PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 1st October 2026, commencing at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.
All supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, October 2026.

Present:

Cllrs: Jack Norman, Frank Domoney, Lizzie Falconer, Iain Lamont, Roy Mawford, Irene Mitchell, Janice Muckian, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Five members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair (Cllr Norman) welcomed everyone highlighting that the formal introduction to the meeting had been included in the published agenda.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

Cllrs Bourne and Ranzetta had sent their apologies, no absences required approval.

2. Declarations of Interest and item 3 Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk said that Cllr Robinson had updated his Register of Interests and reminded Cllrs that they have 28 days to lodge any changes. He had received no requests for dispensations.

He asked Cllrs whether they wished to declare any interests concerning tonight's agenda of which he was not aware and secondly, in general, whether Cllrs had any updates to their previously declared interests. He said that he was aware that some Cllrs whilst entitled to vote at item 13 would need to leave for item 14. None said that they had updates to their previously declared interests.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve as accurate minutes of the 3rd September 2026 meeting of the Council.
Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded**: Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllrs Lamont, Mawford, Mitchell and Muckian abstained.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair (Cllr Norman) told Cllrs that the PC had received an unprecedented number of letters concerning buses during the month. These letters concern the punctuality and cancellation of buses. These have been copied to County Cllr Lindsay. The Clerk has collated the key points from the letters received and written to Central Connect. That letter requests the Cancellation and Punctuality data since the 30th August timetable change, asks for explanations for the poor performance and asks what improvements are planned.

The issues raised by Members of the Public concerning the fares and timetables of school buses and the timing of the last bus from Sudbury to Bury have been taken up with Suffolk County Council by County Cllr Lindsay. It would appear that Suffolk are unable or unwilling to intervene concerning the fares and that the funding agreement has not been broken by the change of the time of the last bus.

The Babergh Officer who visited the August Farmers Market had reported: 'Our representative stated that the car park was busy, but everyone was acting safely and responsibly as you'd expect. The only comment was that two stalls were trading from our car park (near the coach bays) rather than within the Village Hall car park, which is something we will be taking up with the organisers of the market'.

It remains the intention of the Chair to talk with other village organisations to see how we can work together concerning the parking arrangements for significant village events.

Babergh have at the request of the Parish Council and local businesses agreed that, as a trial, Coach Car Parking will very shortly be made free for a year, a local business will be writing to all the Coach companies telling them of this change.

The Chair has spoken with very nearly all of the residents who live near the proposed Speed Indicator Post on the First Meadows side of Brent Eleigh Rd. She aims to complete this exercise very shortly.

9.11.2026

In May Suffolk Highways informed the Parish Council that Water St would be surface dressed this summer. This work has not been completed. The Clerk chased this up. It has now emerged that the supplied information was incorrect and Water Lane, which is not in Lavenham, was surface dressed.

The Clerk has taken the opportunity to also raise with Suffolk Highways the dreadful state of Bolton St. We have now been advised that the Community Liaison Engineer will raise the condition of Water Street and Bolton Street with the Asset Managers and advise us where they are in the priority listing and the likely timescales for surface dressing prep works and treatment.

Another area of difficulty this month has been the reactions of Members of the Public to the weed-spraying work done by the Councils Contractors. The Clerk will be covering this in his report.

Our lawyers have reviewed the form of lease provided by Greene & Greene for the Paddocks Allotments and returned it with comments. We wait to hear from Greene & Greene with their comments, once they have discussed with their client.

The PC has been made aware that the Hub's application for Charitable status has been refused. The Hub will now meet with their professional advisors to understand what options they have and subsequently decide which way to proceed.

We have been officially advised that the Government has withdrawn its previous decision to create three new unitary councils in Suffolk. District and indeed the Parish Council elections in May next year will go ahead. However, these will no longer be for the proposed Shadow Authorities and will instead take place on existing district boundaries.

6. Public Participation Session

A Member of the Public expressed her concerns about the punctuality and cancellation of bus services. The Clerk said that he had received a number of such letters. He has written to the Bus Company,

A Member of the Public expressed his concern about the surface of Bolton St adding that that Barn and Prentice St were also in a poor condition. All were last resurfaced at the same time. The Clerk said that he would add these streets to his request of Suffolk County Council.

A Member of the Public asked about the status of the Village Emergency Plan. The Clerk replied that Emergency Plan would shortly be updated.

