

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

In response to Government measures prohibiting gatherings, announced on 23rd March 2020, this meeting was conducted remotely.

Present Mr C Reeve, Chairman Mr J O'Mahony, Vice-Chairman.

Mrs D Twitchett, Mrs A Norman, Mrs M Morrey, Mr T Sheppard, Mr B Panton,

Dr C Posner, Mr I Lamont, Mr P Grindley.

Mr C Arthey, Babergh District Councillor.

Police Matters – Go to <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters> for the February 2020 copy of the County newsletter, Constable's County. The newsletter provides an update on policing from the East, West and South policing areas of the County and an explanation of the Constabulary budget and the level of Council Tax to be charged for policing in Suffolk for the coming year.

The summary of crimes reported within the parish of Lavenham is listed on www.police.uk, search by postcode on Find your Neighbourhood. Crimes recorded within the parish of Lavenham in February 2020: 1 x Violence & sexual offences, 1 x Burglary, 1 x Other Theft, 2x Anti-social Behaviour.

County Councillor's Report, Mr R Lindsay

Robert Lindsay still not completely recovered, Mr Reeve had said any relevant questions arising from this meeting would be passed to him.

District Councillor's Report, Mr C Arthey

Mrs Maybury had earlier forwarded the Babergh Councillors' Briefing Notes for Town and Parish Councils, April 2020.

Mr Arthey had forwarded the Media Release concerning the emergency funding pot available to help local community groups. There is also a Councillor Locality Grant scheme which has been agreed today. Both Mrs Maybury and Mr Arthey will have an annual budget of £2,000 to be used at their discretion on projects and initiatives in villages covered by the Lavenham ward.

Babergh is still able to provide a full planning service, officers are working from home and going into the Ipswich office to open post. The only problems is applications to committee, advice from NALC is awaited. Some fast-tracking, such as for applications for change of use, should be possible.

As far as other Council functions are concerned, applications for small business relief and grants are being fast-tracked, getting processed as quickly as they are able. Local Council Tax support may also be extended. The District Council is concentrating on keeping services going.

Mr Reeve felt that we all must learn from this episode, what has worked and what has not, as it has shown up some very serious weaknesses in many Council functions. Newsletters have been forwarded by the County Council but these do not help at the grassroots level. Most of our information has been picked up from radio and television news programmes.

Mr Arthey congratulated Lavenham for responding so quickly to the needs of the vulnerable in compiling a list of those volunteers in the village able and willing to help with collections and deliveries, shopping etc.

Dr Posner mentioned problems with transport to hospital/doctor's appointments. Volunteers were no longer able to offer this services due to the need for social distancing, funds would be needed to hire the appropriate larger vehicles if available.

Mr Arthey said that some limited funding would be available, apply to Stef Osborne at Babergh/Mid Suffolk. The County Council is receiving a significant amount of money for adult social care, but not sure how this will work.

Mr Reeve felt that the District Council has driven harder and harder towards web based solutions, but there must be alternatives, many of the most vulnerable are not tech savvy and personal contact has been essential.

In summary it was felt that this criticism is fair, however people did not foresee how this particular crisis would progress. Mr O'Mahony commented on his previous experience as an EPO in London, budgets had been stretched because nobody wants to spend money on what may never happen.

The Minutes – Prop. by Dr Posner, sec. by Mr O'Mahony, the minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2020 were approved. Carried.

Declarations of Interest – none

Apologies for absence received from Mr Lindsay, Mrs Maybury.

Matters arising and update of outstanding issues

It was agreed that the Parish Council had decided not to renew the Sudbury Wardens contract for 2020/21 at the last meeting. Contact has also been made to obtain the keys to the dog bag dispensers.

Finance and Strategy

Cheques for payment:

idverde Ltd, public toilet works for March £1,860.00: : JPB Landscapes, (March grass cutting £928.75, street cleaning £1,253.33 plus VAT) £2,618.50: The Lavenham Press, digital printing COVID-19 posters, 2 x information leaflets £288.00: British Gas, electricity supply Church Street toilets £19.58: Seago & Stopps Payroll Solutions, corresponding with The Pensions Regulator & completing the Parish Council's Re-declaration of Compliance £90.00: Lavenham Literary Festival, donation to Children's Book Festival 2020 £200.00: Kinex, phone account March £37.81: Playquip Leisure, supply/install grass protection mats around table tennis table £500.90: Payroll £730.27: Suffolk Association of Local Councils, annual subscription £638.34.

A letter to the Bank requests the transfer of £7,000.00 between accounts.

Received from Lavenham Street Fair Committee cheque for £250 towards ground/grass repairs to First Meadow.

