

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 6th August 2020, commencing 7.30 pm.

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

Present Mr C Reeve, Chairman Mr J O'Mahony, Vice-Chairman.

Mrs D Twitchett, Mrs M Morrey, Mr T Sheppard, Mr B Panton, Mr I Lamont, Mr R Macro, Mrs A Norman

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

No members of the public joined the meeting.

The Chairman reported that Dr Posner had resigned shortly after the last meeting, Mr Reeve had thanked him for his work for the community over the past year.

Police Matters – Go to

https://www.suffolk.police.uk/sites/suffolk/files/ceo_constables_county_august_online.pdf

for the August 2020 copy of the County newsletter, Constable's County. Information from the Police Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable regarding the present state of the pandemic in Suffolk, read how each SNT is handling the situation in its area. News from Sudbury & Haverhill SNT that PC Darren Marshall is to take over the hot seat of Community Engagement Officer in Sudbury. As they record: 'Once you've met PC Marshall, you do not forget. Anyone who knows Darren will tell you of his obvious passion to engage with the public alongside his brilliant eclectic descriptive dialogue!' From past Lavenham Parish Council and Annual Parish Meetings anyone who has attended when Darren has reported on Police matters will endorse this sentiment.

The summary of crimes reported within the parish of Lavenham, listed on www.police.uk, has been updated recently to show crimes reported in June, there had been 6 crimes: Anti-Social Behaviour x 1; Criminal Damage & Arson x 1; Violence & Sexual Offences x 2; Public Order x 2. It was noted that there had been some thefts and attempted thefts in the area in recent weeks and two young men had been observed looking into garages etc. Everybody reminded to be alert to this.

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

Mr Lindsay mentioned in his report that three families had raised concerns about the cost of school transport, he has passed these concerns on to the Cabinet Member for Education and School Transport and the press.

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

Mr Arthey had emailed a short report:

Local Development Scheme (LDS). The new LDS has been approved by Council. It sets out the proposed timetable for the Joint Local Plan (JLP) and the review of the CIL Charging Schedules. We are anticipating the next stage of the JLP will be presented to Council in early November, before a six week consultation and submission to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public. It is hoped the new JLP will be adopted late 2021/early 2022.

Walking and cycling. Proposals put forward by Babergh's Green councillors for a Sustainable Travel Action Plan have been approved. It will encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport such as cycling, walking or public transport. Your County Councillor, Robert Lindsay, may be able to explain how this ties in with SCC initiatives (including Safe Routes to Schools).

CIFCO. There have been several recent press reports about Babergh and Mid Suffolk's property investment company CIFCO Capital Ltd. Most recently it was to announce the purchase of a health centre in Nottingham, but previously it was as a result of its 2019-2020 Business Trading and Performance Report. The last year had seen reported losses as a result of asset revaluation and acquisition costs, but £1.6m of net income received (after debt repayment) which supports the Council's budget and is equivalent to 13.5% on Council Tax.

Waste and Recycling. The market for recyclable materials is changing and becoming ever more demanding. As a result the percentage of 'rejects' from the MRF at Blakenham is rising. In the Autumn we will be embarking on a new campaign to encourage households to present us with good quality recyclables, and only materials which are accepted at the MRF. Further details can be found at <https://suffolkrecycling.org.uk/my-bins/what-can-i-put-in-my-recycling-bin-at-home>

Solar carports. A grant has been secured from the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' to install multifunctional solar carports which will generate and store electricity and provide electric vehicle charging points. The car park at Station Road in Sudbury is currently being assessed as BDC's first possible site.

Other issues over the last month which Mr Arthey was sure the Councillors are aware of include Sudbury Road footway, ongoing discussions regarding 'land behind Brent Eleigh Road', and today's progress update on the Parish Council's CIL bids.

Mrs Maybury reported on other matters in which she had been involved:

Church Street car park recycling area had been monitored and the deposits of recyclables around the bins cleared. However this appears to be an ongoing problem, monitoring will continue.

