matters so serious consideration had not been given to it yet.

Secondly, a sum was handed over which had been donated in the 'Light up Lavenham' collection tin from the counter at Heeks. Heeks were thanked for continuing to collect for this, the Parish Council planned to continue with the 'Light up Lavenham' collections and finance the erection of the Christmas lights as it has in the past.

Mrs Linda Farmer raised concerns about the safety of parents and young children crossing the road to the entrance to the First Meadow on the junction of Brent Eleigh Road/Water Street and Lower Road. Visibility was very poor and the speed of traffic often excessive, she wondered if consideration could be given to improvements. The formation of a new Traffic Working Group had been agreed at the annual meeting and this group would be considering speed zones, quiet lanes, visibility and traffic management in general, this problem could be added to their agenda. It would also help if individuals could raise concerns with Suffolk County Council, the highways authority. Mrs Farmer also thought that this recreation area could be made more attractive to other age groups.

Police Matters –Go to

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/sites/suffolk/files/ceoconstablescountyagust-online.pdf> for the August 2021 copy of the County newsletter, Constable's County.

The summary of crimes reported within the parish of Lavenham, listed on www.police.uk, has been updated recently to show crimes reported in July, there had been 5 crimes: 1 x violence & sexual offence; 2 x shoplifting; 2 x Anti-Social Behaviour.

County Councillor's Report, Mr R Lindsay (*in Mr Lindsay's absence the report forwarded had been circulated, follows these minutes*)

District Councillor's Report, Mr C Arthey (*no written report*)

It has been a quiet month at Babergh with no significant decision made. Information regarding the solar car ports for the EV chargers and the introduction of revised car parking charges from 1st January had been published.

Energy from Waste Virtual tours can be booked for 10th and 11th September as part of Heritage Open Days. Since 2000 the Suffolk Waste Partnership has increased recycled waste to 50% with only 1% of household waste now going to landfill. Landfill stays in the county, going to the landfill site across the road from the plant at Great Blakenham.

Mr Arthey was pleased to note the progress at the Gas Works site.

The Minutes

The Clerk raised the matter of amendments to the minutes of 5th August as she had noticed some anomalies.

Page 121, Mrs Maybury's report re Belle Vue Park. Should read 'As the development

was for retirement homes there would be no (insert no) contribution for the community’.

Page 124 under Operations, under Project Updates for Prentice Street car park, should read ‘A further CIL bid for this of £10k. has been agreed with Babergh D C (insert) for the power upgrade, and a bid for a further £10k. etc.

Page 125 under Signing of Contract/Review of Tenders, 2nd paragraph ‘the Council accepts Tender Option C (insert) as the preferred provider, as the only tender that fits within budget’.

3rd paragraph should read ‘It was felt that in order to satisfy the Financial Regulations and the Council, as the contractor was not known to the Council, two bona fide references should be sought for the preferred provider only. (insert underlined text)

It was prop. by Mr Sheppard, sec. by Mr Ranzetta, that with the amendments outlined, the minutes of the meeting held on 5th August are approved also the minutes of the meeting held on 12th August. Carried.

Declarations of Interest - none

Apologies for absence - Mr Lamont, Mr Chick, Mr Lindsay.

Matters Arising

Ms Mitchell referred to page 123 of the 5th August minutes where Mr Ranzetta had asked about the Parish Council’s policy in respect of World Heritage Status. Ms Mitchell confirmed that the policy remained that which had been adopted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2016, and would remain policy until it is changed.

A draft Communications Policy has been prepared, now looking for a volunteer for the Information & Data Handling Policy, Mr Ranzetta offered.

Mr Ranzetta mentioned a number of items deferred but still not on the agenda, some of these are listed under correspondence.

Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan revision group update

Preliminary analysis shows that 251 responses to the Questionnaire were received, 30 of which were transcribed paper copies (32 paper copies had been requested).

The age spread of the responders roughly matched the spread of responders of the initial Questionnaire. It was recognised that the Covid restrictions had greatly hampered the efforts to publicise the Questionnaire and hold Informing Events in the eighteen months before the survey.

Tom Butler has been appointed by the Group to form a small group to look more closely at the data and prepare an analysis for the Group to study. It has been agreed to delay the production of the Business Questionnaire until there has been a chance to study the revised data supplied by the Forum.

There is to be a meeting with Rachel Hogger from Modicum when the Group will be discussing with her the many issues under current review and how we can best proceed to the next stages. Rachel will also advise us on how we can best go about physically updating the original Plan to incorporate all the data assembled and analysed.