A Member of the Public asked whether the licence to operate a bar in the Market Place was only for the summer months. The Clerk replied that he would check.(Note: it has now been ascertained that the permit is for 1st April to 30th September each year).

A Member of the Public expressed his concern about the parking arrangements at Tenterpiece, the Clerk asked District Cllr Maybury to respond to these points as part of her District Councillor Report.

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Lindsay was unable to attend because he was at the Alpheton Parish Council Meeting.

He reported that he had been forwarded a number of emails by the Clerk from Lavenham residents complaining about delays, cancellations and lack of timetables for various bus services, all run by Konect, whose parent company is Transport Made Simple (TMS). Some issues he had already raised in several emails to the company. The Clerk has now written to TMS regarding the latest complaints.

He urged anyone with a complaint about a specific service to also write directly to the bus company. To write not to the Konect customer service email, but to the Managing Director at TMS, Peter Nathaniel, making clear that you are lodging a formal complaint. He explained that TMS is a private company and so he has very limited influence over its timetables or reliability. Only where a route is subsidised by the County has he some influence.

Following the recent surface dressing of parts of the A1141 at Brent Eleigh working with the Clerk he has asked if Water Street and Bolton Street can be inspected to see if they can also be pushed up the priority to be surface dressed or resurfaced. None of the individual potholes on this road meet the County's intervention criteria, but both roads are in a terrible overall state.

5.11.2026.

He reported that the County Council's latest estimate is a £7.8million overspend for the year. The Chief Executive has written to staff warning that "if we continue as we are," this overspend would mean reserves would fall "below the minimum level required for safe governance of the authority."

The weight of the black bin "residual" waste for the incinerator has been cut by 21% from 4,077 tonnes per week in April/May to 3,225 tonnes per week since June. Mostly this is due to food waste being collected separately and processed in anaerobic digestors.

District Cllr Maybury reported that all Parish Councils are being encouraged to enact or revise their Emergency Plan.

She asked the Clerk to consider if a bench could be sited at the top of Spring Lane saying that some of her locality budget might be available. She reported her efforts to resolve issues with the Tenterpiece fire alarms.

She reported concerns about the closure of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre questioning the large size of circulated estimates for the rebuilding costs. She understood that Babergh had approached Central Government for funds.

She informed Cllrs that under new Government regulations District Cllrs can no longer call in Planning Applications to be discussed by the Babergh Planning Committee. Officers, in certain circumstances, may still refer decisions to the Planning Committee.

She urged the Member of the Public concerned about parking at Tenterpiece to check his tenancy agreement commenting that the scheme is no longer a sheltered housing scheme having been reclassified by Babergh on 1st April 2026 to general needs accommodation

Cllr Robinson questioned the delay in implementing the new Government regulations concerning Planning Applications. The Chair stopped Cllr Robinson from asking such questions telling him that he should put these to Cllr Maybury outside the Meeting as they related to his personal issues. Cllr Robinson replied that these questions did not relate to his personal issues. The Chair moved the Meeting to the next item.

8. Clerks Report

Accounts:

The Accounts for August contain no substantial savings except the £10,000 saving because no tree work has been done. They also record that £2,437 had been spent on the Boundary matter.

Motions: to approve Accounts and Receipts and Payments for the month ending 31st August 2026
Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded**: Cllr Sherman **Decisions:** Approved unanimously.

The Clerk explained that the Standing Financial Regulations require that a reforecast for the year is prepared after five months of Accounts. The draft reforecast shows that the substantial variances to budget are expected to be:

a) Office Rent saving (£3,000)
b) Extra Spend on Tree Maintenance £3,000. Note: As agreed at the September Meeting these two items were expected to cancel each other out.
c) Legal Fees committed to Allotments Project £5,000
   Note: No expenditure invoiced or accrued at end August, £3,600 spent at end September.
d) Whatever is spent on the Boundary Matter above the £2,400 spent at the end of August. This will depend on the decisions made later during this meeting.

The Clerk had, in September, used his power to spend up to £1,500 necessary for the proper functioning of the Council, to spend £200.62 (net of VAT) as a reimbursement of costs incurred by the Secretary of the LNP Group for Printing costs incurred.

As mentioned elsewhere the Hub has failed its application for Charitable Status, the Grant made available to them to execute this application will therefore not be paid. It may well be that the Hub pursues an alternative plan to minimise its administrative costs in which case Council could then decide to release the funds.

