

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 18th May 2023, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, May 2023 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.

Present:

Cllrs Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Lizzie Falconer, Janice Muckian, Irene Mitchell and from 7.50pm Cllr Mary Morrey.

Babergh District Cllrs Margaret Maybury, Paul Clover

Five members of the public.

1. To elect a Chairman

Cllr Falconer proposed Cllr Mitchell. Seconded by Cllr Muckian, carried.

2. To elect a Vice-Chairman

Cllr Falconer proposed Cllr Muckian. Seconded by Cllr Bourne, carried.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Requests for Dispensation

The Clerk explained that Dispensations are permission to take part (both speaking and voting may be requested) in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because the Councillor has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

The Clerk explained that owning or renting a house in Lavenham is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and that he was aware that six Councillors will declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest being the ownership or tenancy of a property in the Water St area.

The Clerk then requested that each Councillor living in the Water St area seriously consider requesting a dispensation to speak and vote on matters concerning Water St and the surrounding streets as otherwise the Council will likely be inquorate, unable to make any decisions, with respect to any issues as to this important street.

The Clerk added that to put this into action he will put onto the agenda, for the June 1 meeting, a motion to 'resolve that the Council delegates the power to grant dispensations to the Clerk; and should this be passed, he would distribute a short application form and announce the dispensations received, refused and granted at the July 6 meeting.

Cllr Muckian noted that Councillors might wish to consider requesting dispensations to speak and vote on all matters in all areas of the village.

5. To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the Council

Cllr Falconer proposed, seconded by Cllr Muckian, carried.

6. Public participation session

An elector asked where to discuss online bullying and cybercrime. The Chair responded that this is not within the remit of a Parish Council and suggested the enquiry might be directed to Local Authorities.

An elector reported that the length of the grass in the Prentice Street Car Park is a poor image for the village. The Chair explained that grass cutting in this area is the responsibility of Babergh DC and asked the Elector to take photographs. Subject to research as to whether the grass is being allowed to grow to protect wild flowers etc LPC will follow up with Babergh DC.

The same elector reported that a number of streetlights have stopped working and that the grass around the Preston Rd Lavenham sign is overgrown. The Clerk is asked to check the streetlights and follow up with Suffolk CC. As to the grass around the Lavenham sign the Chairman explained that this was the area of daffodils and that a little more time, possibly two weeks, should be allowed to let them die back.

An Elector asked whether pedestrian crossings and further dropped kerbs were going to be installed to help those less mobile. The Chair responded that crossings require a Traffic Order from the County Council and that there are no current plans for such. However improved pedestrian movement is a focus of the existing and emerging Neighbourhood Plans. The Chair said that she would walk the pathways referred to by the Elector and consider raising with Suffolk Highways.

An Elector pointed out that apologies for absence had not been discussed. The Clerk apologised for the error.

Apologies and approval of absences

Cllrs Matt Chick, Iain Lamont, Jane Ranzetta

The Clerk explained that satisfactory explanations had been received.

Proposed by Cllr Falconer seconded by Cllr Muckian, carried.

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

Cllr Maybury congratulated all Councillors on their election saying that she is looking forward to working with them all.

Cllr Maybury explained that Babergh Council is under 'No Overall Control' and that despite the Annual Council Meeting being Tuesday May 23rd it is still unclear as to who the Council Leader will be and who will hold the Cabinet positions.

The Chairman invited newly elected Cllr Clover to speak who introduced himself and indicated that he is looking forward to working for the people of Lavenham ward.

8. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported as to four matters:

- A) The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan has been modified and further consultation has been conducted. The deadline for comments was 3rd May and so she had responded on the Council's behalf. MM5; the proposal is to reduce the minimum percentage of Affordable Homes on Brownfield sites from 35% to 25%. She had taken a steer from the existing and emerging Neighbourhood Plans and had written opposing this change. MM28: Suggests that developments should be around a nucleus of 10 Homes, in line with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan she had written suggesting this should be around nuclei of 12 homes. MM33 suggests relaxing planning rules for Rural Workers and Rural Enterprises. She had written commenting that these terms need defining.
- B) Intermittent flooding on Bury Rd caused by blocked drains. Following the request by this Council Suffolk CC has flushed and cleared a number of drains and will be returning next week to complete the job. This exercise has revealed the poor maintenance of this street by Suffolk Highways over a number of years with a water pipe now visible. This Council will continue to demand proper and full repair.
- C) She had written to Babergh Council with respect to an empty property on Sudbury Rd asking them to take action under the Empty Homes Initiative
- D) A small amount of s106 money had been allocated to the Harwood Place Play Area. Since that development cannot proceed as Babergh DC has turned down a CIL claim she has spoken to the Grants Officer at Babergh who has extended the deadline until July 2024 and he will write to the Tennis Club, the Football Club and the Dyehouse Field Wood group.

9. Planning

To receive a report and recommendations from the Planning Group

Planning Applications for consideration at LPC meeting on 18TH May 2023

None

Planning Applications for consideration at LPC meeting on 1st June 2023

DC/23/02208 Fell Ash Tree, Tudor Cottage, 92 Church Street.
DC/23/02214 – Fell seven trees, The Old Rectory, Church Street.

These applications have been received very recently and Babergh DC has agreed to close Consultation on June 2.

