



02 (1) 24 125

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 1st February 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, February 2024 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Janice Muckian. Cllrs: Alison Bourne, Iain Lamont, Mary Morrey, Jane Ranzetta and Chris Robinson. Five members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair began by welcoming everyone and introduced herself.

1. Apologies and approval of absences

Apologies received from Cllrs Chick, Falconer and Mitchell, the Clerk reported that these absences had been explained. Cllr Domoney had not responded to the invitation to the Meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest had been received.

3. Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk reported that none had been received other than those previously reported.

The Clerk added that he was aware that a Member of the Public is intending to speak in Public Time concerning the proposed Lavenham Wellness Centre. He explained that Cllr Robinson has declared an interest in this project and had been, when he joined Council, obtained a dispensation to speak and vote on matters relating, in general, to the Brent Eleigh Rd but not relating to this property.

4. To approve as accurate minutes of the 11th January 2024 meeting of the Council

The Chair introduced the minutes emphasising that these had been on the Parish Council website for two weeks. The Clerk added that he had received no questions concerning the accuracy of the minutes.

Motion: to approve as accurate the minutes of the 11th January 2024 meeting of Council.

Proposed: Cllr Muckian

Seconded: Cllr Morrey

Decision: The minutes of the 11th January 2024 meeting of the Council were approved as accurate with no votes against.

5. Public participation session

The Chair began by welcoming all observers to the meeting of Council 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 the 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 who wish to ask a question, or make a statement, have 3 minutes. She explained that if a question cannot be answered tonight Members of the Public should inform the Clerk of their email address and will receive a written response within 28 days.

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.

The Chair asked who would like to speak, four members of the public raised their hands.

A Member of the Public advised that the 20mph scheme should be abandoned explaining that in his opinion, since the Parish Councils decisions in 2016 and 2021, circumstances have dramatically changed. The finances of Central and Local Government have alarmingly deteriorated. Russia, he said, had invaded Ukraine with the express purpose of restoring the boundaries of the old Russian empire and is now committing 40% of its industry to the war building another 100 tanks for every 40 tanks destroyed. The UK and others he argued must now dramatically increase their defence expenditure to meet the Russian threat. Councillors he said have expressed doubts as to how enforcement will be achieved as this depends on the Police committing scarce resources which he said should be used catching criminals rather than speeding drivers. Pedestrians he added should remember the Green Cross Code. He concluded by advocating that the Parish Council cancel the 20mph scheme, return the money to Highways and that this might encourage other Parish Councils to do the same. He quoted John Maynard Keynes 'when the facts change I change my mind, what do you do?'

A Member of the Public spoke concerning the Lavenham Wellness Centre beginning by reporting that the original planning application has been refused by Babergh District Council. She reported that Babergh Council had not made any mention in the pre-app of any flooding risk. She explained that the land is on the approach to Lavenham and, in her opinion, is an eyesore and that due to the challenges with the economy there is reduced demand for livery services but a need to improve wellness and health services.

Babergh Council has advised her that the application can be resubmitted and so she will be submitting a revised application for a smaller development only on flood zone 1 with flood mitigations as per the previous application. There will she said be no competition to community services and the build will be of similar proportions to the neighbouring site which is also outside the settlement boundary.

She requested that the Parish Council recognise that there is a need for such a facility as evidenced by the numbers in the Lavenham Wellness Centre Facebook group and the supports for the previous application asking that since Lavenham is a tourist hotspot and dependent on income from tourism the Parish Council recognise that supports outside of Lavenham are also valid. This need she said supports and is aligned to the LNP – Tourism and Leisure that supports consideration of development outside the settlement boundary.

She requested that the Parish Council made any further decision only on the relevant policies, requirements and facts.

She concluded by advising that she is looking at alternative ways to help with the overall flooding in Lower Road and asking if the Parish Council is interested in exploring this with her. She would consider sacrificing 4 acres of existing flood plain at the bottom of her land for flood compensation storage, which could take the pressure of Lower Road. She asked the Parish Council to advise her if there were any requirements it would like to see.

The Chair responded that the Parish Council acknowledges that there were expressions of support from both within and outside Lavenham for the original application and that any future submission will be evaluated by the Parish Council in accordance with the legal framework noting that it is Babergh District Council who are the Local Planning Authority. She acknowledged the Member of the Public's words concerning flooding and said that the Parish Council looked forward to receiving the application.

