

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 5th June 2025, commencing at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, June 2025 Meeting Pack.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne, Lizzie Falconer, Iain Lamont, Mary Morrey, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Eleven members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair began by welcoming everyone and introduced herself explaining to all present that this meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute taking only and that after the minutes have been approved this recording will be destroyed. 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 Domoney, Mawford, Mitchell and Ranzetta were not present and had sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reported that the Planning Application DC/25/01943 concerning De Vere House related to the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest of Cllr Ranzetta who had sent her apologies concerning her non-attendance at this meeting. He invited Councillors to declare any interests, none were declared.

3. Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk reported that he had received no further requests for dispensations.

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the May 1st 2025 meeting of the Council

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

5. To register no objections by the Parish Council concerning the accuracy of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 15th 2025

No Councillor registered an objection concerning the accuracy of the minutes.

6. Public Participation Session

The Chair reminded Members of the Public of the protocol for this session. Those who wish to ask a question or make a statement have three minutes. Matters raised must concern business on the agenda or local matters. If a question cannot be answered tonight Members of the Public should contact the Clerk with their name and contact details and will receive a written response within 28 days. She explained that the Standing Orders of the Council are clear that this public participation session is for ten minutes and that it is at the discretion of the Chair whether further time is allowed.

A Member of the Public asked if Council was aware that one of the Speed Indicator Devices on the Melford Rd had stopped working. The Clerk responded that he was aware, the batteries in the device had lost their charge and had been returned to the supplier for testing.

A Member of the Public spoke concerning the application to install an EV Charger in the grounds of De Vere House explaining that the application had been made (rather than the proposal being possible under Permitted Development) because Babergh District Council had recently corrected their omission of De Vere House from the list of Listed Buildings.



The Member of the Public explained that this delisting had arisen because Heritage England only records 60 Oxford Cottage, which is part of the property known as De Vere House, as listed.

A Member of the Public explained that she had that evening sent the Clerk a letter asking questions concerning Allotments. The Clerk acknowledged having received the questions.

In answer to the questions the Clerk replied that:

- a) The Parish Council could take a long-term lease of the land from Hartog Hutton and sublet it to the emerging Lavenham Allotments Group or the lease could be between Hartog Hutton and the emerging Lavenham Allotments Group. This would be a matter for Council and the emerging Lavenham Allotments Group to discuss.
- b) He was not aware of any failures to comply with any relevant conditions or obligations such as under Section 106. The Clerk agreed that, together with District Cllr Clover, he would ask this question of Babergh Planning.
- c) Cllr Domoney is the holder of the list of those who have previously expressed an interest in having an allotment. The Clerk agreed to ask Cllr Domoney to share this list.
- d) The Lavenham Allotments Association has existed for some years, the Clerk understood this organisation to be, in a legal sense, more akin to an informal gathering than a fully constituted organisation, the organisation did not, for example, have a Bank Account. He explained that, as previously reported, that Association, having deemed The Paddocks site to be unsuitable, is now working with the owner of Second Meadow to build allotments on Second Meadow.

7. Chair's Announcements

20 mph scheme

The Chair reported that on 20th May 2025 Babergh Council had advised the Parish Council that the Parish Poll concerning the 20mph scheme will be held on Tuesday 24th June 2025.

The Chair reported that Suffolk Highways had, in the last few days, advised that the PC that the inflationary increase from 2024/25 costs to 2025/26 costs is approximately £350.

The Chair told Councillors that the polling station will be the Village Hall explaining that because of the antiquated legislation concerning Parish Polls the hours of poll will be restricted to being between 4pm and 9pm with voting possible in person only. There would be no proxy or postal voting.

The Chair informed Councillors that Babergh Council will not be sending out polling cards and so the Clerk has prepared a notice to bring the poll to the attention of residents and is organising the printing of some 1,300 of these for distribution throughout the village. The cost of printing will be less than £100.

Green Willows Footpath and possible changes in the CIL levies payable by developers

The Chair reported that the final bid for District CIL funding for this project has now been submitted, by Suffolk Highways, to Babergh District Council, the trial hole had confirmed that the underground utilities in the verge are at a suitable depth to enable the footpath to be built.

The Chair noted that Babergh has opened a consultation, open until 9th July, with regards to changes in the CIL levies paid by developers. She told Councillors that they may wish to contact the Clerk with a draft wording for the PC's response which could be agreed at the 3rd July Meeting of the PC. Councillors and Members of the Public she said, may submit a personal response to the consultation.

Allotments

The Chair reported that all the individuals who expressed an interest in forming an allotment association to manage the site adjacent to the Railway Walk have been contacted by the Clerk and they are now in contact with each other and Hartog Hutton. The Clerk has also written to Babergh District Council informing them of recent developments.



The Chair encouraged Councillors and Members of the Public to attend the Church service to be held on 29th June at 11am to mark the 500th anniversary of the Church Tower. She noted that the service will be attended by local dignitaries and members of the Spring family

Himalayan balsam

The Chair informed Councillors that the Environment Agency had written and explained to the Parish Council that they work closely with the Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust who lead the clearance of Himalayan Balsam in a number of locations.

The plan is to have a session starting at the First Meadows at 10am on Friday 20th June 2025, the Trust would very much welcome further volunteers. Details of when and where to meet and what to bring will be published by the Clerk on the website and Facebook.

Initially the Trust can only commit to this one date, but they will see if there is a way of following it up with a further clean out of later growing plants to ensure that they are eradicating it from the stretch entirely. The aim is to work down to the parish boundary at the sewage works to clear this section completely over the next few years and then gradually work downstream.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that the Trust has the experience and Public Liability Insurance to organise and lead the work.

VJ 80 day

The Chair reported that the commemorative beacon has been found commenting that she was certain that Councillors will wish to be supportive of the Royal British Legion as they lead in arranging activities to commemorate the end of WW2 and that any need for financial support could be considered at the next meeting of Council. Councillor Sherman and others echoed these thoughts.

8. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

The Clerk explained that County Cllr Lindsay was unable to be present. He read to Councillors the most significant parts of Cllr Lindsay's report, which is on the Parish Council's website, to the meeting.

Cllr Lindsay had reported that the County Council is conducting a "composition sampling" of black bin contents to enable them to work out what is currently being sent to the incinerator that could be recycled after the changes due to come in 2026.

On collection day the sampling company will come beforehand and empty some bins at random into their own van which will be taken to a recycling centre for sorting into different categories of materials and weighing. Ahead of this survey Householders do not need to change anything in the way they dispose of things nor should they because they want an accurate picture of the normal contents.

Cllr Lindsay told Councillors that the Libraries have been taken back in-house by the County Council which advises that nothing is changing for library users. All 45 libraries will remain open, with the same staff, services, opening hours, activities, and the Spydus reservation system.

Suffolk has launched a consultation so Suffolk residents can give their views on the contributions which can be sought from developers proposing major planning applications. The consultation is open until 9th June. The Clerk commented that this is the first he had heard of this.

Cllr Lindsay commented that the Conservative-led Suffolk County Council has got the Council's Communications Team to arrange meetings with Town and Parish Councils to advocate the creation of one giant Suffolk unitary, rather than the two or three unitaries that District Councils, led by different parties, have asked for.

Cllr Falconer asked if the Clerk knew whether Cllr Lindsay had been able to make any progress understanding whether the Water St culvert was indeed listed. The Clerk said that he knew that Cllr Lindsay had made some inquiries and agreed to follow this up.



District Cllr Clover reported that The Suffolk County Council elections postponed from this May are now planned to take place in May 2026 alongside the Mayoral elections.

District Cllr Clover highlighted the survey referred to in item 14 in the Working Papers provided by the Clerk for this meeting commenting that Local Government Reorganisation will impact everyone and therefore it is important that as many people as possible register their views. The survey will close on 25th July. General information on the progress of LGR can be found on Babergh's website.

District Cllr Clover reminded Cllrs that currently the various districts are favouring different arrangements to those proposed by Suffolk County Council saying that the Government is looking for aligned, evidence-based proposals drawing on the same publicly available data with the applicant explaining the reasons for preference. He reported that the final case for change needs to be submitted by 26th September 2025 and that it may be that the decision is made by June 2026 rather than January 2026. Elections for Councillors to Shadow unitary authorities could then be held in May 2027 with full implementation of the new Unitary Authority in April 2028.

District Cllr Maybury spoke of her joy in being part of the Tudor fete and the excellent publicity work being done by the Rector concerning the T500 events. She commented that some of the Box Bushes were becoming a little overgrown concluding that Babergh had always considered the Water St Culvert to be listed, she would follow this up.

9. Planning Applications for Consideration

The Clerk reported three matters:

- a) At Glenholm on the Brent Eleigh Rd, the applicants had subsequently submitted a Flood Risk Assessment (the absence of this was the reason why the PC had recommended Babergh to withhold Planning Permission) and Planning Permission had later been granted. He said that the later application, at the same property, for a Cartlodge is still to be determined by Babergh.
- b) Babergh had declined Listed Building Consent for replacement windows at The Great House.
- c) The owners of Little Brook on Lower Rd had withdrawn the application to construct a timber framed single storey building. It seems that some work then commenced on a smaller piece of construction which has currently been halted whilst Babergh Planning Enforcement consider matters and decide whether any action is required.

The lead of the Planning Group explained that the Group had not met and so no recommendations had been formulated.

DC/25/01943 De Vere House, Water St

Householder Application: Installation of an electric vehicle charger

Cllr Lamont explained that the proposal is to instal a charging point in the curtilage of a Grade I listed property located inside the Conservation Area. The charger is proposed to be located on a brick wall erected in 1996 as a boundary between the property and Quakers Yard.

Cllr Sherman expressed concern that the intention was to power the charger from an outbuilding. Cllr Lamont replied that such detailed installation matters were for the Electrician and Planning Control and were not relevant to the current decision before Council.

Motion: that Application DC/25/01943 be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Falconer

Decision: Approved unanimously. Cllr Robinson abstained.

DC/25/01930 – Land off Norman Way

Councillor Lamont explained that the application is for amendments to the proposed garage outbuilding adding a single storey open additional cartlodge and three Velux style roof windows to the roof facing the properties on Deacon Close. The property is not in the Conservation Area.

Motion: that Application DC/25/01930 be approved.

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



DC/25/02102 Lavenham Primary School. Infilling of a wall in order to add an additional teaching space.

This application is covered by Suffolk County Council planning portal Application SCC/0060/25B as it is for changes to a School.

Cllr Lamont explained that the building is not listed, but is inside the conservation area. The changes to the external appearance face the playground area. He showed drawings which showed that essentially an outdoor area is being enclosed and merged with an existing indoor area.

Cllr Lamont reported the comments of the Babergh Planning Officer 'Babergh District Council as the Local Planning Authority do not raise any objections to the above proposal. The proposed infilling of the wall would create an additional small teaching space within the main cluster of teaching blocks, and would not appear out of keeping with the site as a whole. It is acknowledged that the infilling would be matching brickwork to the host building which is supported. There are no constraints to the site that would be negatively impacted by the proposal.'

Motion: that Application SCC/0060/25B be approved.

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

The Clerk explained that the owners of Toll Cottage had appealed the Babergh decision and that Babergh had confirmed that they had forwarded all representations received by them to the Planning Inspectorate. However, Council had the opportunity to modify or withdraw its previous representation.

Motion: that no further action be taken

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

10. Clerk/RFO Report

The Clerk began by explaining that, following the questions asked at the last meeting of Council by a Member of the Public to Cllr Robinson, he had passed a number of letters from Cllr Robinson to that Member of the Public.

The Clerk spoke next of Public Realm explaining that he would have delivered much of this information at the previous Meeting of Council had that meeting not overran.

The more heavily used street litter bins are now emptied twice a week with agreement obtained from Babergh that they will charge extra only for the months in which they are emptied twice weekly. The Clerk is also aware that two bins near the Co-Op need replacing, the bins are very solidly attached to the ground, the PC is trying to ascertain how they are attached to the ground. Babergh have told the Clerk that they will not remove or instal the bins even for a fee.

The replacement steps to the water pumps have been manufactured and the pumps will shortly be painted. The basin which was falling off the wall in the Prentice St toilet has been fixed, the fence on the Brent Eleigh Rd has been fixed as has the Potland Lane sign. As documented in the Working Papers repairs have been made to the drain in the Prentice St Car Park to remove the belly and uneven joins.

The Clerk is aware that five potholes on Lower Rd have been accepted by Suffolk Highways as requiring repair, the repainting of the Slow Signs was initially rejected but the Local Highways Inspector has after conversation with the Clerk accepted that there might be an argument that within Suffolks rules they qualify for repair and we wait to see if they will be done.

The Clerk spoke next of his obligation to report each month how much money has been spent on legal costs, the total to date is about £8,000. He explained that the deadline for responding to the Subject Access Requests is next Monday and that the deadline will be met.

The Clerk then outlined the financial position of the Council. In April there had been no significant variances to budget other than the legal costs incurred with respect to the Data Subject Access Requests. At the end of April £5,000 had been spent answering these requests. £1,200 in the 2024/25 Accounts and £3,800 in the 2025/26 Accounts. Council had budgeted to break even in April and the actual result is a deficit of £3,800.

The Clerk added that to the end of May these costs are some £8,000 and that the final total will depend on whether further work is required after the Data has been provided to the Applicants.

The Clerk explained that, as referred to at the recent Annual Parish Meeting, the financial position at 31st March 2025 was healthy with 11 months of reserves but with two unbudgeted headwinds: the legal costs and the LNP costs and now there is a third headwind the cost of the 20 mph Poll. The legal costs are likely to be £8,000 by the end, the LNP Group has requested £15,000 as an interim budget and the 20 mph Poll will cost £2,000. And so, there are extra costs of some £25,000.

Councillors, he said, needed to be aware of where this takes Council and that is that Councils reserves are likely to fall to 7.5 months by 31st March 2026 which will be below the long running target of 8 months and absolutely in the centre of the 6-9 months range recommended in the professional guidance. He described this position as not unreasonable but said that it will make holding Council Tax down for a further year very difficult particularly if the final spend on the LNP, net of any grants received, is above the £15,000 in this interim budget.

Cllr Sherman asked for confirmation that the construction costs of the 20mph scheme would be funded by Neighbourhood CIL. The Clerk confirmed that they would. Cllr Robinson said that some further fencing surrounding First Meadow was in poor condition.

Motion: to approve the accounts for the month ended 30 April 2025.

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

Motion: to approve the Receipts and Payments for the month ended 30 April 2025.

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

The Clerk formally reported to Council his use of his discretionary powers (under Standing Financial Regulations April 2025 paragraph 4.4) to spend money: £1,360.50 (an amount some £400 above that previously authorised) to repair the drain in the Prentice St Car Park and £73 printing the Notices of Parish Poll. He referred Councillors to the detailed report in the Working Papers. Item 10c.

The Clerk spoke next of the Annual Financial Returns and Audits.

He explained that Council is required to: a) Submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with various supporting schedules b) Commission a review of the AGAR and the Councils underlying financial and accounting processes by an Internal Auditor. c) Publish the AGAR.

The Internal Auditor had made two comments a) that the wrong form had been used to give Notice of Period for the exercise of Public Rights of Inspection and that b) Council should consider the limits of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. This scheme, he explained, only covers deposits of up to £85,000. Council he said has mitigated this risk by banking with a very large bank (Barclays) but should reduce this risk by finalising and paying Suffolk County Council for the streetlights. Fidelity Insurance (lack of) which was the Internal Auditors comment last year has now been purchased.

The Clerk displayed the numbers in the draft AGAR giving explanations for the variances highlighting the reduced CIL income and higher expenditure on various infrastructure items as described in the Chairs report to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Motion: to approve the Internal Audit Reports

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

Motion: to approve the Section 1 of the AGAR (the Governance Statement)

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

Motion: to approve the Section 2 of the AGAR (the Accounting Statement)

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

Motion: to approve the supporting schedules for the AGAR

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

Motion: to approve the exercise period for public rights

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



11a. Report from the Chair of LNP Group including update concerning Draft Questionnaire

Cllr Sherman explained that the LNP Group has prepared a draft Questionnaire for completion by the pilot group with that draft Questionnaire included in the Working Papers.

The next steps are:

- 1) This Questionnaire will be sent out to the Pilot Group only. The Pilot Group is a cross-section of local residents. A small number of points in yellow on the draft Questionnaire will be finalised before sending out to the Pilot Group.
- 2) Councillors are invited to note the Questionnaire and to write informally to the LNP Group with any thoughts they have.
- 3) The LNP Group will reflect on the Pilot Group and Councillor comments and finalise the Questionnaire.
- 4) The LNP Group will submit to a future meeting of Council the final version of the Questionnaire for Council approval.
- 5) The LNP group will get quotes for the printing cost and distribute the final Questionnaire to Members of the Public.

Cllr Sherman spoke of his respect for the work done by those who prepared LNP2 and that many of the documents such as the Design Guide would be largely carried forward. Some rules would be amended, a major aim of the LNP Group was to make the Plan simpler. The question concerning the 20mph scheme will be removed.

11b. LNP Interim Budget and the engagement of professional advisors

The Clerk explained that at its 6th February 2025 Meeting Council had passed the following motion:

'That the Parish Council authorises the expenditure of up to an initial £3,000 to kickstart the revision process'.

The LNP Group has now submitted a request for an interim budget of £15,000.

Professional Fees:	
a) To complete the questionnaire, consider the raw data on housing target emanating from BDC and formulate an approach to site allocations, numbers and timing	£5,000
b) Review of NP1 and NP2 policies and further policy drafting	£3,000
Printing: Village information letters, questionnaire and village feed-back	£4,500
IT: Website set-up, questionnaire hosting and input	£1,500
Room Hire and Miscellaneous, each £500	£1,000
Total (NB total spend to date is less than £200 entirely on Printing)	£15,000

The Clerk explained that Council needs to resolve:

- a) whether to grant the interim budget requested and
- b) whether to approve the individual spends, without approval of the spends the budget, he said, is essentially useless.

The Clerk reported that the LNP has explained that the budget requested is interim because:

- a) Central government and Babergh Council have laid out a requirement for future Neighbourhood Plans to assume a level of development not previously seen and at this stage it is difficult to foresee the full range of assistance required.
- b) At this time the Planning Consultant is only being tasked with producing a revised timeframe working within the Locality framework.
- c) Grants will be applied for once this interim budget is put in place and the application period is open.



Cllr Sherman said that it is not currently possible to apply for Grants telling Councillors that Council will be able to apply for Grants in August.

He explained that this is a change made by Central Government. Most of the spend, he said will be covered by Grants, the need for money will be less as Council will get the money in August.

Cllr Falconer asked whether it was known why Grants applications were currently not being accepted and whether there was any assumption that 'we will not be able to do Neighbourhood Plans'.

Cllr Sherman said that this was not the case, the Government, the Conservative and Labour parties are supportive of Neighbourhood Plans as is the local MP. The reason for the delay was unknown. He added that Central Government had budgeted for the spend.

Cllr Sherman told Councillors that the professional fees are expected to be significantly less than those incurred writing the two previous Neighbourhood Plans because much of LNP2 had been 'spot on but been too complicated'.

Cllr Muckian asked if the aim of the Group was to write the plan for Developers or for the village. Cllr Sherman replied that the intention was to write it for the village.

Cllr Muckian asked how the plan would protect the village from Developers and 'their legalese'. Cllr Sherman replied that the Plan will not be able to offer the protection previously provided by the Neighbourhood Plan because of the new Government housing targets.

Cllr Muckian asked whether the aim was still to protect the village as much as possible.

Cllr Sherman replied that this was most definitely the aim but Central Government had taken away powers from Babergh District Council and the Parish Council and imposed targets. He added that Central Government had been clear that new homes should be built where the transport infrastructure and employment opportunities are and that the LNP Group was strongly making the point to Babergh Council that Lavenham has neither of these attributes.

The Clerk clarified that what this means is that there will certainly be further expenditure above the £15,000 initially requested offset somewhat or entirely by Grants.

Cllr Lamont asked what the value of the expected Grants was. Cllr Sherman replied that Babergh Council had told the LNP Group that Lavenham would receive at least £10,000.

Cllr Lamont asked if there was a draft budget for the whole Neighbourhood Plan project. The Clerk and Cllr Sherman each answered that there was not.

Cllr Falconer asked how much money Council had that it could spend on the LNP. The Clerk replied that he had, earlier in the meeting, explained that Council was heading towards reducing its reserves to 7.5 months and that should reserves fall below that level Council Tax would have to be increased.

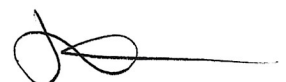
Cllr Lamont said that for the other capital projects Council has done budgets are normally for the whole project.

The Clerk explained the proposed four professional appointments, as described in the Working Paper 11b, and their roles distinguishing between the three advisers who are being tasked with minor revisions to their previous work and the proposed new advisor.

The Clerk explained that:

Standing Financial Regulations Paragraph 11.1 h) says:

'When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000.00 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) (AJS which does not apply to these proposed purchases) the RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply) where the value is below £3,000.00 and above £1,000.00 the RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates'.



a) Paul Dodd (Out Design), Lucy Batchelor-Wylam and Hannah Lazarus are intended to provide services of less than £3,000 each which are essentially follow-on or revisions to their services previously provided. No attempt has been made to obtain 3 estimates for these services. It cannot be said that the RFO has strived to obtain 3 estimates.

b) It is proposed to appoint Places 4 People having striven to obtain three quotes but having failed to obtain three quotes. This appointment cannot be considered follow-on or revisions to work previously supplied by Places 4 People.

Standing Financial Regulations Paragraph 18.2 says: 'The Council may, by resolution of the Council, duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council'.

Council, he said, therefore needs to consider the risks of appointing these suppliers. The risks are:

1) Reputational. Council may face criticism that required procurement best practice has not been followed and that there is no evidence that Value for Money has been achieved. At worst Council may face allegations of corruption. Council has recently received correspondence questioning the processes behind the selection of the Consultants for LNP2 and the lack of open competition. The questioner chose not to pursue the matter beyond an initial question.

2) Legal. The appointment of these suppliers is likely to be questioned or highlighted by the Internal Auditor and included in their report which will then be reviewed by the External Auditor. Both these reports have to be publicly displayed.

3) Commercial. Effectively the Council will be tied into appointing Places 4 People for the further professional work required with the first appointment not having been consequent of being the preferred of three quotes.

Cllr Robinson asked for confirmation that three of the proposed advisors were continuing their work, the Clerk confirmed that was the case, only one supplier was new.

Cllr Muckian asked if it had not been possible to get further quotes for the Planning Advisor roles. Cllr Sherman replied they had approached all those with local knowledge in this area but had been unsuccessful. Cllr Muckian asked for a list of all those approached, Cllr Sherman replied that he did not have a list but the Group did such have a list and that they had approached all of those with relevant local experience. Cllr Sherman said that they had used the Babergh list. Cllr Robinson said that the quoted rates were not unreasonable.

Cllr Falconer expressed concern about the possible risks saying that she wanted the LNP Group to succeed but did not want to expose Council to further legal risks. Cllr Bourne said that thinking about the reputational risk, the Parish Council has a reputation for saying 'No' and this perception very strongly needs to be considered.

Cllr Muckian highlighted that the Council had often taken time and delayed projects to obtain three quotes and expressed concern about setting the precedent suggesting that the appointment of the three advisors used before made considerable sense.

Cllr Lamont suggested contacting other 'out of area' advisors to compare the daily rates. Cllr Robinson pointed out that the daily rates proposed by the Planning Professional were not very different to those proposed by the other advisors.

Cllr Sherman expressed his frustration.

Cllr Lamont proposed an amendment such that motion c) read:

Council approves the appointment of Paul Dodd, Lucy Batchelor-Wylam and Hannah Lazarus as long as the spend on the services provided by Paul Dodd, Lucy Batchelor-Wylam and Hanah Lazarus is each less than £3,000.

Motion: to amend the motion c) to read as above

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



Motion: to approve an Interim Budget of £15,000.

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

Motion: Council suspends Standing Financial Regulations Paragraph 11.1 h) having considered the recommendations and underlying reasonings of the LNP Group for the selection of these suppliers and having considered the assessment of the risks arising from the appointment of the proposed suppliers consequent of the procurement process followed.

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

Motion to approve the appointment of Paul Dodd, Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, Hannah Lazarus as long as the spend on the services provided by Paul Dodd, Lucy Batchelor-Wylam and Hanah Lazarus is each less than £3,000.

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

12. Motion to sign EV Lease Agreement

The Clerk outlined the legal and commercial background and also recent developments.

Motion: The Clerk is instructed to send the unsigned lease, LTA54 notice and declaration to Connected Kerb. Council approves the lease and authorises two Councillors to sign the Lease when it has been signed by Connected Kerb.

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

The Clerk also discussed with Councillors whether they wish all six EV bays in the Prentice St car park to be activated in the first wave. Councillors expressed a preference to begin with only two EV bays.

13. Motion to terminate participation in Suffolk Community Self- Help Scheme

The Clerk outlined recent developments explaining that it has now become clear that Suffolk County Council rules prevent the Parish Council putting out flood warning barriers in Lower Rd. Cllr Sherman added that he felt let down by Suffolk County Council, the course had trained them to close the road and now they were unable to use the skills they had learned.

Motion: The Clerk is instructed not to sign the Agreement required to enter the Suffolk Community Self Help Scheme and to inform Suffolk that the Parish Council will not be signing the Agreement

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

14. Report concerning Local Government Reorganisation Survey organised by Babergh District Council


The Clerk displayed the survey, describing it as basic, explaining that if Councillors want the Council to submit a response then (a) Councillor(s) need(s) to draft a response for Council to consider at its July meeting. Cllr Robinson and Sherman expressed an interest in being involved in the workshops. Cllr Mawford had already informed the Clerk of his interest.

15. Motion to appoint a Councillor to the Lavenham Guildhall Committee

The Chair suggested Cllr Morrey

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Morrey abstained.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 3rd July 2025 7pm in the Village Hall. Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Janice Muckie

3/7/25.