

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 4th February 2021, commencing 7.30 pm.

In response to Government measures prohibiting gatherings, announced on 23rd March 2020, this meeting was conducted remotely.

Present Mr I Lamont, Chairman. Mr J O'Mahony, Vice-Chairman.

Mrs D Twitchett, Mrs M Morrey, Mrs I Mitchell, Mr C Reeve, Mr T Sheppard, Mr B Panton, Mr R Macro, Mr M Chick.

Mr R Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor

Mrs M Maybury and Mr C Arthey Babergh District Councillors for Lavenham Ward.

3 members of the public.

Public Forum

Mr Simon Howlett said that he was here to support planning application DC/20/05776 Howlett Of Lavenham, Sudbury Road. He outlined the history of the site and added that the plans for the garage are intended to meet the developing needs of the automotive industry into the future.

Mr Richard Aspa firstly welcomed Mr Lamont in his new role as Chairman, also thanking Mr Reeve for his work for the community as previous Chairman and Vice Chairman. Mr Aspa talked about proposals previously put forward in respect of reducing and reconfiguring parking in the Market Place in order to clear space in front of the Guildhall, thus making a less cluttered and more welcoming environment for visitors and residents alike. It is difficult at this time, in the absence of public debate, to envisage how local consultation could take place in order to progress any plans prior to the return of visitors once restrictions are relaxed.

Police Matters – Go to:

https://www.suffolk.police.uk/sites/suffolk/files/ceo_constables_county_feb_-_online.pdf for the February 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 December, there had been 1 crime: Violence & Sexual Offence.

County Councillor's Report, Mr R Lindsay (*report forwarded and circulated, follows the minutes*)

Clay Hill corner flooding was discussed. Mr O'Mahony reported that rising river water is coming out of the gullies and settling on the lower areas of the road but there is no way for the water to drain back into the river as water levels fall. Apart from the dangers of vehicles being stuck in the middle of the floodwaters Mr O'Mahony raised the risk of a person escaping from a vehicle being swept off their feet by the force of the water.

District Councillor's Reports, Mrs M Maybury and Mr C Arthey (*Mrs Maybury had forwarded a report, follows the minutes*)

Adding to the report, Mrs Maybury was pleased to support remedial work to the Mud Lane flooding situation with £2,000 from her locality budget. Mr Lindsay had confirmation from SCC that although the map showed that Mud Lane itself was in their ownership and responsibility the ditch is not, and does not appear to have any owner recorded.

Mrs Maybury repeated her thanks to Mrs Mitchell and all the volunteers at the vaccination centre for their splendid work.

The Minutes – It was noted that the January minutes recorded that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th November were approved, this should have read 'the minutes of the meeting held

on 3rd December'. With this amendment it was prop. by Mr Reeve, sec. by Mrs Twitchett, that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2021 and the minutes of the meeting to determine the Precept for 2021/22 held on 21st January 2021, were approved. Carried.

Declarations of Interest – none.

Apologies for absence - Mrs Norman was unable to join the meeting due to technical difficulties and sent her apologies. After initial technical difficulties Mrs Maybury and Mr Lindsay joined the meeting at 7.55 pm.

Matters arising and update of outstanding issues

Concern was being expressed at a number of residents putting out cones in order to 'reserve' parking spaces in some of the side streets. This is not a matter over which the Parish Council has any authority, County Council Highways is the only authority which has the power to place cones on the highway and any concerns should be reported to them.

Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan revision update

Mr Panton reported that the group is meeting every week via Zoom and have welcomed Rachel Hogger, Planning Consultant, and Paul Bryant, Babergh D C Neighbourhood Planning Office, as speakers. One problem to be addressed is that of timing, especially of the public consultation, which is a bit of an issue complicated by the present Covid restrictions, under normal circumstances consultation would take place by public meeting and talking face to face. The NDP revision group is ready to release their first newsletter and this will be going out soon. This will be for NDP information only, building up to the production of the public questionnaire (probably in May), which it is thought will help with the record of proof of consultation. Feedback from the test questionnaire has been good.

Newsletter articles

At the moment it is thought that there are not sufficient information updates to provide articles to justify a further Parish Council newsletter.

Operations

Project Updates

Prentice Street car park and toilets - work has commenced on-site: the old toilet block has been removed, surface and foul water drains cleaned (some root growth to be removed), trees work undertaken (tree at entrance requires co-operation of UKPN as cable entwined in branches), rebuilding of edging started, base for electric vehicle charging points started. Specification for construction for charging points changed by UKPN, hence a bigger above ground box than at Church Street (now 2.4 metres long!) and foundations far greater – EV provider have indicated that this should not increase cost. Cabin to be delivered mid-March. Building control fee paid. **Church Street toilets** - Planning Permission now received. CIL bid now clear to go to Cabinet on 8th March for decision. Builders lined up to commence on 18th March. Building control advised.

Tenter Piece - builders to go on-site mid-March.

Harwood Place and Green Willows - no further progress. Business case could now be progressed for at least Harwood Place (play area).

Water Street - Mr Lindsay said that the designer has not yet started work, should start mid-March.

Gas Works – NG have commissioned a feasibility study which they expect will be completed by the end of January, they will consider the findings and come back to us.

Mr Arthey expressed concerns about completion within 2 years of the CIL award, this cannot

be extended.

LED lighting – nothing much happening at the moment. UKPN have given notice of a power cut in Spring Street for about two and a half hours on 13th February in order for the last lighting column to be installed. Concerns had been expressed by a resident, Mr Lamont will speak to him as there had been a long wait for this work to be carried out.

20 mph speed limit – not changed since last report, surveys put on hold because of lockdown.

New Projects

Car Parking, strategy and consultation – a document ‘Lavenham Parish Council Car Parking Strategy’ had been drafted and circulated to all Councillors. This outlined the present position with regard to the car parks in Lavenham, the Parish Council’s involvement and investment in toilet/car parking provision and a view of the future, especially in response to the recently announced review of car parking charges in the district. It was proposed by Mr Sheppard, seconded by Mr Macro, that the Parish Council adopts this document. Carried. Mr Arthey thought that this is a really useful document. Mr Reeve was thanked for his work in drafting the study.

On-pavement parking control, planters/street furniture – a progression following work carried out six years ago by a Traffic Working Party.

Mr Lamont proceeded to show a series of slides showing Parish Council traffic and parking projects giving examples of ways in which inconsiderate and/or dangerous parking might be managed using street furniture and bollards. The programme of projects would be ongoing, probably 2021 to 2025 and would have to involve public consultation. In the Neighbourhood Development Plan, ENV3 promoted a better place for community and leisure in the Market Place and suggestions for reconfiguration had been put forward. Mrs Mitchell, although in favour of removing some of the parking spaces in front of the Guildhall, was concerned about the possible effects on traders. Mr Chick wondered how often parking is at capacity.

Mr Sheppard suggested that the proposals should be agreed in principle, taking the opportunity to produce better plans, costings and an idea of any permissions which may have to be obtained. Mr Reeve proposed, Mrs Morrey seconded, that the Parish Council agree in principle with further research and planning to be carried out. Agreed.

Finance and Strategy

Invoices paid between meetings:

Babergh District Council, Building Regs application Prentice Street £252.00.

Cheques for payment:

idverde Ltd., public toilets works for January £1,230.00: JPB Landscapes, (January winter maintenance £345.00, street cleaning £1,253.33) + VAT £1,918.00: Zoom, monthly fee for remote meeting £14.39: Kinex, phone account January £40.22: Payroll £749.48: British Gas, electricity supply to Church St. toilets £19.90: Suffolk Tree Services, crown reduction Horse Chestnut tree Prentice St car park £2,100.00: Suffolk Tree Services, fell diseased Cemetery Pine £1,020.00: Seago & Stopps Payroll Solutions, q/e 05/01/21 payroll admin. £110.40: Glasdon UK Ltd, mobile grit bin for use at Church Street Vaccination site £187.06: Irene Mitchell, fee for NALC Zoom seminar ‘The future of health challenges post Covid 19 £38.93: Reimbursement for expenditure connected to the vaccination programme (Elite Hi Vis for Hi Vis jackets for volunteers £54.71, Tesco petrol for generator £34.58) total £89.29.

A letter to the Bank requests the transfer of £7,000.00 between accounts.

Mr Reeve proposed, Mrs Twitichett seconded, that the financial transactions are approved. Carried.

Precept 2021/22 – following the meeting on 21st January when a precept of £78,967 had been approved, the appropriate forms had been submitted to Babergh District Council.

Finance update to 31st December 2020 – an update of income/expenditure as at 31st December 2020 had been circulated to all Councillors, also a copy of the most recent Bank statement for transactions to that date. The Bank Reconciliation to that date showed a total balance in the bank of £290,029. It was proposed by Mrs Twitchett, seconded by Mr Reeve, that these documents are approved as correct. Carried.

External Auditor Report - External auditor certificate 2019/20 received from PKF Littlejohn had been circulated which certified that they have completed their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged their responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2020. Proposed by Mr Reeve, seconded by Mr Sheppard that receipt of the Final Auditor Report and Certificate is acknowledged and the Councillors have noted the matter drawn to their attention in the Report, that is ‘We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by SI 2020/404 the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2020/21 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not start on or before 1 September 2020. As a result, the smaller authority must answer ‘No’ to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2021/22.’ Carried.

The Final External Audit Report and Certificate, together with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, will be displayed on the public notice board and the Parish Council website together with Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the AGAR.

Planning

Planning Applications Received:

DC/20/05776 Howlett Of Lavenham, Sudbury Road, Lavenham

Planning Application - Erection of replacement commercial garage building (following demolition of existing building). Erection of 5no. dwellings and construction of 2no. vehicular accesses

Existing established business in Lavenham, the proposal will demolish and rebuild the workshops and showroom and allow space for the proposed 5 dwellings to be developed at the rear of the site, a brown field site, adjacent to the Hopkins development. The proposed dwellings, a three dwelling terrace and a two dwelling terrace are similar in external design to the social housing abutting the boundary on the Hopkins development. The site is opposite land on Melford Road identified by BMSC for 20 houses.

This will retain a long established business in Lavenham and improve the visual aspects of the site on the outskirts of the village. Recommend Approval.

DC/21/00481 12 Market Place Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent - Rebuild double flue chimney stack (following demolition of existing)

Essential repairs. Recommend Approval.

DC/21/00426 6 Lady Street Lavenham

Householder Application - Erection of single storey outbuilding.

Listed Building in Conservation Area, small “shed” at rear of garden. No impact on listed building. Recommend Approval.

DC/21/00588 Drury House Frogs Hall Road Lavenham

Application for Planning Permission without compliance of Condition(s) Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to DC/20/01371 for variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents)

Original application (approved) was for 1 detached and 2 semi-detached dwellings. The revised

application is for 3 detached dwellings. The design of the properties is in line with the original application. Recommend Approval.

Notification for work on trees in a Conservation Area

DC/21/00125 56 Water Street Lavenham

Reduce 4 No. Sycamore trees due to overhang and shading.

& DC/21/00134 56 Water Street Lavenham

T1 (Sycamore), T2 (Sycamore), T3 (Yew) and T4 (Walnut) - reduce overhang.

The applications above, relating to the same property, did not show the location of the trees, subject of the applications, to be identified. Recommend Refusal

Following consideration of the recommendations made by the Planning Working Group it was proposed by Mr O'Mahony, seconded by Mrs Mitchell, that the recommendations be endorsed by the meeting. Carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/20/05282 3 Bridge Street Road, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of single storey rear extension (following demolition of existing conservatory), Erection of single storey extension to garage and single storey link extension to create Entrance Hall

DC/20/05146 3 Priory Farm Court, Water Street, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of 2no. single storey rear extensions and alterations to existing window.,

DC/20/05472 The Island House, Lower Road, Lavenham - Babergh D C does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - T1 (Silver Birch) - Fell. T2 (Silver Birch) - Reduce height by 5-6m and shape the top. T3 (Hawthorn) - Fell. T4 (Hazel) - Reduce the height by 50%. T5 - (Hawthorn Stem) - Fell.