The Licensing Committee had consulted on taxi fare increases which had resulted in a more user-friendly tariff being produced.

The Discretionary Business Support Grant scheme had been extended to 24th August and money is still available, about half has been allocated so far. It is important that this information gets to any business which might be eligible. More information will be sent and will be forwarded to the Forum. Full details can be accessed on Babergh's website.

The Minutes – Prop. by Mr O'Mahony, sec. by Mr Sheppard, the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2020 were approved. Carried.

Declarations of Interest – none

Apologies for absence - Mr R Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor

Matters arising and update of outstanding issues

Draft documents in respect of guidance on the use of village notice boards and relating to donations and grants made by the Council for the benefit of the community, had been circulated by the Chairman.

Notice Boards – the guidance document was amended with the addition of 'although space will be limited' to follow the information that 'no permanent posters or notices may be displayed on the Parish Council notice boards without the written approval of Lavenham Parish Council'. Also to add that the Parish Council reserves the right to remove notices which do not comply with the guidance. With the amendments the guidance note for notice boards was approved.

Guidance relating to donations and grants made by the Council for the benefit of the community – this guidance note was also approved. Both will be available to view on the Parish Council website.

Dog waste bag dispensers – Clerk had taken over refilling of the dispensers since the services of the Sudbury Wardens had ceased, this was not too onerous. It was debated whether one of the dispensers, the least used, should be moved to the Church Street car park. However, the question was asked whether the village should be paying to supply dog walkers with bags when responsible owners ensured that they took their own bags when dog walking. There must be a balance between cost and benefit. The present bag supply was getting low and it was agreed that a notice should be put in Lavenham Life and one displayed on Lavenham Walk explaining that the provision would be reviewed unless sponsors came forward, individuals or local businesses, to bear the cost in return for an acknowledgement of the support by way of discreet advertising on the dispensers.

Finance and Strategy

Invoices paid between meetings:

MLM, environmental consultancy services, Gas Works site £261.60: Babergh District Council, planning fee for Tenter Piece application £117.00.

Cheques for payment:

idverde Ltd., public toilets works from 15/07 £1,192.92: JPB Landscapes, (June grass cutting £928.75, street cleaning £1,253.33) + VAT £2,618.50: Kinex, phone account July £37.82: Suffolk Tree Services, watering new trees in Cemetery x 14 visits £168.00: Seago & Stopps Payroll Solutions, payroll services q/e 05/07 £110.00: Suffolk Association of Local Councils, training website accessibility B Panton £30.00: Payroll £730.07: Zoom, monthly fee for remote meeting £14.39: British Gas, electricity supply to Church Street toilets £19.59: UK POS, 3 x automatic hand sanitiser dispensers plus supplies £300.20: Suffolk Libraries IPS Ltd, purchase of Kinderbox for Lavenham Library £398.00: Karzees Ltd., hire of portable toilets to 14/07 plus collection £384.00: Paul Holland, hanging mounted Coat of Arms in No 2 Lady Street £95.00: Fox Cars, hire of Covid19 compliant taxis for GNS appointments £812.40.

(the 3 automatic hand sanitiser dispensers are to be installed outside each public toilet block and outside No 2 Lady Street)

Remittance Advice 24/07/2020 from Babergh D C, Cleansing grant of £2,380.56 paid by BACS.

A letter to the Bank requests the transfer of £8,000.00 between accounts.

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

Mrs Norman, Executive Library Manager (Area South) had sent (and circulated) an email thanking the Parish Council for its kind donation of £398 for the new kinderbox which had enabled remodelling of Lavenham Library and an increase in accessible space.

Planning

Planning Applications Received:

DC/20/02492 - 6 Butfield Lavenham CO10 9SD

Householder Planning Application for re-consultation: revised plans received 22/07/20—
Erection of a two storey front extension and single storey rear extension.

Minor change to original. Note ALL drawings now relate to the application, proposal looks acceptable. Recommend Approval

DC/20/02725 Linden Hall Road Lavenham

Notification of works to trees in a conservation Area - T1 Conifer-fell.

Decision “No objections” issued by Babergh 30 July 2020. No decision required.

DC/20/02739 The Old Piggery Slough Farm Bridge Street Road Lavenham

Planning Application - Continued change of use and completion of conversion of agricultural building to dwelling following lapsing of Class Q prior approval B/16/01556.

Proposals unchanged existing approval time expired, no reason to change our position. Recommend approval.

Following consideration of the recommendations made by the Planning working group it was proposed by Mr Lamont, seconded by Mr Macro, that approval should be recommended in all three applications. Carried.

A planning application had been received the previous day, too late to consider at this meeting. It was agreed that this would be discussed and considered by the planning working group via email and their recommendation circulated. If the whole Council was in agreement the recommendation would be forwarded to Babergh before the cut off date of 26th August.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/20/01371 Drury House, Frogs Hall Road, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of 3 No. dwellings with basements and private gardens including alterations to vehicular access (following demolition of existing house and outbuildings)

DC/20/02222 28 High Street, Lavenham – Listed Building Consent for Installation of a rooflight to a 1980's extension

DISCHARGE OF CONDITION(S) TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Discharge for Application No B/16/00437 Land North West And South West Of, Norman Way, Lavenham

Condition 9 (Fire Hydrants), Condition 17 (Tree Protection) and Condition 18 (Ground Floor Levels)

DC/20/02725 Linden, Hall Road, Lavenham - Local Planning Authority, no objection to works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Conifer - Fell

DC/20/02512 74 Church Street, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of garage with vehicular access via Tenter Piece and home office over. Removal of Leylandii hedge remnant

Operations

Former Gas Works Site – the person with responsibility for the site is based in Manchester and struggling with Covid restrictions, she has suggested conversing online. Unfortunately nobody can access the site unless accompanied and that means somebody travelling from Birmingham. Permission has been granted for pruning a tree at the back of the site but nothing can be done until the Parish Council has acquired the site.

Housing & Social

Good Neighbours Scheme - Report from Mrs Twitchett:

Since last month we have had many more requests for transport to Hospital, Doctors and Dentists, at least 20. As well as several requests for other help, which have also been managed. Without the grant from Babergh it would not have been possible to carry out the transport requests, as many of our volunteer drivers were retired, they felt they were unable to go out. We still have many of the new volunteers shopping and helping out those who requested help at the very beginning of lockdown, the Good Neighbour Scheme are grateful to them all.

It was pointed out that the grant from Babergh, which had been specified for use to produce the Covid newsletters and cover the cost of compliant taxi journeys for the more vulnerable, was rapidly approaching zero. It was agreed that the grant should be used first for the taxi journeys already booked and if necessary the Parish Council would bear the cost of the newsletters. Any new bookings for journeys to appointments would now revert to the previous arrangement of a nominal charge for mileage.

It was reported that the Surgery is now open two days a week with two nurses in attendance. It

is hoped to get some local appointments back there.

Tenter Piece – the CIL bid has not yet been validated as there are issues with planning. Due to the lockdown it has not been possible to get people on site easily in respect of pricing the works. Mr Panton has been assisting with the planning application.

CLT s106 housing - Mr Reeve updated the Parish Council regarding the Trust's acquisition of four of the s.106 homes to be developed on Melford Road, which would ensure that the properties would remain for people with a close local connection. The Parish Council had granted £17,500 towards this and it seemed likely that a commuted sum of £160,000 would be available from Babergh. After the addition of their own funds the CLT was seeking a mortgage to make up the full amount required to acquire the four properties.

Correspondence had been received from:

Mrs Lyn Gurling, long-time resident, former Parish Councillor and Chairman, thanking the Parish Council for the dignified and helpful way in which the community has been kept well informed, under difficult circumstances, in this time of health crisis. Not an easy task. It was agreed that it was very kind of Mrs Gurling to take the time to thank the Council.