A Member of the Public commented that one of the signs advising lorries that they cannot enter Water St is often obscured by buses and other vehicles parked at the bus stop and that the lorry signage is generally poor.

A Member of the Public drew the attention to the water leaks and the slow progress of Anglia Water's repairs asking whether they would fix all the damage to the highway these leaks had caused. The Clerk replied that he shared concerns that Anglia Water would just repair the tarmac above the leak and not repair all the damage and that he would report any such damage to Highways.



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6. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

Received:

District Councillor Clover reported that despite having recently met with Council Officers he still had not had answers to all his questions concerning the current costs and revenues of the car parks and that in his opinion there could not be a decision whether to introduce charges without the figures. He added that Babergh had revised its likely financial outturn for 2023/24 from a deficit of £1.8million to a deficit of £0.8million, the key movement apparently being an updated bad debt provision. The petition he reported now has 8,300 signatures,

District Cllr Maybury added that a survey will shortly be distributed by Babergh Council. The Chair replied that this had been received this morning.

District Cllr Maybury reported that Babergh Council are intending to be in Meadow Close on August 21st as part of the 'Meet the Residents' scheme to do odd jobs in the village, she asked if anyone had requests they forward them to her.

County Cllr Lindsay congratulated the Parish Council on its success seeking Suffolk CC support for improvement to the 753 Bus Service adding that Monks Eleigh PC's request for a dial-a-ride minibus that would take people in the villages of Cosford to Lavenham and Hadleigh to join backbone routes between Bury and Sudbury and Hadleigh and Sudbury had also been approved. The idea is that the service will be bookable online rather than reliant on people answering the 'phone. The County Council will open talks with GoStart and Hadleigh Community Transport about how and whether they can run it.

County Cllr Lindsay reported that County Budget proposes £64 million budget cuts over 2 years, the complete axing of £535k funding for arts and museums had, he said, attracted the headlines and so the changes have been partly reversed. The biggest cuts are in Adult and Community Services where they are proposing cutting £28m next year. The County is also cutting all funding for skills development and apprenticeship programmes. It warns that this means it is likely that the number of young people in Suffolk not in education, employment or training will rise as a result. The programme to decarbonise and retrofit school buildings to meet zero carbon targets is being stopped from the end of this financial year. £3.57 million will have been spent on this in the current year.

7. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair reported that:

- a) Council would like to thank all of those who responded in support of the Council's application for improved local bus services. The start of the Public Consultation on the 20mph zone is awaited, the timing is in the hands of the County Council. The PC has continued to press the County Council on the number of signs required for both aesthetic and cost reasons. SCC have an agreement with Suffolk Police that 30 cm diameter signs are placed at maximum 300 metre spacings, with a clear visibility distance of 20m. We have queried this again and have received no response to date. She encouraged everyone to participate in the Public Consultation.
- b) Babergh DC has now sent the Council a survey to complete. Little Waldingfield has copied to the Council its letter to Babergh opposing car park charges which highlights that they have no facilities in their village and only two buses a week.
- c) The PC has arranged for a small number of Councillors to meet with the Great Waldingfield Speedwatch team on Monday February 12th as an information gathering exercise.
- d) The Babergh Council CIL team has confirmed that 100% of the costs of the Green Willows footpath can be funded as long as the bid comes from Suffolk Highways. This will however have to wait for the May 2024 CIL round.
- e) Suffolk County Council has informed us that they would like to proceed with the suggested improvements to the 753 Bus service. Our three separate requests will be discussed with Chambers to see whether all are achievable. They write that the addition of Evening and Sunday journeys and potential diversion via the Health Centre should be possible within the current vehicle resource available to Chambers but that the duplicate bus at school times will require another bus and driver recruitment. We will keep you updated with progress.

