

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 7th November 2024, commencing at 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.
Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, November 2024 Meeting Pack.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Iain Lamont, Roy Mawford, Irene Mitchell, Mary Morrey, Jane Ranzetta, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Eighteen 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 all Councillors were present.

2. Co-option of Lizzie Falconer or Alison Sherman as Councillor

The Clerk explained that legal position is that there is one Councillor vacancy and that Babergh Council has advised that the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

Alison Sherman has withdrawn her application and therefore Lizzie Falconer is the only candidate.

Since she is the only candidate there is no need for Lizzie to outline her suitability and for this to be compared to other candidates.

He informed Councillors that Lizzie Falconer has provided evidence of her eligibility, completed the required Register of Interests form, has received a copy of the Code of Conduct and has been directed to the other Parish Council policies published on the Parish Council website.

He told Councillors that Lizzie Falconer has not requested a dispensation on any matter.

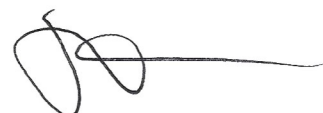
He informed Councillors that SALC and NALC advice is that when there are the same number or fewer candidates than vacancies then the legal position is that Council shall resolve to co-opt them to Council.

The Clerk explained that consequent of the legal position there is no vote but that Council practice, as followed when Cllrs Mawford, Robinson and Sherman joined, is that the motion to welcome Lizzie Falconer to Council is proposed and seconded.

Proposal: That the Parish Council welcomes Lizzie Falconer to the Council and asks Ms Falconer to sign the Acceptance of office with the Clerk instructed to a) inform Babergh District Council and b) lodge with Babergh District Council the 'Register of Members Interests' form.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Morrey

Cllr Robinson asked why Alison Sherman had withdrawn her application. The Chair replied that she had given a reason but that she did not know whether Mrs Sherman wanted her reasoning made public. Cllr Robinson asked Cllr Sherman if he could explain why Mrs Sherman had withdrawn her application. The Chair asked Cllr Robinson if this question was relevant to the proceedings. Cllr Robinson replied that it was not. He then added that he considered it relevant to the meeting that Councillors be told why she has decided to withdraw. The Chair informed Cllr Robinson that this reasoning was not relevant and that the meeting would 'move on'.



3. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reported that Cllr Robinson has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in respect of Second Meadow and Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell have declared a DPI in respect of Rowan Cottage. He explained that these Councillors would need to leave the room whenever these matters were discussed including during Public Participation.

4. Requests for Dispensations

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

5. To approve as accurate minutes of the 3rd October 2024 meeting of the Council

Motion: to approve as accurate the minutes of the 3rd October 2024 meeting of Council.

Cllr Domoney asked why the reasons he left the meeting had not been included.

He said that he had been asked by people to attend the meeting to object to the appointment of Mr Mawford, Cllr Mitchells' husband, on grounds of propriety explaining that, in his opinion, since there had not been a vote, there had been no point in him remaining at the meeting because, had he remained, he would have appeared to acquiesce to impropriety and nepotism. He asked whether we are on the slippery slope to playing by either 'Belfast or Dublin rules'.

The Chair asked Cllr Domoney to moderate his language.

The Clerk explained that the tape records that Cllr Domoney said 'Will you excuse me? There is no point in me being here anymore, I was very strongly urged to attend, I'll be in touch, have a good day'.

The Chair intervened saying that whilst Cllr Domoney may have wished to say more that the Minutes can only record what was actually said. Cllr Domoney and the Clerk agreed to amend the minutes to record what Cllr Domoney actually said.

Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: The minutes of the 3rd October 2024 meeting of the Council were approved as accurate. Cllrs Domoney, Falconer, Robinson and Sherman abstained.

6. Public Participation Session

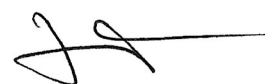
The Chair reminded Members of the Public of the protocol for this session. Those who wish to ask a question or make a statement have three minutes. Matters raised must concern business on the agenda or local matters. If a question cannot be answered tonight Members of the Public should contact the Clerk 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. Cllr Robinson left the room.

A Member of the Public asked why a Consultant had been engaged to help Council assess the application for the Wellness Centre on Second Meadow when Consultants had not been employed in the past even in connection with contentious applications. He asked what the cost incurred was.

The Chair responded that Consultants had been engaged in the past where the issues are complex and that the cost was £1,150.