5.11.26

The Clerk has asked Babergh for its car parking revenue and footfall data so to try and better understand the trading picture in the village. Curiously Toilet Donations are higher in September than August.

Babergh Council has advised us that with respect to funding Neighbourhood Plans funding currently remains available in Mid Suffolk but all available funding in Babergh has already been allocated.

Public Realm

The spate of repairs to public toilets continues, this month a new soap dispenser, a visit from the plumber to repair a malfunctioning flush mechanism and a replacement door lock. The possibility of having only one of the non-disabled Church St toilets working for the Farmers Market weekend was averted.

The Clerk explained that the main area of difficulty this month has been the reactions of Members of the Public to the weed-spraying work done by the Councils Contractors.

These reactions have been of three types:

a) Concern that the Council uses Glyphosate which some consider harmful to dogs. These concerns have been forcefully verbally expressed to the operatives causing some distress.

   The Clerk told Cllrs that Suffolk and West Suffolk both trialled products not containing Glyphosate. In December 2024 West Suffolk reported:

   'In April 2023, West Suffolk Council took the decision to cease the use of glyphosate and other chemicals for the treatment of weeds or unwanted growth to promote better diversity. However, due to public dissatisfaction, the lack of viable alternatives, Suffolk County Council's decision to resume chemical weed treatment, and evidence from other case studies, the proposal has been made to return to using glyphosate in very specific circumstances. The specific circumstances include controlling weeds growing into and around monuments, footpaths, playing surfaces and manmade street structures, such as utility boxes and lamp posts, in grass areas. Limiting use to hard landscaped locations ensures that any negative impact to the environment is minimised'.

   Babergh has advised that the weed suppressants currently used in Babergh are NewWay, which is vinegar/acetic acid based, and 2,4-D (Deputox), which contains dichlorophenoxyacetic acid. Some consider that this acid is also not good for dogs.

b) Lack of clarity concerning which areas are sprayed. The Contractors do not spray the gutter between kerb and road. Contractors do spray both sides of the pavement up to the garden wall but not if the pavement has a decorative edge between it and the house. Such areas are often private land and complaints have been received in the that these areas contain private plants.

   The Clerk told Cllrs that in theory Suffolk spray all of gutters and both sides of the pavement but that this is only twice a year. Babergh are responsible for the clearing of litter and vegetation from gutters i.e. street sweeping. Asking the Contractors to spray the gutters would lead to further need to consider Working in the Highway regulations.

a) A concern that the Contractors are insufficiently diligent which has been passed on to the Contractor.

Council instructed the Clerk to:

a) Continue the use of Glyphosate
b) Publish the weed spraying in advance on Facebook and the website advising that those with dogs may wish to make ensure that their dogs do not tread on wet Glyphosate in the two hours or so before it dries.
b) Make it clear in the announcements that abuse of the staff is not tolerated.

The Clerk informed Cllrs that the three replacement litter bins (two for the High St by the Green Co-Op and one for near Howletts) were installed this week and notes of appreciation had been received from a local business. As advised by Councillors at the September meeting the cost of their purchase and installation will be charged to Neighbourhood Cil.

5.11.26.

The much chased proposal from Suffolk streetlighting, including a quotation, for a bollard type light was received this week and will be brought to a future meeting of Council. It is some £3,700. This could be funded from Neighbourhood Cil.

The Clerk recently attended a session organised by SALC concerning Emergency Planning and will shortly be updating the Emergency Plan, a draft will be shared with Council.

9a. Planning Register The Clerk had no update to the published Register.

9b. Planning Applications

Applications DC/26/03737 and 03738: The Lavenhams, Bridge St Rd.

Householder Application and Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of 5 external timber doors and bricking in of the utility window opening (north end of the east elevation).

Council noted all the affected fenestration, except ED03, are not heritage interest and lie within the 20th century section of the house. French doors ED03 are on the rear elevation of the 16th century element of the house. The timber is rotten and the unit has reached the end of its life span. All the units are within the existing structural openings. The units are described as high-quality bespoke joinery items. The Chair reported that the opinion of the Planning Group was 'We SUPPORT this application

Motion: That the PC supports the recommendation of the Planning Group
Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded**: Cllr Robinson
Decision: Approved unanimously.