It is noted with regret that our Chairman has received the resignation from the Group of our valued member, Richard Jackson and he was thanked for the help and guidance, as well as his time, he has afforded us. In accordance with our Terms of Reference, the Group will elect a replacement. As we have two Councillors as active members, the new member does not have to be, but could be, another Councillor.

(report forwarded by Mrs Morrey and circulated)

Mrs Morrey answered some questions which had arisen. The response rate was 13.9%, 1800 questionnaires had been distributed. The response rate to the original Neighbourhood

Plan had been 30% but Mr Ranzetta mentioned that statistics show that there has been a massive decline in the response to online questionnaires. The team had considered it highly unlikely that anyone would try to submit more than one questionnaire.

It was commented that the high quality of the Guide had contributed to the response, surges in the responses had matched Facebook reminders.

Gas Works Site

The contract has been signed and sent to Birketts for exchange and completion. Mr Lamont chasing. We are in a position to begin work as soon as we have unfettered access to the site.

Two local Tree Surgeons have been asked to submit estimates for tree felling etc. Planning approval in place for the Sycamores at the south boundary, a further permission is required for the Silver Birch on the west boundary. Until they can get on site they are basing their estimates on visual evidence from outside the site. A local contractor has been asked to provide advice and a cost estimate for sandblasting the wall facing onto Water Street or painting the wall. The existing gates from Water Street will be retained until our works and National Grid's refurbishment is completed, when a height restriction gate will be installed.

The metal palisade fencing recovered from the Melford Road Highways Depot has been examined with a view to using this along the south boundary to replace the chain-link fencing which is in poor condition. The erecting of posts is likely to be difficult due to the extensive root systems of the Sycamore trees. A local contractor has been asked to advise on likely costs and viability of this along with the alternative of replacing the chain-link like for like. We should also consider the necessity of having a fence there at all. There will be free public access from Water Street both for parking and for viewing the Heritage element of the gas holder which is to be renovated by National Grid. None of the other car parks in Lavenham has security fencing and public access between Water Street and the Public Footpath may be beneficial.

We continue to be supported by MLM in respect of environmental monitoring now and during the construction phase. David Wilding has generously offered to use his technical knowledge and professional experience to oversee the electrical aspects of supplying power to the site and the EV charging element.

We have obtained a quote from UKPN for a low level of power supply which will be sufficient to meet needs. We have asked them for advice on the possibility of increasing this should demand ramp up in the future. We are advised that a greater level of supply in the future cannot be guaranteed but much of the cost of increasing the supply would be in the civil works that would be necessary. This could be mitigated now by having oversized ducting installed that would be suitable for higher power cabling in the future.

It is possible that there is a redundant water supply to the site. We do not anticipate a long-term requirement for a water supply, but we may need to have a temporary connection for environmental purposes. The alternative will be for the contractors to arrange for a bowser supply.

All in all we have made a lot of progress but there are still some decisions to be made. We are still being frustrated by the slow progress in completing the acquisition of the site. *(report forwarded by Mr O'Mahony and circulated)*

David Wilding was thanked for volunteering to help oversee the electrical aspects. There was confidence that the group would be able to organise and complete the works before the CIL deadline.

Other Project Updates

Prentice Street car park - the dispute between BDC and the owners of neighbouring properties of the car park should by now have been resolved.

The connection and supply by UKPN is still scheduled for mid-October. This will allow the EV points and toilet block to be connected to the electricity supply.

There has been some debate about the suitability or otherwise of using the installation company Plug-N-Go to provide the longer term end user electricity supply. This is with the Chairman to resolve and advise. The Plug In Suffolk Community Grant for £10,000 outcome is still awaited from SCC.

Following the electricity connection to the toilet block, an access plinth needs to be fitted to allow easier access for all. BDC has agreed to pay for this.

Church Street block - these works have been completed with the exception of the safety railings to the top of the raised paving which are awaited from the fabricator. Once fitted; the toilets can come into use subject to fitting toilet paper and soap dispensers. The office is usable now. A suitable date and time to hold a familiarity session of the facility is to be advised by Iain.

The pay post is fitted but the card device is outstanding. This is with Mr Chick to pursue further.

The official opening with Cassandra Clements, Assistant Director, BDC for the Environment was to be held on 1st September, this has now been revised to 14th September to avoid holidays of some key invitees.

Tenter Piece refurbishment - all structural works are completed, apart for the replacement front door. Floor finishes and 'Dementia colours' to walls awaited. BDC has agreed to pay for the demolition and erection of a wall to the entrance hall.

The Good Neighbour Scheme and Dementia Alliance are working on a grand opening for the facility on 14th October.

Mr Ranzetta noted that questions were being asked by village residents as to the length of time it was taking to reach completion of the Church Street toilets. Mr Ranzetta thought the Council should ensure that a post-build review is carried out in order to inform future projects.

Water Street Traffic Scheme - a letter from Susan Broom, Design Engineer at Suffolk Highways, had been circulated. This included details of trial removal or priority signing, a request for a proposal to monitor the trial. No costs have been provided yet.

The Parish Council needs to decide how the trial will be monitored. It had been suggested with several Councillors resident on Water Street we would have sufficient volunteers able to give direct feedback. Suffolk County Council prefer cameras but costs will be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Several commercial premises have cameras on Water Street, perhaps they could be asked to contribute to data. However these might not cover the whole length of Water Street or Brent Eleigh Road. Recording of large vehicles ignoring the weight restrictions already in place, would also be preferable during this trial. We should consider costs and suggest placements but the experts from Suffolk County Council would have the final decision on camera placement.

It was agreed the Chairman should pursue costs of cameras.

Organisation of the Council

Agenda item 10 a. Standing Financial Regulations

Amendments to SFRs together with a Scheme of Delegation and Financial Limits were noted. Key recommendations are:

1. that under SFR 6, the Council alters banking arrangements to enable on-line banking. This will include a Council credit card to enable on-line purchasing and to offer protection under Section 75 Consumer Credit Act.
2. That limits are set for the RFO and/or Chairman's decision to purchase or authorise payments from revenue accounts
3. That for capital projects, decisions to award Contracts are reserved for Council decision and payments arising are managed by the RFO within budget. Variations to Contracts or costs exceeding 5% tolerance ser reserved to the Council
4. That virement between budgets above £1500 in a single year is reserved for the Council
5. That all grant applications are reserved for Council decision
6. Variations to any agreed Contract are reserved for Council decision

Proposed by Ms Mitchell, seconded Mr Wilding, and agreed.

Agenda Item 10b Working Groups Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference for Finance, Planning, Operations(Facilities), Operations (Open Spaces) and the Natural Environment & Bio-diversity were considered. Ms Mitchell reported that she had prepared the documents from a brief issued by the Chairman.

Finance

Agreed to amend 2.2 to read “ By the end of December each year, recommend the level of precept required”

Agreed to amend 2.4 to read” Manage the selection of Internal Auditors

Agreed to add 3c) Shall publish an annual calendar of key meeting dates to align with the timescales for meeting annual returns and appointment of auditors

Operations (Facilities)

Agreed 2.3 Conduct audits.....add (e.g.) car parks.....planters add (any other appropriate areas that may present)

Agreed 2.6 to amend manage the Cemetery Chapel to read “ management of the Cemetery, Chapel and Church Grounds “

Agreed to transfer responsibility for the Cemetery, Chapel and Church Grounds to the Working Group for Operations (Open Spaces)

Operations (Open Spaces)

Agreed 2.4 to delete Woodlands Trust (Dyehouse Woods) and replace with “ Lavenham Woodland Group”

Council agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference as amended for Finance, Planning, Operations (Facilities), and Operations (Open Spaces) Working Groups.

Natural Environment & Bio-diversity

Agreed 2.1 delete Woodlands Trust and replace with “ Lavenham Woodland Group”

Mr Ranzetta queried the exclusion of air quality at this time and noted he had a number of other questions about the scope of the work proposed for this Working Group.

Agreed: To defer a decision to enable Mr Ranzetta to conduct dialogue with the Chairman.

Proposed by Ms Mitchell, seconded Dr Posner, and agreed.

Agenda Item 10c Councillor Roles August 2021

Council noted an interim report from the Chairman setting out various positions within and external to the Council. The Chairman would be continuing to discuss various options with Councillors in forthcoming weeks.

Proposed by Ms Mitchell, seconded Mr Ranzetta, and agreed.

Planning

DC/21/04264 Land Being Developed South of Howlett of Lavenham, East of Melford Road and West of Sudbury Road, Lavenham

Application for works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (WS240) - 1no Hawthorn, 1no Blackthorn and 1no Elder -Undertake hedge laying along entire length of G001 (left unmanaged, Hedgerow not appropriate)

Recommend Approval. Required work as hedge out of control.

DC/21/04427 45-46 Church Street, Lavenham

Application for works to trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce height of 1No Eucalyptus tree by 50%, pruning side branches by 3-4m and overall reduction of 1No Lime Tree by approx 3m.

Recommend approval. No issues

DC/21/04150 Bertrams, Bridge Street Road, Lavenham

Erection of a garden shed (retention of).

Recommend Approval. No issues.

