

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllr J Evans (Chaired the Meeting), Cllrs P Breary, P King, T Taylor and S Whitelaw attended in person. D Hattrell (Clerk), District Cllr L Parker, County Cllr J Finch, Sue Felgate (interested in joining the Parish Council (PC) in the future) and 6 members of the public attended in person and there were no attendees via the Video link. Paul Mortlock (Chair of PC) joined the public forum during the meeting and was welcomed by all.

Cllr Evans thanked all those who had provided a written report and encouraged further reports in the future. He confirmed all reports had been read by members and up to two points could be made from the reports by attendees and, of course, questions answered.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** A resident asked for feedback from the District Council/Planning Authority regarding the Appeals. This was to be discussed under the Planning Agenda item and the District Council Report.

**CO-OPTION OF MEMBER:** Sue Felgate attended prior to the meeting to find out more about the role from members. She was to observe the meeting and confirm whether she would like to join the PC by co-option. \*She has since confirmed her willingness to be co-opted at the January PC Meeting in her absence - **Action Clerk to arrange.**

**APOLOGIES:** were received and accepted from Cllr P Mortlock (Chair) and Cllr C Morgan.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024:** These were accepted as a true record.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:** It was agreed to include the Model Publication Scheme as an Agenda item for PC Meeting on February 2025 - **Action Clerk and Cllr T Taylor to circulate proposed new wording ahead of the Meeting.**

**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**

Cllr S Whitelaw reported that the committee would like to thank all those who have supported the hall over the past year by hiring, attending events and of course those who run the hall and volunteer at events. At their November meeting, they were very happy to welcome three more committee members Joe, Gill and Charlie and look forward to working with them all. The new classes/clubs have been well attended so please keep your eye on the noticeboards and website for dates and times. They wish us all a very Happy New Year.

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

**Footpath Warden's Report** - There was nothing to report

### **Police Report**

There were four crimes reported in October: -

1 x Other theft at/near SBN Golf Club - under investigation

1 x Violence and sexual offence on or near Radleys Lane - under investigation

1 x Other theft on or near Orchard View - investigation complete, no suspect identified

1 x Violence and sexual offence on or near Wrights Way - suspect charged and awaiting court outcome

It was suggested that our new Community Police Officer be invited to a future PC Meeting in view of increased criminal activity in the vicinity – **Cllr S Whitelaw agreed to make contact.**

### **Village Green Report**

**Playground Project Update** - All the funding applications had been made and an appropriate contingency had been built in. The 106 monies decision was to be made soon, and the Capital grants should be decided in January. The CIL bid will be considered in March 2025, and a team's meeting was scheduled to engage with the County and District Cllrs as this is part of the process. It was agreed to include an Agenda item for January of "Engagement with Residents - Playground". A suitable date has not been found when enough residents neighbouring the Village Green are available to attend, so the agenda item can progress matters further.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr L Parker attended and reminded the meeting of the general Babergh Council Report that is circulated on the email. He confirmed the Planning Appeal Hearing on 14<sup>th</sup> January could be transferred online if the weather deteriorates. It is held in public, however, he suggested those wanting to attend register, so if it was held online, they would be sent an invite. Cllr Parker agreed to provide a short notice explaining this for LSPN and our website. Our MP wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister about the strength of Neighbourhood Plans going forward and Cllr Parker was pleased to report there is no intention to dilute the validity. He reminded the meeting that Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan was a material reason for refusal relevant to current appeals. In relation to the Vehicle Activated Signage condition of the Lion Development and the decision of a nearby resident to object to the location of the southbound pole, it was agreed for the Clerk to email Highways making a formal request for them to suggest a further suitable location for the pole. This should be copied to our County and District Cllrs.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch attended and reported that 5 organisations in Suffolk were awarded the King's award for Voluntary Service including: -

- Ipswich Outreach
- Let's Talk Reading
- Still Good Food
- Tattingstone Good Neighbour Scheme
- The Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum.

The Stronger Family Partnership including Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils, Bridges Outcome Partnership and Family Psychology Mutual all work together to improve outcomes for families. Improvements are being achieved to SEND services; however, further challenges remain. Gritting of the Counties Roads is due to commence. A new deputy Chief Fire Officer for Suffolk,

Henry Griffin, has been appointed. Virtual Fostering and Adoption sessions continue including options for giving short term care.

**URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS:** The high quote for traffic management etc. to clear the pavement along the A134 prevents this PC from pursuing this avenue. It was therefore agreed to form a fully risk assessed working party for volunteers for the Spring and perhaps organize a skip. It was agreed to include as an Agenda item for the February PC Meeting to make the arrangements – **Action Clerk**. The recent accident on Stoke Road is being investigated in relation to improved safety/traffic calming on the approach. The only accident statistics recorded are when the Police are called. The replacement reflective bollards have been ordered for near the junction of Stoke Road and Stone Street.