A Member of the Public expressed his concerns about the proposed Wellness Centre saying that he was concerned about the flooding issues. He referred to recent storms recalling that Brent Eleigh Rd had flooded, that water in neighbouring areas had been up to 1.5m deep and Lavenham Studios had nearly flooded. He described the proposed development as un-needed and said it will reduce the size of the flood catchments and create a partial dam which will further raise the risk of flooding.

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.



A Member of the Public said that she had raised two Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests, one on the Parish Council and the second on Babergh. Across these bodies she said the total cost of LNP2 will be £93,000. Explaining that LNP2, should it be adopted, will be the roadmap for future development in Lavenham she said that there is little in the Plan which encourages new businesses to move to the area saying that new investment and expansion is key to sustainability and growth. As someone who is thinking of investing £2million she said that she needs to be sure that Lavenham is the best place to invest in and she asked the Parish Council to explain its vision, approach and specific plans to promote and support small businesses and encourage investment to ensure that Lavenham remains a vibrant and flourishing community. She concluded by asking how the income will be raised to cover the costs of preparing LNP2.

The Clerk responded that he had not seen the FOI response from Babergh but could detail the Parish Councils costs. These he explained were likely to be £37,000 with a Grant received from Central Government of about £18,000 meaning that the Parish Council will have spent £19,000. This he said had been spent over four years and had been funded by the Parish Council's income during that period.

The Chair said that the Member of the Public's other questions will be responded to in writing within 28 days but after the end of the Referendum period.

7. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair gave further information to Councillors concerning the report that had been commissioned costing £1,150 regarding the Planning Application for a Wellness Centre. She said the purpose was to provide objective expert advice. She explained that the decision to seek this advice had been made by the Clerk and was due to the complex nature of this application. The decision, she said, had been made with her approval and was in accordance with Council's standing orders.

She reminded Councillors that Babergh has announced that the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum will take place 28th November. She urged residents to read the document and urged those who are registered to vote to make the effort to exercise their democratic right.

The Chair informed Councillors that it had been anticipated that costings for the 20mph scheme would be received this week but that nothing had been received.

Council she said had noticed the recent reduction in opening hours of the Surgery, the Clerk has written to the Practice Manager seeking further clarifications and will publish any information made available.

She concluded by welcoming the new Village Pharmacist Anusha Deshmi. Anusha, she explained is licensed to prescribe and plans to offer other options to supplement and support local GP services.

8. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Lindsay highlighted the key items in his report.

Efforts to progress the Green Willows footpath continue. He explained that until the new political regime took over at Babergh in May 2023, Babergh always refused to provide CIL money to communities for Highways purposes such as cycling and walking infrastructure. The new leadership at Babergh he said had over-turned this but Babergh officers have not worked with Highways before on infrastructure projects and are now having to build a relationship with Highways officers to work out what happens should costs overshoot Highway's estimate. Green Willows he said has become a bit of a test case. He said that he wished to allow Babergh officers some time to try to find a way forward with Highways but that he had made it clear to them that time is of the essence. He is prepared to contribute to the £5,000 costs of obtaining a firmer estimate if this will satisfy Babergh and allow the CIL bid to succeed.

The County's Cabinet will, he said, on November 5th allocate an extra £1.5m to deliver flood prevention work it has identified in the parish-based investigations it has by law to conduct (seven out of an estimated fifty total investigations done so far). It is asking for another £20 million from government. The Council has already committed £12.25m but only £2.25m of this was related to Babet directly. A further £10m was allocated over three years to try to address the massive ten-year backlog of drainage repair work it already had, even before Babet.



Separately, Cabinet in October agreed to contribute £2m to a scheme to protect Benacre, south of Lowestoft. The Environment Agency is contributing £30m and Sizewell C £27m.

The scheme will protect the A12 with a bank but will allow the valley, drained years ago, to be reflooded by the sea, creating hundreds of acres of saltmarsh habitat which will also act as a powerful carbon sink.

Suffolk County Council has announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to home owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest.

<https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>

Unlike the earlier Warm Homes grants, which failed to get adequate take up, these loans are not means tested.

His political group had brought forward a motion that the County review its priorities for repairing pavement defects in order to ensure quicker interventions where tripping incidents are most likely. He explained that if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more this will be repaired. His political group had argued that in areas of high footfall, or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high.

