

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs C Morgan, J Evans, S Felgate, T Taylor and S Whitelaw. 3 members of the public attended in person. D Hattrell (Clerk) and 1 member of the public attended by Video link.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** There was a brief discussion about publicity for the Annual Parish Meeting.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR:** Cllr Clare Morgan was duly elected Chair, and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office signed. She led a huge vote of thanks to our outgoing Chair, Paul Mortlock, for all he has done for the Parish Council (PC) and Village over many years. He continues to Chair the Village Green Committee. It was resolved to elect Cllr Jeremy Evans to the Vice Chair role.

**APOLOGIES:** from Cllr P King were received and accepted. County Cllr James Finch and District Cllr Lee Parker also sent their apologies. The Clerk attended by video link in view of health issues.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2025:** These were accepted as a true record.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:** All matters were covered by the agenda items.

#### **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 work hard over the last month to broaden the variety of classes and activities available. A new term of Yoga is just beginning, Tai Chi continues to be popular, and their first Art class will take place this month – details are on their website, noticeboards and Facebook for all activities and events. The committee is still in the process of investigating how to improve disabled access to the hall, they will provide an update when they have more information. As a committee they remain dedicated to the goal of keeping the Village Hall at the heart of the community and offer activities and events that people want and enjoy. If you think you could spare just a little time to help them achieve this goal, they would love for you to come along to one of the meetings and get involved. Please also keep Leavenheath Village Hall in mind for your next event, whether that be a child's birthday party or a new class/activity you're thinking of starting – they have just had a weekly slot open on Thursday evenings.

**Tree Warden's Report** - Nothing to Report.

**Footpath Warden's Report** - Nothing to Report.

**Police Report** - The December statistics were the last recorded on the Police website and these were reported at the February PC Meeting.

**Village Green Report** - The new contracts are in place for Village Green maintenance which will be monitored. The cutting is due every two weeks. The Invoices should be sent directly to the PC Clerk. The consultation session on the potential new playground was well received with mostly positive comments. Enquiries are in hand to relocate the proposed zip wire in view of resident feedback and the Chief Environmental Officer is happy with the proposed new positioning.

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr L Parker had sent his apologies and the main report from the District Council had already been circulated.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch had sent his apologies, and his report covered: -

1. Proposal for One Council for Suffolk: Suffolk County Council (SCC) leaders propose consolidating all county, district, and borough councils into a single unitary authority to simplify, reduce costs, and improve service delivery. The proposal was to be submitted to the government by 21 March, followed by a public consultation.
2. New Cabinet Role: A new cabinet role for devolution and local government reform has been created, with Cllr Richard Rout appointed. Suffolk is one of six areas fast-tracked for devolution, which includes electing a mayor in May 2026.
3. Investment in Fire and Rescue Service: Following a government inspection, SCC proposes a £1.6 million investment over two years to address areas needing improvement in the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.
4. Library Service Investment: SCC plans to take the library service back in-house, investing in new mobile libraries, books, and computers. This follows unsuccessful attempts to secure an external provider and concerns about the current provider's viability.
5. 2025/26 Budget: The council's budget for 2025/26 is set at £803.7 million, focusing on essential services and vulnerable residents. 77% of the budget will go to Adult Care and Children's Services.
6. Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions: Information on fostering and adoption opportunities is provided, with contact details for those interested

**URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS:** The PC wanted to start planning a spring working party to clear A134 pavement. It was confirmed that it was Highways' responsibility, however, in the absence of their funding/priority a group of volunteers would be considered. It was noted unless volunteers came forward it would not be feasible for Parish Councillors to do it all. It was agreed for Cllr Jeremy Evans and Cllr Sally Whitelaw to put together a plan for one session ahead of the Annual Parish Meeting - **Action Cllrs Evans and Whitelaw**. Further sessions could be arranged subject to support from Parish Volunteers. Safety and the means of disposing of the cuttings will be considered. A skip could be arranged, however, the Clerk agreed to check whether the DC could provide bags and collect if left in an appropriate location - **Action Clerk to make enquires**. It was agreed to postpone litter picking whilst this project is being considered.

