

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllr C Morgan (Chair), Cllr J Evans (Vice Chair), Cllrs S Felgate, P King, and S Whitelaw. County Cllr J Finch and 8 members of the public attended in person. D Hattrell (Clerk) attended by Video link.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Representatives from St Matthews Church had attended to observe the financial item of support to their toilet and kitchen servery project. The A134 sign pointing towards the High Road is overgrown in the hedge. The resident agreed to report on the Highways Reporting Tool. Some delays have been noted with the emptying of the waste bins in the Village. It was agreed to monitor the situation and contact the Clerk in the event of further problems - **Action All.**

**APOLOGIES:** were received and accepted from Cllr Tina Taylor and District Cllr Lee Parker also sent his apologies.

**FUTURE RESIGNATION:** Cllr Sue Felgate confirmed she would be resigning from the Parish Council (PC) at the end of the year. This is due to personal circumstances. She was thanked for all she had done.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST:** Nothing was declared.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025:** These were accepted as a true record.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:** Nothing was raised.

**UPDATES FROM COMMUNITY, ORGANISATIONS AND WARDENS ON URGENT MATTERS:**

Reports were provided for the Village Hall, Footpaths, Village Trees, Village Green, Community Woodland and from the Police Website.

**Village Hall Report**

The Leavenheath Village Hall Management Committee (LVH) had their AGM on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, and were joined by ten members of the public whose contributions were extremely helpful. Their 'review of the year' was read by John Garrett, which detailed the ups and downs over the last year. One of the key challenges has been the loss of income from the closure of Ladybirds, and the difficulty in filling the spaces left in the timetable. Anyone who would like to read the 'review of the year' can find it on their website: [www.leavenheathvillage.com](http://www.leavenheathvillage.com) Although the last year has been a year of endings, with the loss Ladybirds, and committee members Yvonne Roder (former Chair), Paul Mortlock and Marion Jones, it has also been a year of beginnings! They have gained five new committee members; added new clubs to the timetable; established a successful social media presence; planned & held a very successful Quiz Night in September and completed phase 1 of 2 to make the car park and hall entrance more accessible for those with mobility difficulties.

LVH is a registered charity, and the only income comes from hire fees and fund-raising events. The village hall costs an awful lot of time and money to run, and all members of the committee are volunteers. They all care deeply about the village hall as a community asset, which is why they are always trying to find ways to fund maintenance and improvements. But this can only happen with the support of the community - supporting *any* of the village hall events; hiring the hall for a children's birthday party; joining one of the many clubs and groups - will all make a huge difference to the village hall's income.

Cllr J Evans spoke of an impressive Annual Meeting of the Village Hall which he attended.

**Tree Warden's Report** - There was nothing to report.

**Footpath Warden's Report** - Cllr Sue Felgate gave a report as Footpath Warden and confirmed FP13 off Edies Lane where the owners had planted a new hedge was being investigated by the County Council (SCC). SCC have recently had a change of staff which has led to some delays. In respect of FP14 at Orchard Walk, the issue with the landowner's fence at an angle is being resolved with the landowner. On FP18, the PC emailed the Golf Club to seek some assistance. They have cleared the path, so it was agreed for the Clerk to email thanking them - **Action Clerk.**

**Police Report** -

Crimes reported in August

1 x Burglary - On or near Radleys Lane (Under investigation)

1 x Burglary - On or near Harrow Street (Investigation complete, no suspect identified)

Four crimes in SBN Golf Club area

2 x Violence and sexual offences (Unable to prosecute suspects)

1 x Other theft (Under investigation)

1 x Vehicle Crime (Under investigation)

**Village Green Report**

Village Green Entrance has been completed and the Invoice settled between meetings - see listed payment. This was delegated during the July 25 PC Meeting. The Representative from the Village Green has instigated regular checks of the Play Equipment to note any obvious issues. The timing of these inspections is being logged in accordance with our insurer's requirements. The item observed is grass coming through the matting near some of the equipment, together with mole hills. It was agreed to report to the contractor to investigate - **Action Clerk.**

Further suggestions from the project team in relation to the Playground were noted as follows: -

- A Funding Contributor sign
- An internal Litter Bin. A potential location has been passed to BDC Public Realms for approval. Subject to approval this can be ordered and installed.