He said that since most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65 it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the Council had he said voted down our motion saying that a review of highways processes is being undertaken.

His group will try to input into this. He also considers that there ought also to be some flexibility over the maximum width of pavement that highways will clear of encroaching vegetation – currently no more than 50cm.

After the new Government scrapped Suffolk's plan for devolution, it is now "exploring" whether to put the County in charge of some £9.4million a year (60% of the £16m a year on offer in the original devolution deal) to have control of adult education schemes. That includes funding the three Suffolk further education colleges – currently directly funded by Central Government. A cabinet report is recommending the Council take up the offer of an annual "Adult Skills Fund" and officers have drawn up a "Strategic Skills Plan".

Cllr Mitchell asked if Highways usually deliver projects within budget. Cllr Lindsay replied that in general Highways execute projects very close to budget. This project he said is complicated by below ground BT cables.

Cllr Mitchell asked if the plans for a directly elected Mayor had been put on hold by the new Government. Cllr Lindsay confirmed that this is the case.

Cllr Domoney asked if Suffolk has any interest in Quantum Science and Artificial Intelligence. He is interested in setting up a training organisation. He asked if Suffolk is interested in setting up a Quantum cluster suggesting he might he have to go to Germany, Morocco or Egypt. The Chair asked Cllr Domoney to email Cllr Lindsay.

District Cllr Clover said that he and Cllr Maybury both support the Green Willows Footpath and will continue to push Babergh Council to resolve the issues.

District Cllr Clover highlighted the key points from his report.

Despite previous assurances that the Cork's lane development of the old Council Offices in Hadleigh would return a profit the latest forecast is that it will produce a £3-3.5m loss.

Following extensive repair work to the roof, the Kingfisher pool is now due to reopen on 11th December.

Babergh District Council is inviting residents, groups and businesses in Stour Valley to find out more about creating community energy schemes. More information is on the Babergh website.



9. Planning Applications for Consideration

The Clerk informed Cllrs that Babergh had refused permission for the part-demolition of a wall and construction of an off street parking Bay on Prentice St largely due to heritage considerations. The Parish Council had recommended approval.

The Chair introduced this part of the meeting reminding Councillors that any decision they make must be based upon their evaluation of all the documents available to them, including all other Material Considerations including public comments and economic and social consequences.

Documents prepared by the planning group, she said, summarise that groups deliberations but do not replace Councillors own due diligence. With respect to the first application the Planning Groups overview is she said 'helpful' but as always it is up to individual Councillors to make up their own minds based upon the facts available to them.

She reminded Councillors that Council recommendations to Babergh only express the opinion of this Council in the same way others are able to express their opinions; the granting of any planning permission is made by the professional planners employed by Babergh District Council.

DC/24/04224

Cllr Robinson left the room.

Second Meadow Stables, Brent Eleigh Rd

Application for Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved. Erection of Wellness Centre (sui generis use). Removal of existing structures.

Cllr Lamont began by saying that it was unusual for this Council to consider sui generis use, the last time was concerning Number 10 Lady St, he informed Councillors that a professional report had also been obtained with respect to that application.

He explained that the previous application DC/23/02659 was refused for three reasons: Contrary to Policy SP03 Joint Local Plan, Accessibility and Flood Risk.

The application is, he said, for Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved at this stage meaning that the actual details of the buildings will be applied for later. This is an application, he said, for putting something on that site, the detail of what goes on in those buildings is not the subject matter of this application.

Cllr Lamont explained that policy Joint Local Plan SP03 is clear that development will only be permitted outside the settlement boundary when:

- a) The site is allocated for development, or
- b) It is in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan, or
- c) It is in accordance with one of the policies of this Plan (the JLP) listed in Table 5 or
- d) It is in accordance with paragraph NPPF 2023 para 84.

The site he said is not in accordance with a) or d) and that following detailed consideration of policies SP07 and LP12(2) the Planning Group considers the proposal not in compliance with point c).

He then explained that the site is in a 'Special Landscape Area' as described in LNP1 and is an 'Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity' as described in LNP2. LNP2 he explained (Policy LAV13) says that 'Outside the Settlement Boundary, development will be restricted to:

- a) Rural exception sites that are well connected to the settlement and key services and community-led developments adjacent to the settlement, where such a scheme accords with Policy LAV 17 of this Plan.
- b) Development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor recreation, essential education infrastructure and other uses that need to be located in the countryside.
- c) Replacement dwellings or residential extensions or annexes or conversions allowed for in the Local Plan.



