

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 4th March 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, Mrs A Norman (left the meeting at 9.20 pm.), Mr C Reeve, Mr B Panton, Mr T Sheppard, 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.

8 members of the public.

Public Forum

Malcolm Lomers, Jane Henderson, Paul Hardiman and Nicola Hayden were all residents of Prentice Street and separately outlined their objections to the planning application in respect of 26 Prentice Street. All had forwarded detailed submissions to the District Council as Planning Authority. Mr Lomers referred to the recent mail shot and observed that the Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan was designed to protect the village. The general objection was to the upscaling of the building, the encroachment of the project and impact on buildings on all sides of the site. The District Council's planning website also appeared to require correction as it referenced a response from the Suffolk Preservation Society which was in fact an individual resident's response. There is no SPS response available to view.

Paul Thompson and Jennifer Davis were heading a Lavenham Allotments Group and wished to know what was the possibility of getting some land for allotments in the village. The Group had gained quite a bit of interest from people keen to know what might be available and a Lavenham Allotments facebook page has been set up. There is some history of the Parish Council endeavouring to find land suitable for allotments and it was thought that if some of the people interested now would be willing to come forward and work with the Council it would add weight to these attempts.

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 January, there had been 5 crimes: Burglary x 2, Public Order x 2, Violence & Sexual Offence x 1.

Mr Reeve said he wished to raise awareness of two recent daytime forced entry offences which had occurred when the residents were in their homes.

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

Mr Reeve asked about the precept breakdown and the 2% rise in the Social Care rather than the 3% allowance. Mr Lindsay said that extra would be taken out of reserves as a way of keeping taxes down, although his political group had submitted an amendment to authorise the use of the full 3% which was not passed.

In respect of flooding in Lower Road it was agreed that improved signage is necessary, perhaps even a depth indicator. The need to clean the gullies connecting the road with the river was emphasised. The water level in the river rises and overflows back onto the road, when the river level drops water is trapped on the lower parts of the road and cannot run back into the river. The road drains also need clearing. Mr Lindsay has already raised the issue of signage and will go back and raise the need for clearing gullies and drains and suggest the need for a depth indicator

Mrs Twitchett raised the issue of lack of organised transport for local patients referred to Ipswich and Cambridge hospitals. It would seem that if patients do not have family who can help they are dependent on the voluntary sector. Is there anyone at the County Council who can help. It was suggested that an email should be sent to Councillor Fleming, Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

District Councillor's Reports, Mrs M Maybury and Mr C Arthey

Mrs Maybury had not sent a report but said she hoped to write one by the end of the week and circulate it.

February Council meeting approved the 2021-22 Housing Revenue Account Budget. BDC Council Tax £173.86 (+3%).

A reminder about the Census due to be completed on 21st March.

Bin collection issues: There had been various problems, both Covid and weather related, but all should be back to normal next week (from 8th March) with brown bin collections resuming too. Mrs Maybury had been helping with fly-tipping issues at the recycling area in the Church Street car park. Lavenham is not the only parish suffering from this problem at the moment.

Chilton Woods, there is concern from the parishes on the edge of Chilton, along the B1115, that the HGV traffic will be sent through the adjoining villages and not along the Sudbury and ultimately the Melford by-passes as hoped. A meeting is being set up with planners.

Mr Arthey added that he would mention CIL Prentice Street car park and toilets and the Gasworks car park during agenda item 9.

February Cabinet meeting approved changes to car park charges. Lavenham not included in the changes and LPC's lease negotiations are making progress.

Payment of latest tranche of Business Grants imminent. Premises with RVs of £15,000 and under (most Village Halls) will receive £2,096.

Building work at 'The Granary': Enforcement Team investigation under way.

The Minutes – In the minutes of 4th February the final sentence of the Public Forum report was incorrectly attributed to Mr Richard Aspa. Mr Aspa wished to make clear that it was not his opinion in respect of any future proposals to reconfigure parking in the centre of the village, that; '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'

With this noted, it was prop. by Mrs Mitchell, sec. by Mrs Morrey, that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2021 were approved. Carried.

Declarations of Interest – none.

Apologies for absence - none

Matters arising and update of outstanding issues

Following discussions regarding the possibility of the formation of a new committee to take forward plans for a Christmas Fair the Parish Council had expressed their support for Mr Mawford who had offered to facilitate the handover from the old committee to a new one. The Parish Council was keen for this to succeed but had not been involved in the organization previously and would not again, in addition any decision as to the allocation of any surplus monies would be for the committee alone.

Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan revision update

The first Newsletter had been distributed throughout the village in the last weekend of February, this will raise awareness of the revision and keep it in people's minds until the issue of the questionnaire. This is now approaching completion, 7th May is the target. This has to be shown to have been carried out in a fair way and will be available as a paper copy as well as available online. The website is now up and running.

The Steering Group is going through the original Plan and considering what needs to be retained or amended, also adding new items.

Mrs Morrey added that the Steering Group and NP revision are independent of the Parish Council, they stand alone. They are not influenced by, and do not seek to influence, the Parish Council.

Operations

Project Updates

Prentice Street car park and toilets - a claim as to ownership relating to part of the car park (Babergh officers to resolve) has necessitated the new toilet having to be sited away from its previous location and this required the provision of new services (water, electricity and drainage). The additional cost of this is a Babergh DC liability and has already been settled.

Work is completed subject to white line painting to be carried out Monday 1st March, installations of toilet block w/c 15th March, installation of electric charging points; awaiting EV provider above ground works and UKPN connection. All below ground work has been completed but connection could take some time due to the lack of sufficient power in the electricity Grid in the vicinity of the car park. A new heavier duty supply cable will need to be laid by UKPN at an additional cost of approximately £15,000 and will require a separate CIL bid to be made.

Church Street toilets - CIL bid to be considered by BDC Cabinet on 8th March. Builders had been lined up to commence on 18th March but a Covid outbreak in their workforce will delay commencement by approximately three weeks, i.e. w/c 12th April.

Tenter Piece - the CIL bid for this is agreed. The same builders will carry out this work as Church Street toilets hence the revised start date is w/c 12th April.

Harwood Place and Green Willows - no further progress. Business case could now be progressed for at least Harwood, Babergh D C to be consulted re possible near neighbour claims.

Gas Works site – in order to try and move matters along our MP James Cartlidge had been contacted to seek his support and he had written to NG, maybe reaching a higher echelon than the Parish Council had been dealing with. A follow up call had been made to NG by the Chairman two weeks later and the manager dealing with the sale of the site proposed a two stage process. This amounts to ownership of the site passing to the Parish Council as soon as possible with a second stage being the completion by them of some renovation work on the gas holder before the final hand over. Just what the Parish Council had been seeking for some months, although his proposal still needs to be ratified by NG's Sanctioning Committee which meets again in April.

In the meantime a site visit has been arranged on 11th March for relevant bodies and potential contractors. This has taken a couple of weeks to arrange as access is only possible when supervised by one of NG's Land Agents who is based in Birmingham. We also have to liaise with Cadent who are the gas suppliers for this area and will retain an interest in the site as they have a monitoring function in the small compound behind the gas holder. UKPN, Historic England, Anglia Water and other agencies all have to be accommodated if they wish to attend. If any of these agencies, except Cadent who have 24/7 access, miss this appointment it will be 3 months before we can arrange another site visit.

The intention is do as much preparation as we can without spending money so that as

soon as we get confirmation from NG that we are good to go ahead we can complete the formalities and get works underway.

LED lighting – no progress to report. The planned temporary power cut for part of Spring Street to enable the safe removal of a old lighting column had been cancelled due to the prospect of very low temperatures.

Lower Road Flooding – The Parish Council has been approached by SCC Highways (Enforcement Team) regarding the condition of the ditch that runs between The Common and First Meadow. It is their contention that there is restricted flow along the ditch and that this contributes to the flooding that we have been seeing more and more of. It is not felt that this is a sustainable allegation and Highways have been asked to visit and meet with Mr O’Mahony and explain their concerns. They have agreed to do this when Covid restrictions allow

In the meantime the result of a Freedom of Information request from the Environment Agency regarding whether there are any restrictions, manmade or natural, to the flow of the River Brett downstream from Lavenham, is awaited.

New Projects

Car Parking, leasing and cashless donation boxes – Mr Chick had carried out a study into the feasibility of installing a contactless card donation post at each car park as part of the refurbishments. Annual voluntary donations so far had covered a large proportion of the costs of operating and maintaining the public toilets and car parks but the current pandemic had highlighted the reduction in people carrying cash and the preference for contactless payments. Security of collection, the time spent processing cash and the possibility of damage to the present cash collection boxes was also taken into account. An option to pay cash if preferred would remain but it was expected that cash donations would be considerably lower.

