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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 6th[t] July 2023, commencing 7.30 pm. in the Village Hall.
Full reports and supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, July 2023 Meeting Pack. Paper copies are also available.

Present:

Cllrs Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Lizzie Falconer, Iain Lamont, Mary Morrey, Janice Muckian, Irene Mitchell and Jane Ranzetta

Babergh District Cllrs Margaret Maybury, Paul Clover.
County Councillor: Robert Lindsay
Ten members of the public.

1. Apologies and approval of absences

Apologies received from Cllr Chick.
Absence has been explained and is approved.

Proposed by Cllr Falconer seconded by Cllr Muckian, carried.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Muckian declared an interest in Application for Planning Permission DC/23/02493 – The Bays, Bears Lane, Lavenham. Cllr Muckian agreed not to speak or vote on the Application but was permitted to remain in the room.

3. Requests for Dispensation

The Clerk reported that dispensation requests had been received and granted as follows:

a) Cllr Mitchell as documented in the minutes of the June 1 meeting.
b) Cllrs Chick, Falconer, Lamont, Morrey, Ranzetta had all been granted dispensations for the period up to the Council's Annual Meeting in 2024 to speak and vote on matters with respect to Water St unless they specifically relate to their Disposable Pecuniary Interests.
c) Cllr Muckian had been granted a dispensation for the period up to the Council's Annual Meeting in 2024 to speak and vote on matters with respect to High St unless they specifically relate to her Disposable Pecuniary Interest.

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

Cllr Morrey proposed, seconded by Cllr Ranzetta.

Decision: Minutes of 1st June 2023 were approved with no votes against or abstentions.

5. Public participation session

A Member of the Public drew the Councils attention to the dilapidated nature of the Meadow Close play area commenting that the equipment needs repair and cleaning, that the grass is cut insufficiently regularly and that the fencing is inadequate.

The Chair responded that it was agreed that the playground was the responsibility of Babergh DC but that she would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter further, outside the meeting, with the Member of the Public.

A Member of the Public referred to the draft Neighbourhood Plan and how it will shape the development of the village until 2037 and beyond explaining that in his opinion a summary should have been sent to every household. He explained that he was particularly concerned that the omission of the land to the west of Park Road as an ALLS (an Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity) would give encouragement to the development of high value homes on Park Road.

A Member of the Public spoke in support of the application for Planning Permission for an extension of 'Carramore' a house on Sudbury Road. Two members of the Public spoke of their concerns with respect to the loss of light to neighbouring properties and possible damage during construction or later house maintenance to the nearby Heritage wall.

A Member of the Public enquired as to progress with the 20mph scheme and whether signs will need to be put up. The Chair responded that the latest plans for the scheme were being reviewed and that signs will be required with consideration given to the appropriate design in a conservation area.

The Chair then referred to the concerns raised by the Member of the Public in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan explaining that there had been considerable correspondence with the Member of the Public about his views whilst the Plan was being drafted which had not led to Council considering that the plan needed, in these regards, revising. The Neighbourhood Plan is now in the Regulation 16 Consultation period and the Chair urged all those who have concerns to use the prescribed objection mechanisms.

6. <u>Local Authority Councillors' Reports</u>

6a Received:
An oral report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay about the results of the Traffic Survey carried out following the removal of the priority signs on Water St.

Noted:
The trial showed an increase in conflicts i.e queues and vehicles having to reverse. The trial unfortunately occurred during a diversion period which significantly increased traffic on Water St. The Survey also showed that a large proportion of the 'conflicts' were due to parked cars which would imply that the 'conflicts' are not related to whether there are or are not signs. Cllr Lindsay concluded by suggesting that if removal of the signs is not making a significant difference, then removal is worth doing for aesthetic and economic reasons since making the temporary buildouts permanent will be much cheaper without signs.

Discussion:
Cllr Falconer: Commented that the removal of the signs has not improved anything, speeding traffic remains a concern as is the quantity of lorries going in both directions.

Cllr Ranzetta: Emphasised that lorries are the main issue causing damage to houses and that the build outs were an attempt to protect properties many of which are listed. She further noted that over-sized lorries travelling east are effectively breaking the law and enforcement is required.

Cllr Lamont: Lorries and signage are separate issues.

6b Received:
An oral report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay advising the status of the 20mph scheme explaining that whilst it does not cover every road in the village and that he would be in favour of further coverage that it 'is probably the best we can get from Highways – given the council's current restrictive policy on 20mph speed limits. These criteria insist that lots of money is spent on kerb build outs in areas that do not comply with their strict criteria about average speeds. So wider 20mph would need more money from the community. As a rough idea, the Bildeston 20mph scheme is going to cost £28k with just signs and no build outs (plus £8k design costs)'.

6c Received:
An oral report from District Cllr Maybury explaining that, in her opinion, little is currently going on at Babergh Council as Cabinet has not yet determined its priorities. She had walked the village with Public Realm and had spoken with the Chief Enforcement Office who had explained that tickets were not being issued as the lines are too faded. She is aware of the Meadow Close Play Area issues and has mentioned this to Babergh Public Realm and written in support of the CIL bid for Generator hook up.

6d Received:
An oral report from District Councillor Clover reporting the installation of four extra EV charge points in the Church St Car Park.

Parish Councillors remarks:
The Chair noted that conversion of 4 car parking spaces without consultation with the Parish Council was regrettable and that this would not help to alleviate the on-street parking stress the village experiences on a regular basis. It was also deeply unfortunate that 4 further EV points had been installed without any evidence of need, particularly in view of the suspension of the Parish Council owned EV points in Prentice Street and Water Street because of the high cost of energy.

7. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported:

A) The vintage VW weekend had been a great success and she wished to thank many for welcoming it to the village Particular thanks are due to John Heeks for setting out traffic cones in Market Place and Andrew Butcher for managing parking restrictions on Lower Road and access to 1st Meadow. Public donations of £50 were collected at 1st Meadow.
B) She had written to the Chief Executive of Babergh Council with respect to the absence of communication in advance to the Council as to the replacement of gas supply pipes by Cadent in Butfield, Sudbury Road, Meadow Close and Tenterpiece and the conversion of 4 car parking spaces to EV charge points in The Cock Inn Car Park. It was acknowledged that some communication had been made by Babergh Officers and Cadent to those most directly effected by the gas works but residents, not directly effected, had been un-necessarily distressed. A response is awaited.
C) She had considered the concerns raised by a Member of the Public at the May 18 meeting as to the lack of dropped kerbs and had great sympathy with the concerns raised adding that this will be considered further.
D) It had now been established that Babergh Council in 2018 gave permission to the allotments and the car parking for them being across the railway walk from The Paddocks development. Whilst extremely regrettable the legal position was now clear.
E) That in response to comments made in various fora concerning bio-diversity measures the Council will work with Babergh DC to draw up a bio-diversity plan for growing season 2024.
F) She had reported five potholes by the church using the on-line reporting tool.

8. LNP2 Regulation 16 Consultation

Received:
The report prepared by LNP Revision Group Leader.

Noted from the Report:
That 'Regulation 16' consultation on the draft revised Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan commenced on Monday 3rd July, and will end at 4pm on Friday 18th August.

BDC will now look to appoint an examiner and liaise with the Parish Council over choice.

Examination once started could take two to three months. It will be conducted in public, which means all communications will be published on a dedicated web page on the BDC website

If minded to make a significant change, the examiner will normally run a scenario with the Parish Council as to how this can best be done.

Before the end of examination, there will be a Fact Check report. This is a draft report issued by the examiner inviting BDC and the Parish Council to correct factual errors only. This will be followed by the actual final report.

Following the close of the examination, the Parish Council and BDC are expected to work together to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum. This is for local voters to decide whether LNP2 should be adopted in place of the (current) 2016 Plan.

Discussion:

Cllr Ranzetta asked exactly what the referendum question will be. Cllr Mitchell responded that she would research and report back.

Cllr Mitchell thanked the LNP group for its work and thanked the Clerk for publicising the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Notice Boards and Parish Council website.

9. Planning

Received: A report and recommendations from the Planning Group.

a) DC/23/02303 | Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area, 45 And 46 High Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9PY. Fell 1No. Ash (T1), Fell 1No. Pare (T1). Comments by 7th July.

Councillors noted the need to protect trees.

Motion: This application should be approved subject to the planting nearby of two replacement, indigenous, trees'.

b) DC/23/02594 – Application for consent to carry out works to tree(s) protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Old Rectory, Church Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9SA Fell 1 No. Holm Oak (T1) Comments by 7th July.

Motion 'Council considers that this application be refused. Every effort should be made to save the tree. In the event that felling is the only option, we strongly urge the planting of another tree within the garden. The Parish Council considers that felling should only take place as an absolute last option after a period of observation has taken place'.

Motions 9a and 9b taken together

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta. Seconded: Cllr Muckian

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

c) DC/23/02828 – Application for works to tree(s) in a conservation area. The Little House, Lady Street, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RA. Fell 1 No. Gleditsia (T1) Comments by 7th July

Councillors noted that this tree appears to be substantially diseased.

Motion 'Council recommends that this application be approved'

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta. Seconded: Cllr Muckian.

Decision: Approved with six votes for and two against.

d) DC/23/02493 – Application for Planning Permission. The Bays, Bears Lane, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RT Householder Application - Remodel bungalow, upgrade building fabric and erect front link extension to ancillary building. Comments by 7th July

Cllr Lamont displayed on screen the key documents and drawings. Councillors commented that the proposal is an improvement on the current building.

Motion: Council recommends that this application be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta. Seconded: Cllr Falconer

Decision: Approved unanimously by those Councillors present except Cllr Muckian who neither spoke or voted.

e) DC/23/02450 – Application for Planning Permission. Carramore, Sudbury Road, Lavenham, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9SB. Householder Application - Erection of first floor side and single storey rear extensions. Comments by 7th July.

Reported:

The Planning Group had considered the drawings submitted on May 24th and May 30th and had visited the site. The drawings showed two upper floor extensions to existing ground floor garages at both the north and south of the main building and reported:

'The north first floor extension has two issues. The rear window overlooks the properties at 1 and 3 The Glebe. The 1st floor pitch roof extension will cast a shadow over the rear of 1 The Glebe during the day as it is directly to the south of this neighbouring property. This affects their amenities. Hence, it is contrary to policy D3 of the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 2016. The proposal as presented represents an over-massing of the plot as seen from the street. Recommend Refusal'.

In presenting the Planning Group recommendations, Cllr Lamont stated that following a site inspection, in his opinion, the rear window overlooking issue was not as significant as anticipated.

Members of the Public drew to the attention of the Chair that the Babergh Planning portal had been updated on 4th July and was now showing drawings that did not include a 2nd floor extension on the southern side.

Cllr Lamont enquired of the Clerk whether revised drawings has been forwarded by the Planning Authority. The Clerk advised that no revised drawings had been received either in hard copy, or email notification.

The Chair guided that she would make enquiries with the Planning Authority about this lapse in process and sought consensus from Councillors to proceed with consideration of the application of the basis of drawings submitted on 24th and 30th May AND 4th July in order to expedite a conclusion on this application.

Cllr Lamont displayed all the drawings and spoke to each drawing in turn, highlighting the changes from one set to the other. Following Cllr Lamont's presentation, the Chair invited each Councillor to offer their views.

Parish Councillor Views:

Cllr Ranzetta commented that the proposal does not enhance the character of the village, is an over-development of the plot and is out of scale to the neighbouring buildings and will lead to loss of light to neighbouring properties. She made reference to planning policies that demonstrate this proposal is not in keeping with the style and character of Lavenham. Specifically, Cllr Ranzetta drew attention to D1 LNP 2016, draft LNP2 LAV 38 5b and LP03 of the draft Joint Local Plan.

A paper highlighting the relevant policies was put on screen for all Councillors to refer to. This stated:

LNP Policy D1

"Outside the Conservation area this means contributing positively to the street scene..... and by being of a height ***and scale*** *that is in keeping with neighbouring buildings"*

LNP2 Regulation 16 version Page 90 - Policy LAV 38: Design and character
"Care should be taken to ensure new dwellings or residential extensions do not result in over development of individual plots or out of scale in relation to neighbouring buildings"

This plan is not made but will carry some weight.

The Draft Joint Plan was modified in 2023 but no apparent changes have been made to LP03 Policy LP03 - Residential Extensions and Conversions 1) Proposals for development within the

curtilage of existing dwellings, extensions to existing dwellings or conversions within residential dwelling curtilage may be permitted providing they;
a) Are in keeping with the size, scale, mass, design and materials of the existing dwelling and wider setting.
b) Will not result in over-development of the plot or within the curtilage or create an incongruous impact. The cumulative effects of a number of extensions or conversions to the existing dwelling or dwelling curtilage will be regarded as a material consideration.

Cllr Falconer explained that in her opinion it was not a little extension in either the 1st or 2nd set of drawings and was over-development.
Cllr Morrey drew attention to the over-shadowing effect of the proposals.
Cllrs Bourne and Muckian noted that despite a reduction in the second drawings submitted 4th July, it is still too large and Cllr Domoney concurred with this view.

Motion: Council recommends that this application be refused.

Proposed: Cllr Falconer
Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta.

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

10. Clerk/RFO Report

10.a Draft Accounts for the month ended 31 May 2023.

Received:

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.

Parish Councillors Discussion:

Cllr Lamont asked as to the earmarking of funds for the replacement of the LED streetlights. The Clerk explained that at all levels of government except Parish Councils the requirement is to depreciate such items so that there is not a write down of the items when they are replaced. The earmark ensures that General Reserves are not overstated.

Motion: to approve Draft Accounts for the month ended 31 May 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Falconer
Seconded: Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

10.b Receipts and Payments for the month ended 31 May 2023.

Received:

A report listing the receipts of £8,263.87 and payments £16,975.32 in the month

Motion: To approve Receipts and Payments for the month ended 31 May 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta
Seconded: Cllr Muckian

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

10.c Progress update of Management Matters

The Clerk has now assumed responsibility for updating the website and thanked Cllr Morrey for her tuition. The new bins for the Market Place were now scheduled for installation on July 19. A programme of bench cleaning and bin cleaning is now underway

10.d Criteria for use of Restricted Reserves.

Received : A report setting out details of restricted reserves. The Council has two funds 'Restricted Reserves' which it must be careful to use as the Donors expect. These are in addition to the Neighbourhood CIL Fund the use of which is controlled by legislation.

Noted: Street Fair Fund
Policy adopted on 13 January 2022 states, that this is a 'ringfenced fund for use by Lavenham Parish Council to support Celebratory Events that benefit the whole village'.

Noted: Lavenham Funds in Trust
This fund has been in place for many years. A report called 'Earmarked Expenditure Revision 2 Feb 2021 CR' dated February 2021 describes this as being for 'Village Sign repaint'. Proposed policy as to the use of this fund is that it shall be used solely for the repair including repaint of the Village Sign.

Motion: Council is asked to approve criteria for use of Restricted Reserves.
Proposed: Cllr Bourne
Seconded: Cllr Falconer

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

10e Council is asked to approve the Complaints Policy and the related Complaints about Councillors policy.

Received: A report from the Clerk, outlining a general Complaints Policy covering complaints to the Council from the public about Council employees, Councillors and Council Administration / Procedures and a separate policy specifically addressing the management of a complaint against a Councillor.

Noted: That it is essential for the integrity of the Council that these pathways exist and are publicised, highlighting that Complaints about Councillors are handled by the Principal Authority, in our case Babergh District Council.

Motion: Council is asked to approve the Complaints Policy and the related Complaints about Councillors policy.

Proposed: Cllr Falconer
Seconded: Cllr Morrey

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

11. Lavenham Football Club

Received:
Cllr Mitchell reported that the Lavenham Football club has expanded wonderfully over recent years with around 100 young people regularly engaged in sport. Presently, recycling and general waste in excess of the capacity of the two bins already provided by the Community Council, is kindly being taken by local businesses who also generously sponsor the Club. The cost of a normal household bin emptied fortnightly is £233 per annum. This has been discussed with the Community Council and it has confirmed that they would take responsibility for ordering and managing refuse collection for bins paid for by the Parish Council.

Parish Councillor Discussion:
Cllr Lamont asked whether the Community Council received rent from the Football Club. Cllr Mitchell replied that they did but that support and partnership of the Parish Council would benefit all.

Motion: That the Parish Council sponsors one additional recycling bin at a cost of £233 per annum. Should this prove insufficient, the Council is also asked to approve a further household general waste bin at £290 per annum without the need for reference back to the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell
Seconded: Cllr Bourne

Decision: Approved with 1 vote against and no abstentions.

12. The Churchyard

Reported and Noted:
By the Clerk that Buxus moth caterpillars are infesting the box bushes in the Churchyard and that a first contractor had indicated that treatment would cost approaching £3,000 and would need to be repeated each year. A second contractor has been recommended to the Council, and he has arranged for this contractor to visit the site, assess the situation and recommend a programme of pest control for initial comparative purposes.

13. Parish Council Social Media Policy Proposal

Received:
A report from Cllr Falconer setting out the need for Council to consider:

- a social media policy
- establishing a social media presence and
- guiding principles on a social media account could be used to support the work of the Council

The report detailed that the Council has traditionally engaged with the Community through public noticeboards and the Lavenham Life magazine. Council is aware that many in the community are left untouched by these forms of communication and that many demographic groups are ignored by this approach.

In recent years it has established a website to inform the public and this has been improved recently. A key method of quickly getting important announcements across is through Social Media. There are over 3,500 registered users of the Lavenham Facebook page. It is not proposed that the Council enter into online debates or arguments about the Council's work but when a straightforward question is asked, the Clerk would be empowered to respond. The Clerk would moderate the account and be supported in this by a Councillor where needed.

The proposed policy also sets out a guide for Councillors' private interaction with Social Media.

Parish Councillor Discussion:
Cllr Lamont asked as to whether the Council would enter into debate on Social Media and whether the Account would be moderated. The Clerk referred Cllr Lamont to the report.

Motion: Council is asked to approve the establishment of a Parish Council Social Media Account and the policy governing its application

Proposed: Cllr Falconer
Seconded: Cllr Morrey

Decision: Approved with no votes against and 1 abstention.

14. To receive a report from the Traffic Working Party

District Cllr Maybury as Chair of the Traffic Working Party was invited to present this report.

Reported:
Cllr Maybury explained the history of the Traffic Working Party and its proposal that an external objective strategic study should be conducted.

The Lavenham Traffic Working Party was set up in 2022. The remit was originally to investigate the perceived static parking issues within the village and provide recommendations to the Parish Council for consideration. However, it became evident that we also needed to consider movement of people and vehicles.

In terms of traffic, the challenge is to find an approach which balances the needs of local businesses and residents as well as encouraging tourism related to the heritage asset of the village (which some businesses also rely on).

The proposed study will include a survey of static traffic, an assessment of parking requirements, review of traffic signage, consideration of pedestrian safety and sustainable transport solutions with the overall aim being to reduce the impact of parking and congestion within the streets and key public spaces to improve the village environment as a whole.

This study should not cost as much as £5,000 but that amount was proposed to ensure that the study was not delayed by the need to come back to Council for additional funding.

Motion: Council is asked to approve the report and award funding of up to £5,000 for an external study to be funded from NCIL

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta
Seconded: Cllr Muckian

Decision: Approved with no votes against and no abstentions.

15. Deferrals

As the meeting had been lengthy the Chair sought consensus and listed items 15, 16 and 17 were deferred to the next meeting due to the late hour. The meeting closed at 10.05pm.

16. Date of next meeting

Thursday 3rd August, 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

3rd August 2023