Applications DC/26/03509: Greenleigh, Sudbury Rd

Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access to be considered, all other matters reserved) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Erection of 1 Dwelling with Access

The Clerk explained that no comments have been lodged by Members of the Public and that Pre-Application advice was obtained and Babergh had concluded:

'This pre-application indicates that an additional dwelling alongside existing bungalow at the dwelling 'Greenleigh' would likely been seen as acceptable, providing the scheme aligns with the advice dispensed within this pre-application. An acceptable design would take inspiration from the surrounding character in terms of appropriate exterior materiality, development scale, compatible massing, and fenestration, all evidenced within suitably scaled drawings'.

The Clerk highlighted that the application seeks approval of access only, with all other matters, namely appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, reserved for subsequent consideration.

The opinion of the Planning Group was 'We SUPPORT this application. Cllr Mawford, saying that the reserved matters may not come back to the Parish Council, moved a motion to amend the motion to:

'The Parish Council supports this application in principle conditional on further consultation by Babergh District Council with the Parish Council concerning the reserved matters'.

Motion: That the motion is amended
Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded**: Cllr Falconer
Decision: Approved. Cllrs Domoney, Norman, Robinson and Sherman voted against

Motion: That the PC supports the amended motion.
Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded**: Cllr Falconer
Decision: Approved. Cllrs Muckian, Robinson and Sherman voted against.

Applications DC/26/03671 and 03672: The Grove, 5 Lady St.

Householder Application and Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of existing modern garage with new residential annexe, formation of parking area and minor internal alterations to create better bathroom provision.

5.11.26.

The Clerk explained that the property is Grade II* listed and in the Conservation Area. Substantial Pre-Application advice has been taken which led to very significantly reduced proposal which has led to Historic England conclusion 'We would not wish to object to the application but would support the Council's conservation officers in securing any additional information on matters of detail, including through conditions placed on any consent'

The Chair reported that the opinion of the Planning Group was that the Parish Council supports this Application and agrees with the recommendations of Historic England. We would hope that the trees which are to be felled are replaced elsewhere on the property.

Cllr Domoney said that he did not agree with the word 'hope' and suggested an amendment so that it reads 'The Parish Council supports this Application and agrees with the recommendations of Historic England. It should be a condition of the Babergh Council Approval decision that any trees subject to TPOs which are to be felled are replaced elsewhere on the property'

Motion: That the motion is amended
Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded**: Cllr Domoney **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Motion: That the PC supports the amended motion.
Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded**: Cllr Domoney **Decision:** Approved unanimously

10. Report concerning Bus Services

Cllr Mawford said that he considered that the only way matters could be improved was application for Local Authority Bus Grant Funding.

The Clerk replied that he had this week been advised by County Cllr Lindsay that: 'You need to know that £27million bus service funding is no longer available. It was some time ago (probably more than a year but I can't remember exactly when) that I was told that there was £27m from govt to be spent on buses over three years. I have more recently been told that all this money has been allocated. Half of it went to improving bus stations, as in Sudbury. The other half went into new bus services. As it happens, some small amounts of funding are still possible because SCC are reviewing all routes to see if any that are being subsidised actually do not justify the subsidy, which would free up some extra subsidy money'.

Cllr Mitchell suggested contacting the Local MP concerning the various issues. The Clerk replied that James Cartlidge had already been made aware and had expressed his concerns.

11. Report concerning Norman Way Bus Stops

The Clerk presented images of the proposed bus shelter. Cllrs said that they were appalled and the Clerk was instructed to request a wooden bus shelter similar to that recently installed in Cockfield.

12. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 3: Minutes and Report

The Chair reported that the LNP will hold a workshop with a cross section of the Community, perhaps twenty people, to better understand the opinions of the whole community.

13. Motion to consider excluding the public and press for item 14 because of the confidential nature of the material to be discussed.

Proposed: Cllr Muckian **Seconded**: Cllr Mitchell
Decision: Approved, Cllrs Domoney, Robinson and Sherman voted against.

Cllrs Domoney and Robinson left the room and subsequently Cllr Sherman left the room

14. Report and Motions concerning boundary to Parish Council land and also correspondence received.

Motion: To close (i.e. terminate) the Meeting.
Proposed: Cllr Norman **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Meeting ended 8.50pm. Date of next meeting –Thursday 5th November 2026 7pm.

5.11.26