Mr Lamont proposed, Mrs Norman seconded, that the financial transactions are approved. Carried.

Planning

Planning Applications Received:

DC/20/00872: 37 Prentice Street, Lavenham

Householder Planning Application - Erection of two storey rear extension.

renewal of existing consent. proposed extension sympathetic with location and similar extensions in adjoining properties. **Recommend Approval**

DC/20/895: 27 Prentice Street, Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of two storey rear extension.

Recommend Approval

DC/20/00295: 4 Ropers Court, Lavenham

Householder Planning Application - Installation of metal balcony and French Doors to 1st floor rear and replacement of metal railing with balcony to 1st floor.

Design of balcony matches existing balconies on building. No issues. **Recommend Approval**

DC/20/01123: The Guildhall of Corpus Christi, Market Place, Lavenham

Application for Listed Building Consent - Affix timber rail to timber bannisters.

Safety measure. **Recommend Approval**

DC/20/01234: 6 Bolton Street, Lavenham

Householder Planning Application _ Erection of 1st floor rear extension.

Extension above existing single storey extension. No impact on area. **Recommend Approval**

DC/20/01149: Street Record, Deacons Close. Lavenham

Notification of works to a tree in a conservation area - T1 Cedar reduce by 2m and raise crown to 4.5m.

No issues. **Recommend Approval**

DC/20/00697: The Black Barn Hall Road Lavenham

Planning Application - Alteration and two storey extension to existing two storey structure.

Conversion of first floor to form 4 No. apartments, sub division of existing B1a units and extension of existing sui-generis unit.

Development contained within existing footprint of building infilling an open veranda and internal organisation. This is Full Application following outline approval DC/19/05825.

Following discussions last month issues raised. **Recommend Approval**

The Planning working group had circulated their recommendations in respect of all applications and it was proposed by Mr Lamont, seconded by Dr Posner, that all applications are recommended for approval. Carried.

Planning Decisions Received:

DC/20/00400 & DC/20/00391 & DC/19/04287 Windwards, Bury Road, Lavenham - Discharge of Conditions for DC/19/01955 - Condition 10 (Landscaping Scheme), Condition 12 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy) & DC/19/04286- Conditions 9 - Refuse/Bin Storage, Condition 10 - Landscaping Scheme, Condition 13 - Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy & Condition 5 - Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

DC/20/00222 Plot 1 Land Adjoining Windwards, Bury Road, Lavenham - Discharge of Conditions for DC/19/04286 7 – Conditions 9 Refuse/Bin Storage, 10 Landscaping Scheme, 13 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

DC/20/00401 Plot 2 Land Adjoining Windwards, Bury Road, Lavenham - Discharge of Conditions DC/19/04285 - Condition 9 - Refuse/Bin Storage, Condition 10 - Landscaping Scheme, Condition 13 - Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

DC/20/00687 Pippins, Bridge Street Road, Lavenham – Consent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order WS240/G1. To reduce Maple Trees to the previous pruning points, removing 2-3 foot of re-growth

DC/20/00688 Louise Cottage, 29 Church Street, Lavenham works to tree in Conservation Area - Fell to ground level 1No Conifer Tree in rear garden

DC/20/00810 Box Cottage, 21 Prentice Street, Lavenham

Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/05381 Condition 4 (Fenestration)

DC/20/00802 2 The Maltings, Barn Street, Lavenham

Listed Building Consent for replacement French doors in widened opening to rear elevation

Operations

Mr O'Mahony had circulated a report on behalf of the Operations working group, as below:
Former Gas Works Site - Planning permission granted for use as a car park. CIL funding in

place. Process currently delayed due to investigations into “interceptor tank”. I have recently written to Anglian Water for information on what might be contained within the tank.

Traffic and Road Schemes - Parking - enforcement of waiting restrictions. Civil enforcement was due for implementation on 1st April. Probably delayed due to Covid 19. Clarification needed on the application of new regulations to Church Street and Prentice Street carparks. If they are to be subject to civil enforcement what happens to voluntary donations scheme?

Parking on pavements – enforcement and use of engineering solutions. We have established a precedent with the installation of planters and relocation of the street name sign to prevent parking. Other locations will be considered on their viability as each location needs a licence from SCC Highways.

Water Street Scheme – Review. We submitted comments by the deadline of 15th July 2019. Issues within SCC have resulted in there being no meaningful response to those comments. A meeting with the portfolio holder has been delayed and is still awaited.

