

MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 6th December 2023 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

PRESENT: P Mortlock (Chairman), C Morgan, R Bellenie, D Kingham, S Whitelaw, D Hattrell (Clerk), J Finch (County Cllr), L Parker (District Cllr) and 7 members of the public attended in person and 2 attended by Video link.

Y Roder had resigned from the Parish Council. Some potential candidates for co-option were free to attend the January Meeting. However, none could make this meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM: One resident had requested an update regarding the Play Ground Project. It was explained that the project was moving forward until a resignation of the Project Leader. Some further volunteers have come forward and we were optimistic it will start up again in the New Year. The CIL monies coming to the end of the five years could potentially be ring-fenced for this project and the Parish Council is mindful of this. Another resident stated that a number of residents in the Village would like improvements to the Play Equipment. Another resident asked about a private hedge obstructing the footway near the Village Hall/Village Green. The Chair explained that he has asked the resident to cut it back. However, the control lies with the private owner. L Parker agreed to report this aswell. The tone of some residents was critical and the Parish Council listened to concerns and urged more understanding and appreciation. Another resident raised a query regarding one of our documents on our website. This was noted and followed up.

APOLOGIES: None were received.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: R Bellenie and D Kingham repeated their interests in the Planning Decision at 9 Stoke Road.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 1ST NOVEMBER 2023: 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 As we approach the Christmas holidays, the Village Hall Committee would like to thank all their hirers for supporting them again this year. None of this would be possible without the volunteers and committee members who all work so hard to keep the hall up and running for everyone in the village. The additional insulation and heating upgrade has been a major achievement this year and undoubtedly a huge improvement for all hirers. The Warm Space is back for the winter months, all very welcome to come along. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the Committee.

Tree Warden's Report : There was nothing to report.

Footpath Warden's Report: There was nothing to report.

Police Report One crime reported in October - Burglary on or near Kingsland Lane. Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

Village Green Report

There was nothing to report apart from confirming the Play park is inspected annually to ensure the safety of the play equipment.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr L Parker attended and confirmed that Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan was finally adopted by the District Council. Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan is now a statutory part of this document. He again congratulated all involved in producing and securing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Village. The second part will include strategy and allocation. On another matter the District Council has just launched a request to landowners to take part in re-wilding/planting trees in the District. The aim is to get from 10% of the District covered with trees to 15%. There is a new consultation on Listed Properties in order to look at making planning more streamlined for sympathetic efficiency improvements to heritage properties. Finally Babergh District Council has re-stated objections to the Norwich to Tilbury pylons despite the suggestions of cash advantages to those living along the route.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended and confirmed the Cabinet have approved new funding to re-surface residential roads and welcomes Government's announcement of funds ring-fenced over the next ten years. The County Council Adult Social Care Service was rated good overall by the Care Quality Commission. A 1400 year old temple was discovered at Rendlesham. The County Council remain united against the Norwich to Tilbury onshore pylons option. Virtual fostering and adoption sessions continue. J Finch confirmed the budget is challenging. Following his report S Whitelaw asked how the budget for re-surfacing roads will be prioritised. He confirmed it will be based on assessment excluding A & B roads.

CORRESPONDENCE: On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. D Kingham reminded the Parish Council of his research into Planning Consultants fees which is recorded on the correspondence list. The advantage with using the services of the Planning Consultant who worked with the Parish on the Neighbourhood Plan is the knowledge of the Parish she has gained during the Neighbourhood Plan process and obviously a professional understanding of our Plan Policies. C Morgan is the only member of the existing Planning Group going forward (see Resignations recorded at the start and end of the Meeting).

URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS: County Cllr J Finch was asked about the scraping back of the pavement along the A134. J Finch confirmed it was on the list, however, attention had been diverted to recovery from the floods.

FINANCE: The Bank Balances as at 1st December 2023 were £55,551.16 in the Community Account and £15607.22 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £71,158.38

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
<u>As at 1st December</u>			
Funds Transfer	326.04	Tree & Lawn Co	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	1238.42	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs including backdated pay settlement
Funds Transfer	105.00	S Whitelaw	Chairman's Expenses
Funds Transfer	95.00	J Dunkley	LE - Snail Race
Funds Transfer	14.39	D Kingham	NP - Website

Review of Model Publication Scheme

The Clerk had sent round a potential wording for this scheme and it was resolved to adopt this wording - **Action S Whitelaw to put on the Website.**

Leavenheath Events

There report had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. The budget for Fun and Games Night was approved. It was also agreed to split the proceeds of the Santa's Sleigh as suggested with the Scouts. S Whitelaw will be in touch with J Dunkley between meetings to reconcile the Expenditure and Income in relation to staging the Events. This was agreed. S Whitelaw floated an idea of merging certain groups in view of the low number of Committee Members such as the Village Hall and the Events Committee. Also the idea of a Community Council was again raised.

