

MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 2nd April 2025 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllr C Morgan (Chair), Cllrs S Felgate, P King, T Taylor and J Evans. District Cllr L Parker, County Cllr J Finch, and 3 members of the public attended in person. D Hattrell (Clerk) and 1 member of the public attended by Video link.

PUBLIC FORUM: Some members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group attended in relation to the new District Council building targets and the importance of reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chair of the Village Green Committee attended in relation to trees obstructing the maintenance of the Village Green and a quote which had been provided in advance to clear the obstructing branches.

APOLOGIES: were received from Cllr S Whitelaw and accepted by the Parish Council. The Clerk joined by Video link in view of on-going health issues.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: Nothing was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 5th MARCH 2025: These were accepted as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: None.

UPDATES FROM COMMUNITY, ORGANSISATIONS 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

The committee has continued to investigate ways to improve the village hall, from tidying the grounds ready for Spring, to improving disabled access to the hall. As the evenings draw out, you may feel like joining one of the many evening classes they have on offer – please see their website and notice boards for full details. Remember they also have clubs for the younger members of our village, such as our children’s dance class that runs on a Thursday, from 6-7pm; Leavenheath Beavers on Fridays at 5-6.15pm, and Cubs and Scouts on Tuesday evenings. If there are other clubs or activities you would like to see offered at Leavenheath village hall, why not contact the Village Hall Management Committee through the village hall website: leavenheathvillage.com/contact and let them know your thoughts.

Tree Warden's Report

Nothing was raised.

Footpath Warden's Report

Nothing was raised.

Police Report - February crimes - 1 x Other Theft (Includes theft by an employee, blackmail and making off without payment) on or near Hawthorn Way. Currently under investigation. Cllr S Whitelaw had invited our Community Policing Team to the Annual Parish Meeting and was awaiting a response.

Village Green Report

The new playground has been authorized between meetings. Cllr J Evans agreed to be the point of contact for the PC in respect of the Playground project. He agreed to make immediate contact with G Deeks. A Report on progress of the new Playground had been provided by G Deeks as follows -

All the necessary funding is now in place and the PC has formally placed the order with Kompan, the Contractor. The Contractor has advised that Mid-June would be the latest date for completion to hopefully coincide its official opening with the Fete on July 5th and are confident they will meet that deadline. There was soon to be further site meeting to discuss final layout and drainage issues. It would be advantageous a representative from the Village Green Committee would be in attendance for the Drainage decisions.

Cllr J Evans has now come on board with the project to liaise between the PC and the “tiny” sub-committee for the nuts and bolts of seeing this project through, including subsequent organisation of Surveys, signage etc required by our main Funders. On a practical note, and within the parameters of the Play Area Funding Strategy, the entrance to the Green from the VH Car Park would benefit from an upgrade *suggestions have since been emailed from G Deeks to the PC. It is a “Muddy Puddle” at best, untidy and the Bollard is defunct.

Parish Council Meeting frequency

The proposal is to meet 6 times a year in May, July, September, November, January and March. This was resolved as a trial for the coming year and additional extraordinary meetings could be called if necessary.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr L Parker attended and reported on the substantial matters being discussed at the district currently including Devolution and Planning Policy including housing targets. The single unitary proposed by the County Council is not considered the best approach by the District Council and it is felt 2 or 3 may be less damaging to the democratic process. The Consultation was open until 13th April. On local matters he congratulated Leavenheath on the successful CIL bid for the new playground. In relation to the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, he felt there is a need to prepare locally for growth to have an influence over the future of the Parish. It was agreed to encourage people to come to the Annual Parish Meeting to support the Neighbourhood Planning Group. Representatives from the Neighbourhood Planning Group explained some of the complexities and nervousness when it comes to site allocation. The Chair agreed to produce a notice for encouraging further volunteers to support the Neighbourhood Plan Review – **Action Chair**. The 5 Year Land Supply was discussed, which influences the relevance of Local Planning Policy when applications are being considered. Currently the Babergh District has a very strong housing supply. The new targets are stretching. With development, substantial CIL funds are available for local infrastructure.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended, and his report issued in advance covered: -

Opposition to Pylons:

- Suffolk County Council (SCC) opposes the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project.
- Final consultation completed on 3 March 2025.
- SCC advocates for offshore and undergrounding solutions.
- National Grid has ruled out undergrounding in the Waveney Valley.
- SCC will continue to push for no pylons and fair treatment for communities.

Secondary School Admissions:

- 97.5% of pupils received a place at one of their preferred schools on National Offer Day.
- 91.9% received their first preference.
- Information on school travel eligibility will be emailed by 3 April 2025.

Specialist SEND Places:

- Proposal for 200 new specialist SEND places costing £18.6 million.
- 100 places to open in autumn 2025, another 100 by September 2026.
- £3 million for small groups in mainstream schools, £12 million for satellite units linked to special schools, and £3.6 million for further SEND provision.

Local Government Reorganisation:

- SCC's cabinet approved an interim plan for one new council in Suffolk.
- Potential benefits include simpler governance, clearer accountability, better use of funding, safer services, efficient decision-making, and stronger leadership.
- Financial benefits estimated at £26 million annually, with a net benefit of over £103 million after 5 years.

Independent Travel Toolkit:

- Launched to help young people travel independently on public transport.
- Website provides guidance for neurodivergent young people and their supporters.
- Highlighted during Neurodiversity Awareness Week.