Prentice Street, carpark and toilets – Like Church Street car park this is currently owned by Babergh but maintained and managed by LPC. Funding for this comes mainly from the voluntary subscription scheme in each location. We are in the midst of a review of the space and how it could be improved. Currently we are looking at removal of the existing toilet block and replacing it with a smaller more space efficient unit. This would allow for the realignment of the shape and number of the parking spaces. Any additional spaces would be less than the number that would be lost by preventing parking in the central area of Market Place.

No Cold Calling Zones – These are legally enforceable areas that can be designated by SCC Trading Standards Department. Following an incident we introduced one at Green Willows and there have been no further complaints from residents. Additional zones will be considered on their merits.

Street Lighting – Stop start progress continues.

Lavenham Walk – Discussions ongoing with SCC

Grass cutting and general maintenance – The grass cutting contractor has been providing a good service. The Sudbury Town Wardens contract is to be terminated. We need to consider how we address some of the tasks that were the responsibility of the wardens. In addition, SCC are seeking to devolve responsibility for some low-level maintenance of road signs, verges, hedges etc to parish councils under a Community Self Help Scheme. Such a scheme can be delivered by volunteers (subject to some conditions) or suitably accredited contractors. More thought and discussion needs to be given to this in order to bring forward a proposal.

Events – Christmas Fair 2020 has been cancelled due to Covid 19. It remains to be seen whether a new organising committee will come forward for 2021.

VE75 & Friends of Lavenham Airfield events have been postponed for the same reason. August/September are being considered for staging the event but decisions cannot be made in the current situation.

VW has not yet been cancelled but the intended date for this is in May so it is getting increasingly doubtful.

The annual car show held at the Recreation Ground is still on the calendar. Hopefully we will be out of pandemic by then.

Increasing numbers of concerts are being planned within the village. There are positives and negatives in staging these events. It would be useful to consider a policy on holding such events.

The Public Consultation events planned for The Village Hall and The Guildhall have been postponed but will be held when possible.

Use of Market Place, additional parking in Brent Eleigh Road and possible new public footpath on Lower Road – all matters for future discussion.

Covid-19 an update

Several items of information were suggested for inclusion in a third community newsletter. Philip Grindley had put a tremendous amount of work into the first two newsletters and Dr Posner agreed to share the work by receiving and helping to check and edit drafts submitted by Councillors etc.

Lavenham Press to be contacted tomorrow to check that they are still operating and establish a deadline.

Housing and Social

Good Neighbours Scheme & Dementia Alliance – Mrs Twitchett had experienced difficulty joining the meeting but was now able to give a report:

The Good Neighbours Scheme had received a donation of £250 from the Christmas Street Fair committee today.

Couple of food parcels organised, including frozen meat very generously donated via Lavenham Butchers. From her knowledge of those who regularly use the GNS Doreen has initially phoned some of the people she considers more vulnerable and possibly in need of additional help.

Following the call in the first newsletter, a list of volunteers, and a separate list of those who would like help for certain tasks, have been collated and compiled by Mr Panton. Tear-off forms have been returned to 2 Lady Street and Lee Morris has helped compile the lists. All have consented for their details to be kept on file for the duration of the crisis. People in need of help have been advised to ring GNS.

Doreen has talked to Stef Osborne in respect of grant help, although the GNS scheme has a good reserve at the moment. Lots of links are coming through, 'Home, but not Alone' has helped one person in particular.

Transport to appointments has been stopped due to the need to distance, a normal sized car will not allow 6 feet between driver and passenger, a larger vehicle is needed. Enquiries to be made with GoSTART at Sudbury. Also, considering the age of the average GNS volunteer previously, and the need to self-isolate, younger people will be needed to act as drivers and will be approached first for other tasks. The number of younger volunteers who had come forward had been very encouraging, it was heart-warming to talk to so many people eager to help.

The Surgery has not helped matters by closing the Lavenham premises, creating problems with transport to Long Melford, and ceasing to process paper repeat prescriptions. There had been no advance knowledge of this intention.

Doreen was asked if she needed any back up, but said she was used to dealing with requests via GNS and felt that at the moment this was not necessary. If requests increase it might be necessary to purchase an additional mobile phone. Mr Grindley said he would be willing to help if needed.

Correspondence had been received from:

No correspondence or emails, other than those related to the present Covid-19 situation, have been received.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

Advice was being sought as to the process to fill the vacancy on the Council by co-option whilst meetings could only be held remotely. In anticipation of clarification Rob Macro's biography has been circulated to the Councillors for consideration.

The meeting was informed of the recent death of Nick Ridley who had served as a District Councillor for many years. He was well-respected and in his time had served as Chairman of the Planning Committee and Chairman of the Council. He had always been very supportive of Lavenham.

Mr Arthey thanked the Parish Council for arranging this meeting and inviting him to attend and wished everybody continued good health.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7th May 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.