

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** P Mortlock (Chairman), C Morgan, S Whitelaw, J Evans, T Taylor, J Finch (County Cllr), L Parker (District Cllr) and 6 members of the public attended in person. The Clerk attended by Video link.

**CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS:** Tina Taylor and Jeremy Evans had been invited to be Co-opted onto the Parish Council. They both confirmed their willingness and completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms before joining the Meeting.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** G Deeks had attended on behalf of the Events Sub Committee and another resident asked whether there would be any news regarding the Orchard Development - See Planning section.

**APOLOGIES:** were received and accepted from D Hattrell (Clerk) who joined by Video link.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 6th DECEMBER 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**

Next meeting to be held on Monday 5th February at 6.30pm in the Committee Room.

The Village Hall Film Night has been awarded a "Living Well in Winter" grant from Babergh. This will go towards our overheads and so we are delighted to offer half price tickets and a free hot drink for the next few months. We have a high number of tickets already booked for our February film "The Great Escaper" so don't miss out! Please watch the LSPN, website and noticeboards for the next films and also the chance to suggest which films could be shown over the coming months. Great to welcome back all our regular hirers in 2024 for another action packed year.

**Tree Warden's Report**

There was nothing to report

**Footpath Warden's Report**

There was nothing to report

## **Police Report**

One crime reported in November.

Violence and sexual offence on or near Wright's Way - Crime currently being investigated by the police.

## **Village Green Report**

The Village Green Meeting was scheduled for 25th January and the new Playground Equipment Project was to be discussed.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr L Parker attended and confirmed that 128 new Affordable Homes have been added to the housing stock over last year. The Average House price in the District is still too high to be affordable, so more homes are needed. 30 Community projects have been granted monies for warm spaces. The District Council is encouraging second homes and empty properties back to use by incentives and penalties. The District Council is requiring Developers to sign up to Considerate Constructors Scheme which has a code of conduct. Car parking charges are back on the Agenda for Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham. All Councils are suffering a shortfall/funding gap due to the government settlement this year.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch attended and confirmed the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has announced its funding package to support councils in England to deliver frontline services. At the County Council, this is considered far less than they need and by prioritising their statutory responsibilities this leaves difficult decisions about the services they deliver, how they deliver them and their Council Tax. Various Scams are happening including fake texts, emails websites, bogus charities, gift card scams and fake social media opportunities. Suffolk Trading Standards are urging residents to be wary of offers that look too good to be true and to stick with reputable websites and be suspicious of requests for bank transfers or personal details. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions continue.

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

**URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS:** The Meeting was closed briefly to allow residents to contribute. A suggestion was made that ahead of surface dressing or re-surfacing, the drains should be cleared. It was observed that along the A134 the drains are full of stones. The cats eyes were reported as being missing in some parts of the A134. This was noted. C Morgan updated the Meeting on the Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) that was a condition of the Lion development. The Clerk agreed to update all parties on correspondence in this regard - **Action Clerk**. It seems the developer has confirmed willingness to purchase the VAS, however, County Highways should inform the positioning and the Parish Council would need to outsource the re-locating of the VAS periodically.

**LEAVENHEATH EVENTS:** G Deeks gave a report of the successful Santa's Sleigh and the profits have been divided with the Scouts as before. He thanked Lee Poolman for the Trailer and vehicle and Chris Weston for the refreshments. The next event is the Fun & Games night with 50% of the

tickets already sold. They were proposing another Fete in June providing enough volunteers come forward to help with the arrangements. The Deadline was the end of January, otherwise a smaller event was to be organised.

**FINANCE:** The Bank Balances as at 3rd January 2024 were £53,949.89 in the Community Account and £15661.57 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £69,611.46

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

<b>Cheque No.</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b><u>As at 3rd January</u></b>			
Funds Transfer	866.69	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	270.00	Leavenheath Scouts	LE - Santa's Sleigh donation
Funds Transfer	60.37	N Weston Plumb	LE - Santa's Sleigh expenses
Funds Transfer	39.24	G & A Deeks	LE - Santa's Sleigh expenses
Funds Transfer	26.94	Boxford Lane Joinery	LE- Santa's Sleigh expenses
Funds Transfer	95.08	Sudbury Town Council	Repairs to Dog Bins
Funds Transfer	64.25	Leavenheath VH	Hall hire

