

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

PRESENT: Cllr J Evans (Chaired the Meeting), Cllrs S Felgate, P King, T Taylor and S Whitelaw attended. District Cllr L Parker, County Cllr J Finch, D Hattrell (Clerk) and 5 members of the public attended in person. No video link was requested.

PUBLIC FORUM: The issue with verges and footpaths being encroached all around the Village was raised. The position was explained regarding reports to the Highway Authority Suffolk County Council SCC - on the Reporting Tool, the responsibility of homeowners and the prioritisation by the Highways Authority. Details of the volunteer clearance of the A134 pavement from the Church to the pub were shared. Further sessions were to be planned. The kerbside weeds on Wrights Way and other parts of the Village were raised, and these have been reported on the Highways Tool. Residents have been concerned about the lack of support given by the SCC when items are reported.

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

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: Nothing was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 7th MAY 2025: These were accepted as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: The Invoice for the skip used at the volunteer pavement clearance was to be forwarded to the Clerk for payment. It was agreed to circulate contact details of our website and email providers to enable individual Councillors to follow up any issues they are experiencing with their Council specific email addresses and set up - **Action Clerk.**

APPOINTMENT OF ROLES AND REPRESENTATIVES: -

The Vice Chair - Cllr Jeremy Evans - was appointed at the Annual PC Meeting following the Election of the Chair - Cllr Clare Morgan.

Working groups/subcommittees were then discussed.

All resolutions are made by the full Parish Council at Meetings. The representatives and sub committees provide more focus on key areas between meetings.

Finance Sub Committee - Cllr J Evans (Vice Chair) and Cllr S Whitelaw will continue with Debbie Hattrell, the Responsible Finance Officer - RFO.

Leavenheath Events Sub Committee - Greg Deeks, Anita Deeks, John Garrett, Ruth Garrett, Nicky Weston-Plumb, Jill Dunkley, Cllr Tina Taylor, Zara Day, Matt Smith and Jamie Lumsden.

Planning Subgroup & Strategy - Cllr C Morgan (Chair), and Cllr T Taylor.

Neighbourhood Planning - Cllrs C Morgan, J Evans and T Taylor.

Footpaths - Cllr S Felgate is the Parish Footpath Warden

VH rep - Cllr S Whitelaw.

VG rep - Cllr J Evans (Vice Chair) will join the Chair of the Village Green Paul Mortlock.

Risk Assessment - The Policy is reviewed by the full PC annually. Cllr S Whitelaw will carry out inspections of Assets and equipment and report any findings to the full PC.

Others - Attention needs to be put to recruitment of Parish Councillors.

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 Village Hall Management Committee's focus over the last couple of months has been to plan and complete important work to keep our village hall a hub for the community for many years to come. One of these being finalising plans to improve disabled access to the hall. They are delighted to report that work will commence in late August and apologise in advance for any inconvenience this may cause. They feel strongly that this will be a great improvement for all the village hall users once completed. They have recently made changes to their website:

leavenheathvillage.com Hire charges are now available to see on the 'Our Village Hall' page, including discounts for residents. You will see two upcoming events on the 'Events' page - a Quiz Night on Saturday 13th September - you can contact John Garrett on: 07740 099760 to book your tickets - and a Christmas Fayre taking place on Saturday 30th November. If you would like to book a stall at the Christmas Fayre, please use the contact information on the website. They remind everyone that the village hall car park is for users of the village hall only and that no vehicles should be parked in the car park overnight.

Tree Warden's Report

There was nothing to report.

Footpath Warden's Report

Cllr S Felgate has carried out some clearance of Footpath 14 and correspondence is on-going regarding the new hedge planted at Edies Lane which is causing some concern to walkers.

Police Report - **March 2025**

1 x violence and sexual offence on or near Blackthorn Way - under investigation

1 x other theft at SBN Golf Club - Investigation complete, no suspect identified

April 2025

1 x Anti-social behaviour on or near Hawthorn Way - no crime timeline details

Village Green Report

The new playground has been completed and the claim submitted for the substantial CIL funds. Photos are being arranged and sent directly from the working group and the Invoice will go directly from the contractor. The MP is on schedule to open the playground at the Fete this Saturday. Cllr J Evans led a huge thank you to the project team for their hard work in seeing this through to completion. The Playground is a real Village Asset going forward for all to enjoy.

Subject to funding being received, it was resolved and delegated to the Clerk, Cllr J Evans and Cllr S Whitelaw to organise payment to the Playground Contractors between meetings and report to the next PC Meeting - **Acton Cllrs Evans and Whitelaw and Clerk**. Quotations were discussed in relation to the Village Green entrance and bollard which will need to be adapted to incorporate

a pathway from the entrance to the Play Park Gate. G Deeks agreed to ask the contractors to quote again with the added pathway. This was resolved/delegated to the full Council to finalise between meetings with Cllr J Evans taking the lead on this item and liaising with the project team. The budgetary constraints had been discussed – **Action Cllr J Evans and all.**

Access to the Village Green via the Jubilee Gates was discussed and it was agreed to resolve by giving the relevant residents access to the gate code – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw.**

County Cllr J Finch was asked by the Playground Project team for his contribution towards the Playground promised in February 2025. He agreed to investigate this matter.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr L Parker attended and referred to the general report from the District Council sent around each month. Additionally, he clarified the position regarding funding for Neighbourhood Plans which have been withdrawn going forward. However, other avenues exist including Parish Council CIL monies. He encouraged everyone to get involved in the Local Government Re-organisation Consultation. Reform is underway at the District Council in respect of Listed Building windows. The arrangements for the Playground opening on Saturday 5th July, just ahead of the Fete, were discussed. Cllr S Whitelaw agreed to organise some ribbon to be cut on the day – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw.**

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr J Finch attended later into the Meeting and his report covered: -

1. **£8m Funding for Bus Service Improvements:** Suffolk County Council (SCC) received £8m from the Department of Transport to enhance bus services and infrastructure. £5.2m will be allocated to capital projects like bus stops and priority measures, while £2.8m will support existing services and new routes. Previous funding improved over 15 routes, including Sunday and evening services.
2. **Objection to North Suffolk Solar Farm Plans:** The council raised concerns about a proposed 250-megawatt solar farm, citing loss of Grade 2 agricultural land, impacts on communities and habitats, archaeological sensitivity, and cable corridor damage. It urged EcoPower to publish refined plans by June 2025.
3. **200 New SEND Places for Suffolk:** SCC plans to create 200 new specialist places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by 2026, costing £18.6m. This includes £3m for mainstream school units, £12m for satellite units linked to special schools, and £3.6m for additional SEND provision.
4. **Dementia Marketplace Event:** A free event on June 25, 2025, provided advice and support for those affected by dementia. It highlighted the growing challenge of dementia, with early diagnosis being crucial for effective care.
5. **New Strategy to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG):** Suffolk launched a strategy to prevent abuse, support survivors, hold abusers accountable, and foster community collaboration. It emphasizes inclusivity and was endorsed by the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board.
6. **Suffolk Maritime Exhibition:** Running from June 27 to September 27, 2025, at The Hold in Ipswich, the exhibition explores Suffolk's maritime history through displays, talks, workshops, and family events.
7. **Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions:** SCC offers flexible fostering and adoption opportunities, with virtual sessions available for those interested.

Following his report, County Cllr Finch was asked to investigate the lack of weed clearance on the kerbside in Wrights Way and other locations in the Village. He agreed to help in relation to bus stops and bus service with District Cllr L Parker. Cllr S Felgate will be the contact point for the PC and will identify requirements – **Action Cllr Felgate.**

URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS: The working party to clear A134 pavement went ahead and achieved a great deal. This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

LEAVENHEATH EVENTS: Preparations for the Fete had been made. The Committee were thanked for the huge amount of work they are putting into these arrangements. It was resolved to settle invoices for the Fete between meetings in accordance with the agreed budget.

CORRESPONDENCE: On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. Cllr S Felgate agreed to provide details of a potential handy person for jobs around the Village. He will be asked to quote for forthcoming work.

FINANCE: The Bank Balances as of 27th June 2025 were £6485.75 in the Community Account and £53032.37 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £59,518.12.

The following pre-agreed payments were made: -

Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
<u>At 30th May</u>			
Funds Transfer	687.87	Clear Ins Mgmt Ltd	VG Insurance
Funds Transfer	648.00	Moser Groundcare	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	1076.07	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	601.87	Suffolk County Council	Str light power & maint.
Funds Transfer	528.73	Clear Ins Mgmt Ltd	PC Insurance
Funds Transfer	300.00	Peter Irving	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	191.79	G Deeks	LE – Fete 25
Funds Transfer	23.98	C Morgan	Highways – Hi-viz
<u>At 1st July</u>			
Funds Transfer	1076.07	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	648.00	Moser Groundcare	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	200.00	Jos Events	LE- Fete 25
Funds Transfer	96.00	Geosphere Ltd	Parish Online Subscription
Funds Transfer	69.65	Boutique Print Ltd	LE – Fete 25

The Quote for the electrical work to relocate the defibrillator at the Village Hall was approved – **Action Clerk.** The Cost of new pole and installation of dog bin at the Village Green was agreed in principle and Cllr S Whitelaw will investigate further – **Action Cllr Whitelaw.**

Any Other Urgent financial matters.

The first quarter budget review had been circulated ahead of the Meeting.

The PC insurance renewal went ahead in the final year of a long-term undertaking for reduced premium ending on 31st May 2026. This was reviewed and the Clerk negotiated a further discount bringing the amount to the figure shown above.

IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE: Potential use of FaceBook as a Parish Council was discussed and it was resolved not to proceed at this stage. Cllr Felgate was encouraged to gain further information should this come up again.

MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS: We are currently awaiting approval by the District Council for us to relocate a dog bin. They need to be satisfied because the proposed new location needs to be serviceable. It was hoped the restored Village Sign would be installed ahead of the Fete on Saturday.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: The Meeting was considered a success with no items to take forward that were not currently in hand.

REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: It was hoped to encourage further people to enquire about joining the PC at the Fete. If there was sufficient time, Cllr S Whitelaw was to arrange a poster on the subject. Cllr J Finch would welcome feedback in relation to the traffic management for Bramford to Twinstead works. It was noted that the signage has improved since the start of the works.

The meeting closed at **8.20 p.m.**

The next PC Meeting is scheduled for 3rd September 2025 *this has since been rescheduled for 17th September.

Planning Meeting on 2nd July 2025

The following Applications were concluded by the Planning Authority: -

- 1) **8 Oaklands** – Consent was granted for work to protected oak – **DC/25/01708**
- 2) Prior approval has been given subject to conditions for change of use to dwellinghouse at **Norton Villa, 14 Nayland Road – DC/25/01929.**

The following Planning Applications were discussed: -

- A) Report on observations to proposed traffic control measures for Bramford to Twinstead works.

The PC urged there to be adequate signage and traffic control measures to reduce the risk of road accidents – speed limits are not obeyed, and the approach is around blind bends, so drivers meet the traffic measures and /or queues of traffic suddenly. We also questioned what is being done to protect the country roads through Assington, Leavenheath and Boxford as drivers seek alternative routes. These roads are narrow, are not suitable for heavy traffic and will quickly block if traffic uses them in both directions. There would also be considerable damage to verges, hedgerows and risk to walkers, cyclists, and horse riders – many of these roads are designated Quiet Lanes. Whilst we realise the development will go ahead and vehicular access will be required from the A134, please be aware of the inevitable traffic issues that will be caused directly and on the alternative routes. This needs to be effectively managed from the start.

- B) Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan in view of new targets. This was discussed earlier in the Meeting.
- C) Any other urgent Planning Matters including application for Goods Vehicle Operator License at Corvus Farm, Cawley Road. It was agreed to forward details to Cllr J Finch to see if he could investigate further – **Action Clerk**. Chase ups were agreed to the Lion Developer from Cllr J Evans, Vice Chair, County Cllr J Finch and District Cllr L Parker. The Clerk will forward relevant emails – **Action Clerk and All.**