**LEAVENHEATH EVENTS:** G Deeks reported that 40 tickets were sold so far for the New Years Eve party. Volunteers for the Fete will be requested again in January before a decision is made on whether we have enough to make it viable. Otherwise, there are a few events next year which could take place. He asked if the Events Committee can make use of the storage building at the Village Hall. The Committee will be asked – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw**.

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

**FINANCE:** The Bank Balances as of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were £15,785.51 in the Community Account and £52474.25 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £68,259.76.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

| <b>Cheque No.</b>                         | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Payee</b>          | <b>Details</b>   |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b><u>At 1<sup>st</sup> December</u></b>  |               |                       |                  |
| Funds Transfer                            | 1055.93       | Clerk/HMRC/SCC        | Staffing costs   |
| <b><u>At 15<sup>th</sup> November</u></b> |               |                       |                  |
| Funds Transfer                            | 1700.00       | Stoke by Nayland Club | VG Grass Cutting |
| Funds Transfer                            | 450.00        | Blu Ice               | LE – New Yrs Eve |

### **Review of Internal Control Statement**

The document had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. Adoption was recommended by the Finance Committee. Only minor amendments had been required. This was duly approved and the document signed accordingly. This is an internal document, so does not need updating on the website.

### **Recommendations from Financial Committee**

The Finance Committee do not have delegated authority; however, recommendations are made for the PC to consider. Finance Committee met on Zoom and recommended restraint regarding next year's increase in Precept despite the pressures. Finance Committee recommend an increase of 5% at £22,029 Precept (based on the predicted taxbase figures – to be confirmed January 2025). They also recommend continued adherence to the National Pay Scales and Terms for Clerks. The Earmarked Funds recommended are as follows: -

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Playground                 | £31631.48 (as already confirmed-no change) |
| General Reserves           | £6500 (30% of Precept)                     |
| Village Asset Renewal Fund | £6400                                      |
| Legal Fees                 | £2000                                      |

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Planning Consultants Fees   | £1000      |
| Total Earmarked and General | £47,531.48 |

All details are included on the spreadsheet - predictions of End of Year and next year's estimates.

Subject to the final tax base figures, **it was resolved to increase the Precept by 5% to £22,029 for the 2025/26 year.** The continued adherence to the National Pay Scales and Terms for Clerks and the proposed earmarked funds as above were also resolved.

#### **Quote for the brick plinth for the Village Sign**

A further estimate has been received in relation to the restored Village Sign. This is for repairs to the brick plinth and to secure the Village Sign back into position and it was resolved to authorize the work up to £500. The new noticeboard can also be installed using the plastic poles obtained for this purpose which are being stored by Cllr P Mortlock (PC Chair) – **Action Cllr J Evans.**

#### **Any Other Urgent financial matters**

Nothing was raised.

**IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE:** Nothing was raised in addition to the work of Leavenheath Events and towards the new playground.

**MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS:** The reinstatement of the Village Sign and the installation of the new noticeboard was agreed under Finance.

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:** Cllr P Mortlock (PC Chair) has been approached by a resident wanting to put a fence up on a footway. This was to protect his land/garden from dog walkers. He also wanted to know who owned the hedge at one side and how wide to make the footpath. Cllr Mortlock approached Suffolk County Council. They reported that the route had been inspected. There is no recorded width for this footpath. In the absence of a specified width, they would be looking for a minimum of 2 metres to be available. Any fence at this width should be a post and rail fence rather than one with solid panels. They offered to attend a site meeting to discuss the matter further if required. Cllr P Mortlock is following up with the parishioner.

It was noted the next **PC Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January starting at 7 p.m.** Cllr T Taylor made her apologies for that meeting.

The meeting closed at **7.50 p.m.**

## Planning Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### The following Planning items were discussed: -

- 1) Householder application for single storey front extension to 18 Oaklands – **DC/24/04851**.

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

- 2) Appeal by written representations to refusal of 40 dwellings on land south of High Road – **DC/23/04452**.

The response drafted by Cllr C Morgan was uploaded to the Planning Inspectorate ahead of the deadline. This included various updates in the Village since our earlier submission.

- 3) Appeal by hearing for refusal of 23 dwellings on land east of Blackthorn Way and Campion Way – **DC/23/03653**. **Details of the hearing have been received**.

The response drafted by Cllr C Morgan was uploaded to the Planning Inspectorate ahead of the deadline. This included various updates in the Village since our earlier submission.

- 4) Any other urgent Planning items including the Vehicle Activated Signage **VAS** – condition of The Lion Development.

The location of the southbound pole has not been agreed and County Highways were to be formally asked to suggest a new location for the pole – **Action Clerk**.