

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 8th January 2026, commencing at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, January 2026 Meeting Pack.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne (from 7.06pm), Frank Domoney, Lizzie Falconer, Iain Lamont, Roy Mawford, Irene Mitchell, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Six 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. 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 Cllr Ranzetta had sent her apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reported that no Cllrs had declared any interests. He asked whether any Cllrs had interests or updates to their interests that they wished to declare. None were declared.

3. Requests for Dispensations

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

4. Approval of Minutes

To approve as accurate minutes of the December 4th 2025 meeting of the Council

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Falconer **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Domoney and Sherman abstained. Neither had been present at the meeting.

5. Public Participation Session

No Member of the Public wished to speak.

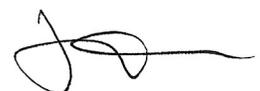
6. Chair's Announcements

Election of Ms Jack Norman:

The Chair informed Cllrs that Ms Jack Norman had been elected, unopposed, to the Parish Council vacancy. She welcomed Ms Norman to Council explaining to Cllrs that since the scheduled date of the election was January 22nd Ms Norman will join Council at the February meeting. Consequent of the unopposed election Council will not incur the costs of sending Poll Cards to all electors or the costs of an opposed election.

Bus funding:

Suffolk has been awarded £27million for the funding of bus services from the Local Authority Bus Grant. This can be used for routes, ticketing or improved infrastructure such as bus stops and shelters. Communities are invited to submit online "bids" via the Suffolk on Board website. The Chair suggested that thought needs to be given to what improved or additional facilities would best serve the residents and businesses of Lavenham.



Sustainable travel:

There is also £12million available across the County to promote sustainable travel, these monies coming from Active Travel England. Such funding has previously been used in the County to improve routes for pedestrians and cyclists, for example road crossings. The Chair suggested that some thought be given to this so that a bid can be submitted.

The Clerk explained that the Closing Dates were not imminent. In answer to a question from Cllr Domoney the Clerk said that he was investigating the possibility of moving the pedestrian gate at the corner with Lower Rd to a safer location 50 metres or so along Brent Eleigh Rd. He would investigate whether Sustainable Travel funding could be applied for in respect of this project.

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

District Cllr Clover presented his and District Cllr Maybury's report:

- a) He deplored the recent decision by Babergh Cabinet to increase car parking charges by 20% saying that when Babergh introduced car parking charges they had undertaken not to increase them for two years. He questioned the accuracy of Babergh Budget Forecasts. The decision may be called in by the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee..
- b) He expressed concern with respect to the effects of these charges on town and village centres saying that, of the retailers they have spoken to, over 70% have said their sales are down.
- c) He told Cllrs that four fully funded training courses are available to help local organisations strengthen and build for the future. Presented by Community Action Suffolk, the courses will take place in January and February and will cover such subjects as understanding trustee roles and responsibilities, essentials for launching a charity and volunteer leadership. Further details are on the Community Action Suffolk website.
- d) He explained that grants available to improve the insulation of homes where the resident is on low income, benefits or in certain postcode areas. Available to private homeowners or landlords with an EPC of D or below. SCC have a fund of £1.38million which has to be allocated by March 2026. Visit: www.warmhomessuffolk.org or call 03456 037 686
- e) Anglian Water's thriving communities fund supports projects that improve the water environment and bring real social benefits to local communities. Applications for grants of between £10k and £100k can be applied for including projects to reduce flood risk. £5.8million is available with the aim of distributing £1.5million in the first year. Further information is on the Anglian Water website.
- f) Unity healthcare which serves Lavenham, Long Melford and Haverhill has now merged with Glemsford surgery. It is hoped that this will increase patient services and reduce wait times.
- g) Cllr Clover has this week spoken to Konnect bus services re the local services that they provide with a view to understanding residents needs. He requested that if anyone has any points they wish to raise that they contact him.

The Clerk presented County Cllr Lindsays report explaining that Cllr Lindsay had also informed Cllrs of the Bus and Sustainable Travel Funding and the home insulation grants.

Cllr Lindsay had also written in his report (which together with the District Cllrs Report is on the PC website) that an upcoming SCC Meeting will consider delaying the SCC elections due in 2026 and of the availability of Winter Warmth packs for vulnerable residents.