DC/20/05489 Woolstaplers Hall, 24 Prentice Street, Lavenham - Babergh D C does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - T6 (Yew) - Reduce the tree by 50%

DC/20/05480 5 White Gates, Lavenham - Consent granted for Works to Trees in a Conservation Area and Protected by a Preservation Order - T1 (Silver Birch) - Reduce height by 4-5m and shape. T2 (Silver Birch) - Reduce height by 5m to face back the long branches and shape. T3 (Silver Birch) - Reduce height by 5m.

DC/20/05382 Public Conveniences, Public Car Park Adjacent Cock Inn, Church Street, Lavenham – planning permission granted for Change of Use of part of building to create Parish Meeting Office, reconfigure internal layout to provide gender neutral cubicled public facilities including external disabled access as per schedule of works.

DC/20/05434 & DC/20/05444 14 Shilling Street, Lavenham – Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent granted for demolish loggia and other works as per Heritage Statement

Housing & Social

Good Neighbours Scheme – Mrs Twitchett's report:

This last month has seen only 12 requests, 6 of those being lifts to the surgery for Vaccination.

Remu Ramanathan, who has started to come to the Village on Saturdays with his Fish and Chip van, has kindly offered to donate £1 from each sale in his first month to the Good Neighbour Scheme. He has already raised around £70 from his first 2 visits. This is a very nice gesture from him and we wish him well.

I have taken leaflets printed by Jane, to the sheltered housing residents of Tenter Piece to inform them of the upcoming works to the common room. Also I informed the Scheme Manager of the site, she was really pleased to know this, as she herself had not been told by Babergh.

Correspondence had been received from:

Resident of Old Station Close, raising the problem of cars parking along Preston Road between the junction with Bury Road and the entrance to Old Station Close. The Parish Council had suggested that double yellow lines should be put in place along Preston Road when commenting on the original planning application but the suggestion had not been taken up. In the absence of any restrictions parking in a dangerous position is a matter for police enforcement.

Resident of Spring Street with request for extra parking spaces in Spring Street to prevent parking on the grassed areas which are in a very poor state. Forwarded to Babergh D C as owners of the green areas and appropriate Authority.

Highways Enforcement, asking for help in identifying the possible owner responsible for the ditch running between The Common and First Meadow in order to get it cleared as a build up of silt has been judged to be contributing to flooding at Clay Hill corner.

SCC Legal Services, informing of the Emergency Closure of Byway 22 (near Brights Farm) and Byway 20 (Peek Lane) due to damage to the surface.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council/future agenda items

Christmas Fair – Carole and Goff Holland have informed the Parish Council that, with regret they have decided to stand down from organising the Christmas Fair 2021 and onward. There are also several of the volunteers on the team who are also wishing to stand down. It is hoped that a younger team might come forward and carry on, either with a similar or new format. Roy Mawford has kindly offered his help in calling a meeting to recruit a new committee but he will not be running it. There is a reserve in the bank, Jane Gosling is the Treasurer and has said that she is willing to carry on. Prop. by Mr Reeve, sec. by Mr Sheppard, that the Parish Council will support Mr Mawford where possible in facilitating the formation of a new committee. Agreed.

It is reported that Wool Towns board had been closed down.

Play equipment independent inspections have resumed and a quote for safety surface repairs under the junior swings has been requested

Charles Posner would like to sponsor another bench for the Lavenham Walk, if the Parish Council will purchase and he will reimburse

Mr Chick has volunteered to help with the website following discussions with Mr Panton and Mrs Morrey has agreed to help collate grant applications.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4th March 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.