A visitor to the village, drawing attention to the disgusting state of Lavenham's public toilets, feeling that if we are to attract visitors back to the village these should be a priority. Updating and/or rebuilding is essential. A reply will be sent noting the comments and pointing out that although the premises are still in the ownership of the District Council the Parish Council is hoping that plans to update and/or rebuild the premises will come to fruition soon.

Letter from solicitors Bates Wells & Braithwaite advising of the closing of the file in respect of the Lease of Lavenham Walk from Suffolk County Council

An email had also been received from a concerned parent who would now have to pay £1,200 per year for her child to use the bus to get to Thomas Gainsborough School, this was due to the change in Suffolk County Council's school transport policy. Although understanding that this charge would have to be met the Coronavirus situation meant that many parents had been affected financially and it would be hard for this commitment to be met. There were several parents in the same position in the village. Although sympathetic, the meeting could not suggest any ways in which the Parish Council could help. Mr Lindsay had mentioned in his report that some cases brought to his attention had been forwarded to the Member with responsibility for school transport.

20 mph speed limits

Mr Reeve had circulated the papers and suggestions are with Suffolk County Council at this moment. This is not a 'done deal', Suffolk County Council will be conducting a speed survey.

Covid-19 an update

Matters are changing by the day, we might have been the last of the newsletters.

Neighbourhood Development Plan revision

Four members of the Parish Council had a Zoom meeting with Rachel Hogger, lead consultant on the NDP, and Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, discussing how we should approach the revision. Rachel is drafting a short questionnaire which will be sent out. A larger group of volunteers, at least 10, will be recruited to join and form the working groups. Recruitment will start over the next two weeks, Mr Reeve will chair the opening meeting and then withdraw from the group.

Consultation on New Model Code of Conduct

No comments were made and it was agreed that no response was required.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

Request from Merchant's Row traders for permission for an A-board to be positioned somewhere between the bus shelter and butcher's to direct visitors to the premises in Water Street which they felt were often missed. The board would be provided and maintained by the traders. Mrs Morrey, as the Parish Council's representative on the Forum, had been asked to put this suggestion to the Council. The Protocol covering free standing advertisements had been circulated, and part of the conditions were that boards should be positioned as close as possible to the premises they advertised and be removed at the end of the trading day. It was also pointed out that there had been previous problems with excessive use of A-boards and their legal status. Mr O'Mahony came up with two alternatives, one involved an engineered solution on the corner of Church Street and the other would be an addition to the finger post pointing down Water Street, next to the bus shelter. It was agreed that the Council was not in favour of an additional A-board and Mr O'Mahony would take up the other options with Amanda Mays of Suffolk Highways.

It was reported that a resident of the Glebe had drastically reduced a length of hedge on the Cemetery boundary and piled the resulting branches on the bank at the rear of the Cemetery saying that they could not get a contractor to remove them during the Covid movement restrictions, this is not acceptable under any circumstances. The resident had now been approached, and had agreed, to remove these as soon as possible.

Mr Reeve and Andy Gentle of STS had inspected the Beech trees in the Cemetery. The tree on the left hand side of the Chapel appears to be dying back. Both trees were tested a few years ago and another Picus test will be carried out to see if there is any reason for the dieback. At the same time Andy had looked at the trees between the Churchyard and Tenter Piece, he will produce a price for work to remove the thick growth of ivy which is causing the trees to suffer. He also offered to trim the overhanging Lime trees on the front boundary free of charge as his contribution to the village. All this will be done after the nesting season.

Mr Lamont said that he had reported blocked drains throughout the village.

Mr Macro reported that several residents on different sides of the Lavenham Press premises had noticed increased noise in the early morning around 6 am. It was pointed out that the premises has a 24 hour running licence.

Mr Panton drew attention to the Parish Council's website which now complied with accessibility regulations. All websites of authorities linked to the government must comply before 23rd September so that their content and functions are accessible to those with disabilities.

There were some concerns about the open air concerts due to take place on the Bridge Street Road playing field over the weekend of 14-16th August, however it was pointed out that it is the responsibility of the Community Council and the promotor to ensure that all, or any, licences or insurances required are in place

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday 6th August 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.