DC/21/04423 Peg Weasel Farm, Bears Lane, Lavenham

Application for Outline Planning Permission (all matters reserved) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Erection of 1no detached dwelling.

Recommend approval. The Parish Council supported this application for Outline Planning Consent, complimenting the proposal on its eco and environmental-friendly design, observing that its location did not obstruct sensitive views or harm any of the local heritage, that it was sufficiently proximate to the village to benefit from the community's infrastructure, that the development is in scale with existing development, and that the location was in a region of other residential development and so would not sit out of place.

As part of any Full Application all assessments and surveys required under Policies D and H of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and National Building Regulations M, must be available at the time of consultation:

DC/21/04517 81 Church Street Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent -Internal alterations to adjoining rear property to remove non-original features, replace staircase and under-stair WC and re-instate door to rear elevation in place of window as per Design & Access Statement.

Recommend Approval. No issues

Following consideration of the recommendations made by the Planning Working Group it was proposed by Mr Ranzetta, seconded by Mrs Falconer, that the recommendations be endorsed by the meeting. Carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/21/01811 23 Prentice Street, Lavenham – planning permission granted for Erection of garden room/studio.

DC/21/03342 12 Spring Street, Lavenham – planning permission granted for Erection of single storey front and side wraparound extension and two-storey rear extension.

DC/21/01783 8 Shilling Street, Lavenham - Discharge of Conditions - - Condition 6 (Details

of Extension Roofing)

DC/21/03488 De Vere House, Water Street, Lavenham – Listed Building Consent for - Installation of sign to front elevation (following removal of existing sign)

DC/21/03557 Robin Hill, Park Road, Lavenham – planning permission granted for Erection of two storey linked extension to provide garage at ground floor and additional bedrooms (following removal of cart lodge)

Finance and Strategy

Invoices paid between meetings:

R D Lane, , works at Church St toilets/office £10,800.00: R D Lane, works at Tenter Piece £19,200.00. (both covered by CIL bid claims)

Invoices received/ Cheques for payment:

Kinex, phone a/c August £40.22: Playdale Playgrounds, check & free up Aerial Runway £126.00: Donationboxes.co.uk Ltd. 50% balance for two donation posts £1,260.00: Suffolk Tree Services, works to willow tree on First Meadow (ref.. 09(i)/20 p44) £1,920.00: Lavenham Community Council, Village Hall meeting room hire £94.50: Anglian Water, water charges Church St. £22.82: Anglian Water, water charges at Cemetery £19.52: Mutts Butts, dog waste bags for dispensers £157.25: Zoom, monthly fee for remote meetings £14.39: Karzees Limited, hire/cleaning of temporary toilet units Church St/Prentice St £1,365.60: Payroll £1,293.38: NFU Mutual, annual insurance renewal £1,525.52: JPB Landscapes Ltd. grounds maintenance/street cleaning £2,618.50: British Gas, electricity to Church St toilets £14.45: The Sign Shed, custom aluminium signage for public toilets x 6 £89.75.

Anglian Water have asked for a new meter reading at Prentice Street car park, overpayment now has to be re-calculated, waiting for confirmation and bank transfer.

Direct payments to Bank: Babergh District Council, 50% claim for EV unit in Prentice St. £9,999.99: Babergh District Council, CIL claims £11,250.00 (Church St £5,625.00, Tenter Piece £5,625.00): HMRC, VAT refund for 1 June to 30 June 2021 £13,918.40.

A letter to the Bank requests the transfer of 10,000.00 between accounts.

Prop. Mr Thompson, sec. Mrs Morrey, that the financial transactions are approved. Carried.

To receive and note Neighbourhood CIL Expenditure Report 01/04/2020 to 31/03/2021

The report had been forwarded to Babergh District Council and circulated to all Parish Councillors. The report would also be available to view on the website.

Correspondence

The following correspondence deferred from August meeting:

Email from resident of High Street concerned that a car which had not been moved from its parking space for about six months, had been abandoned. Resolved, report already filed with Babergh some time ago who had confirmed that the car is legal and belongs to a resident of High Street.

Email from resident (circulated to Councillors) asking if Lavenham is proactively trying to attract ultrafast Fibre To The Premises internet to the village? Gigabyte-speed internet is so useful, increasingly a must, for local businesses, sole traders and multigenerational families, particularly as Working From Home surges during the pandemic.

Small villages not far away in North Essex, are having theirs installed at the moment following multiple expressions of interest encouraged by their parish councils.

Most in Lavenham have access to 30mbps broadband speed thanks to Superfast Fibre To The Cabinet, Ultrafast is over 20 times as fast. Mr Ranzetta reported that his enquiries had indicated that only 9% of the country has this ultrafast speed. The Parish Council could perhaps coordinate expressions of interest, may be something for a future Facilities Group to consider.