- Two of the original basic timber benches were beyond saving and relocating. There is an offer of 2 six seat Picnic Benches that have been refurbished to be placed in the vicinity of the Play Area.
- It has been noted; dogs are inside the Play Area for whatever reason. Would it be possible to have a duplicate information sign on the second gate entry to the area. The Contractor Kompan will have the template. It is believed to cost about £99.00.
- There has been a substantial increase of the use of the "Octagon" since the Play Area was installed. To ensure a safer environment some repairs, to the roof and especially to the floor need attending to.
- And finally, "Shading". The Play Area is quite expose to bright sunlight and some natural shading may be of benefit in the long term, in the form of some trees.

All these items had been noted by the Village Green Representative and were being investigated. The representative from the Village Green asked whether the existing litter bin could be re-located. He was not in favour of further trees in the vicinity.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr L Parker had sent his apologies and offered to follow up any issues relevant to the District Council. The general report from the District Council had been circulated as usual.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch attended later into the Meeting and his report covered: -

**One Suffolk Plan:** A proposal to replace Suffolk's six councils with one unitary council to save £39.4 million annually and improve local services. The plan includes harmonizing council tax, investing in market towns, empowering local councils, modernizing planning frameworks, and leveraging technology. The proposal has been submitted to the Government for consideration, with a decision expected in early 2026.

**Primary School Applications:** The application window for primary school places is open until January 15, 2026. Last year, 94% of applicants received their first-choice school, and 98.4% received one of their top three preferences.

**Mapping Project:** Suffolk County Council has completed a digital consolidation of the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) of public rights of way, ensuring accurate and accessible records for future generations. Updated maps are available for public viewing and download.

**Devolution Deal:** Suffolk County Council approved the creation of a new mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk, which will bring £1 billion in investment over 30 years. The deal includes a £37.4 million annual investment fund to support infrastructure, housing, education, and economic growth.

**Suffolk Business Board Support:** The Suffolk Business Board supports the devolution deal, emphasizing its potential to empower local leadership, attract investment, and drive economic growth. Suffolk and Norfolk have already secured over £1.3 billion in investment and created more than 15,300 jobs.

**Fostering and Adoption Sessions:** Virtual sessions are available for those interested in fostering or adopting children in the Stour Valley. Flexible options are offered, and interested individuals can contact the team for more information.

He confirmed the Local Government Review is out of their hands now as proposals have gone to central government to consider. Cllr James Finch was asked about the installation of the poles for the Vehicle Activated Signage supplied by the developer in compliance with a planning condition. This Council has been struggling to find a suitable contractor to install the poles and thereafter a contract to regularly move the equipment between the poles. Cllr James Finch felt it would be the responsibility of County Highways to support, so he asked for details to be sent to him – **Action Clerk.** Cllr Sue Felgate chased the bus stops on the A134 and Cllr Finch asked for details of where the stops need to be installed. It was noted that there would be insufficient space for covered shelters, however, properly marked stops would be helpful – **Action Cllr S Felgate.** Cllr Sue Whitelaw asked about the locations of the grit bins which are overgrown in hedges. It was noted that the criteria changed some years ago not allowing bins to be filled on gritting routes. With this information, she will try to locate any remaining bins and update the asset list accordingly – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw.**

**URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS:** These items were discussed elsewhere in the Meeting.

**LEAVENHEATH EVENTS:** The Santa’s Sleigh Risk Assessment and confirmation that Leavenheath Events were staging the event with assistance from the Scouts was gratefully received. The budget had been circulated between meetings, and this was duly approved. The Fun and Games Night budget had been provided and members voted to approve the budget.

Discussions have taken place regarding the best forum for Leavenheath Events to build upon following the initial support from the PC. The early years of Leavenheath Events have been very successful, and a buffer has accumulated to help support Leavenheath Events move to independent management. A small charity or other suitable community structure should be considered once the principle is agreed. Cllr J Evans explained the situation and offered support from the PC in the set up. It was noted Leavenheath Events had a Meeting the following day to consider the next steps. Cllr S Whitelaw felt that in the long run it will be easier for Leavenheath Events to run their own affairs. The PC asked to be kept fully informed.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting.

**FINANCE:** The Bank Balances as of 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were £21,191.94 in the Community Account and £30,135.93 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £51,327.87.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

<b>Cheque No.</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b><u>At 31<sup>st</sup> October</u></b>			
Funds Transfer	648.00	Moser Ground care	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	1110.95	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	589.99	BHF Shops Ltd	Donation L/Events Defib cabinet
Funds Transfer	528.73	Clear Ins Mgmt Ltd	PC Insurance
Funds Transfer	32.00	Leavenheath VH	hall hire

Funds Transfer	12.00	Leavenheath VH	LE – General
Funds Transfer	3840.00	Border Construction	VG – Playground path
<b><u>At 30<sup>th</sup> September</u></b>			
Funds Transfer	1134.15	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	648.00	Moser Ground care	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	252.00	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit Fee
Funds Transfer	190.00	Daniel Saliba	VH Electrics
Funds Transfer	23.20	C Morgan	Chairs Expenses

The above payments were resolved.

**Half Year Budget Review** – this had been circulated to members between meetings, and it was noted all was on track. The half year financial position had been noted by the PC.

**Review of Standing Orders** – these had been reviewed and tailored from the new model orders issued by NALC. The PC resolved to approve these – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw to upload to the website.**

**Village Hall solar project** – a letter from LVH had been circulated between meetings seeking financial support with this project. The principle of support was agreed, a suitable sum to be recommended by the Finance Working Group and agreed at a future PC Meeting – **Action Finance Working Group.**

**St Matthews toilet and server project** – an email had been circulated between meetings seeking financial support with this project. The principle of support was agreed, a suitable sum to be recommended by the Finance Working Group and agreed at a future PC Meeting – **Action Finance Working Group.**

*(It can be noted that the previous legal restriction to support churches has been clarified, so support can be made under our General Power of Competence).*

**Any Other Urgent financial matters.** The Zoom Finance Working Group Meeting to help the PC prepare the Annual Budget was arranged for 6.30 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – Cllrs Evans, King and Whitelaw and Clerk are due to attend – **Action Clerk to provide the documentation.**

**IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE:** Various ideas have been suggested for future funding including more and larger noticeboards, a marquee for events, removal of weeds from pavement edges, further lighting along the high road near the village green and path around village green. Cllr S Whitelaw wondered whether the community benefit being offered by the Bramford to Twinstead pylons would cover the cost of a path around the village green. The Chair agreed to complete the online survey with this in mind – **Action Chair.** Better use of the existing noticeboards was suggested ahead of ordering new ones. Lighting could have differing views and would be a costly project. The cost and the management of a marquee may not be viable. The surplus roadside weeds are the responsibility of County Highways; however, the PC could consider contracting some work to enhance the Village between attendances by SCC. We could investigate some pricing for this type of work – **Action Finance Working Group.**

**MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS:** Cllr S Whitelaw has located the 7 Street lights owned by the PC in the vicinity of Oaklands, however, one is not working. She will provide information to the Clerk for reporting - **Action Cllr S Whitelaw and Clerk.**

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:** Some adverting boards have appeared, and details were given to Cllr J Evans to investigate and potentially take down - **Action Cllr J Evans.**

The meeting closed at **8.28 p.m.**

**The next PC Meeting is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026.**

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**Planning Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**The following Applications were concluded by the Planning Authority: -**

- 1) **19 Elm Tree Lane** - Consent was granted for the felling of protected oak - **DC/25/03858**
- 2) Planning Permission for change of use of Community Shop at **Hare and Hounds, Harrow Street** was granted subject to certain conditions including that the shop cannot be sold separately from the Public House, so it continues to support the viability of the pub. - **DC/25/03411.**

**The following Planning Applications were discussed: -**

- A) **Hare Cottage, Harrow Street** - Household application for conversion of existing cart lodge to annex - **DC/25/04472.**

The PC had **No Objections** between Meetings.

- B) Proposed conversion of outbuilding to dwelling at **Hynards, Harrow Street** - **DC/25/04443.**

**No Objections** were agreed providing there is a condition linking the dwelling to the host property and not allowing it to be used or sold separately.

- C) Any other urgent Planning Matters including any progress with updating **Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan** in view of new government housing targets. No progress had been noted. However, comments were made that the property market had slowed.