- d) Uses appropriate to supporting a rural economy (rural employment uses) where such uses need to be located in the countryside and where they comply with other provisions in the development plan.
- e) Residential development that complies with one or more of the exceptional circumstances set out in paragraph 84 of the NPPF 2023

This application, he told Councillors is not for a community-led development and does not accord with LAV 17. It does not, he said, fit the purposes stated in (b) above and in (d), a Wellness Centre need not be in the countryside.

Cllr Lamont next considered Accessibility explaining that the current pedestrian access is by the River Brett along a muddy path, the only alternative pedestrian access is to walk in the carriageway of the A1141 in a section which is both unlit and subject to the National Speed Limit (60mph). Access he said was extremely difficult for those with mobility issues and non-compliant with Policy LAV41 in LNP2 which requires 'provision of safe, attractive paths, routes within the development site suitable for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or walking frame or using a mobility scooter.'

Lastly Cllr Lamont considered flooding describing this as a very technical area, he directed Councillors to the expert Consultee comments reporting to Councillors that these comments appeared contradictory and suggested that Council was not technically qualified to resolve such matters.

Cllr Lamont concluded by saying that since the previous rejection the land parcel proposed for the development of a Wellness Centre has not moved. It is still beyond the built-up area boundary defined in the Neighbourhood Plan 2016 and is not adjacent to it. It is beyond the proposed settlement boundary set out in the draft revised Neighbourhood Plan 2023 (LNP2). No overwhelming community need, he said, for a Wellness Centre in this location has been identified.

Pedestrian access on a routine and year round basis has not been identified. The proposal is contrary to policies LAV 13 and LAV 41 of LNP2.

Cllr Sherman asked why the footpath is described in LNP2 as an excellent footpath but is criticised in this report and whether the Consultant was appropriately qualified. The Clerk responded that Consultant was a Chartered Town Planner, an MRTPI.

Cllr Mitchell asked whether need has been established saying that she could not see evidence of a full survey. She noted the petition but said that it could not be considered that this evidenced a need, only a desire, adding that in general she supports providing more services in Lavenham but that it has to be on the basis of evidenced need and that other needs may take priority.

She drew attention to the Planning Statement on pages 54 and 55 where the application states it would be another attraction for residents and visitors but then says it would be unlikely to encourage more visitors to the area.

She questioned the impact on other local businesses since the applicant suggests that there will be few additional visitors to Lavenham.

She explained that it had to be considered whether the proposal, when considered collectively, brings more benefits than harm and therefore tilts the balance in favour of development outside the settlement boundary. She commented that such factors might be tangible health and welfare benefits that cannot be achieved anywhere else. The countryside, she said, cannot be recreated once lost.

Cllr Ranzetta described Cllr Mitchells comments as thorough and interesting expressing concern that this application is not necessarily for a wellness centre.

Cllr Domoney reminded all that LAV13 restricts development outside the Settlement Boundary to:

- a) Rural exception sites that are well connected to the settlement and key services and community-led developments adjacent to the settlement, where such a scheme accords with Policy LAV 17 of this Plan.
- b) Development for agriculture, horticulture, outdoor recreation, essential education infrastructure and other uses that need to be located in the countryside.
- c) Replacement dwellings or residential extensions or annexes or conversions allowed for in the Local Plan.



Cllr Domoney expressed concerns that Lavenham Parish Council stops things from happening.

Cllr Mawford noted that there are some significant positives from the application such as the potential employment activities, potential improvements to the footpath and indeed the Wellness Centre itself.

He spoke of a number of what he considered to be factual errors in the Planning Application concerning the state of the footpath, the location as not being within a special landscape area and that the development will not directly impact village traffic flows. He questioned the way that the Sequential Test had been carried out.

He said that he wished the application had not been 'all matters reserved' He said he did not share Cllr Ranzetta's concern that this might not be an application for a Wellness Centre but that the plans give no idea as to what the Wellness Centre might look like.

Cllr Falconer highlighted the possible economic impact on a Community facility, the Village Hall. Cllr Lamont echoed these thoughts.

Cllr Bourne expressed her concerns about potential flooding.