Resident nearby on Bears Lane raising concerns about the overgrown frontage of a property in Bears Lane. It was thought that the owner of the hedge should be contacted by letter to request that some tidying is undertaken.

Recent correspondence/emails

Joint Local Plan Examination Hearings (re-scheduled). Mr Ranzetta will attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

from Suffolk Preservation Society (circulated) in respect of the planning application for the Lavenham Press site and in particular the potential loss of the 19th century building on the site which is a former horsehair factory. Mr Lamont had replied that the Parish Council was aware of this during consideration of the application but there had been more significant issues in the application which had prompted a recommendation for rejection. A point made in the Parish Council's response was that there needs to be more land retained in the curtilage of Number 47 in order to preserve the building and its setting.

from a resident of Lower Road concerned at the growth of Himalayan Balsam in the Common watercourse and River Brett (emails circulated), there are fears that the vigorous and invasive plants will form a dam and lead to water backing up and causing flooding in Lower Road and even backflow up the Water Street culvert. Investigations to be made with the Environment Agency, which was thought to be the appropriate authority in this matter. May be a subject for future consideration by the Environment Group.

from TRO Consultation, Babergh/Mid Suffolk, Notice for Civil Parking Enforcement Order (circulated). On 25th August, a Notice was published in the East Anglian Daily Times for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. This email is not related to parking charges as approved in February this year. Details with regards to tariff changes will follow at a later date. from Babergh/Mid Suffolk & Adam Bunce, Director of 2020 Consultancy with updates on parking charges, 3 emails, all circulated.

Firstly giving notice ahead of a press release, due out shortly, that the District Councils will be looking to introduce the new tariffs, as agreed at Cabinet earlier this year, in January 2022 rather than in October 2021.

General information about the new tariffs can be found on their FAQs

at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/environment/parking/babergh-car-and-lorry-parks/parking-proposals-2021-faqs>

Followed by an introduction to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Parking Strategy Consultation with a link to the questionnaire,

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BMSDCparkingstrategy/> which is now live and which should be completed by 28th September.

There will be virtual workshops, on Wednesday 8th September at either 1pm, 2pm, or 3pm; Wednesday 15th September at either 1pm, 2pm, or 3pm. Applications to attend can be made online.

Future tree planting project (see circulated email exchanges)

Needs further consideration, bringing together interested parties to identify potential sites for planting. A survey should be the first task. Natural Environment working group involvement.

John Knight has already proposed a plan to plant a tree for every resident of the village and the work already done must be taken into account. Mr Ranzetta and Dr Posner will work together in moving forward tree planting proposals.

Platinum Jubilee

The Parish Council had planned to discuss this before the end of the year but it would appear that some residents are wondering already what might be planned and may be looking to the Parish Council to be supportive. Mr Ranzetta offered to make enquiries as to whether any other organisations in the village might be planning events and then act as liaison.

Part 2

Motion to exclude the public 2nd September 2021 (Standing Order 3d)

Proposed by Irene Mitchell, seconded by Tony Ranzetta. Carried.

“The Council resolves to exclude the public for the remainder of this meeting. The reason for this proposal is the business to be discussed is of a confidential financial nature”.

Mrs Mitchell circulated notes on the matter to be discussed – Cleaning Services for Church Street Public Conveniences

This matter has been placed into Part 2 because of the commercial sensitivity of the subject. In short, a local company referred to as A had quoted for cleaning the Church Street and Prentice Street public toilets daily, and the office weekly, at a cost of £xxxxxx per annum. This does not include sanitation removal service. A second quote for Church Street only is £xxxx. A local company, referred to as B, will provide the sanitation disposal service for Church Street for £xxxxx per annum. The total cost for this option is £xxxx

A further quote, for toilet cleaning only, has been obtained from a company based in Ipswich referred to as C. The quoted cost for Church Street is £xxxxxx. References have been sought, the quote and references are attached to these notes. With the contract for the sanitation disposal service for Church Street of £xxxx the total cost for this option is £xxxxx

Neither quote A nor C included consumables, but quote C has included costings for toilet rolls and liquid soap as a separate item.

The Council is asked to approve the appointment of providers B and C to provide a service for Church Street conveniences, as they have submitted a competitive bid and excellent references have been received from companies they currently deliver service to, on approach from this Council

Proposed by Ms Mitchell, seconded by Mr Ranzetta, to award the contract to company C (Infinity Cleaning Services).

Agreed.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7th October 2021.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm.