

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

*Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, August 2022 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.*

**Present** Cllr Irene Mitchell, Chairman.

Cllrs Mary Morrey, Janice Muckian, Iain Lamont, Tony Sheppard, Paul Thompson, Michael Sherman

Babergh District Councillor Margaret Maybury.

5 members of the public.

**Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs Falconer, Macro and Chick.

**Declarations of Interest/Request for Dispensation** None

**To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the Council**

It was agreed that an amendment should be made to the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July in order to clarify the motion in respect of the Water Street scheme. On page 47, under the heading of Water Street Scheme the third line should read: Rounded quote for survey for 1 week £6,500, 2 weeks £11,700.

**Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Muckian, to request a two-week camera survey in order to provide a more robust result at a cost of £11,741.02 ex. of VAT.**

With this agreed amendment if was proposed by Cllr Sherman, seconded by Cllr Morrey, the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July are a true record of the meeting. Carried.

**Public Forum**

Mr Christopher Churchard raised the poorly signposted new car park in Water Street, considering the cost it is important to ensure it is used. In general the signage to car parks in the village is poor.

The Water Street scheme, is the cost of this coming from the Parish Council budget? If so, he thought that this was inappropriate at this financially difficult time.

Why is a hedge needed along the boundary of the First Meadow in Brent Eleigh Road, he feels that it will spoil the open views of the meadow. A hedge will require maintenance.

The Chairman responded that directional signing to all car parks can be reviewed in conjunction with signage for the Water Street scheme, better to wait and combine it all into one scheme.

The Water Street design and build costs will come from Neighbourhood CIL and other external funding sources not the precept. This scheme was first conceived in 2012.

The Open Spaces Group, lead by Dr Posner, had raised the future planting of a hedge in Brent Eleigh Road in February/March 2022. The land is owned by the Parish Council and residents nearby had expressed a wish it should happen. There is a question mark over this at the moment because it is understood that a sewer pipe runs just inside the fence. Enquiries are ongoing to establish exactly where and at a what depth.

Mr John Sutton asked where the Harwood Play Area is situated, Cllr Mitchell described the location and commented that proposals for use were first subject of public engagement in 2018, nothing had progressed at that time and Covid restrictions had affected this also.

In respect of this meeting Part 2, it was not the case that the Parish Council wished to hide this but the matter is financially sensitive at this stage.

Mr John Heeks asked several questions:

What are future plans for the publication of minutes in Lavenham Life?

When will the public toilets reopen?

Following a matter raised at the 2020 Parish Meeting, has any action been taken on the general untidiness of the village, litter and weeds on the pavements and Pump Alley, the poor condition of the litter bins on Market Place, weeds in the flower beds at Prentice Street car park and the bad condition of the road surface in Lady Street and other streets leading onto Market Place. Can the Parish Council sort this out?

With rising energy costs will there be a relaxation of planning rules on solar panels on Listed Buildings?

As had been reported in the July minutes the decision was taken only to publish minutes which had been approved in Lavenham Life rather than draft minutes which still had to be approved at the next meeting.

There is to be a Civic Pride drive in the Autumn which would encourage the community to collectively achieve an improvement in our surroundings, not only the areas for which the Parish Council has responsibility but those under the control of other authorities. Babergh is responsible for the upkeep of various green and garden areas in the village, Suffolk Highways for the roads which are in need of some serious attention.

Cllr Mitchell suggested that Cllr Sheppard could respond on the 'green energy' question.

**District Councillors' Reports, Mrs M Maybury** (report submitted and follows these minutes)

Mrs Maybury reported matters which the public had raised with her. She had been asked whether any more bicycle racks were planned for the village. An additional litter bin for the Church Street car park is being considered.

Fly-tipping around the recycling bins in Church Street had been reported and Mrs Maybury hoped that by now this had been removed. Clerk confirmed that the area is now clear.

Mrs Maybury asked to be copied in to the letter to Babergh regarding the overgrown garden area in Prentice Street car park.

## **7. Infrastructure Development**

### **7a To receive a report on Harwood Place play area**

The play area is situated between Harwood Place dwellings and Peek Close. Precise measurement of the area is not available yet but there is a cracked and broken hard surface, semi caged, and with a known drainage problem. There is correspondence dating back to 2019 and there has been a previous community engagement. However it is considered that the community needs to be consulted again as residents and families previously engaged may have moved on.

Cllr Thompson reported on proposals for a short questionnaire to be put to residents in Harwood Place, Peek Close and Green Willows. There is no wish to create a parking problem so only those within walking distance are included.

Four questions would be put as to ascertain the best use of the site: whether to refurbish the play facility and if so for what age group; alternative use as raised bed community garden; any other suggested use; leave as it is.

**It was resolved to enter into a second, but selective, round of community engagement before any decision is made on the future of the Harwood Place play area.**

### **7b Church Street public conveniences**

There is a meeting scheduled with contractors next week, postponed from last week when one had contracted Covid.

### **7c To consider a proposal for the village to participate in Anglia in Bloom**

The suggestion had come from a resident in respect of next year's competition. The Parish

Council is asked to approve in principle but will have to see a full plan, fully costed before we go any further. There will be a Village in Bloom seminar in the Autumn and it was suggested that two representatives from the village attend to learn more, Cllr Muckian would attend for the Parish Council.

The general poor state of the village, previously remarked upon, was raised. Was it realistic to think we could be ready for 2023, perhaps aim for 2024. The competition could tie in well with works to encourage Civic Pride, through a holistic approach. Sustainability would be the emphasis, with plants which require the minimum of water and could be re-used in other areas once the competition is over. Both businesses and householders would be encouraged to enter into the spirit.

A method of funding would have to be carefully considered. Next week Cllr Mitchell and the Clerk are meeting with an 'external grants' expert from Babergh. Some ideas might come out of that meeting.

**It was agreed in principle to support the proposal, with two representatives (1 Councillor) attending the seminar and a small group working to flesh out the proposals.**

#### **7d Regeneration of the redundant red telephone kiosks**

The Parish Council has taken ownership of the two kiosks, one in Church Street the other in High Street. So far nobody has come forward with an idea of how to repurpose them. An advertisement would be put in Lavenham Life, notice boards, Council website and the village facebook inviting innovative proposals for regeneration, with costings. Preferably low, or no, cost and low maintenance. A no-prize competition.

### **8 Climate Emergency**

Cllr Mitchell reported a very successful meeting with members of the Infrastructure Team and it was established that Babergh has a very strong agenda to address climate change. Leading on from this the environmental impact of CIL applications will be seriously considered.

The Neighbourhood Plan has a heavy bias towards environmental issues and this was supported by responses to the Questionnaire circulated in the community.

A start has been made with planned tree and hedge planting and other projects. The matter of solar panels raised earlier might raise difficulties due to our unique environment.

We also need to protect what we have and the emphasis will be on biodiversity when considering planning applications on green space.

**Cllr Mitchell proposed, Cllr Morrey seconded, that Lavenham Parish Council supports the principal Authorities' endeavours to protect the environment and declares a Climate Emergency. Agreed.**

### **9. Finance**

#### **9a Invoices received/for payment.**

JPB Landscapes, July grounds maintenance & street cleaning £2,684.58: Karzees Ltd. hire/cleaning of temporary toilets Prentice Street & Church Street £828.00: Kinex, phone a/c July £54.06: British Gas, Church Street toilets electricity £29.14: Payroll £4,097.16: Sterling Electrics, electrical installation works to donation point in Prentice Street car park £170.50: Lavenham Village Hall, meeting room hire £38.00: Zoom, monthly remote meeting charges £14.39: BT, broadband £24.28: ICS, Church Street/Prentice Street toilet cleaning & consumables (Aug) £402.88 (includes refund of £99.50 for 25 days in July not cleaned at Prentice Street): Seago & Stopps, payroll services to q/e 05/07 £115.20: Command Pest Control, quarterly sanitary services Church Street £174.00: Playquip, safety inspection First Meadow play equipment £321.60: Sweco, Construction Method and Site Management

Statement £288.00 (to be paid when confirmation received of Condition 3 discharge): Janey Auchincloss, supply of planters & compost for trees £72.35.

Direct Debit payment: Paya Group, monthly service fee £43.08: BG Business, electricity Water Street car park £13.09: BT Group plc, monthly mobile charge £6.00.

### **9b Income (July):**

Burial account £70.00: Total donations collected from car parks for July (total of cash & card donations) £1,082.20.

**Proposed by Cllr Morrey, seconded by Cllr Thompson, that the financial transactions are approved. Carried.**

## **10. Clerk's Report**

### **Prentice Street car park drains**

Following further investigations by Babergh three areas of concern were found, 'bellying' in the drain connecting the new toilet block to the old drain system, displacement of the pipework causing an obstruction below the manhole near the boundary wall, problem in Pump Court in main drain which is AW's responsibility.

Repair works commenced Monday 26 July, lasted all week, surface re-laid on Saturday. All except area of AW's responsibility completed and toilets could be reopened. However some concerns were raised about the dimensions of the ramp and landing area in front of the cabins. Dialogue with the Project Manager is planned.

### **Email regarding Vintage VW Event in 2023**

Email from organisers: this is a 4-yearly event which was scheduled for 2020, Covid forced postponement, deferred to 2023, 17-18 June. Village Hall and recreation ground booked accordingly for past 3 years. There has always been a display on the Market Place on the Saturday (described as the Jewel in the Crown). Cllr Mitchell has spoken to Charles Oldroyd, the organizer, further talks will take place.

### **Calendar of Councillors' availability**

In order to ensure that each upcoming meeting is going to be quorate the Clerk suggests that a log of Councillors' availability is kept. This would record known future dates when Councillors know they will not be able to attend a meeting and if numbers are low then variation of dates is possible. Methods of keeping a record will be researched. Also it is proposed to compile a perpetual Decision and Action List, which will be reviewed at week's end by the Chairman and Clerk and updated with actions arising out of the monthly meeting by the Monday following and circulated as a reminder of decision reached, who is following up actions and agreed timescales.

## **11. Planning**

### **Planning Applications Received:**

DC/22/03490 Poppy Cottage , 18 Shilling Street, Lavenham

Listed Building Consent - Alterations to existing modern flooring in one room.

DC/22/03562 The Little House, Lady Street, Lavenham

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area- Reduce crown of 1No. Gledistsia.

DC/22/03564 : 1 Bridge Street Road, Lavenham

Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order BT0414/G1 - Reduce two low hanging branches of 1No. Scots Pine (T1) by 3-4m. Remove two lower hanging branches of 1no. Scots Pine (T2). Reduce branches of 1No. Scots Pine (T3) by 50-60%. Reduce 1 lower

branch of 1No. Scots Pine (T4) by 50-60%. Reduce two branches of 1No. Scots Pine (T5) by 4-5m and reduce one overhanging top branch by 50-60%.

DC/22/03588 28 High Street, Lavenham

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area- Reduce 1No. Bay tree (T1) by 6-8ft.

Fell 1No. Cherry Tree (T2). Reduce 1No. Birch tree (T3) by 1m all round.

DC/22/03646 16 Prentice Street, Lavenham,

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1No. Spruce.

DC/22/03637 & DC/22/03638 Barn Cottage, Barn Street, Lavenham

Householder Application & Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of a conservatory (following demolition of existing).

DC/22/03762 Woolstaplers Hall, 24 Prentice Street, Lavenham

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce crown of 3No. Silver Birch (T1, T2 and T3) by 30%. Reduce crown of 2No. Maple (T4 and T5) by 30%.

**Proposed by Cllr Sheppard, seconded by Cllr Muckian, recommend approval for all above applications. Carried.**

### **Planning Decisions Received:**

DC/22/02802 Fiddler Simpsons Cottage, The Granary, Bury Road, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of 1No. dwelling.

DC/22/03035 5 Ropers Court, Lavenham - planning permission granted for change colour of external render, replace existing front door, erection of fencing and extension of paved path

DC/22/02404 10 Lady Street, Lavenham - Removal or Variation of a Condition following grant of Planning Permission B/12/01024/FUL Dated 06/03/2013 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Change of use from residential to mixed use (A1, A3 and C3) including associated alterations, and conversion of existing garage to kitchen preparation area and toilets as amended and amplified by agent's letter dated 4 December 2012 amending description to change of use to mixed use Sui Generis (Public House)/Class E (b) (Restaurant) and conversion of garage to storage, plant and WC use, together with other changes to the proposals as set out in an 'Additional Information' document and a revised Design and Access Statement together with amended plans numbered 915/05A, 06A, 07A, 08A, 09A, 10A and 11A - To vary Condition 2 [now Condition 1] (Hours of operation) and Condition 11 [now Condition 10] (Restriction of Areas for Consumption of Food and Drink) to allow extension to current opening hours and revision to areas to be used for consumption of food and drink

Cllr Sheppard had drawn attention to a report of a Council winning a High Court case to protect 'green spaces'. In a judgement the High Court had found for the Council against the Government and the developer when a decision was quashed by a public inquiry inspector to give the scheme at Chatsmore Farm the go ahead. The Court ruled that the inspector had not given enough weight to the impact such a large development would have on the setting of the South Downs National Park and the view within. This would appear to reinforce Lavenham's Neighbourhood Plan position on views into the village.

Further to Mr Heeks' question earlier in the meeting Cllr Sheppard said that discussions had taken place in respect of modern heating/energy saving in the case of Listed Buildings. Energy prices and the Green Agenda had revived interest in the subject but there was lack of progress and still no clarification as to how rules might be applied.

Following the robbery at the Post Office last Friday it was agreed that the Parish Council should do all we can feasibly to support any plans for increased security that the Trustees of No 2 Lady Street can propose. It is important that the community does not lose this asset.

**12. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

**Part 2****Motion to exclude the public (Standing Order 3d)**

The Chairman read Standing Order 3d.

**13. The Council resolved 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.**

**14. Recruitment update/Clerk to the Council role**

**The Council resolved to Advertise the Clerk vacancy on SALC website (weekly & free); local community Facebook; INDEED (also free).**

**The Council resolved to approve the budget for the hiring of a consultant for a maximum of 30 days in the period from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, on a fee for service basis at a maximum cost of £3,000 in the current year.**

The proposal is to relieve pressure on the Clerk role and to provide certainty to Council that the back office is ready for an incoming Clerk.

The meeting closed at 10.05 pm.