Cllr Ranzetta explained that in her opinion the site is only safely accessible by car. The path she said, is unlit, muddy and unusable by those with a mobility scooter, wheelchair, pushchair etc and is therefore unsafe.

Cllr Mitchell spoke of the comments from other statutory consultees highlighting the Babergh Council Ecological Assessment Holding Objection "we are not satisfied sufficient information in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain has been provided prior to determination" and the Babergh Communities team comment "We feel some of the arguments of the section assessing need [for a Wellness Centre] versus desire for the facility are overstated." "The proposed facility is unlikely to be transformational in reducing health inequalities". "The proportion of visitors to the Wellness Centre by foot rather than car has not been modelled and public transport not factored. Other factors, such as accessibility of the facility and cost relative to income are likely to be as significant."

Cllr Sherman asked whether people would consider investing such money without checking everything out.

Cllr Mawford said that in some way the application is unfair in that it does not contain detailed building heights etc to permit Council to take more a rounded view of the impact on the Community. He noted that the Babergh Area Planning Manager, Mark Russell, had advised the applicant: "... if you resubmit as an Outline [application], change the description very slightly to 'Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access and Layout to be considered)'" Cllr Mawford added that a different application, in line with the advice received, might be much easier to consider and possibly to support.

Cllr Domoney suggested that refusing this application might give the impression that this village does not want to change from being a place where rich people buy expensive houses and wait to die.

Cllr Mitchell said that she was not clear if the applicant wants a Wellness Centre as her first priority or whether she wishes to build on the countryside.

Motion: that Application DC/24/04224 not be recommended for approval

Proposed: Cllr Lamont

Seconded: Cllr Mawford

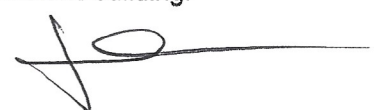
Decision: Approved. Cllrs Sherman and Domoney abstained.

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.

DC/24/04658 and 04659

The Crooked House, 7 High St, Lavenham CO10 9PR
Householder Application and Application for Listed Building Consent for the erection of single storey rear extension (following demolition of existing single storey rear extension); Replacement of render on rear elevation with lime render; Installation of external boiler; Construction of garden room.

The applications were considered together. Cllr Lamont reported that this is a landmark historic building.



The rear of the house, he said, is covered with cement render and the rear extension is a single skinned modern brick building. He told Councillors that the cement render is totally inappropriate for a timber framed building as it traps moisture and causes the timbers underneath to be damp and prone to rot. This application restores and re-renders these sections with traditional lime plaster.

This application demolishes a poorly built 20th century extension and replaces this with a new, timber frame extension and additionally constructs a single-room traditional-style outbuilding as a home office.

Both the extension and garden room are to be clad with timber weatherboard, painted black. Slate roofed. The extension has Conservation rooflights and the Garden room has solar panels on the west facing roof, the solar panels not visible from the Crooked house.

The new buildings will not be visible from the high street and are sympathetic to the surrounding buildings.

Cllr Muckian asked whether the work will reduce the light available to adjacent properties.

Cllr Mitchell noted that neighbours have lodged an objection but that from the street it is difficult to determine the precise locations of the properties and the consequent effect of the proposed works on access to light.

Cllr Mawford asked whether the solar panels would be visible noting that they are within the curtilage of a listed building. Cllr Mitchell said that the panels would not be visible from the street.

Cllr Robinson said that the matter was being considered too deeply, we are not Planning Specialists.

Motion: that Applications DC/24/04658 and 04659 be recommended for approval on the condition that Slate Roof tiles are specified on the extension and garden room as indicated on the elevation drawings and Planning Statement

Proposed: Cllr Robinson

Seconded: Cllr Sherman.

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Ranzetta and Mitchell abstained.

DC/24/04664

5 White Gates, Lavenham CO10 9FL

Application for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS41/A1. Fell 3 silver birch trees.

Cllr Lamont explained that the reasoning provided is that they currently need reducing again and will probably need doing every 3-4 years which is an ongoing cost". He said that there is no indication that these trees are diseased.

Motion: that Application DC/24/04664 be refused, the trees should be pruned rather than felled.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta

Seconded: Cllr Bourne.

Decision: Approved. Cllr Robinson abstained.

DC/24/04672

Mole Cottage, 32 Prentice St, Lavenham CO10 9RD

Notification of works to trees in a conservation area. Reduce Goat Willow by 50% and reduce the overhang over No 30 back to the boundary.

