

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 1st September 2022, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

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

Present Cllr Irene Mitchell, Chairman.

Cllrs Mary Morrey, Janice Muckian, Tony Sheppard, Paul Thompson, Michael Sherman
Babergh District Councillors Margaret Maybury and Clive Arthey.

4 members of the public.

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

2/3. **Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensation** Cllr Morrey declared an interest in agenda item 13, and said she would not speak or vote on the No 2 Lady Street motion.

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

It was proposed by Cllr Sherman, seconded by Cllr Muckian, and agreed, that the minutes were a true record of the proceedings of the meeting held on Thursday 4th August.

5. **Public Forum**

Mr Christopher Churchard in raising the matter of progress with the Prentice Street car park public toilets mentioned that one of the EV chargers was listed as being available for use and had caused some confusion with a motorist who had been expecting to be able to charge his car there. Anglia Charging to be contacted to remove this from the sat nav.

6. **District Councillors' Reports, Cllrs Clive Arthey & Margaret Maybury** (report submitted by Cllr Maybury follows these minutes)

Cllr Arthey highlighted a few items in the Councillor Briefing Note which had been received direct and circulated. They included the annual canvass of electors, the solar panel and battery purchasing scheme and the Suffolk Waste Partnership initiative regarding safe battery disposal.

He then went on to talk about the Tree Canopy Survey which is going to Cabinet next week for approval to publish on the website. The Cabinet papers are available and include the Assessment Report with information on a ward-by-ward basis showing tree cover and other data including air quality and life expectancy. Unfortunately Lavenham ward (which includes Cockfield, Little Waldingfield, Great Waldingfield and Chilton) has the lowest percentage tree cover of all the Babergh and Mid Suffolk wards at 5.5%. The average is 10.3% with the highest in Orwell ward of 19%.

The Chairman pointed out that the Parish Council has aspirations in respect of increasing tree and hedge planting in the village, Cllr Posner had initiated these during his time on the Council. Two plots of land have been identified and steps are being taken to establish legal ownership, following which approaches will be made to the owners.

Cllr Maybury's report covered matters throughout the Ward and she went on to discuss in more detail her involvement in Lavenham matters.

Whilst in the village today visiting the Good Neighbours Scheme meeting she had taken pictures of the area around the recycling bins. Babergh will be dealing with the fly tipping and the broken fencing beside the surgery building.

The Traffic Working Group meets next at the end of the month. Cllr Maybury and Cllr Mitchell have been talking to businesses in the village, in particular the Swan management to ensure better use is made of their car parks.

On 10th September Cllr Maybury will be attending the presentations for the Summer Reading Challenge.

Thanks should be publicly expressed to Mr & Mrs Booker who she understood tended the area around the milestone in Sudbury Road, keeping the grass short so that the milestone was a feature beside the road.

Following talk about the cost of living and the Food Store, Cllr Muckian noted that some of the supermarkets are planning to stop using 'use by' dates in an attempt to reduce food waste.

7. Chairman's Announcements

Prentice Street car park/public toilets: both Babergh District Council and Anglian Water had responded quickly and repaired the drains under the car park and beyond.

However a query had arisen regarding the step-free access to the toilet cabins, which had been interpreted as a 'ramp', and which was now holding up the reopening of the facilities as the width of the ramp was not considered to be the required width of 1.5 m. Cllrs Mitchell and Muckian had met Mr Notley on site who explained that due to the requirement for a 4.5 m. carriageway in front of the building space was restricted. Cllr Mitchell was seeking further information from Nigel Jarvis and Mark Cross of Babergh and advice as to how the problem might be resolved. The situation is becoming embarrassing and cannot continue.

Communities – external funding: some s106 money is available for Lavenham and could be applied for as a contribution towards the improvements to the community play area at Harwood Place.

Recruitment: advertisements for the Clerk role had been posted on the SALC website, INDEED and public notice boards, so far the only responses had come from INDEED and it was accepted that there was a fair chance that recruitment might take some time. As several nearby Parish Councils are advertising for the post of an appropriately qualified Clerk the possibility of a shared role was raised. As to timescale, assuming that further applications are received, shortlisting should be completed by the October meeting with a projected formal interview date in the week commencing 10th October.

A property owner: has raised the possibility of support for protection of a building from traffic damage, issues might arise later.

Emergency Plan meeting: a meeting had been convened by a member of the NP review group. A review of the Rest Centre plan is needed, many of the contact names are out of date and no longer available.

Lavenham Press site: following the consideration of an application by Churchill Homes for a development in Sudbury which had been before the Planning Committee on 10th August, clarification would be sought in respect of the policy relevant to such applications in respect of no requirement for affordable housing or CIL.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions arising. Cllr Muckian considered that there was sound footing to investigate the possibility of a shared, qualified proper officer. It was agreed that Cllr Mitchell should continue with talks with the Chairmen of other Councils. No decision would be made without first coming back to Council for agreement.