Foster Families Initiative:

- Eleven local authorities in East of England collaborate to recruit more foster carers.
- Suffolk participates under Foster East.
- Urgent need for foster carers with over 7,000 vulnerable children in care and 150 more entering care monthly.
- Promotional films available on the Suffolk website.

Devolution was discussed following the report noting it would be a complicated process to make the necessary changes and keep services going during the transition. One Unitary Authority for the whole of Suffolk could be considered too large and unwieldy. Cllr S Whitelaw had included a link on our website to the Local Government Reorganisation.

URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS: Progress towards a plan for potential spring working party to clear A134 pavement. The District Council cannot help with vegetation clearance as it is not their responsibility. We have asked County Cllr J Finch whether SCC could help. Unfortunately, the County Council cannot help. District Cllr L Parker agreed to make representations to the District Council to see if they could assist. It was agreed for the Clerk to forward the previous emails to help Cllr Parker take this forward – **Action District Cllr Parker and Clerk.**

LEAVENHEATH EVENTS: The Chair of Leavenheath Events had provided a report of the progress of various Events. The Bingo and Cake afternoon was a stunning success with 100 guests enjoying a great afternoon. All age groups were represented making it a good family event. Tea and Cake were served at half time generating a lovely atmosphere of community interaction. The afternoon climaxed with the “Golden Ticket” game with the winner receiving the top prize of £150. As a fundraiser for the Fete in July, an amazing £1087.55 was achieved.

A big thank you must go out to all our contributors of Cakes and Raffle Prizes and the volunteers who helped make the afternoon go seamlessly.

This event will, by popular demand, be run again in the future.

Planning for the Fete on the 5th of July is well under way.

We have about 20 stalls, various attractions, including Classic Cars, a Glider, Bouncy Castles, a Bar, Caterer, and a full afternoon of entertainment for the Main Marquee. These include a Choir, Singer, Dance Group and Band.

We hope to have our local MP open the Fete and, if complete on time, open the new Play Area as well to make it a special day for the Village.

It must be noted that our last plea for volunteers to help out with the Fete was a success with a bank of about 20+ to now draw on.

From this, LE has recruited 3 new members for its committee.

Going forward pipeline projects are:

Fun and Games Night

Santa’s Sleigh

Leavenheath’s Got Talent.

CORRESPONDENCE: On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. Model Publication Scheme tailored for the PC is being progressed between meetings.

FINANCE: The Bank Balances as of 31st March 2025 were £6817.51 in the Community Account and £52,856.78 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £59,674.29.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
<u>At 2nd April</u>			
Funds Transfer	1093.97	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	650.00	Ask Neil Ltd	Installation of Noticeboard
Funds Transfer	648.00	Moser Groundcare	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	489.60	Scribe Accounts	Accounting Subscription
Funds Transfer	120.00	Suffolk Cloud	Web hosting
Funds Transfer	50.00	Leavenheath VH	LE – Bingo hall hire
Funds Transfer	34.82	Boutique Print Ltd	LE - General

Village Green – Quote to clear branches obstructing maintenance

The quote to remove obstructing branches of £300 was duly approved.

Consider contributing to Stoke by Nayland Graveyard maintenance

It was resolved to make a one-off donation of £250 towards the maintenance. Finance Committee will consider and make recommendations for next Financial Year – **Action Clerk and Finance Committee.**

Any Other Urgent financial matters – Nothing was raised.

IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE: In view of all the current activities and improvements, nothing further was suggested at this stage.

MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS: The noticeboard has been installed and now attention will turn to the installation of the Village Sign.

DATE FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: 7th May 2025 starting at 7 p.m.

Report from Cllr S Whitelaw:-

- Hall booked
- VH - report will be given (person to be advised)
- Community Pantry & Warm Space - Ann Myers will send me report ahead of meeting, Cllr Jeremy Evans to read out as she is unable to attend
- LE - Greg will provide report and either be there to read in person or send replacement
- Playground - Greg will provide report and either be there to read in person or send replacement
- FOSM church - Jane Gurden is unable to attend but will send a brief update to read out.
- Police - email sent to PC Brendan McKenna, no reply yet so I will chase it still no reply

As soon as posters available Cllr Whitelaw agreed to put in noticeboards. She will provide and serve refreshments on the night. The Chair of the Village Green Committee agreed to give a report.

REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: Cllr S Felgate is researching her new role as Parish Footpath Warden and will bring the Footpath Map to the Annual Parish Meeting. It was noted the keys for the new noticeboard are the same as the previous boards.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Planning Meeting on 2nd April 2025

The following Applications have been approved by the Planning Authority: -

- 1) Webbs End, Edies Lane - DC/25/00500**
Conditions were approved for biodiversity enhancement measures.
- 2) Nayland Hall Farm, Cock Street - DC/25/01081**
Formal approval is not required for alteration to agricultural buildings.

The following Planning Applications were discussed: -

- A) Any updates relating to the on-going Appeals.
There were no further updates. However, it was agreed it would be sensible to update the Neighbourhood Plan in view of the new targets to enable the Village to have some influence on the nature of future development in the Parish. Further people would be required to join the Neighbourhood Planning Group to further represent the village and share the workload. This will be raised at the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting.
- B) No Objections were raised in relation to the agricultural determination application at Corvus Farm, Cawley Road - **DC/25/01364**.
- C) Any other urgent Planning Matters including update on the Lion Development Speed Signage Condition. The developer has been asked to supply the VAS, solar powered with a spare battery and two compatible poles ready for installation. Delivery is awaited. No updates have been received since the last meeting. It was agreed for the Clerk to seek a progress report from the developer - **Action Clerk**.