Cllr Lindsay had advised that issues remain with respect to Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. Whilst progress has been made to clear the backlog of EHCPs and improve the waiting times to produce them and review them annually, many families had not yet felt the benefit of improvements that the Council and health partners were trying to embed. Some issues, like the shortage of speech and language therapists, were a national issue rather than specific to Suffolk. The government's Schools white paper, which is expected to include an overhaul of the SEND system nationally, is expected soon in 2026.

8. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan Group: Report by The Chair of the Group

He apologised for his non-attendance the previous month which had been due to health issues. He tabled the brief report from his group included in the Working Papers.



He told Cllrs that following the December meeting of Council the retained consultant had amended the draft Residents Survey Questionnaire. This revised Questionnaire had been sent to the Clerk on 31st December for inclusion in the January Agenda. He had unfortunately not noticed that the Clerk's reply deferred discussion of this Survey until the February meeting of Council and so another month had been lost. He told Cllrs that the Questionnaire will be sent to Cllrs tomorrow and that their urgent attention to it would be much appreciated. He noted that Long Melford is needing to consider revising its Neighbourhood Plan despite it being less than four years old. He described that Melford Plan as now being 'unfit for purpose'.

A subgroup of the Neighbourhood Plan Group is reviewing the SCC Green Spaces paper and how it relates to Lavenham's settlement boundary, biodiversity, Rights of Way and green spaces maps. Supporting documents including mapping tools have been provided by BMSDC and SCC. These overlaying maps will then be available to be incorporated in the revised NP.

The Group thanked the Clerk for forwarding to the Group, as requested by the Group, excerpts of the minutes of the last three years PC Meetings concerning the LNP.

The Clerk responded that most significantly the Clerk and Chair of the LNP Group had now agreed a plan to distribute the draft Questionnaire and request Cllrs immediate attention to it with Cllrs free of the distractions of other papers. He thanked the Chair of the LNP Group for this.

The Clerk reminded the Group Chair that he and the Group Chair had agreed on the telephone and in writing on December 19th that the 'aim is to share the draft Questionnaire (with the aim that this is the final draft) with Councillors in January with sign off at the February meeting of Council'. All his actions subsequent had been consistent with that agreement. Cllr Sherman said that he had been in hospital at the time. The Clerk acknowledged that, at that time, Cllr Sherman had been unwell.

Cllr Mawford noted that Cllr Sherman had an electronic copy of his spoken report, and asked if this could be shared, so that people not present could read it, and it would be available for future reference. Sherman said that he would see if he was able to forward his paper to Cllrs.

9. Planning Register

The Clerk told Cllrs that the decisions concerning Teazle Cottage and 9 Trinity Gild are in accordance with PC recommendations.

The proposed change of use of Toll Cottage had been refused by the Planning Inspector. The reasoning the same as that as of the PC recommendation to refuse and the Babergh refusal.

Concerning 24 The Paddocks Planning Permission had been granted by Babergh contrary to the recommendations of Cllrs. He had circulated the Babergh reasoning to Cllrs which was essentially that, despite being contrary to Policy SP03, in the round the proposed development is considered, by Babergh, to comply with the Development Plan as a whole with the design not resulting in material harm to the landscape. The proposal had been considered, by Babergh, to be less damaging than the proposed development at 15 The Paddocks concerning which permission had been denied.

Babergh had followed the advice of their Heritage officer and denied Planning Permission for the proposed replacement gates at The Hall on Hall Road. Cllrs had recommended approval of that application.

10. Planning Applications

DC/25/05383 73 Church St. Listed Building Consent for addition of sanitary accommodation to existing ground floor cupboard and reconfiguration of first floor layout.

Cllr Lamont explained that the property is Grade II listed and in the Conservation Area and that the Planning Group considered that the changes are limited to changing stud walling and the addition of toilets and showers which do not affect the heritage elements of the building.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/05383.

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



DC/25/05310 Land west of Sudbury Rd. Works to Gas Terminal including new provision of a 3 metre high security fence with security cameras to protect this gas facility located on the FD05 pipeline, which has been identified as critical infrastructure to the integrity of the United Kingdom's energy supply.

Cllr Lamont explained that the site is located outside of the settlement boundary within the Countryside and well screened by existing vegetation.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/05310.

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

DC/25/05313 Anchor House, 27 Prentice St., Listed Building Consent for Roof Repairs.

Cllr Lamont explained that the property is Grade II listed and in the Conservation Area and that the application is to undertake roof repairs to the property in like for like materials.

