

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Thursday 19th April 2018, in the Guildhall at 7.30pm

Councillors Present

Mr C Reeve, Chairman.

Mrs J Baker, Mrs D Twitchett, Mr P Gibson, Mr B Panton, Mr J O'Mahony, Mr A Searle, Dr C Poston.

Mr R Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor. Mr W Shropshire, Babergh District Councillor.

PC 1720 Rob Sippitt. Sudbury Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Bradley Smith, Sudbury Community Warden
9 members of the public.

Apologies received from Ms N Smith (Parish Councillor) and Mrs Lyn Gurling.

Mr Reeve welcomed everybody to the Annual Parish Meeting 2018.

THE MINUTES of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 13th April 2017 were agreed as a true record of those proceedings, proposed by Mrs Baker, seconded by Mr Panton, carried.

MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising from the previous minutes.

POLICE REPORT

PC Sippitt introduced himself as a member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team based in Sudbury. A member of the team tries to attend one meeting annually in each of the parishes covered, either the Annual Parish Meeting or a Parish Council Meeting.

Present concerns were the recent ram raids on ATMs and supermarket premises in the Suffolk/Essex/Cambridgeshire area. There appears to be something similar in the carrying out of such raids although it is thought two separate groups may be responsible. There have been 4 arrests, 3 in Suffolk and 1 in Essex, for incidents involving the theft of cigarettes and alcohol, investigations continue into the ATM type offences.

Thefts of tools from vans are increasing, often stolen to order or to sell on at car boot sales, very hard to track down. More lead thefts have occurred as the price of scrap has increased, be aware and report suspicions especially around churches.

Monthly crime updates are available on the SNT website and statistics for the area can be found on the national Police website www.police.uk. Mr O'Mahony said it would be reassuring to be able to see some information on clear-up rates, PC Sippitt would feed this back.

Mr Reeve said that there were some minor issues in the village but these were not classed as priority matters. PC Sippitt was thanked for attending and reporting to the meeting.

BRADLEY SMITH, SUDBURY COMMUNITY WARDENS

Following a shake up the team Mel will be covering the contract recently awarded by Lavenham and patrols will be increased from two hours per fortnight to two hours per week. Again the main focus will be on prevention of dog fouling, littering and dealing with graffiti.

In partnership with the Police the wardens can ticket badly parked vehicles, three strikes and cases can be reported to the Police.

In addition to regular random patrols, over the past year the Wardens have dealt with graffiti on the children's playground and roads around the Common, which was removed within hours of reporting. Traffic management assistance was provided for the Christmas Fair.

Wardens are provided with body cameras which will only be switched on when a dangerous situation or abusive individual is encountered, and then a warning is given before the camera is switched on. This provides extra security and a record of the incident.

The Wardens are here to help the community and will be providing publicity for notice boards, Lavenham Life and the Parish Council website. They are also on Twitter and Facebook.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & STATEMENT ON THE PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2018 - MR CARROLL REEVE

During the year the Parish Council has supported a number of village initiatives including: the move of the Pre-school to its new building (which has won a RIBA architectural award); the Woodland Project; Forest School; Wool Towns project; Dementia Alliance setup; WWI & WWII commemorations; work of smaller organisation such as the Literary and Art Festivals.

We have undertaken the refurbishment of the Cemetery Chapel, this being funded from a legacy of

£10,000 received during the year, an award by our County Councillor from his Locality Budget, a donation from Mr Bob Burchi, with the balance provided from our own funds. Andrew Searle will comment on this later.

Replacement notice boards and two new seats and additional dog fouling bins have either been fitted or are awaiting fitting.

The replacement of street lights to energy efficient LED units continues – slowly. Part of this is down to the slowness of Suffolk Highways and in part to a contrary view expressed by a minority of residents who take the view that the end lighting unit is not suitable. Street lighting is not pretty, hence the selection of an unobtrusive unit used throughout the County, including in conservation villages.

The Parish Council also participated in the draft Joint Local Plan process and our comments can be viewed on the website. This was very time consuming and all your Parish Councillors should be congratulated on sticking with this.

The Community Land Trust first turf at Harwood Place was cut a few weeks ago and the foundations for the 18 local needs houses went in last Friday. Handover is expected in June 2019. A new Local Housing Need Survey was delivered to all households in March.

The Precept has been maintained at a neutral Band D level.

Dog fouling continues to cause concern and Charles Posner will report further on this. John O'Mahony will later report on the ongoing traffic and road maintenance saga.

Discussions are in the very early stages with the owner's agent in respect of acquiring access to the old Gas Works site to use for additional parking. Previous approaches have been made to no avail.

Babergh will be closing the TIC in October. The existing service is a non-statutory activity for Babergh and the Parish Council has started a dialogue to see if the building could be viable to house a post office and other community and visitor activities.

Thanks must go to all the Councillors and Clerk, and also to ex-Councillors who had left during the past year, Emma Paris and Gail Banks ex-Councillors had both worked hard on various projects during their time on the Council.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Copies of the accounts year ending 31/03/2018 had been circulated to the meeting.

The Precept for 2017/18 had been £69,000, other income came from burial fees, car park voluntary payments, VAT refund, District Council grant towards street cleaning and donations.

The Parish Council is holding monies for the LED street lighting conversion project which should be finished soon, a fifteen year loan from the Public Works Loan Board will pay the majority of costs.

The project to provide an additional bus shelter had stalled due to the inability to find a suitable location.

Earmarked expenditure would support Forest School, contribute to SCC traffic schemes and possible Churchyard tomb repairs.