Applications for Discharge of Conditions for consideration at LPC meeting on 18TH May 2023

DC/22/06053 (Cartlodge to replace Garage) and DC/22/06052 (reconstruction of Conservatory) at 25 Prentice Street.

Details submitted are appropriate in terms of materials used and design. Recommend approval.

Applications for Discharge of Conditions re DC22/06052 and 06053 have been considered and are supported. Proposed by Cllr Falconer and seconded by Cllr Muckian, motion carried.

Enforcement Notices lodged with Babergh DC

EN/23/00265 4 Ropers Court, UPVC windows throughout and UPVC Patio Doors Front Balcony.
EN/23/00219 8 Ropers Court, UPVC Front Door.
EN/23/00212 25 Church St, Installation of Solar Panels.

Responses are awaited from Babergh Council and will be reported.

Late update

Babergh DC has REFUSED applications with respect to a Change of Use and modifications Number 10 Lady Street.

Land off Norman Way

The Chairman reported that she has written to Philip Isbell (Chief Planning Officer) at Babergh DC explaining that the Council does not appear to have been written to with respect to the siting of vehicle parking on the Allotment side of the Lavenham Walk. Additionally, she has queried why Babergh documents say that the Parish Council approved this arrangement when it did not and that Planning Officers have reported that the Allotments are a Planning Gain whilst not acknowledging the loss of amenity on Lavenham Railway Walk consequent of the proposed parking arrangements.

10. Clerk/RFO Report

10.a Motion: to approve Draft Accounts for the month ended 30 April 2023.

The Clerk displayed and explained the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and Reserves position commenting that there were no significant variances to expenditure and that the significant variance to Income was the receipt of the variable and unbudgeted Car Parking//Toilets donations.

The Clerk added that the key financial event in the month was the receipt, as scheduled, of the precept requested from Babergh, at the amount requested.

Proposed by Cllr Bourne, seconded by Cllr Morrey, motion carried.



05 (1) 23 39

10.b Motion to approve Receipts and Payments for the month ended 30 April 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Muckian, seconded by Cllr Falconer, motion carried.

10.c Motion to approve the removal of Jane Bellward, Robert Macro, Carroll Reeve and Iain Lamont from the Bank Mandate and the addition of Andrew Smith, Janice Muckian and the Chairman.

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council Financial Regulations require that two signatories are required for all payment whether they be made by cheque or electronically. The Clerk added that in his opinion this is an adequate level of Internal Control.

The signatories to the to the Bank Mandate are currently Jane Bellward, Mary Morrey, Robert Macro, Carroll Reeve and Iain Lamont. Carroll Reeve and Iain Lamont are on the Bank Mandate consequent of having been Chairmen of the Parish Council but have had no recent involvement in Banking matters.

These changes would make the mandate consistent with the current members with signatories being the Clerk and Councillors Morrey (existing signatory), Muckian and Mitchell.

Proposed by Cllr Falconer, seconded by Cllr Morrey, motion carried.

The Clerk added that he would shortly be consulting as to cancelling the December 7th and January 4th meetings and replacing them with a meeting on December 14th. The delay of one week to December 14th would give time for the November Accounts to be prepared and submitted to that meeting and so that meeting would be the Budget and Precept setting meeting.

11. Proposal to establish a .gov.uk domain

The Clerk reported that we have been unable to obtain further quotes competitive with the quote already secured. Cllr Chick had previously informed the Council that the quote is financially very competitive and technically appropriate. Long Melford Council are highly pleased with the suppliers' work.

There is no obligation, considering the value of the work, Council Standing Orders, to obtain further quotes.

Motion: Council is asked to approve the implementation of Microsoft 365 at an initial cost of not more than £400 and an ongoing annual cost of £780.

Proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Bourne, carried.

12. Report to Council Provision of Allotments

Cllr Mitchell detailed the powers and duties of Parish Councils with respect to allotments.

The developer of the site has verbally indicated that he expects to sublet the land to the Parish Council at a peppercorn rent but that Mrs Bellward, Clerk to the Council, has confirmed that there is no agreement with the developers and there is no obligation to do so.

The Parish Council gave support to the proposal to development allotments north of the Railway Walk in 2016/17, providing car parking was made available on the south side and that vehicles would not be permitted to traverse the pedestrian walkway.

The outline planning permission given in 2017 contained a Condition that before any development commenced, details of allotments, access and associated parking provision to be submittedwith a timetable for their delivery to be advised and implemented as agreed. “

The Parish Council were consulted again in 2018 when the developer sought to discharge some of the other Conditions and the Planning Authority refused to discharge the Condition relating to the allotment site because they had not submitted details as required under the Outline Planning Permission.

In 2020, the developer submitted a drawing to the Planning Authority which shows provision for 3 vehicles to park within the allotment site and thus permitting vehicles to traverse the Railway Walk. This was approved by the Planning Officer without apparent reference back to the Parish Council. Babergh Council have been contacted and we await their response.

Cllr Domoney explained that he was investigating possible sites for allotments talking with the community and landowners and would report back.

Cllr Mitchell's report was noted by the Council.

Before closing the meeting the Chair thanked Mrs Bellward for her continuous service to the Council.

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday 1st June, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall at which Councillors will be asked to approve the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegations and Authority to Release Resources.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chewman
Chairman
1st June 2023