- f) Gigaclear: We have no further information since the last meeting when we informed all of the Gigaclear plan for communicating with the public.
- g) Lower Rd flood signs volunteers, despite distributing invitations to over 30 householders so far only 2 volunteers and 1 person who was interested but not prepared to do the training. Idea not possible as insufficient volunteers to properly implement. Community response would be too dependent on a very small number of individuals.
- h) A Member of the Public had asked whether the Parish Council could commission a study by professional consultants concerning steps which could be taken to reduce the flood risk in Lavenham. The legal answer is that Council could potentially spend a maximum of £10,000 or so on such a project if voted for by Councillors. It needs to be remembered that Council has no legal obligations in this area and any proposals contained in that report could be ignored by the bodies which do have legal responsibilities. The Member of the Public has been informed of the legal position and may approach Councillors to discuss this.
- i) Council will be reviewing its Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Standing Financial Regulations, Risk Register, Scheme of Delegation and Authority to Commit Resources at its March meeting. The Clerk will be circulating any proposed changes to Councillors for their review prior to the meeting. She encouraged Councillors to read these in advance.
- j) LNP update. The Council made the representations contained in the Working Papers. Council will shortly respond, via the delegated authority passed at the last meeting, to the representations made by others as part of the Focused Consultation. The responses submitted will be detailed at the March meeting of Council.
- k) Jane Bellward Award. Information and nomination forms are now available on the Parish Council website. Paper copies and Posters will shortly be made available. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Thursday April 18th.

8. To receive a report concerning sites for Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)

The Clerk presented the Working Paper issued with the Agenda explaining that of the four proposed sites two were not possible under the rules issued by Suffolk County Council. The effect of the rules is that no SID post can be erected west of Green Willows. The Clerk invited Councillors to consider a new SID post either between Peek Close and Green Willows facing outwards and/or opposite the existing SID post facing inwards.

Cllr Ranzetta asked if signs have to be on the left side of the road. The Clerk responded that the guidance is 'the SID should ideally be sited on the near side of the road'.

Cllr Ranzetta asked if SIDs can be moved between posts, the Clerk confirmed that they can be moved and can be moved by the Parish Council.

The Clerk suggested various possible actions:

- a) Communicate this note widely to explain possible locations 3 and 4 and the reasons why locations 1 and 2 would not be approved.
- b) Obtain support from residents adjacent to sites 3 and/or 4.
- c) Pass resolution authorising application for SID post(s).
- d) Optional step: pass resolution authorising purchase of an additional SID.
- e) Apply to Suffolk Highways, enclosing payment, with respect to locations 3 and/or 4
- f) After SID post(s) installed purchase and install SID

Cllr Lamont responded that he saw this as recognising community concerns. Cllr Ranzetta echoed these thoughts. Cllr Muckian said that she saw the next step as obtaining residents support and thinking about how that might be done. Cllr Lamont questioned whether site 3 is the site of the proposed new pavement.

The Clerk was asked to explain the rationale to residents and seek their support. The Clerk agreed to draft a communication and share this with the Chair and Vice-Chair.



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9. To receive a report concerning Lorry Management and Water St signage

Cllr Lamont reported that James Cartlidge MP had responded extremely positively to a letter from the Parish Council and had suggested that he 'host a multi-agency meeting in the New Year, to include the Parish Council, Babergh and County Councillors, Suffolk Constabulary and local businesses to discuss the issues faced, and most importantly possible solutions' A date is being agreed.

Cllr Lamont agreed that the signage could be improved reporting that this had been previously discussed by Council and that the original scheme for Water Street included advanced signage.

He displayed the suggested signing to Councillors and explained that he had written to Suffolk County Council and asked the Clerk to write to the Council (with copy to County Councillor Lindsay) and request a response.

He added that he had also discussed with Highways whether the existing diversions could be changed, this subject would be discussed at the meeting to be hosted by James Cartlidge.

10. To receive a report concerning the Melford Road verge

The Clerk presented the Working Paper highlighting the efforts by County Cllr Lindsay requesting Highways to properly maintain this verge and the response County Cllr Lindsay had received from Highways 'for action to be taken, in this case the verge skirted, the extent of the obstruction needs to divert pedestrians into the live carriageway. The highways assessment officer concluded that this was not happening and action... was not required. The area will be continually monitored during regular safety inspections. Should the extent of the growth result in then forementioned situation, action will then be taken'.