**LEAVENHEATH EVENTS:** The first budget for the proposed Summer Fete on 5<sup>th</sup> July was considered. Greg Deeks explained what is intended. The PC debated that the likelihood is the Event would more than cover its costs, however, with all the Events there is a risk that something could happen impacting on its success and the question is whether the PC is prepared to take that risk with public money. After debate, it was unanimously resolved that the PC will cover costs up to £2000 in the unlikely case that the Fete makes a loss. A positive update was given in relation to the forthcoming Bingo Event which is nearly sold out. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the hard-working Events Committee for all they are doing.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. The Model Publication Scheme is still being tailored for the PC. The Chair agreed to convert the existing document to word to enable Cllr Tina Taylor to make the necessary amendments and for the PC to approve.

**FINANCE:** The Bank Balances as of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were £5924.95 in the Community Account and £52,670.49 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £58,595.44.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

| <b>Cheque No.</b>                        | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Payee</b>   | <b>Details</b>   |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b><u>At 5<sup>th</sup> February</u></b> |               |                |                  |
| Funds Transfer                           | 1088.43       | Clerk/HMRC/SCC | Staffing costs   |
| Funds Transfer                           | 396.00        | Bowman & Son   | VG - maintenance |
| Funds Transfer                           | 205.00        | Suffolk Cloud  | Domain & emails  |
| Funds Transfer                           | 153.60        | SALC           | Training         |

**Any Other Urgent financial matters.**

It was resolved to include a Financial Agenda item at the next meeting of making a modest contribution to the cost of maintaining the graveyard in Stoke by Nayland – **Action Clerk**. The Clerk will also seek information from SALC on any limitations of financial assistance on PCs in this regard – **Action Clerk**. In the meantime, Cllr J Evans will ensure all relevant information is available to the PC. A point to note that whilst neighbouring Parishes have Cemeteries, Leavenheath does not. The Churchyard is still open for burials and the maintenance responsibility currently lies with the Parochial Church Council.

**IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE:** It was suggested that it may be easier for the current and future Parish Councillors to meet less frequently. It was agreed to include an Agenda item at next meeting – **Action Clerk**. This could be May, July, September, November, January and March. Cllr S Felgate felt bringing back the Community Cinema would be great if more support could be generated. She also enquired about news regarding a Village Shop.

**MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS:** Cllr J Evans reported that the installation of a new noticeboard was in progress and the Village Sign will be next.

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING:** The date is set for 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 starting at 7 p.m. Cllr S Felgate will work on a notice to advertise the event – **Action Cllr S Felgate**. The Chair will work on posters and Cllr S Whitelaw will pin to noticeboards – **Action Chair and Cllr S Whitelaw**. Cllr S Whitelaw will arrange tea/coffee/biscuits and will contact previous contributors to ask them to give reports during the evening – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw**.

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:** There was a request from a resident not to cut daffodils from the roadside in the Village. These look great and should be preserved. Some amendments were agreed to the website and LSPN contact details. Cllr S Whitelaw agreed to take these forward – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw**. All contact is encouraged through the Clerk and Councillors agreed to step in and help resolve issues between meetings.

The meeting was closed at **8.37 p.m.**

### **Planning Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 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) Fiddlers Green, Plough Lane – DC/25/00338**  
Planning Permission was granted for porch extension

**The following Planning Applications were discussed: -**

- A) Any updates relating to the on-going Appeals. The Appeal for 23 dwellings on land east of Blackthorn Way and Campion Way had been allowed. This was reported at the February PC Meeting. The Planning Inspector interpreted Policies relating to connectivity and sustainability differently to the Planning Authority (Babergh District Council) who had refused the application. Between meetings the Clerk had circulated details of an uncontrolled crossing for the A134 which is a condition of the Approval. At the time of the Meeting, the Decision relating to the land south of the High Road was not known. \*This has since been confirmed. The Appeal was dismissed on grounds of the location and drainage and flood risk. It was found to be contrary to the Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan.
- B) Consider the application for single storey front and side extensions at Greens Farm House, High Road, Leavenheath – **DC/25/00756**.  
Whilst there were No Objections, the Chair agreed to research the heritage aspect, and it was delegated to the Chair to draft a suitable response to the Planning Authority – **Action Chair and Clerk**.
- 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.