Charity Payments

Members had considered correspondence on the subject of the Community Pantry and Hardship Fund between meetings and a further contribution of £500 was agreed - **Action Clerk.** Other Charities have made contact, details of which were circulated between Meetings.

Finance Budget Meeting on Zoom

It was agreed for the Chairman, C Morgan, S Whitelaw and the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer to meet by Zoom next week to consider budget and make recommendations for next years Precept to the January Parish Council Meeting - **Action Clerk.**

IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE: The Meeting was closed briefly to allow members of the public to make suggestions. One resident suggested it was not unreasonable to divert some reserves to paying a planning consultant to review these development plans. He also suggested a ceiling amount could be agreed. It was noted drainage is a material fact to the planning proposals.

MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS: Nothing was raised.

REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS : R Bellenie and D Kingham resigned from the Parish Council. However, they will still be available in the side lines to help with handover. D Kingham will continue as a community representative on the pylons and R Bellenie still wants to pursue highways safety matters. It was agreed to re-arrange the January Meeting as all the three remaining members need to attend for a quorum.

The meeting closed at **8.30 p.m.**

Planning Meeting on 6th December 2023

The following Decisions were confirmed by the Planning Authority: -

- A) Non Material Amendments were approved to re-locate dwellings on site and other alterations at Land Adjacent to Plough Lane, Leavenheath - **DC/23/05066**
- B) Planning Permission was granted for extensions and garage conversion at Fairview, Stoke Road, Leavenheath - **DC/23/04447**
- C) Conditions were approved regarding trade waste management at 9 Stoke Road, Leavenheath - **DC/23/04904. R Bellenie and D Kingham had declared an interest.**
- D) Planning Permission was granted for extensions at 81 High Road - **DC/23/04938**
- E) Discharge of Conditions were refused for biodiversity and wildlife sensitive lighting and were approved for illumination, electrical vehicle charging points, landscaping and clearance of existing outbuildings at Oak Cottage, Breach Grove, Kingsland Lane - **DC/23/04656.**

The following applications and planning matters were discussed: -

- 1) Land East of Blackthorn Way and Campion Way. Full Planning Application to erect 23 dwellings - **DC/23/03653.**

Objections have been issued ahead of the deadline. This application will go before Committee even if recommended for Refusal by the Planning Officers. As it stands, this seems non-compliant with Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan.

- 2) Outline Planning Application for 14 dwellings and garages (including 4 affordable dwellings) on Land West Of A134 Honey Tye - **DC/23/04425.**

This decision will be delegated to Planning Officers. The Parish Council has issued objections ahead of the deadline. As it stands, this seems non-compliant with the Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan. The response from Highways was late making full consideration of access difficult.

- 3) Outline Planning Application for 40 dwellings (including 14 affordable dwellings) on Land South of High Road - **DC/23/04452.**

This will go before Committee even if the Planning Officers recommend refusal. The Parish Council issued objections ahead of the deadline. The response from Highways was late making full consideration of access difficult. Updates since last meeting include a meeting of a group of residents with the applicant and a revised entrance. Highways are being re-consulted. To date the Parish Council have not received these amendments.

All three of the above applications appear not to comply with Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan. D Kingham explained that the Neighbourhood Plan did not allocate sites, however, the Orchard site was already in the draft Joint Local Plan. He asked L Parker as the approved Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan does not now include allocations, is it now likely that all three applications will not succeed in their current forms. This leaves the Village with a level of uncertainty as residents will be aware that development will inevitably come. L Parker acknowledged that this is a real scenario and also that even if Planning Officers recommend Refusal, the Planning Committee could approve. The outcomes will be understood in the New Year.

- 4) Any other Urgent Planning items: D Kingham confirmed although he was resigning from the Parish Council he is happy to continue with the pylons issues. He explained local meetings are on-going and it is their intention to ask the District Council Cabinet to re-look at the issue. L Parker confirmed we have his support.