8. Infrastructure Development

8a Harwood Place play area

A full report had been circulated to the Councillors and the selective community engagement exercise agreed at the last meeting was carried out by Cllrs Sherman and Thompson. Total responses 32, 19 expressed a wish for the area to be retained as a play area and all but one of these suggested the younger age group of 3-12.

Council agreed to the proposal set out in Section 4 of the report, set out below. Proposed by Cllr Sherman, seconded by Cllr Thompson. Carried.

Proposal 4: 2022

To re-develop the Play Area for children aged 3-12.

- i. To allocate a maximum of £25,000.00 from Neighbourhood CIL as LPC's contribution
- ii. To submit a bid to the Community Infrastructure Team in October 2022 for the balance required for re-development costs
- iii. To submit a bid to Babergh DC's Community Development Fund by 16th September 2022 for the cost of play equipment including installation up to a maximum of £20,000
- iv. To assemble a Project Team comprising Councillors Sherman, Thompson and Mitchell to plan and deliver this project in conjunction with support from community volunteers and/or professional guidance as required

In the event of 4iii above failing to secure funds, other potential sources of funding will be explored but the maximum resource from the Parish Council will remain at £25,000.00. Council is asked to note there is a window of opportunity for funding (see iii above).

8b Church Street public conveniences

The deposit for works by County Washroom has been paid in order to secure a start date in the diary, confirmation of a date is awaited. There has been a re-examination of the doors to assess whether replacements are required. Enquiries are also taking place in order to establish whether, and where, Thermostatic Mixer Valves have been installed.

8c Hedge Planting

Due to doubts over the suitability of the First Meadow boundary (Brent Eleigh Road) for hedge planting, due to the presence of the sewage pipeline, an alternative site owned by the Parish Council at the Recreation Ground in Bridge Street Road has been investigated with Lavenham Community Council, who lease the site, for planting in 2022. The First Meadow site could be considered for a planting plan in future years.

Hedge planting is for the benefit of all. This is a BMSDC priority enshrined in their Biodiversity Action Plan which includes funded provision of plants and trees to communities to 'make this happen'.

The report circulated included a map of the proposed location and a schedule of the plants required.

Council agreed to the planting of a mixed hedge in 2022-23 within the boundaries of the Recreation Ground, Bridge Street Road, Lavenham within the cost envelope of £1,500.00 previously approved.

9. Finance

Invoices paid between meetings:

County Washrooms, 50% deposit for Church Street conveniences works (minute ref: 06(i)/22 p39) £7,376.40: Devon Disability Collective, 5 covers for EV charge points (minute ref: 06(i)/22 p39) £348.00: Mutts Butts, refill dog waste bags (debit card online order) £165.70: Viking, copy paper/printer inks (debit card online order) £78.43.

Invoices received/for payment :

JPB Landscapes, Aug grounds maintenance & street cleaning £2,684.58: Karzees Ltd. hire/cleaning of temporary toilets Prentice Street & Church Street £936.00: Kinex, phone a/c

Aug £55.88: British Gas, Church Street toilets electricity £30.03: Payroll £3,049.69: Zoom, monthly remote meeting charges £14.39: SALC, Councillor training, modules 2-6, M Sherman £156.00: Out Design, Lavenham Design Guide invoice 3(from NP2 budget) £2,000.00: Birketts LLP, professional charges for fixed fees for second and final property transfer former Gas Works site £623.00: Wave, water charges Church Street £128.55: Wave, water charges Prentice Street £41.34: Wave, water charges Cemetery £17.05: NFU Mutual, annual insurance premium £1,662.41.

Direct Debit payments: BT, broadband £24.28: Paya Group, monthly service fee £43.08: BG Business, electricity Water Street car park £83.58: BT Group plc, monthly mobile charge £6.00.

Income (August):

Burial account £860.00: Total donations collected from car parks for August (total of cash & card donations) £1,926.65: Babergh District Council, partial refund of planning fee (Water Street car park removal of condition) £58.00: Street Cleansing Grant, Q1 2022/23 £2,593.50.

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

10. Capital Planning Process

10a Capital Planning & Delivery Process

The Parish Council is aware of the need for clear process in reaching decisions, this is especially critical when committing to spend public resources. A flow chart had been circulated in the support documents setting out a framework as a basis from which to work. This is likely to require further refinement. A further paper will follow in November 2022, to underpin the tasks outlined in Stages 2 and 3 of the process.

Invariably some schemes will be more complex than others. Judgement by Council will be required on a case by case circumstance, on whether the framework must be applied in full or if elements of it can be set aside. The process should therefore be viewed as iterative. Lessons will be learned from each scheme and the process adapted on an on-going basis to take those into account.

The Council resolved to adopt the principles as set out in Capital Planning and Delivery Process and refer back to the Finance & Strategy Group for further refinement.

10b Parish Infrastructure Investment Plans (PIIPs)

Draft Guidance for Parish and Town Councils had been received from Babergh District Council. Schemes arise out of the Neighbourhood Plan and as the District Council is our main funder for Capital Development they request that parishes have PIIPs.

A PIIP can help to identify and prioritise the infrastructure needs of a community and future spending decisions, provide an evidence base for spending decisions, identify sources of funding, explain to local communities where local investment is being targeted and encourage engagement with members of the community who will use the facilities and services being delivered.

The Council agreed to the development of a Lavenham Infrastructure Development Plan (proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Muckian)

Cllr Sheppard agreed to take up the challenge of drafting a PIIP for Lavenham Parish Council.

11. LNP Timetable

Parish Councillors are expected to give their views as individuals in the Informal

Stakeholder Engagement. Comments are invited to be forwarded to the Group no later than 5th October.

There are three documents to be considered: LNP2: an updated Lavenham Landscape Character & Sensitivity Assessment 2023; a Lavenham Design Guide 2023. An email with a link to these documents will be forwarded by the Review Group.

As these are large documents there was a feeling that it would be an advantage for each Councillor to have a printed copy. Clerk to look into the costs of providing these.

Councillors will be asked to review the results of the information consultation at the Finance & Strategy meeting on 11th October and an informal seminar with the Parish Council and the LNP Group to discuss and confirm the consultation final draft will be arranged as soon as possible.

The Review Timetable circulated to Councillors outlined other critical dates for the review.

12. Civic Pride

Civic Pride means taking a pride in the village in which we live and trying to make our environment a better place. In recent times, through observation of Councillors and the public, standards in Lavenham appear to have slipped. There are many reasons for this and action is proposed to improve the appearance of the village.

Matters are complicated by the fact that the public realm is managed by 3 Councils; Lavenham Parish Council, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council. This sometimes causes blurred lines with confusion as to who is responsible for which area.

Cllrs Muckian and Sherman, supported by Cllr Mitchell have drawn up a schedule and it is proposed that the Council receives reports periodically of additions to the schedule, actions taken and outcomes. It is also proposed to bring a further paper to the Council setting out the details of a campaign to involve and inform residents once clarification of responsibilities is received.

Council notes the content of the informal audit, will offer further input and approves in principal the approach outlined at 4 in the report submitted.

13. Clerk's Report

Following the robbery from the Post Office on 13th August the Trustees of LCHCLT Ltd are concerned for the safety and well-being of the volunteers and members of the community using the building. They also have to consider whether the loss of current, and recruitment of future, volunteers will be affected by the incident. Consideration is being given to the provision of a CCTV security system in order to protect the staff. Assistance with the cost of the equipment is requested.

Two companies have been approached by LCHCLT Ltd and three quotes for an appropriate system have been obtained and forwarded for consideration by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council considered the recommendation of the Trustees and agreed that this was the most suitable system, with one high resolution camera outside and one inside. The quoted cost, which includes all equipment, installation and legal work, is £749. As landlords of the property it was agreed that the Parish Council will cover the cost of the system, the Trustees will purchase in their name and will be responsible for ongoing costs. A grant of £750 to LCHCLT Ltd was agreed.

It was proposed by Cllr Thompson, seconded by Cllr Muckian, that the Council agrees expenditure to purchase a security system for No 2 Lady Street. Carried.

14. Planning

Planning Applications Received:

DC/22/03807 Shilling Grange, Shilling Street, Lavenham

Householder Application - Erection of front electric entrance gates and posts (following removal of existing) and replacement of house sign.

DC/22/03808 Shilling Grange, Shilling Street, Lavenham

Listed Building Consent - Erection of front electric entrance gates and posts (following removal of existing) and replacement of house sign.

There is no change to existing access arrangements other than new gates and posts. The design of the gates is not detrimental to the street scene or to the adjacent listed buildings.

Recommend Approval

DC/22/03894 10 Bolton Street, Lavenham

Householder Application - Construction of off-road parking space and new dropped kerb including erection of new gate and posts (following removal of front boundary wall).

Recommend Approval, subject to compliance with SCC Highways requirement for access visibility splays.

DC/22/04093 44 Prentice Street, Lavenham

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

Recommend Approval

Proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Thompson, recommend approval for all above applications. Carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/22/03316 19 Green Willows, Lavenham - permission granted for erection of single storey rear extension and two storey side extension over existing garage

DC/22/03294 . Church Cottage, 45 - 46 Church Street, Lavenham – permission granted for construction of timber cladding to extension walls, raise and replacement of felt roof with Enviroflex liquid roofing system and insertion of 3No rooflights

DC/22/03562 The Little House, Lady Street, Lavenham – LPA does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area- Reduce crown of 1No. Gleditsia

DC/22/03588 28 High Street, Lavenham - LPA does not wish to object to 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/22/03564 1 Bridge Street Road, Lavenham – Consent has been Granted 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/22/03646 16 Prentice Street, Lavenham – LPA does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area, Fell 1No. Spruce

DC/22/03490 Poppy Cottage, 18 Shilling Street, Lavenham – Listed Building Consent granted for alterations to existing modern flooring in one room

15. Date of next meeting

Thursday 6th October, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.