

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 4th June 2026, commencing at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

All supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, June 2026.

Present:

Cllrs: Jack Norman, Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Iain Lamont, Janice Muckian, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Six members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair (Cllr Norman) began by welcoming everyone and introduced herself explaining to all present that this meeting is being recorded. The Chair reminded all that this is not a public meeting, but a meeting of the Council held in public. Members of the Public were respectfully asked to maintain silence during the Council's deliberations and not to approach the Councillors. Councillors were requested not to engage with Members of the Public when Council is in session. All were asked to ensure that their mobile phone was on silent and were reminded to treat all present with respect.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

The Clerk reported that Cllrs Falconer, Mawford, Mitchell and Ranzetta had sent their apologies. No absences required approval.

2. Declarations of Interest and item 3 Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk said that he had received no updates from Cllrs concerning their Register of Interests and reminded Cllrs that they have 28 days to lodge any changes.

He explained that he had written to all Cllrs some weeks previously asking if they wished to renew their dispensations. He had received the following requests to apply until the 2027 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and had agreed them.

Cllrs Lamont and Falconer to speak and vote concerning Water St as long as they did not relate to their disclosable pecuniary interests. Cllr Sherman to speak and vote on matters concerning Spring St as long as they do not relate to his disclosable pecuniary interest. Cllr Muckian to speak and vote on matters concerning Bears Lane as long as they do not relate to her disclosable pecuniary interest.

He told Cllrs that he was anticipating that Cllrs will need to leave the room for item 16 and 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. None said that they did.

4. Approval of Minutes

To approve as accurate minutes of the 14th May 2026 meeting of the Council.

The Clerk explained that he made two changes to the circulated draft minutes. The first related to Cllr Ranzetta both seconding and abstaining on a vote. She had not abstained. The second related to the fact that Cllr Muckian had not volunteered to Chair an item. Cllr Mitchell had suggested Cllr Muckian Chair the item and then a vote was held. Cllr Muckian accepted the nomination but to say that she had volunteered, as the draft minutes stated, was incorrect.

Approval Motion Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded:** Cllr Lamont **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair (Cllr Norman) told Cllrs that she had attended the site of the recent fire in Spring St to offer support to those affected. She had been able to contact District Cllr Maybury and between them they had made sure the residents affected were accommodated that evening and had worked with Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council to ensure the site was made secure once the fire was put out.

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She thanked the fire crews from Long Melford, Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds who had been excellent in their handling of the situation and also Suffolk Police, the Ambulance service, Cadent, UK Power Networks and the local community for their support during and after the incident to the residents.

She had been advised that a local resident Paul Cumbers had intervened to try and make sure that the resident was okay and thanked him for his selfless efforts.

She understood that there was some concern about fire hydrants, County Cllr Lindsay has raised this with the Chief Fire Officer and that response will be reported in due course.

A collection box has been set up at the top Co-Op if anyone would like to donate to help the residents once they have been re-accommodated.

Commenting that it was a very hot but also sad afternoon as two ladies lost their homes and one of the ladies also lost her cat and another resident who had to move out because of smoke in his building she said that she could not help but feel proud of our community who all pulled together to help in their hour of need.

6. Public Participation Session

The Chair reminded Members of the Public of the protocol for this session.

A Member of the Public expressed his concerns concerning the proposed dog exercise area saying that Park Road was unable to cope with the unanticipated increase in traffic. He said that the road was much used by local walkers and pastoral in nature. The proposal would have a deleterious effect on this village asset. He had asked Suffolk Highways to revisit their comments on this Planning Application saying that the Highways Officer had concentrated on the immediate site access.

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Lindsay reported that at the first meeting of the new County Council Michael Hadwen, a Reform Councillor from Felixstowe, had been elected as leader of the Council and had announced his appointments to his cabinet. The Greens have formed the official opposition group. County Cllr Lindsay is the opposition spokesman for Highways and Transport.

His group had tabled a motion saying the Council supported the translation services the Council provided. This had been voted down by the Reform UK councillors. Reform UK's campaign literature had criticised the spend on translation services saying it was for those "refusing to integrate". He said that most of the spend was for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, launched when Russia invaded Ukraine, supporting unaccompanied children seeking asylum and sign language for the deaf. The Reform administration has taken down the Ukrainian flag at County Hall raising the St George cross instead. Cllr Hadwen, the new council leader, was himself criticised at the meeting for saying some years ago after the Salisbury poisoning that "Russia is not our enemy".

A new inspection report says the County's Special Educational Needs services has improved, with the backlog of EHCP plans having been cleared but, it says, there are still many issues that it needs to tackle, particularly in communication with families, and between the NHS, schools and social care.

He told Cllrs that the SEND department is having to restructure itself to better handle EHCPs and there appears to have been a recent rash of staff sickness. That had put the department into "business continuity" on May 21st which means it is just prioritising key work for, they estimate, a fortnight.

Reform has said they will review all actions consequent of the climate emergency declared by the Council in 2019. In his opinion the actions taken by the Council under net zero do not need reviewing, since that happens every year anyway and they have been found to have saved £4.8m a year.

He described both the legal challenge opposing the proposed creation of three unitary councils and the net zero review as being mirrored by Reform controlled Norfolk and Essex and appearing to be headline-grabbing stunts organised at the instruction of Reform Head Office.

He confirmed that he was investigating the Hydrant issue and that should the hydrants need testing he would follow this up.

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District Cllr Clover spoke about the fire saying that he understood that affected residents are safely accommodated with family and friends. Residents welfare is being monitored and where necessary ongoing support will be provided. Longer term Housing options are being explored including: temporary accommodation, return to property subject to works and permanent rehousing options. One property was unstable following the fire. Indicative repair times are 3-4 months for the most severely affected property. 2.5 months for the adjoining property. 2-3 weeks for the smoke affected property.

Better recycling commences this week with black bin collection and separate food waste caddy which will be a weekly collection. The following week it will be paper and card in the green lidded bin and on the third week all plastics, tetra pak, glass, metal cans, aerosols and tin foil items.

Low income households who use heating oil are being contacted to advise them of the support available to residents including the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

Following questioning he confirmed that, currently, devices with sealed lithium batteries should only be disposed of at the Sudbury and Hadleigh recycling centres.

8. Clerks Report

The Clerk told Cllrs that the Accounts for April contain no substantial variances to Budget except the cost of answering the Freedom of Information request concerning the Neighbourhood Plan. That FOI has been answered and no correspondence has been received since the response was sent.

He said that the Accounts for May will show a substantial surplus compared to Budget as the £10,000 included in the May budget has not been spent. He is chasing the Tree Surgeon for his proposals consequent of the Tree Survey.

Motions: to approve Accounts and Receipts and Payments for the month ending 30th April 2026

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne **Decisions:** Approved unanimously.

The Clerk told Cllrs that he had inspected both sets of toilets with the Director of the Contractor and expressed his concerns that these needed a deep clean. Both toilets have now been properly cleaned and are looking very much better. Unfortunately, a lock had failed in the Prentice St toilets and someone had been locked in for a short time. The toilet was closed and then reopened several days later when the replacement lock was fitted.

The replacement EV chargers have been installed in Water St. Two engineers from Connected kerb attended the site very recently and had spent the full day working on the units; however, they had been unable to connect them to their back-office system. Their Customer Service team have said that they 'have now contacted the Operations department to confirm the next steps'. The Prentice St Chargers await Babergh Legal and Connected Kerb legal finalising and signing the legal documentation.

The Council's retained handy man and the Clerk had managed to unbolt the bins by the bus stop and the Green Co-Op from the Ground to look at the fixings. The fixings are different to each other and the fixings on bins currently available. He has a quote for the new bins and will order these shortly. The cost is some £350 per bin. This means that we have drill to new holes in the pavement to instal these but the Councils retained handyman says that he can do this.