A study had been produced which had been circulated to all Councillors. Costings indicated that it would cost in the region of £1,500 - £2,000 per set up in each car park, there would also be ongoing card processing and management fees but it was expected that costs would be recouped within 2 years. Suggested donations could be £2, £3.50 and £5 (short stay, half day and full day) although this would be reviewed over time once average donations were calculated. It was proposed by Mr Marco, seconded by Mr O’Mahony, that Card and Cash Pay Posts are set up on both car parks when refurbished. Carried. As the Parish Council already operated a voluntary cash donation scheme Babergh had confirmed that once the Parish Council has informed them of these changes in writing they will give written permission.

On-pavement parking control, planters/street furniture – proposals will be put out to consultation and the Parish Council will be looking into the requirements to obtain licences from Suffolk County Council. In the case of the Market Place the emerging Streets Guide might provide guidance. Any scheme would be experimental with the option to move street furniture around. It is early days but it was thought wise to look for a project team to lead on this.

Finance and Strategy

Consider donation to Lavenham Primary School for Forest School places

A request had been received from Mr Michael, Headteacher, asking if the Parish Council would consider making a donation to enable two additional classes to take part in Forest School sessions. It was thought that this would be beneficial to the pupils after missing out on sessions during the pandemic. It was prop. by Mr Reeve, sec. by Mr Chick, that the Parish Council agrees a donation of £750.00. Carried.

Cheques for payment:

Lavenham Pre-school, 2nd 2020/21 subvention payment £1,000.00: idverde Ltd., public toilets works for February (Church Street only) £840.00: JPB Landscapes, (February winter

maintenance £345.00, street cleaning £1,253.33) + VAT £1,918.00: Kinex, phone account February £40.22: Zoom, monthly fee for remote meeting £14.39: Mr R Norman, various maintenance works 17/02/20 to date £450.00: Payroll (incl quarterly PAYE etc.) £1,290.85: Community Action Suffolk, LNDP revision 1 year website hosting £42.00: Anglian Water Business, Prentice St toilets water charges £627.04: Anglian Water Business, Cemetery water charges £13.36: Pro Main, car charging point notices £260.40: Suffolk Tree Services (emergency tree works Prentice Street car park £240.00; & Churchyard £540.00) £780.00: Sigma Structures Ltd, structural design services Church Street toilets £525.00: Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, consultant's presentation to LNDP group £60.00: Suffolk Tree Services, re-pollard Sycamores at Prentice Street car park £2,100.00: Wayland Paving & Contracting Ltd., works at Prentice Street car park refurbishment (CIL bid) £99,720.00: Wayland Paving & Contracting Ltd., works re AV charge points £25,560.00: Suffolk County Council, street lighting annual energy & maintenance £4,339.65: British Gas, electricity supply to Church St toilets £18.97: Lavenham Community Primary School, match-funding Forest School places £750.00 (assuming agreed at this meeting): The Lavenham Press Ltd., LNDP review leaflet £126.00: Petty Cash £100.00: Playquip Leisure, play equipment safety inspection £321.30. Paid by Direct Debit to Total Gas & Power, Prentice Street toilets electricity supply £200.83.

Remittance Advice from Babergh D C, payment by BACS of £2,380.56 Cleansing Grant for Q3 20/21.

The locality award of £2,000 secured by Mrs Maybury towards works to prevent flooding of Mud Lane has been paid into the Parish Council bank account.

A letter to the Bank requests the transfer of £150,000.00 between accounts.

It was agreed that Mrs Morrey and Mr Macro should be added to the bank mandate as cheque signatories.

Mrs Mitchell proposed, Mrs Twitchett seconded, that the financial transactions are approved. Carried.

Planning

Planning Applications Received:

DC/21/00602 The Priory Water Street Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent - Internal alterations including work to kitchen, Great Hall, Great Chamber and Dining Room as detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

Combination of remedial works and re-modelling. Well thought out and supported by attached Heritage Statements.

Recommend Approval - Scheme/method of works to be agreed with Conservation Officer.

DC/21/01168 The Guildhall Of Corpus Christi, Market Place, Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent. Replacement of fire alarm system to meet updated standards.

Essential works. Recommend Approval

Applications for work on Tree(s) in a Conservation Area

DC/21/00675 The Priory Water Street Lavenham CO10 9RW

Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Walnut Tree (T2) to allow other tree to grow, 1 No. Cherry (T4) due to dieback and overcrowding and 1 No. (Yew) overhanging neighbour's property and potential damage.

It was felt that there was insufficient reasons for the felling of a mature yew tree, where remedial tree work could be considered. Recommend Refusal.

DC/21/00925 The Swan High Street Lavenham CO10 9QA

Notification of works to tree(s) in a Conservation Area - 1 No. Cypress -crown lifted by 4 metres, cut back low branches and remove large righthand stem.

Recommend Approval

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

DC/21/00773 26 Prentice Street Lavenham

Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension and two-storey front extension with integral garage (following demolition of existing garage and conservatory). Planning Working Group's recommendation: It was felt following much discussion that the proposed works were of Architectural merit and improved the look of the house. The orientation of the house did not detract from the street view (see above) or the adjacent listed properties. The view into the property with the removal of the existing garage and the changes to the house improved the look of the site. The size of the proposed improved house and how it sat within the site was not out of scale with other properties in the vicinity. Byes Barn is the exception and is of a different scale to properties in the immediate vicinity. it was felt that there was no significant changes to "privacy" for adjacent properties with the development of the house. The design and siting of the windows for Byes Barn there would be no significant loss of light from the proposed development.

In addition to the above it was felt that good Architectural design should be supported where in context . The LNP also looks to support Architectural design. Recommend Approval

The Councillors felt unable to endorse the Planning Group's recommendation without further discussion as there were clearly some points raised in opposition to the proposed extensions. Some felt that, although of a similar style/aspect to Byes Barn, the bulk of the new building is out of place/overpowering within that location and does not enhance this site in the Conservation Area, do not think the proposal meets with policies CN06 and CN08. Although accepting the good architecture it is felt that it is in the wrong place, maybe more suited to a stand-alone position.

It was proposed by Mr Panton, seconded by Mrs Twitchett, that the recommendation made by the Planning Group be endorsed. 5 voted for, 3 against, 1 abstained. Carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/21/00125 56 Water Street, Lavenham – no objections to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce overhang of 4No Sycamore trees due to shading

DC/20/04583 Brett Farm, Clay Hill Lane, Lavenham – Outline Planning Permission (all matters reserved) granted for erection of 1No Dwelling (following demolition of existing stables/barn),

DC/20/05430 31 Water Street, Lavenham – Listed Building Consent granted for internal and external refurbishment as detailed in Scope of Works drawings

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/20/3257586 Lavenham Priory, Water Street, Lavenham

The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission. The development proposed is erection of new detached dwelling with detached garage.

Decision: The appeal is dismissed

DC/20/04993 4-5 Shilling Street, Lavenham – Listed Building Consent granted for installation of internal through floor lift

Housing & Social

Good Neighbours Scheme – Mrs Twitchett’s report:

There have been 6 completed transport requests, prescription requests, sample delivery and other information requests.

Two transport requests were for clinical needs via WSH appointments to Ipswich. This led me to contact the hospital regarding my concerns for patients with no transport of their own, or no public transport from Lavenham to Ipswich or Cambridge. The transport department and PALS put forward more voluntary groups (Newmarket) or the County Council. I will speak to Robert.

We have received a £150 donation after the 4 week collection from Renu, the Saturday evening Fish and Chip Mobile. We have thanked him very much for this donation.

Mrs Twitchett was reminded that the Covid grant is still available to support Good Neighbour activities.

Correspondence had been received from:

Email (circulated to all Councillors) from a Lavenham resident objecting strongly to the proposed changes to the public toilets in Lavenham, in particular the intention to make them ‘gender neutral’.

Email exchanges (circulated to Councillors) with Mr Paul Thompson who had enquired if Lavenham had ever had any allotments. He was enquiring about the position on behalf of a newly formed group who were interested in renting allotments in the village and wondered how this matter could be carried forward. Clerk had already advised Mr Thompson about past attempts to secure land for allotments in the village. It was suggested that Mr Thompson asks everyone interested in renting a plot to put their names forward to the Parish Council to give more weight to attempts to acquire land which has no development value. Mrs Maybury mentioned that a list of interested individuals would also carry weight with Babergh who would have to look at allotment provision in conjunction with any new developments.

Contacting the National Allotment Society for advice and support was also suggested.

SALC, new consultation: Planning – model design code, circulated, deadline for responses 12 March

Babergh D C, acknowledged receipt of the Lavenham Parish Council Car Parking Strategy sent to Arthur Carvonia, John Ward and Cassandra Clements

SCC reply re ditch across Common, following a visit during the recent flooding by a Highway Assessment Officer he requested the ditch to be cleared as it is currently silted up and blocked.

BDC Infrastructure Team, request for an indication as to whether anyone will attend/participate in the CIL Charging Schedule Consultation Public Examination.

Details forwarded for the Lavenham Literary Festival 2021

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

Two reports had been circulated to the Councillors, the first, from Mrs Mitchell, gave an update of the Covid 19 Vaccination Programme. The second was from Mr Mawford and was a West Suffolk Hospital Trust update.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday 1st April 2021.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm.