

MINUTES of the 69th ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT LEAVENHEATH on 15th March 2023 held at The Village Hall, Leavenheath.

PRESENT: Around 22 people present including Councillors (Cllrs) and Clerk. Cllr Paul Mortlock opened the meeting as the Parish Council (PC) Chair for the past year by welcoming everyone to the 69th Annual Parish Meeting and confirming this was the second Annual Parish Meeting since Covid.

APOLOGIES: County Cllr J Finch.

MINUTES OF 31st May 2022: Were accepted as a true record.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr Lee Parker gave a 4-year appraisal of developments at Babergh District Council (BDC) and confirmed the 2023-24 budget was looking for an increase of 2.9% from residents. The Joint Local Plan had not been delivered and was now separated into two parts. The Neighbourhood Plan for Leavenheath was almost at Referendum Stage and he congratulated all involved. Planning was successfully delivering Affordable Homes and Corks Lane re-development was finally underway. He was proud of the many grants that have been issued by BDC. Improvement to online working was delivered during and continues after the pandemic. Recycling levels have increased, the planting of trees has been supported and investment had been made into the Leisure Centres in Sudbury and Hadleigh. He reminded the meeting about the forthcoming Elections and thanked the PC and Clerk for on-going support.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: The Chairman read the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Report in the Absence of County Cllr James Finch. It covered that fees for road closures were to be waived to celebrate the King's Coronation. Suffolk Archives are looking for volunteers in their branches in Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, and Ipswich. Suffolk Archives collects, preserves, and shares over 900 year's worth of Suffolk's rich history. An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen the reform of special educational needs and disabilities services at SCC. Suffolk Walking Festival returns to celebrate its 15th year. The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services Community Risk Management Plan has been finalised. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue.

CHAIRMANS REPORT: Cllr Paul Mortlock delivered his report as the Chair of the PC. He started by reporting the sad loss of Cllr Richard Cowell just before Christmas. For those that didn't know him, he was our documents man, keeper of asset register and a keen helper in our local Royston wood. To the Chair personally he was a voice to make sure things got done. He will be sorely missed. Leavenheath Events team organised Jubilee celebrations, with support from the PC and Village Hall (VH), the whole village was brought together to mark the platinum anniversary of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (96 years old and 70 years on the throne)

This council also has supported the following: -

- Start-up of Warm space event held in this hall every 2 weeks since January
- Quiet Lane signs - If you haven't already seen the signs as you go out of the village towards Assington, we have another 3 sets for our lanes -Plough Lane: Harrow Street (past Oaklands) and Keepers Lane.
- Tenders were out to restore the Village sign – due soon
- Monies to reprint walking leaflets
- And our planning committee guides the PC, with the help of our Neighbourhood plan (NP), to inform BDC of the village's views.

- Dog poo bins – placement and installation - All exciting stuff!!

If you would like to know more on what the council does, an insight into the village, we are keen to fill the vacancies we have. We would like new input, new views to help split the tasks that are presented to us. Thanks to the present councillors for their support this year and the unsung heroes that help in the village, for the village – including litter pickers. We need more people to be involved.....

REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS: Reports were given from the VH, Village Green, Tree Warden, Footpath Warden, Community Speedwatch, the playground project, the Neighbourhood Plan, the W.I, the PCC St Matthew's, the Friends of St Matthew's, and the Community Woodland. All Committee members were thanked for all their hard work. The VH is central to many of the varied activities held in Leavenheath. Who owns the VH was still be investigated, but a small team act as Trustees to oversee the running of the VH. The VH committee welcomes new members to help with this task. The hall is used by all ages, from the Ladybirds baby and toddler group to those who frequent the film night and other activities. The hall is available for hire in between regular users. The Committee tries to respond to the needs of residents, from supporting Leavenheath events and the warm space to allowing take away pizza and fish and chips. You will also notice the electric car charger point in the car park which at the time of the meeting was cheaper than charging at home. The committee have also been trying to make improvements to the hall such as insulation, the doors, and the heating system. The Village Green is still Leavenheath's biggest asset and still the largest cost to the Village. The PC was thanked for on-going financial support. Regular Maintenance includes grass mowing, hedge cutting, repairs and monitoring of play equipment and tree surgery. It had been a busy year for our Tree Warden with numerous visits to residents who had applied for planning permission to prune back trees with Preservation Orders. Various trees had been supplied free of charge to residents. The Footpath Warden was ably assisted by young volunteer Reuben Print as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. The Community Speed Watch program was ready to commence subject to the minimum number of volunteers being available for the first session. The playground project had surveyed the requirements, and the design was based on the findings. Quotations were being obtained and it was the intention of the group to present the proposed plans to both the PC and residents. Cllr D Kingham confirmed the NP Committee were waiting for the date of the Referendum.

LEAVENHEATH EVENTS: The Events Sub Committee of the PC was formed following the success of the Jubilee Celebrations and it was intended to stage 4 to 5 events each year. The funds generated from each event were to help towards future events. The Santa's Sleigh and Fun & Games nights were successful, and the Village Fete was planned for June 2023. The hard-working Committee have many plans and volunteers were thanked for their support.

ELECTOR'S QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS: The PC was questioned about the potential Vehicle Activated Speed Signage. This was a requirement of the Planning for the Lion development. The intention was for the PC to be provided with the signage to put out in certain locations in the Village. The Chairman concluded by explaining that all Committees need further members. He urged residents to step forward and help and encourage others to do the same.

The meeting ended at **8.30 pm**.