Babergh had to bring all the Electrical Safety Checks up to date before the leases for the Office and the Toilets could be signed and as part of this they brought the electrical equipment up to date. This took some time. The Chair and Clerk had signed the leases this week.

Cllr Bourne reported her conversations with local residents concerning the replacement Church St light.

9a. Planning Register

The Clerk said that he had two updates to the published Planning Register.

Babergh has in the last few days approved the applications concerning De Vere House and the property at the junction of Bridge St Rd and Church Rd. The PC had recommended approval of both of these applications.

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9b. Planning Applications

No Cllr wished to discuss any of the three applications for Discharge of Conditions concerning the Gas Terminal Upgrade on Sudbury Rd.

Application. No: DC/26/01986: Perseverance House, 47 High Street.

Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce crown of a Yew by 2.5m, Reduce crown of an Ash, fell Eucalyptus and cut back over hanging branches of Plum tree. Routine maintenance of trees plus the felling of one non-native tree.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Muckian **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Application. No: DC/26/01962: The Old Manse, Barn Street.

Pollard Sycamore tree to approximately 8 metres above ground level. This tree work is quite aggressive for a tree covered by a TPO but it should recover from this work.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Muckian **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Application. No: DC/26/01921: Church Of Saint Peter And Saint Paul, Church Street

Planning Application - Installation of 46 Solar PV panels and Battery Storage.

This panels are mounted flat on the roof and are black in colour to reduce visual impact. Due to the raised parapets, they will not be visible from the street or from a distance but will be visible from above. This installation will have minimal impact on the historic structure and will be fully reversible.

Bury St Edmunds Cathedral (Grade 1 listed) was granted Planning Permission in Feb to fit 100 Solar panels on the roof. West Suffolk Planning portal DC/25/1955/FUL. One of the requirements was that the panels could not be seen from the Ground. This is part of the Church of England Net Zero project.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Robinson and Domoney abstained.

Application. No: DC/26/01886: The Hall, Hall Rd.

Application for Listed Building Consent. Installation of new gates as approved under Non-material Amendment DC/26/01662.

Following the appeal of DC/25/04033 refusal and subsequent granting after appeal, this application seeks for an amendment to reposition the proposed gates and add a pedestrian gate by moving them further back from Potland Lane. New brickwork would be matching the other brickwork in the yard. There will be minimal change to the appearance viewed from Potland Lane.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Application. No: DC/26/01871 Land West Of Park Road Park

Full Planning Application - Change of Use of Part Arable Field to Enclosed Secure Dog Freedom and Exercise Area, including access, parking and a 1.50m high Wire Fence and Field Gate.

Park Rd cannot sustain the consequent increase in traffic. The road is too narrow and lacks passing places. Council is supportive of this type of application but not in this location.

Motion: Recommend refusal

Proposed: Cllr Muckian **Seconded:** Cllr Domoney **Decision:** Approved. Cllr Sherman opposed. Cllr Robinson abstained.

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10. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan Group: Minutes, Report and Motion concerning Newsletter.

The Chair of the LNP Group urged all Cllrs to carefully consider the comments submitted by Members of the Public concerning the PC.

Motion: That the Parish Council approves the text of the draft Newsletter and authorises the Neighbourhood Plan Group to have the Newsletter printed and subsequently distributed to all residents.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Domoney **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Cllr Domoney left the room at 8.25pm and did not return.

11. Motion to request applications for Grants

This motion had been deferred from the previous meeting of Council. The Clerk was asked to update the application deadline of 15th June to reflect the deferment.

Motion: The Clerk is instructed to invite application from Community Groups for consideration by Council at its July meeting. Community Groups to submit their applications by Monday 15th June (date to be updated).