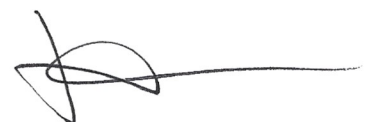
Cllr Lamont explained that this work represents ongoing maintenance to a tree.

Motion: that Application DC/24/04672 be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta

Seconded: Cllr Sherman

Decision: Approved unanimously.



DC/23/05658

Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell left the room.

Rowan Cottage, The Common, Lavenham CO10 9RL
Discharge of Conditions Application. Conditions 3 (External Finishes) and 4 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures).

Cllr Lamont explained that a decision had already been made by Babergh concerning this application.

The Clerk explained that Babergh did not consult the Parish Council on this because it's a Discharge of Conditions only. Cllr Lamont had however noticed the matter and so had included it on the Planning List. Because the Council had not been consulted on this the Clerk had not requested that Babergh allow the Parish Council an extension and so the consultation had concluded the previous day and Babergh had already approved the discharge of conditions.

The Clerk explained that Council could have had a view on this Discharge but the matter was now closed.

Cllr Robinson asked the minutes to include that this reflects a breach of planning not just a discharge of conditions.

Cllrs Mawford and Mitchell returned to the room.

10. Clerk/RFO Report

The Clerk explained that he would keep the Accounts portion short for this meeting saying that the next meeting of council will be 'finance heavy' because of the need, at the next meeting, to set a precept.

He reported that he has received a formal complaint concerning the work of the Planning Group specifically 'the procedures and administration of the collation of the information contained within the Parish Councils recommendation for a planning application'. Informal discussions between the Clerk and the Complainant had been unable to resolve the matter.

He explained that it was most likely that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be held to give the Complainant a full opportunity to detail the complaint, accompanied by their chosen representatives, to Councillors. At that meeting Councillors will decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made.

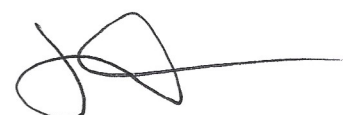
He said that he will propose dates and so find a date convenient to Councillors and the Complainant and asked all Councillors to make themselves available as much as they can saying that the complaint is a serious matter and the Complainant deserves the attention of as full a Council as possible. Councillors will decide, at that meeting, whether to exclude Members of the Public from that meeting.

He then reported concerning Complaints to the Monitoring Officer. He has been advised by the Monitoring Officer at Babergh Council that he should report to Council any Complaints to the Monitoring Officer where the Monitoring Officer has found that the Code of Conduct has been breached and that it is best practice to report to Council complaints which the Monitoring Officer has dismissed.

No Complaints have been upheld. Complaints have been raised against Cllrs Mitchell, Ranzetta and Sherman, the Monitoring Officer has dismissed these complaints. As far as he is aware there are no outstanding complaints.

The Clerk explained that he had included in his letter to the Practice Manager of the Surgery the arrangement that the Village Hall had secured with Babergh Council concerning concessionary car parking but no reply had yet been received. Cllr Mitchell reported that she had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Community Council and congratulated them on increasing the concession from two hours to three hours.

He has answered two Freedom of Information Act requests.



Accounts for September 2024:

The Clerk reported that variances compared to the reforecast were insignificant. The minor cost savings were largely timing as some maintenance tasks are taking a little longer to get going than had been anticipated. There had been no unanticipated changes in reserves. He added that whilst the October Accounts were not finalised he could report that October is likely to report a small surplus of £1,000 to £2,000 compared to the reforecast with key reasons being that the LNP group has so far spent considerably less than the £2,000 allocated to it for publicity and there has been some burial income.

Receipts and Payments for September 2024:

He explained the most significant payments and receipts made in the month.

Motion: to approve the accounts for the month ended 30 September 2024.

Proposed: Cllr Sherman

Seconded: Cllr Mitchell

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Motion: to approve the Receipts and Payments for the month ended 30 September 2024

Proposed: Cllr Lamont

Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Annual Pay rise for the Clerk:

The Chair explained that the pay of Local Government Staff is agreed between the Employers and the relevant Trades Unions. These negotiations are usually protracted and only in the last few weeks has the pay rise, effective 1 April 2024, been agreed. For employees on Spinal Point 42 such as the Clerk the pay rise is £1,290 per annum.