He explained that this application was previously submitted, earlier this year, as DC/24/05588 with the Description "*Application for listed building consent to re-roof 27 Prentice Street, Lavenham*". The PC had recommended approval. However, DC/24/05588 had been withdrawn.

He said that the new application drawings and reports appear to be the same versions as submitted in DC/24/05588. However, this application is for roof repairs, rather than re-roofing, but the purpose of the works is the same - to ensure the property remains watertight and is a good state of repair, without change to the building layout.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/05313.

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

DC/25/05558 5 Prentice St. Notification of works to tree in a Conservation Area - Quince tree: prune and reduce volume by 25% Apple tree: prune and reduce volume by 25%

Cllr Lamont explained that this application had been received too late to be discussed by the Planning Group and that obtaining an extension of time until the February meeting of Council was not possible.

The trees are not subject to Tree Preservation Orders but are in the Conservation Area. The applicant has stated that 'both trees have not been pruned for several years, and as result have lost shape and there are crossing branches'. No arborist report has been provided.

Motion: that the Parish Council recommends approval of Application DC/25/05558.

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

Cllr Sherman reported that the Little Brook (Lower Rd) building works which had not been permitted had been removed.

11. Report concerning Babergh Car Parking Charges

The Clerk explained that the proposed increase in charges is 20%. Babergh Officers had confirmed that there are no proposed changes to the concessions negotiated by the Parish Council for users of Community facilities.

Following the debates and concerns about possibly reduced footfall and spend Babergh had commissioned a report from the University of Suffolk and obtained spend data from Lloyds Banking Group.

The report said that there was a statistically significant reduction in spend in Lavenham and attributed this to hospitality closures.

The report commented that there are relatively few studies exploring the relationship between parking charges, footfall, dwell time and spend in the UK. It asserted that there is no robust evidence to support parking cost as being a decisive factor in footfall or dwell time saying that instead hotels, pedestrianisation, overall diversity and quality of the High Street are the most important factors.



The spend data, obtained from the Lloyds Banking Group, showed a reduction in credit and debit card spend in Lavenham of 9% in the first nine months of 2025 as compared to 2024. The reductions in Hotel and Restaurant spend are 27% and 24% respectively. Supermarket spend is down by 3%. Spend is up in all other categories. The Clerk commented that the closure of The Angel would contribute to these numbers.

Cllr Mitchell said that Lloyds only have 25% of the market and that many users of the hotels such as The Swan do not use public car parks. She said that a causal link between car park charges and the reduced spend in hotels and restaurants is not clear commenting that nationally spend in hotels and restaurants is depressed.

Cllr Bourne said that customers in her shop complain about car parking charges and that some coaches no longer visit Lavenham. Cllr Sherman said that, in his opinion, a £10 charge by coach, spread across the number of passengers, would not significantly reduce the number of coaches.

12. Motion to increase Burial Fees

The Clerk explained that the PC has for many years had a policy to increase fees by more than inflation each year in order to reduce the differences with those charged by Long Melford. The increase in each of the last three years has been 10%. However, in most situations, Lavenham fees remain substantially lower than those charged by Melford.

Additionally, the forecast for Burial Income for 2026/27 is £6,300. The maintenance costs of the cemetery and church are over £10,000 per annum excluding tree and box bush maintenance costs.

He displayed a table comparing Lavenham charges to those in Melford and Clare.

Cllr Sherman said that the increase should be 30% to reduce the burden on Council Tax payers and to reduce the Councils deficit. He recommended an increase of 30% for the following year. Cllr Falconer commented that having recently gone through the burial process concerning her father that she had been surprised by the relatively inexpensive costs in Lavenham. In answer to Councillors questions the Clerk explained that the cemetery had further capacity for some years.

Motion to amend the Motion so that it reads 'Council is asked to approve 30% increase in all fees'.

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

Amended Motion: Council is asked to approve 30% increase in all fees

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

13. Motion to reduce cleaning frequency of the Public Toilets

The Clerk explained that the previous meeting of Council had instructed him, by the end of March, to bring forward proposals to reduce the cost of running the Public Toilets and to introduce charges. This motion was in respect of the first of those two instructions.

He told Councillors that the annual donation income is approximately £2,500 reduced from £18,000 received before the introduction, by Babergh, of car parking charges. The toilets cost £15,000 per annum to run with the largest cost being the daily cleaning cost of approximately £10,000 per annum. Other significant costs are Water and Electricity bills, Business Rates and the provision of sanitary bins.

He had approached the Contractor who had offered reduced costs for cleaning the facilities either twice, three times or four times a week.

He recommended that Council reduces the cleaning frequency to three days per week for two months i.e. Monday January 19th to Thursday March 19th (Good Friday is Friday April 3rd) saving £755.00.

He told Cllrs that very few complaints are received concerning the toilets, the most frequent complaint, by far, concerns toilet paper running out. Cllr Lamont recommended Council install an additional toilet dispenser in each toilet. The Clerk agreed to this.

Cllr Robinson asked if the Contractor would still do extra cleaning when required. The Clerk replied that emergency cleaning visits were not commissioned and that the Contractor had long accepted that some days more cleaning would be required than on other days.

Motion: Council reduces the cleaning frequency to three days per week for two months i.e. Monday January 19th to Thursday March 19th (Good Friday is Friday April 3rd) saving £755.00.

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

14. Motion concerning annual payrise due to the Clerk

The Chair explained that the pay of Local Government Staff is agreed between the Employers and the relevant Trades Unions. That payrise, effective 1st April 2025, was agreed as a 3.2% increase.

Additionally, the Clerk had met with Cllrs Muckian and Ranzetta on December 17th 2025. An annual appraisal had been conducted. This appraisal had been intended to be conducted in June 2025 but was unable to be held because of the ill-health of Vice-Chair Morrey. This appraisal was therefore carried out as soon as possible after the election of Cllr Ranzetta as Vice-Chair.

The Chair and the Vice-Chair have informed the Clerk that, after review, his service has been determined to be satisfactory.

The Clerks Contract of Employment states that subject to satisfactory service, Spinal Pont 26 will be payable from the 1st anniversary of your appointment and Spinal Point 27 will be payable from the 2nd anniversary. On attainment of CiLCA SCP 28 will be paid from the date of qualification'.

The Clerk is working towards the CiLCA qualification but due to changes in the syllabus and the related suspension of the training programmes qualification is now estimated to be in 2027.

The Chair explained that this salary increase (from £36,124 to £38,220) was a contractual obligation.

Motion: Council acknowledges and fulfils its legal obligations to increase the Clerk's salary to Spinal Column Point 27 with effect from April 1st 2025 and the Chair is instructed to inform the payroll bureau.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell **Decision:** Approved. Cllr Robinson voted against. Cllr Sherman abstained. Cllr Domoney was briefly absent from the room.

15. Motion concerning Tree Survey

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that, as detailed in the Working Papers, at the November Meeting of Council, the Clerk had agreed to report the availability of Grants and obtain further quotes for Tree Surveys.

The Clerk reported that both County and District Councillors have reported that no grants are available from their organisations. The District Councillors have offered approaching £1,000 from their locality funds. With respect to Government schemes none appear to be appropriate to this Council.

With respect to Tree Surveys six quotes had been obtained with the preferred Quote being from Contractor B at a cost of £2,495. Four of the quotes had been similar and three of the quotes had been very similar at around £2,500. The cheaper quotes are for reduced scope.

Cllr Robinson asked if all the emergency works had been done and questioned the sequencing of the survey and the emergency works. The Clerk explained that the emergency work was partly done and would be completely shortly.

The Clerk replied that it was unlikely that the Survey would be carried out before the remaining emergency work but should it be that was not a significant issue as the number of the trees requiring emergency work was only a very small proportion of the total number of trees to be surveyed.

Cllr Robinson said that in his opinion it was a lot of money and the survey should not be commissioned.

Cllr Domoney expressed surprise that a database of trees Council is responsible for did not exist. The Chair replied that the resolution of this concern was the objective of this exercise. He recommended the use of image analysis, the Chair replied that this motion was for the commissioning of an Expert and mapping of the trees.



Cllr Mitchell asked the Clerk to explain why he preferred Option B. The Clerk replied that they had been recommended by the Arborist reducing potential for future criticism of the quality of the survey and that the Supplier appeared to be competent and well established and so likely to be able to renew the survey in ten years' time and answer any future questions Council might have.

Motion: Council is asked to select Supplier B.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Falconer **Decision:** Approved. Cllr Robinson voted against.

16. Motion to approve new IT policy

The Clerk explained that an IT policy is required by the new Assertion 10 in the 2025 Practitioners Guide for Parish and Town Councils and without such a policy the PC will fail its annual audit. The NALC Template had been used and modified to suit the PC.

The effects of the policy were:

On Staff: Makes it clear that all Council owned Equipment must be properly looked after and used in a professional manner and that the Employer enjoys the standard rights to ensure that Computer equipment provided by it is used in an appropriate manner. On Councillors: None beyond best practice already made clear to Councillors or is not generally accepted appropriate use of IT equipment.

Cllr Domoney described the draft policy as an outrage questioning whether it was necessary for 'Parish Meetings'. The Chair replied that Lavenham was not a 'Parish Meeting', Lavenham has a Parish Council and so the policy was required.

Cllr Domoney said that the document was appropriate only for an organisation with Councillors and Employees and that he was confused by the language in the document. He considered the document to be poorly drafted and full of holes and exclusions. He was concerned by the proposal to monitor his private emails and have access to his own home IT equipment. This he said would require a warrant.

The Chair replied that whilst many of these requirements are written with larger Councils in mind this Council does have Councillors and Employees and that the NALC template had been used. She emphasised that there would be no intrusion into their private emails and IT equipment. She explained that Council had no access to privately owned equipment and could only (with controls in place) access Councillors .gov email accounts.

Cllr Domoney complained that he had only had a week to read the document and asked for the motion to be deferred pending expert review.

Cllr Sherman asked if we already had such a policy. The Chair replied that the Social Media and Communications policies somewhat overlap the IT policy but the PC does not have an IT policy. He added that, in his opinion, the person most effected by the policy was the Clerk, to bring the conversation to a close he wished to propose the motion. Cllr Mitchell said that she wished to second the motion.

Cllr Domoney said that the policy contained no mentions of Artificial Intelligence and Deep Fakes concluding that it is out of date and unusable.

Motion: Council is asked to approve the proposed IT Policy in Appendix A

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

17. Motions concerning Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr Mawford said that the PC has many interactions with Babergh DC and Suffolk CC and so this reorganisation is significant. He described the current division of responsibilities between District Councils and the County Council as perhaps not ideal and open to criticism,

He explained that the Government had determined that there was going to be a Unitary Structure and that each side of the debate had different opinions concerning the cost savings possible. Should there be one Unitary Council the number of Cllrs would be very significantly reduced, that reduction would be less if there are three unitaries. It is probable that Council Tax will be lowest should there be only one Unitary. He said that he preferred the three Unitary Council option.

Cllr Mitchell described the one Unitary Council proposal as 'Ipswich centric' and that the three Unitary Councils proposal with a Unitary Council based in Bury St Edmunds aligned with Lavenham residents daily lives. She described the performance of Suffolk County Council as generally, from a Lavenham point of view as 'not good' expressing concern that those who advocate for a single Unitary Council had made it clear that a reduction in Council Tax was their immediate priority and that this would inevitably lead to a reduction in services and the transfer of further responsibilities and costs to the PC.

Motion: The Parish Council wishes to take part in the Suffolk LGR consultation exercise.

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

Motion: The 'Three Councils for Suffolk' (TCFS) proposal is supported. The answers to consultation questions set out in Appendix D are submitted as part of this response.

Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Mitchell **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Bourne, Falconer, Mawford, Mitchell and Muckian voted in favour. Cllrs Domoney, Lamont, Robinson and Sherman voted against.

18. Motion concerning Emergency Planning

Cllr Domoney began by saying that the previous day the United States of America had committed an Act of War, with British participation, on a Russian flagged ship on the high seas.

He has been considering how the PC should react to a war between the UK and Russia. He referred to a recent speech by the Air Marshal in which he had said that "A new era for defence doesn't just mean our military and government stepping up – as we are – it means our whole nation stepping up".

Cllr Domoney had been talking with the Clerk and Suffolk CC and had discovered such matters as the end of Lavenham Responders. He had also been considering what would happen in Lavenham, should the expected opening to a war occur, of an Electromagnetic Pulse taking out the electricity supply in the whole of East Anglia. The literature suggests that the electricity outage could be for fourteen days.

He said that in such a circumstance Lavenham would be on its own and could not depend on help arriving from Bury St Edmunds etc. He recommended households have a battery driven lantern and, to reduce fire risk, not use candles. He warned that water pumps would not work without electricity. He said that residents need to be given extra advice and extra support such as gas-fired soup kitchens.

