

**MINUTES of the 71st ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT LEAVENHEATH** on 7th May 2025 at 7 p.m. held at The Village Hall, Leavenheath.

**PRESENT:** Around 25 people present including Councillors (Cllrs). Cllr Clare Morgan opened the meeting as the Parish Council (PC) Chair for the past year.

**APOLOGIES:** were received from Debbie Hattrell (Clerk).

**MINUTES OF 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024** were accepted as a true record.

### **Police Report**

PC Brendon McKenna talked about the new structure for community policing. From the team based in Sudbury, PC McKenna covers a rural area including Leavenheath. Leavenheath has very low crime rates. He discussed how to report crime online, with community policing Sudbury, better than calling 101 which is slow to answer. He left some cards with website details to report concerns or incidents.

### **District Council Report**

District Cllr Lee Parker read his report:

Food waste collections were starting 2026 plus an additional recycling bin

Deborah Saw was elected as Babergh leader

Listed buildings energy updates were due to happen.

Last August Babergh District Council (BDC) published a response to the pylon proposals

Kingfisher Leisure Centre, which is 40 yrs old, has improvement works going ahead.

Devolution: Consultation finished last month awaiting governments response.

Elections were scheduled for next May; however, changes will be short-lived due to re-structuring.

Hadleigh new housing was built on the former BDC office land

Budget was facing significant pressures.

Finally, the Joint Local Plan needs reviewing due to new housing targets.

There was questioning about the future of PCs, no change is anticipated, however, they may be taking on more responsibility.

**Parish Council Chairmans report,** Cllr Clare Morgan, Chair, talked about challenges facing the Parish and Parish Council, and the need for more volunteers in many different roles. She thanked local organisations and volunteers including the Community Pantry, Defibrillator Team, Events Committee, Village Hall Committee.

Opportunities included litter picking, and path clearing.

Supportive businesses were also thanked.

Neighborhood plan requires updating, so volunteers were needed.

The New Playground was to be opening soon.

Thanks went to District Cllr Lee Parker and County Cllr James Finch for their support.

Thanks to PC members, who were trialing 6 meetings a year. She asked for new members to join.

Thanks to Paul Mortlock, our previous Chair, for all he has done and continues to do for the Village including the Village Green.

**Finance report:** Read by Cllr Clare Morgan, Chair, and is available on PC website

**Village Hall Report** was read by Abby Simpson from the VH Committee: Available on PC website.

There was questioning about the e-charging point, Cllr Sally Whitelaw said they were hoping it will be in place by next summer.

**Village Green report:** Read by Paul Mortlock, available on PC Website.

**Neighbourhood planning:** Clare talked about the Committee who did great work to get the plan published, however, it now needs updating.

Lee talked about targets, potentially some additional 228 dwellings for Leavenheath and the importance of having a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chair thanked Pete Reason for his work and asked for more volunteers.

**Leavenheath Events:** Greg Deeks gave his report which is available on the PC Website.

**Playground:** Greg Deeks read his report, available on the PC Website. The work on the new Playground was due to start and finish in the current month, May. The opening by MP James Cartilidge was to take place at the Fete.

**Community Pantry and Hardship fund,** Cllr Jeremy Evans read the report, available on the PC Website.

**Friends of St Matthews,** Cllr Jeremy Evans read report, available on the PC Website.

### **Suffolk County Council (SCC) Report**

County Cllr James Finch referred to his report which is available on the PC Website:

He talked about Special Educational needs (SEN) and that the SCC was not happy with the system, resulting in huge pressure on council budget. A new independent Chair has been appointed to bring forward reforms. Potholes were worse on minor roads. SCC opposed the new Sunnica Solar Farm. To support residents, community electric vehicles were due to be trialed at locations in Suffolk and group buying of solar and battery storage was being organized. SCC was calling on government to recognize the impact of Storm Babette, and fund further flood defenses. The SCC leaders had proposed one Council for Suffolk and Cllr Finch spoke of certain benefits were this to happen. County Cllr James Finch was likely to be standing down next May 26.

**Footpaths:** Cllr Sue Felgate introduced herself as the new warden.

Kingsland lane was mentioned as very problematic when wet in winter

The meeting ended at **8.30 pm.**