Motion: Council acknowledges its legal obligations to increase the Clerk's salary to £36,124 backdated to 1 April 2024 and the Chair is instructed to inform the payroll bureau.

Proposed: Cllr Morrey

Seconded: Cllr Falconer

Decision: Approved unanimously.

11. The Parish Newsletter

The Clerk explained that Council has frequently distributed a Christmas Newsletter written by the Chair of the Parish Council, together with a free copy of Lavenham Life, to every household. The December issue of Lavenham Life will contain the minutes of this meeting. The cost of purchasing the required 1,600 copies of Lavenham Life will depend on the final size of the Christmas issue but is likely to be between £1,100 and £1,400. The cost of printing the newsletter is likely to be approximately £200.

Cllr Lamont asked if there would still be a copy of December Lavenham Life if this motion fails, the Clerk explained that there would, the question is the whether each resident receives a free copy and a newsletter from the Chair.

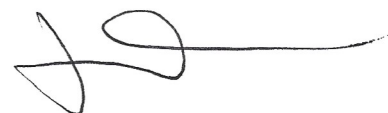
Cllr Ranzetta spoke in support of this as being a way in which the community is drawn together and understand the work of the Parish Council. Cllr Sherman described it as a waste of money as most copies will be just thrown in the bin. Cllr Morrey spoke in support of the motion saying that the Christmas issue is likely to be read. The Clerk was asked to consider Lavenham Press for this printing work.

Motion: Council works with the publishers of Lavenham Life to ensure that every household in Lavenham receives a free copy of Lavenham Life together with a Parish Council newsletter at a maximum cost of £1,700. Section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972 'Publicity' gives the Parish Council the power to provide information about matters concerning local government.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta

Seconded: Cllr Bourne

Decision: Approved. Cllrs Sherman, Robinson, Lamont, Domoney voted against. Cllr Mawford abstained.



12. Lorry Signage

The Clerk explained that as per the motion passed at the meeting held on 5th September 2024 he had asked Suffolk Highways for a quote for only one of the proposed signs i.e. the large sign on the A134 at the Cockfield junction. That quote is £8,798.

Cllr Robinson supported the sign but expressed disappointment at the price quoted. Cllr Mitchell agreed but pointed out that Highways were the only supplier. Cllr Lamont pointed that the sign would need significant foundations.

Cllrs Sherman and Robinson emphasised that signs before the village is reached are important.

The Chair reminded Councillors that Council has asked Suffolk to consider funding signs on the Hadleigh side of Lavenham and to not fund this sign would undermine that initiative.

Motion: that the Parish Council accepts the quote for a replacement sign at a cost of £8,797.95 plus VAT to be paid for by Neighbourhood CIL funds using Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, section 72 which permits Parish Councils the 'Power to provide traffic signs and other notices'

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta

Seconded: Cllr Falconer

Decision: Approved unanimously

13. Second Melford Rd Speed Indicator Device

The Clerk read his report to the meeting.

Motion: that the Clerk order a Messagemaker device at a cost of £3,500 plus VAT using the power under Section 274A Highways Act 1980. Neighbourhood CIL will be used to fund this.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta

Seconded: Cllr Lamont

Decision: Approved unanimously

13. First Meadow Playground Equipment

The Clerk explained that the Contractor has advised that the repair works to the multi play unit and the swings for £2,366 and £965 totalling £3,331 should be done immediately saying that there is a lot of rust on the equipment and if possible, it would be good to get it protected before the winter. The Contractor has advised that the re-surfacing work items of £5,600 and £3,765 totalling £9,365 could be delayed until Spring 2025. He says that surfacing materials have improved and a 'wet pour' is used rather than the tiles which are damaged by expanding in the summer sun and then contracting in the winter and the winter frosts. Should Council wish the work could be done over winter.

Cllr Robinson advised that the wet pour should be delayed until Spring.

Motion: that the Clerk instruct the contractor to carry out both works at a cost of £12,696, the repair works to be done as soon as possible and the resurfacing work in Spring 2025 using the powers referred to in Appendix A with Neighbourhood CIL used to fund this.

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell

Seconded: Cllr Mawford

Decision: Approved unanimously

Date of next meeting

Thursday 5th December 2024 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. The Meeting closed at 10.03pm.

Janice Muckian
5/12/24