### **Finance Budget Meeting on Zoom**

Approval of Minutes and Recommendations from Finance Committee Meeting as follows: -

- 1) A Precept of £20,876, an uplift of 5% for residents. The tax base figures just released were the same as the predicted figures in November 2023.
- 2) £31,000 total to be pledged towards the Playground providing the new team are able to be formed and progress the project. This included CIL, Jubilee Funds and other Reserves.
- 3) All the PC CIL monies to be allocated to the Playground subject to the proviso above. The older contributions to be ring-fenced for the Playground.
- 4) £2000 to be precepted during the 2024/25 Year for future asset renewal.
- 5) This Parish Council accepts the quote from Scribe Accounting and the domain with emails from Suffolk Cloud to modernise our existing systems.
- 6) This Council continues to adhere to Pension Regulatory Requirements and the National Pay Scales for Clerks
- 7) This Council recommends approval of the draft Internal Controls Statement.
- 8) The **Reserves Policy** is still to be reviewed and was to be added to a **future Agenda**.
- 9) The projected expenditure for next year has been increased due to inflationary factors and to adhere to the plans of this Parish Council.
- 10) A potential amount of £5000 is being set aside for any necessary Planning Consultants fees.
- 11) The current Precept falls short of our operational requirements, however, the increase starts to bridge the gap and this Parish Council has healthy reserves currently, so whilst further increases may be required in the future, this budget is suitable all matters considered.

**All the above were resolved and the Precept form requiring a Precept of £20,876 for next financial year (which represents a 5% increase to residents) was duly signed.**

The Reserves Policy will be put on the February Agenda - **Action Clerk**.

Some maintenance items of a rotting dog waste bin and a noticeboard were discussed. In terms of budget, annually maintenance of assets is an expected cost and is budgeted for. Monies are also set aside for renewal of items in the long term. Some necessary repairs were identified and investigated between meetings to an obsolete street lighting lantern on Oaklands (the unit is one of the Parish Council's Assets). Members agreed to authorise this work.

L Parker agreed to send information to the Clerk in relation to the Playground project - Parish Infrastructure Plan.

**IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE:** Nothing was raised.

**MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS:** The Chair is still looking for quotes to rebuild the plinth for the Village Sign.

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS :** Nothing was raised.

The meeting closed at **8.05 p.m.**

## Planning Meeting on 17th January 2024

### The following Decisions were confirmed by the Planning Authority: -

A) The Condition for Surface Water Discharge Prevention was approved and the Contamination Investigation Report was partly approved at Barn At, Heathlands, Leavenheath - **DC/23/05555**.

B) Conditions were approved for biodiversity and wildlife sensitive lighting at Oak Cottage, Breach Grove, Kingsland Lane - **DC/23/05784**.

### The following applications and planning matters were discussed: -

1) Householder application to erect first floor and ground floor rear extensions and single storey side extension. Erection of single storey rear extension to outbuilding at Beaumont, Cock Street, Leavenheath - **DC/23/05773**. A response was issued between Meetings to comply with the deadline.

*"While Leavenheath Parish Council has no objections to this planning application, we would like to highlight our concerns regarding access to the site.*

*Cock Street is a narrow country lane, with grass verges and ditches either side, ditches which are well maintained and provide important drainage for surface water.*

*The lane will become impassable if construction lorries and delivery vehicles are parked on the road, blocking access or parking on the verges which in turn will force other vehicles to drive across the verges, damaging the verges or ditches.*

*We therefore request due consideration is given to the site access and any damage caused to the lane, verges or ditches during the project build is rectified returning it to the original state in a timely manner."*

2) Re-consultation of Full Planning Application for 23 dwellings with associated works - **DC/23/03653**. Extension granted, so can be discussed at next Meeting. L Parker was questioned as to whether notices would be delivered to the neighbours as before. This was confirmed.

3) Any other Urgent Planning items: The application for 14 homes has been withdrawn and official notification to this Parish Council is awaited. The access is being moved for the 40 homes proposed for the Orchard site. New surveys will be needed and a fresh consultation will be received. L Parker asked for clear information from the Parish Council to help him prepare for the Planning Committee Meetings.