The Clerk expressed his dissatisfaction with this response and explained to Councillors the four possible actions:

- a) Buying in additional services from Suffolk Highways.
- b) Buying in services from a private contractor. The PC would then have an obligation to ensure that work is undertaken in accordance with the legal requirements of working on the highway.
- c) Using its own trained employees. The PC would then have an obligation to ensure that work is undertaken in accordance with the legal requirements of working on the highway.
- d) Using community volunteers. The PC would then have an obligation to ensure there is somebody suitably trained and qualified to supervise volunteers and ensure that work is undertaken in accordance with the legal requirements of working on the highway. Suffolk County Council will provide the relevant training for 'lead' volunteers. A day long course, weekdays only. Risk assessments need to be done, no equipment can be used without proof of competency of the machinery/equipment user along with current certification, all machinery and tools used in carrying out the works must be regularly and properly maintained, inspected and serviced to a safe standard of operation and records of all of these items must be hold for inspection by the County Council.

Cllr Robinson asked if the PC could ask a local farmer to do the work, Cllr Bourne asked if a local group could just do the work without referring to the Parish Council. Cllr Muckian explained that the Parish Council could not authorise or condone such a group. Cllr Morrey explained that farmers would not be covered by their insurance, should they have an accident, whilst doing such work.

Cllr Lamont pointed out that the work required was not just grass cutting, it was shifting and digging out the soil and vegetation which had grown over the pavement.

County Cllr Lindsay offered to make a contribution from his locality budget, District Cllr Maybury offered similarly, the Clerk was instructed to ask Highways for a quote.



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11. Motion to increase Burial Fees

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council has for many years had a policy to align fees charged with those charged by Long Melford. A key difference is that Long Melford does not offer a 50% discount to residents as Lavenham does. It is not proposed to remove the 50% resident's discount.

The fees paid by Lavenham residents will remain very considerably less than those charged by Long Melford to its residents.

The Clerk added that most burials in the Lavenham Cemetery are residents and detailed the fees payable. Long Melford fees for the burial of cremated remains are £1,270 whereas Lavenham's fees are £441 for a resident and £882 for a non-resident. Long Melford fees for a burial of a resident are £1,593 whereas Lavenham's fees are £847 for a resident and £1,694 for a non-resident.

The Clerk recommended that Council approve a 10% increase in all fees.

Motion: to approve 10% increase in all burial fees

Proposed: Cllr Morrey

Seconded: Cllr Lamont

Decision: A 10% increase in all burial fees was approved.

12. To receive a report concerning the re-wilding of Public Open space

Cllr Muckian presented the paper included within the Working Papers highlighting that In Summer 2023 Council agreed to give consideration, in Spring 2024, to accompanying the Babergh Council Bio-diversity Officer on a survey walk of the village to consider potential publicly owned sites for re-wilding.

She invited all Councillors to join the Babergh Bio Diversity Officer on a walk around the village to see where this would be possible. Following the survey the Bio-Diversity Officer and any Councillors who have taken interest in this idea could, together, present their findings to Council.

Cllrs Ranzetta and Robinson volunteered.

13. Clerk/RFO Report

- a) **Received:** The report prepared by the Clerk containing and explaining the November 2023 and December 2023 Accounts.

Noted from the Report: The Clerk explained that these Accounts compare the Actual figures to the Second Re-Forecast approved by Council at its meeting on 14th December 2023. The November Accounts showed no material variances. The December Accounts he explained contained larger variances. Whilst income is very much in line with forecast expenses are £6,000 less than forecast. The key reasons for these savings are:

- A) Saving £5,000. Only £1,000 of Grants had been approved by Council as compared to a budget of £6,000. Grants requested had totalled only about 50% of the £6,000 budget.
- B) Unbudgeted spend £1,600. Printing Parish newsletter and distribution of free copy of December Lavenham Life to all residents
- C) Unbudgeted spend £1,000 consisting of £700 replacement Christmas Lights and £300 on replacement Defibrillator pads.
- D) Saving £3,000 on Street Cleaning and Green Maintenance as no repairs had yet been carried out in the Cemetery and no extra leaf sweeping or other miscellaneous maintenance costs had been incurred with poor weather the main factor.
- E) £1,000 saving on Office Costs as Councillors have not organised any further training for themselves.
- F) £1,000 overspend on the LNP costs which was largely timing. Costs budgeted for January had been partly invoiced in December

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Discussion:

Cllr Robinson and Cllr Morrey agreed to meet and try to expedite the cemetery repairs. Cllr Muckian asked if a resubmission of the Allotments Association Grant application had been received, the Clerk replied that nothing had been heard from the Allotments Association. The Clerk explained that the most substantial variance was the Grants underspend which would likely mainly flow through to the final numbers for 2023/24.

Motion: to approve the accounts for the months ended 30 November 2023 and 31 December 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Bourne

Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

- b) **Received:** The report prepared by the Clerk listing the November and December 2023 Receipts and Payments.

Noted from the Report: No receipts or payments required further explanation.

Motion: to approve the Receipts and Payments for the months ended 30 November and 31 December 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Morrey

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions

14a. To receive an update on Planning Decisions received in January 2024

The Clerk reported that two decisions received this month were significant. The first was the refusal of approval for the Lavenham Wellness Centre which the Parish Council had recommended not be approved and the second was the grant of planning permission for the erection of a cartlodge on land off Norman Way which the Parish Council had not recommended.

Cllr Lamont reported that Babergh District Council had published a detailed and helpful explanation for this decision explaining that they considered the proposed construction whilst outside the settlement boundary not to be adjacent to open countryside and to be sufficiently subservient to the main building.

14b. Planning Applications for Consideration

DC/24/00214 Application for planning permission Carvings 41 High Street

Householder Application - Conversion of garage/workshop to form residential annexe for family members.

Discussion:

This application is not a listed building, but Permitted Development Rights were removed when the Ropers Mill was converted to a number of houses.

It is in the Conservation area and inside the Settlement boundary.

This application seeks to create a "Granny Annex" is what is a Garage space, adding small timber windows to the side facing the boundary wall. The building footprint is unchanged.

Garage door is replaced by timber windows & door with a small area of timber cladding below.

It is compliant to LNP 2016 Policy D2 Design & Character as appropriate materials are being used and the impact on the Street Scene is negligible due to the location.

Recommend Approval on the condition that conversion does not form a separate dwelling and is only used as an Annex.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont

Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: The motion was carried unanimously.

DC/24/00223 Pippins, Bridge Street Road

Application for Works to Tree Subject to a Tree Preservation Order WS240/G1 - T1 and T2. Field Maples reduce the crown by around 3m, leaving the trees around 6m tall. This is re-reduction work. The two trees are on the boundary with the playing field car park act as a screen to the car park and grow very quickly.

This is routine maintenance of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order noted in the application form. Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Bourne

Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: The motion was carried unanimously.

14c. Planning – Local Validation Lists

Local Validation Lists (LVL) are guidance to the Babergh District Council Planning Team when registering planning applications.

The North Norfolk District Council website describes these as 'the compendium of the supporting documents which are required to be submitted when making a planning application'.

The Babergh website further explains that: 'Since our Local Validation List (LVL) was amended last year, our new Joint Local Plan (JLP) has been adopted and the LVL has undergone further revisions as a consequence. These revisions are such that formal six week consultation will be required'

This consultation will end March 4th i.e. before the next Parish Council meeting.

There are two LVL: A) The Part 1 or 'Householder' LVL which applies to 'Works or Extension to a dwelling. B) The Part 2 or 'Major and Minor Development' LVL which applies to Major and Minor Developments. The Level 1 Householder document is largely unaltered but contains a new section on Biodiversity Net Gain. The Level 2 Major and Minor Developments document contains more changes. The document is about 35 pages long.

Motion: To delegate to the Planning Working Group responsibility to:

1. Liaise with the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group.
2. Prepare a formal response, for submission by the Clerk, to Babergh District Council.
3. Report the responses submitted to the March 2024 meeting of the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson

Seconded: Cllr Bourne

Decision: The motion was carried unanimously

15. Response to Second Focused Consultation

Cllr Muckian explained that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued December 2023 contained new text concerning 'community-led developments'. Council had obtained professional advice and consequent of this two minor changes have been suggested to the Examiner. Cllr Muckian highlighted the two changes as detailed in the Working Papers.

Two representations were made by others as part of the Second Focused Consultation. Council will respond to these representations and the responses submitted to the March 2024 meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Date of next meeting

Thursday 7th March 2024 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.



