



04 (1) 23 24

## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.

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

### **Present:**

Cllr Irene Mitchell, Chairman.  
Cllrs Matt Chick, Mary Morrey, Janice Muckian, Iain Lamont  
Babergh District Cllrs Margaret Maybury, Clive Arthey  
9 members of the public.

### **2. Apologies and approval of absences**

Cllrs Michael Sherman, Lizzie Falconer, Rob Macro  
County Councillor Robert Lindsey

**Proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Lamont, carried.**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3. Requests for Dispensation**

None

### **4. To approve as accurate minutes of the last meeting of the Council**

Proposed by Cllr Chick, seconded by Cllr Muckian, agreed.

### **5. Local Authority Councillors' Reports**

Cllr Maybury began by wishing everybody a Happy Easter, acknowledging that a new council had been elected and thanking the current councilors.

Cllr Maybury explained that consequent of the pre-election period (previously known as 'purdah') there was little to report.

The advertised public meeting in the Village Hall, with Anglian Water on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023, had taken place. Discussions took place as to leakages, wetlands (an ancient way of dealing with sewerage with one planned for Suffolk albeit not in the Lavenham area) and the situation that Anglian Water is not a Statutory Authority with respect to Planning. Cllr Maybury is looking into this.

Cllr Maybury added that she had as usual been out and about listening to and supporting local groups and had been two inaugural meetings with respect to 'Mens Sheds'. A Lavenham resident has offered a space for the group to meet but this space is too small. Cllr Mitchell acknowledged this and referred to 'Mens Sheds' as being a later agenda item.

### **6. Public participation session**

Cllr Mitchell apologised for not inviting public participation, as scheduled, before the Local Authority Councillors' Reports and explained the Councils rules for the conduct of the session.

Two parishioners representing The Gardening Club explained that The Gardening Club had raised and donated to the Parish Council £375 for a bench to commemorate the late Queen and had heard nothing. The Clerk explained that finding a suitable site had been difficult. The parishioners explained that a suitable site had been identified in the Village Hall garden and the Parish Council agreed to refund the money to The Gardening Club.

Two parishioners commented that the number of lorries was increasing, that in some areas there was parking on pavements and that in some areas such as the top end of Bury Road there was a need for additional street cleaning and asked whether this was going to be addressed by Civic Pride. Cllr Mitchell responded that she had visited the area referred to by the Parishioners, that the detritus was natural and was a Street Cleaning matter.

Cllr Mitchell explained that she had contacted Babergh District Council with her concerns as to pavement parking and would be carrying forward these concerns, as a priority, to next year. As for the number of lorries Cllr Mitchell suggested that the parishioner contact Cllr Lindsay as the elected representative on Suffolk County Council adding that Suffolk CC have been conducting a survey in Water St and so have been counting lorries.

A parishioner commented that vehicles parked on the grass verges in Spring Street and Spring Close were damaging the grass and making pedestrian access difficult and unsafe. Cllr Maybury responded that she had reported this to Babergh DC who are doing a review of parking in this area and also Meadow Close and Tenterpiece.

A parishioner asked if there was any further progress with respect to Water Street. Cllr Lamont replied that the report is still being waited on.

A parishioner asked if there were any estimates as to the demand for allotments. The Clerk responded that in excess of twenty are waiting,

A parishioner asked if there was an update as to the proposed 20mph speed limits. Cllr Lamont replied that that there had been a consultation approximately two years ago, that the plan had been approved by Suffolk County Council, that a proposed design had been very recently received that covered the entire inner core of the village and that it was now being reviewed.

A parishioner stated that the rules, in his opinion, for the conduct of the Public Participation session were restrictive and did not facilitate debate. Cllr Mitchell responded that these had been long-standing rules of the Council and that it needs to be recognised that the meeting is a meeting of the Council that the public are invited to attend. It would be up to the next Council as to whether it maintained that approach.

## **7. Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

## **8. Planning**

### **To receive a report and recommendations from the Planning Group**

#### **APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01044**

The Studio Apartment Annex, Pegtile Court, 3 Church Street, Lavenham

Householder Application - Proposed Installation of 12 Solar Panels to be installed to the roof pitch of existing detached annexe.

Cllr Morrey asked for and received permission, to be recused from this decision.

Cllr Lamont explained that this would be visible from Church Street and was therefore contrary to the Council policy and Neighbourhood Plan that solar panels cannot be seen from the road or another listed building.

DC/23/01044 has been considered and is not supported and refusal is recommended.

Proposed by Cllr Lamont, seconded by Cllr Chick, motion carried.