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Sherman **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Motion: to defer items 12 and 13 to the next Agenda

Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously

The Chair used her discretion to discuss Item 15 next.

15. Report concerning First Meadow Gate

The Chair explained that with the Clerk she had met with a representative of Suffolk Highways who had subsequently written that he would not recommend relocating the park entrance further down Brent Eleigh Road. Firstly, the dropped crossing point across the carriageway could be obscured by on-street parking, so pedestrians would not have adequate visibility to safely cross the carriageway. Secondly, the new location will be against the pedestrian desire line, and many able-bodied pedestrians will instead choose to exit the park via Lower Road or go over the fence.

He had considered whether a dropped crossing point could be constructed on the corner with Water Street, but this is hampered by the available width of the highway and the proximity of passing vehicles.

The Chair and the Clerk had then considered whether speeds could be reduced in the area by putting up a Speed Indicator Device and the risk of incidents reduced by the installation of additional signage warning motorists of the adjacent play area. A Speed Indicator Device could be installed on the park side of Brent Eleigh Rd where it would be less obscured by parked cars, be further from neighbouring properties, would have good forward visibility, could be safely accessed where there are no problems relating to the highway boundary, and the location would be beneath a B.T overhead line as opposed to a power line.

The Clerk agreed to approach Highways for a quotation and permission for a SID post on the park side of Brent Eleigh Rd and for additional warning signage.

The Clerk commented that these measures would cost considerably less than moving the gate.

14. Motion concerning purchase of a Speed Indicator Device

The Clerk displayed photographs of the Bury Rd post saying that it had sufficient visibility to motorists approaching the North was a very difficult site to work on. He added that moving SIDs required a certificate for working on the road and that he was aware that Cllrs Robinson and Sherman had the relevant certificate.

The Clerk was asked to bring a motion to a future meeting concerning the purchase of brackets to make moving the SIDs easier. The Clerk agreed to ask Suffolk County Council whether the Bury Rd SID post can be used and report the Suffolk reply to Council. The Motion was not proposed.

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The Chair used her discretion to discuss Item 17 next.

17. Motion to establish a Footpath and Bridleway Working Group and appoint a Councillor to lead it.

Cllr Robinson explained that he considered it inappropriate for him to participate in the debate because he owns land over which one of the longest public rights of way in Lavenham and did not participate.

The Clerk explained the proposed motion and that the LNP says that Project P10: Footpaths – “The Parish Council will ensure that the extensive network of statutory footpaths... is adequately signposted, regularly inspected and maintained... and will use its best endeavours to ensure continuity of safe access for the public.”

Cllrs pointed out that the maintenance of these footpaths is the landowner’s responsibility and that only Suffolk County Council has the powers to ensure that landowners meet these obligations. The Parish Council can report issues but has no powers or obligations. Cllrs agreed that all residents can contact Suffolk with respect to all such issues.

Cllr Lamont proposed an amendment so that it reads : that the Parish Council advertises a process for the reporting of issues and the suggestions for improvements to footpaths to Suffolk County Council Public Rights of Way

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Bourne, Sherman and Robinson abstained.

The revised Motion Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Bourne, Sherman and Robinson abstained.

16. Motion concerning Lavenham Community Allotments at the Paddocks Legal Work

Cllr Robinson left the meeting as the only remaining item related to one of his pecuniary interests.

The Clerk outlined the proposed scope of work and the quotation.

Cllrs expressed concern at the revised cost in comparison to the number of allotments to be provided. Cllrs recognised that the site had been provided for free and that these were not therefore in addition to the cost of purchasing the land. Cllrs said that in light of these increased costs they may in due course need to reconsider the, in principle, the £2,500 grant made available to the Allotments Association.

Motion: The Clerk is instructed to engage the Councils retained solicitors to a maximum cost of £5,000 to progress matters.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Meeting ended 9.25pm.

Date of next meeting – Parish Meeting Thursday 2nd July 2026 7pm.

M. O'Meara
2-7-26