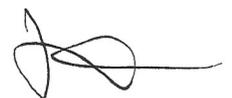
Council, he said, needs to be prepared for serious shooting to begin within the next year. He proposed the motion: 'The Parish Council looks favourably on work being done by the War Planning Group to inform citizens on appropriate measures to take as part of prudent planning. Membership of the group is by invitation only in order to focus efforts from knowledgeable and trained people and draw on lessons from the fighting in Eastern Europe. In particular we want to investigate the revival of the First Responders. Requests for funding of appropriate measures will be at the discretion of the Clerk "

Cllr Mitchell said that her view was when the Government requires PC to participate in Home Defence they will inform the PC. She said that the people of Lavenham will feel reassured that Cllr Domoney and former Cllr Posner are monitoring risks to the public. She said she shared Cllr Domoney's concerns about the demise of the Lavenham First Responders in 2024 saying that the PC might consider how to support its re-establishment. She said that she did not feel comfortable with the name 'War Planning Group' with membership of the Group by invitation only without PC oversight. She expressed surprise concerning why the motion had been on the Agenda, Cllr Domoney said that it had been at the suggestion of the Clerk, the Clerk replied that he had not suggested this but had made Cllr Domoney fully aware of his right to propose a motion.

Cllr Mawford expressed support for the idea of revitalising the Lavenham First responders but expressed concern about Secret Societies saying that they remind him of the Masons. He said that he considers the Masons 'a very uncomfortable group of people' and said that he 'would not in any way be prepared to support a body that had those sorts of characteristics'. Cllr Domoney expressed astonishment concerning Cllr Mawford's words'

Cllr Domoney proposed the motion, it was not seconded.

The Clerk suggested a motion to extend the meeting for 5 minutes so that all agenda items could be decided at this meeting rather than deferred to next month. **Proposed** Cllr Mitchell **Seconded** Cllr Mawford **Approved**. Cllrs Domoney and Robinson voted against.



19. Motion to appoint Trustees to the Lavenham Exhibition Endowment

The Clerk referred to the Working Paper explaining the work of the Lavenham Endowment Fund and the recommendation by the Clerk of that Group that the PC appoints Mr Jeremy Robinson and Mr Robert Norman to be Trustees.

Motion: Council appoints Mr Jeremy Robinson and Mr Robert Norman as Trustees to the Lavenham Exhibition Endowment.

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

20. Clerks ReportPublic Realm:

The urgent safety work on the trees approved last month has been ordered and partly done. It is expected that the remainder to be done very shortly.

At least one van was broken into in the Water St car park, it was reported to the Clerk that four of the nine lights were not working. The PC retained electrician had visited and found that some of the sensors had been moved or fallen out of position and so were not being activated. This has now been fixed.

The First Meadow tap has developed a leak, probably frost damage, and was pouring water out over the grass just inside the gate. The valve has been turned off and the tap will be fixed when the weather improves.

A number of residents had dumped their Christmas Trees in the Market Place near the big tree supplied by the Christmas Event Group. The Clerk thanked that Group for taking those trees away with the big tree. He had been advised that all the trees will shortly be food for goats.

Now that the Christmas break has passed he will very shortly be contacting builders to visit The Hub and view the identified issues.

The draft leases for the toilets are ready for signature and will be signed when Babergh has completed, at its cost, an electrical check.

The Clerk has reported about ten pot holes to Suffolk Highways.

Accounts:

Following Councillors decision to charge the LNP Costs to NCIL LNP costs have been removed from the Income and Expenditure Account.

The November Accounts contain only one significant variance to the reforecast and it is a timing variance. The urgent tree work was included in the November forecast but will be done in December and January.

The draft December Accounts contain two significant variances, still some tree work variance as the remaining work will be done in January and £2,000 or so because the election was uncontested. Additionally, the PC will not incur the costs of poll cards but that cost had not been included in the forecast.

Further to the motion passed last month the Clerk has obtained advice from SALC that Council can legally charge for use of the toilets and also would not have to charge VAT and can continue to recover its VAT. He shall report to Council shortly as to what might be possible.

Cllr Robinson asked if any of the Christmas Event money advanced had been recovered. The Clerk replied that it had not but he understood from the Event organisers that it would shortly be repaid.

Motions: To approve Accounts and Receipts and Payments for month ending 30th November 2025

Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded:** Cllr Lamont **Decisions:** Approved unanimously

Meeting ended 9.33pm Date of next meeting – Thursday 5th February 2026 7pm

j muckian

 5/2/26