#### **APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01036**

2 Granary Cottages, Prentice Street, Lavenham

Householder Application - Erection of rear single storey extension and alterations to include insertion of rooflights, additional window and internal layout changes.

DC/23/01036 has been considered and is supported.

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

#### **APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/23/01094**

32 Spring Street, Lavenham

Householder Application - Erection of single-storey rear extension and front porch for disabled person.

DC/23/01094 has been considered and is supported.



04 (1) 23 26

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

### **Planning Decisions Received:**

DC/23/00458 The Studio Apartment Annexe, Pegtile Court, 3 Church Street, Lavenham – LPA does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Fell 1No. Chestnut (T1). LPC recommended refusal.

DC/23/00426 8 The Paddocks, Lavenham - LPA does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Fell 6 No. Tree (T1 - T6). LPC recommended approval subject to equivalent number of indigenous trees being planted.

DC/23/00529 16 Prentice Street, Lavenham – LPA does not wish to object to Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Fell 1No. Fir (T1). LPC recommended approval subject to equal number of indigenous trees being planted.

DC/22/06052 25 Prentice Street, Lavenham – Householder Application & Application for Listed Building Consent granted for Erection of cart lodge (following demolition of existing garage), reconstruction of conservatory from plinth level, replace rear windows and doors, reconfigure internal layout with partition walls. LPC recommended approval.

DC/23/00424 1 Green Willows, Lavenham – Refusal of Planning Permission in respect of erection of a garage/storage building. LPC recommended refusal.

DC/23/00441 4 Parmenter Walk, Lavenham – planning permission granted for erection of single storey side extension. LPC recommended approval.

DC/23/00545 8 Ropers Court, Lavenham -planning permission granted for removal of an existing window and the installation of French doors to rear elevation. LPC recommended refusal.

DC/22/02802 Fiddler Simpsons Cottage, The Granary, Bury Road, Lavenham - Discharge of Conditions, Conditions 7 (Surface Water Drainage), 8 (Refuse Bins and Collection Area), 10 (Electric Vehicle Charging), 11 (Secure Cycle Storage), 12 (Landscaping Scheme) and 14 (Agreement of Materials)

Cllr Lamont commented that all of the tree planning recommendations of LPC had been ignored, despite ‘Green Agenda’ by Babergh DC. Clerk to send tree planning decisions to Cllr Arthey for follow up.

### **9. Men’s Shed**

The document submitted to the meeting by Mr. Thompson was noted and discussed. Mr. Thompson had indicated that he was intending to attend the meeting but was not present. Many councilors spoke as to the loneliness often experienced by men.

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Mr. Thompson and request material to put on the Notice Board and a jpeg for the Parish Website.

### **10. Clerk/RFO Report**

#### **10a. Motion to approve income and expenditure incurred in March 2023**

Paid between meetings to include in financial year ending 31/03/2023 £8,427.40 net of VAT (all items budgeted):

Suffolk CC, annual street lighting energy & maint. £4,106.90

Karl Hobbs IT equipment £1,150.00, Viking, office equipment £303.02, AO Retail, office equipment £146.75, Disclosure Service, DBS check £26.40.

Events Fund to Coronation event organisation £1,500.00

Robert Stephens, planting/protecting Jubilee trees £625.00

Admin assistance minute taking £300.00

TotalEnergies, Prentice St electricity 01/10/22 to 31/01/2023 £231.33

Village Hall room hire £38.00 (NP2 budget)

Invoices received/for payment £5,326.97 net of VAT (all items budgeted):

JPB Landscapes, March grounds maintenance & street cleaning £2,237.15

March Payroll £1,600.92

ICS, March public toilet cleaning & consumables, both sites £625.41

R & R Duchesne, Christmas trees £220.00

Pear Technology, Mapper Pro support & updates 2023/24 £180.00

Paul Holland, move notice board to Harwood Place, repairs to wooden bench on Market Place 2023/24 £170.00.

Command Pest Control, public toilet hygiene services 2023/24 £145.00



04 (1) 23 27

Lavenham Village Hall, March room hire £85.50  
Karl Hobbs, call out/diagnose/set up laptop 2023/24 £50.00  
Zoom, monthly remote meeting charges £12.99

Direct Debit payments (all items budgeted):

Paya Group, Donation points, monthly service fee £35.90  
British Gas, electricity Water Street car park £102.18  
British Gas, Church Street toilets electricity £64.43  
BT Group plc, monthly mobile charge £5.00

**Income (March): £6,334.02.**

Christmas lights donations £20.00: Burial account £1,090.00: Babergh cleansing grant Q4 £2,593.50: Total donations collected from car parks (total of cash & card donations) £870.90: Interest £421.31: HMRC VAT refunds £1,338.31.

**Proposed by Cllr Muckian, seconded by Cllr Chick, carried**

10.b **Telephone Boxes:** Drawing up of specification for repairs continues. Replacement of Perspex glass and complex pinning method of holding glass in place complicate matters.

10.c **Church St Toilets:** Flushing issues now resolved, painting (snagging and finishing) being chased, 5% retention continues to be held.

10.d **EV Charging:** Water Street EV income and EV costs approximately equal and recent reduction in EV costs will not appreciably change this position. Usage disappointing. Sign to be erected to encourage car park usage. Prentice St high standing charges due to installation of fast charging equipment means currently uneconomical to switch on. To be kept under review. Frustrating that of the 12 installations only 2 are in use.

10.e **Street cleaning timetable:** Schedule agreed and will be put on website.

10.f **Year End Audit Update:** The external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP have certified, that in their opinion, the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return) for 2021/22 is in accordance with Proper Practices and that no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Without qualifying their opinion, they commented that they had not received a year end bank reconciliation (now prepared) an adequate explanation for the variance between the prior and current year values and that the authority had not arranged for an independent internal auditor to review the internal controls and give their conclusions.

The external auditors added that in future years, the smaller authority must ensure it maintains an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

The deadline for 2022/2023 submission to the external auditors is 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023.

We have made contact with the internal auditors and will, this year, on a timely basis provide the year end bank reconciliation and explanations as to variances between the 2021/22 numbers and those for 2022/23.

Cllr Mitchell asked the Clerk why there had not been an internal audit. The Clerk responded that it was because she had been concentrating on preparing the returns and external audit and so had run out of time. Cllr Mitchell thanked the Clerk for the straightforward nature of her reply and added that this is an example as to why having a full-time clerk is so important.

## **11. Finance**

**11.a Parish Office & Church Street Lease and All Business Rates Motion:** Council is asked to approve leasing of the Parish Office at £1,000 per annum for 5 years.

Cllr Lamont asked for a copy of the lease to fully understand Lessor and Lessee obligations. Cllr Mitchell agreed

to provide. Cllr Mitchell added that Business Rate valuations and invoices were awaited and that these were a reminder to Councillors to consider the whole and lifetime costs of projects.

**A motion to approve signing of the lease subject to scrutiny of it was proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Muckian, carried.**

**11.b Replacement of the Kissing Gate Between the Church and Hall Road Motion:** Council is asked to select Contractor A or Contractor B.

Cllr Morrey presented her report. All councillors agreed that retention was important. Cllr Morrey agreed to discuss further with Contractor B and report to next meeting.

**11.c Proposal for Funding small Heritage Projects Motion:** Council is asked to agree to establishing a Heritage Improvement Fund with a separate Bank Account.

Cllr Morrey presented her report. The Clerks explained that the scheme would need detailed rules as to what would happen particularly if projects were either over or under-funded.

Cllr Chick offered to look into ways as to how other fundraisers navigate these issues in particular possible technical solutions.

**A motion to agree in principle to establish a Heritage Improvement Fund with a separate Bank Account with the Clerks instructed to draft a draft constitution to administer the fund was proposed by Cllr Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Chick, carried.**

## **12. Proposal to establish a .gov.uk domain Receive and note report from Councillor Mitchell.**

Cllr Mitchell presented her report. Cllr Chick commented that with the security concerns of IMAP and the desire to introduce a centralised document management system that Office 365 would be the preferred option. The Clerk was asked to look for two quotes including cloud-based document storage. Cllr Mitchell commented that the recent failure of one of the Clerks laptops had highlighted the need for central data storage,

## **13. Civic Pride “Bee Friendly in Lavenham” Motion: To approve financial support of up to £3,000 for “Bee Friendly in Lavenham.”**

Cllr Muckian tabled her paper. Cllr Muckian acknowledged that permissions would be needed from Suffolk CC. Cllr Lamont commented that costs and efforts of watering must not be under-estimated. Cllr Muckian explained that Hidden Gardens had agreed to contribute towards funding the watering. It was agreed that Cllr Muckian would bring this back to Council having discussed further with Cllr Lamont's wife who has been watering other planters in Lavenham.

## **14. Community Infrastructure**

**14.a Council is recommended to confirm that the partial night-lighting schedule is considered permanent.**

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


14.b **Identifying and Utilising Land Suitable for Tree Planting & Allotments** Receive and note report from Councillor Morrey.

Clr Morrey tabled her report. It was received and noted. Cllr Arthey suggested buying land with CIL money.

**15. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

 ..... Date: 27 April 2023

Chairman