There were no questions.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT BY MR ROBERT LINDSAY

&

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT BY MR WILLIAM SHROPSHIRE

(see both full reports at the end of the Minutes)

LAVENHAM GOOD NEIGHBOUR'S SCHEME & LAVENHAM DEMENTIA ALLIANCE– MRS DOREEN TWITCHETT

The GNS is now in its 5th year, helping those in the community with a need, such as shopping, befriending, form filling, small household tasks or lifts to the Doctor's, Hospital, Dentist and Opticians. Over 600 tasks have been completed since the launch in 2014.

Changes to the committee this last year have seen Roy Whitworth replaced by Marian Searle and Rose Bates replaced by Daphne Hartley.

A grant from the Suffolk Giving Foundation was given to help reduce social isolation of those living alone and help the group to build on what we can provide. Three trips resulted from this, the first to Assington Farm Shop for afternoon tea, then a pub lunch at Rede Plough and lastly, just two weeks ago, a visit to Ickworth House. All the trips were enjoyed very much by those who attended.

The monthly Tenter Piece Teas continue with various popular speakers and demonstrations taking place. The Strawberry Tea which is held in Caroline Eves' garden once again proved very enjoyable. The Christmas Party took place once again in the Village Hall and this year an invitation went out to children

from the Primary and Pre-Schools to join us, with the added attraction of a visit by Father Christmas. It was good to see all ages of the community together.

The Scheme came to the attention of the High Sheriff of Suffolk this year and he came along to Lavenham to meet up with some of the committee and volunteers at Tenter Piece. He was very interested and impressed to see the way we worked and how successful we have been.

Eight additional volunteers have come forward and this has help with our need for more drivers.

We were able to help out in an emergency during the bad weather, which was a good example of the community coming together to help others.

The committee is making plans for the monthly teas in the coming year, and the 2018 Christmas Party.

Which brings me on to the Lavenham Dementia Alliance. With help from the Parish Council to start up, and Caroline Eves as Chairperson, over the last few months we have been able to set up a group with the aim of making Lavenham a Dementia Friendly village. Firstly by getting local businesses and the community to become Dementia Friends, also to help and to signpost those with a need locally. We have met with, and are meeting, those who have already set up groups like this to help us move forward. We are a new group and we will endeavour to take this project forward and succeed in the same way as the Good Neighbour Scheme has.

PLANNING – MR PHILIP GIBSON

The Parish Council is consulted by Babergh District Council on planning applications in the parish. It is not a statutory body, only advisory, but with the approved Lavenham Neighbourhood Development Plan carries considerable weight when the District Council considers applications.

There is a Planning Group of four Parish Councillors who consider each application and put their recommendations to the full Council.

There have been 54 applications in 2017/18, which included 15 for works to trees. Four site inspections took place.

The Bears Lane application for 24 houses has been approved whilst two other similar sized application for residential development at land behind the High Street and at the rear of Howlett's garage have approved outline consent.

A meeting has been arranged with Planning Officers on 26 April to discuss past applications of concern, LNDP etc. and show them the historic centre of the village and local issues.

WATER STREET TRAFFIC SCHEME – MR JOHN O'MAHONY

As mentioned in our District Councillor's report the date for the introduction of the weight restriction has been put back and put back again. There seems to be a lack of anybody taking responsibility at Suffolk County Council, promises have not been fulfilled, our County Councillor has not been any more successful nor attempts to escalate the matter through our MP and the power of the press. There have been many meetings with many different officers. It was thought that perhaps some signage might be erected to co-ordinate with other works being carried out in Tenter Piece and Church Street, but this does not seem to be happening. April 30th had been the date specified for the start of the scheme but Suffolk County Council have now said that they will not be able to complete that timescale.

DOG FOULING/FLY POSTING – DR CHARLES POSNER

These tasks had been divided with Dr Posner being responsible for fly posting and Nicola Smith for prevention/education in respect of dog fouling.

When the rules and regulations on the use of parish notice boards were agreed they will be displayed on the website and put into Lavenham Life. Flyposting should be dealt with by Babergh District Council. Suffolk County Council can remove any posters erected on road verges without permission, especially those which are classed as a distraction to drivers. Hopefully we are moving towards a situation where any notices put anywhere other than on notice boards will not be allowed.

Dog fouling is most problematic on the Lavenham Walk and the area between High Street and Park Road, firstly with people who do not clean up after their dogs and then people who pick up but then hang the bags in trees and bushes or leave the bags beside the footpath. The Parish Council has put many signs in place and there are plenty of dog waste bins, in addition wrapped waste can be put into the ordinary litter bins around the village.

To highlight the problem, instances of fouling along the Lavenham Walk have been sprayed with soluble orange spray paint. This has not been popular with everybody but at least it has highlighted the extent of the problem and may shame some of the more irresponsible owners into doing the right thing.

CHAPEL RESFURBISHMENT – MR ANDREW SEARLE

Works have been going on now for five or six weeks, it is a small building and work has had to stop and start as the various trades have come in and worked on different areas. The work has progressed well and the builders are

doing a good job.

The area is now divided with the front half inside the main door providing a quiet area to sit and contemplate, two doors to the rear of that area lead into a much improved storage space. The front area could also be used by small family groups attending a burial service.

A formal opening is planned for 16th May.

REPORTS BY LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

Representatives of the following groups/organisations reported to the meeting:

Joy Baker – The Soper Project; Colin Rockall – Friends of Lavenham Library & Lavenham Literary Festival;

Jane Gosling – Lavenham Society, Lavenham Lectures, Friends of Lavenham Airfield, Community Council;

Philip Gibson – Wool Towns & Lavenham Forum; John O'Mahony – WWI Commemoration Armistice Centenary.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other matters for discussion.

Mrs Baker proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Reeve.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.