

**MINUTES of the MEETING of LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllr C Morgan (Chaired the Meeting), Cllrs P Breary, P King and S Whitelaw. D Hattrell (Clerk), District Cllr L Parker, County Cllr J Finch (arrived late due to other meetings) and 14 members of the public attended in person and 2 attended by Video link.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Some residents attended in relation to the Planning Appeals and had some questions for our District Councillor. One potential inaccuracy had been identified. It was mentioned that the Playgroup has closed since the original plans, so responses may require updating. Mr Walker attended on behalf of the Lady Anne Windsor Charity about some potential locally controlled social housing for Plough Lane. Following positive engagement with the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group, the response from Babergh District Planning has been less positive. Mr Walker is looking for a collaborative response from the Charity and both local Parish Councils to undertake a call for sites for social housing. This was an Agenda item for later in the Meeting.

**APOLOGIES:** were received and accepted from Cllr P Mortlock (Chair) and Cllrs J Evans and T Taylor.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2024:** 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**

Cllr S Whitelaw reported that the usual maintenance was taking place. Exciting new classes were starting this month including Tai Chi, Craft Club and Chair Exercise class. Please see the Village Hall website and noticeboards for details of how you can join in. They thanked all those who have worked hard to get these organised. Future projects include potentially upgrading disabled access in the hall car park and they are hoping to get EV car charger back up and running under new contract ASAP.

**Tree Warden's Report**

Nothing was reported.

**Footpath Warden's Report**

Nothing was reported.

### **Police Report**

Crimes reported in September in the Leavenheath area: -

1 x Other Theft on or near The Ridings - Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

1 x Theft from the person on or near Mayfield - Under investigation

1 x Violence and sexual offence on or near Hawthorn Way - Investigation complete, no suspect identified

1 x Other Theft on or near SBN Golf Club - Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

### **Village Green Report**

Cllr P Breary outlined the progress so far with the Playground Project. A group of four are liaising with potential suppliers. They met a senior Environmental Officer and 2 other representatives from the District Council to see what would be acceptable. The project would rely on significant funding. Various surveys have shaped the design so far. The idea of a zip wire and multi games area are popular. The main funding applications needed to meet the 31<sup>st</sup> of October deadline, which they did. A decision regarding the funding will not be made until March next year. They currently have a preference of supplier and are attempting to have like for like quotations from other suppliers. The meeting was then closed briefly to allow residents to comment and ask questions. There was agreement of the need to upgrade the playground, however, concern at the potential siting of the zip wire. One resident explained, it was not the noise from the zip wire, however, the noise from playing children he was concerned about. Another resident commented that too much control over the use of the Green was given to the Cricket Club. Cllr C Morgan explained that the project is at an early stage and there is further opportunity to engage in the design and she suggested a meeting is arranged with neighbours to the Green and other interested parties. The Playground Project Group will take this forward and invite residents to attend to share their views - **Action Cllr P Breary.**

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT:** District Cllr L Parker attended and reported on the bin collection changes for next year. The reason for the change is national legislation, so there is limited choice in the matter. There will be no change to the green bin regime and glass recycling is to start. Substantial CIL funds have been delivered in the district due to development and due to the Neighbourhood Plan, if development comes to Leavenheath, substantial CIL money would be paid. The Corks Lane development following the closure of the Babergh District Council offices at that location has not been without controversy. Eleven of the properties are currently for sale.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT:** County Cllr J Finch attended later due to other meetings and reported that the County Council (SCC) is investing in further flood prevention work. However, needs more significant funding from central government. An online consultation has been launched for next year's budget priorities. The SCC has included local views in a new Local Transport Plan. The final consultation on this plan closes shortly and will then go before cabinet. The SCC urges government to put infrastructure first when meeting new housing targets. Interest free loans are being offered to make homes more energy efficient. Virtual Fostering and Adoption sessions continue, and a new fostering film was launched last month. Cllr S Whitelaw

agreed to put reference/links to the surveys on the Parish Council website. The report of mud on Cawley Road was due to the mud scraper at Boxford Suffolk Farms being out of use. This has now been resolved. Signage is being organised for the Locks Lane restricted byway.

#### **URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS:**

- 1) Cllr Morgan agreed to investigate the condition of pavements on Campion Way. The Clerk has made an interim report on the Highways Reporting tool which could be enhanced by relevant photographs.
- 2) Parking near the Village Hall continues to attract complaints. This is not the remit of the Parish Council, although we have communicated with the parties involved over the months. The residents have been directed to contact the District Council regarding parking enforcement and the Police in respect of greater concerns.
- 3) Mud on Cawley Road was reported and addressed between meetings.
- 4) In relation to pavement and foliage clearance, a meeting with a contractor had been arranged and it was hoped quotations would follow.

**LEAVENHEATH EVENTS:** Mr G Deeks reported that the tickets were selling for the New Years Eve party at the Village Hall and Santa's Sleigh was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> December as a joint event with the Scouts with the proceeds being split accordingly. Flyers are asking for volunteers to help with the Fete, however, sadly not many people are offering to help.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. Cllr Morgan had been approached by a neighbour adjoining Royston Wood about tree maintenance. It was agreed to pass details to the Arboricultural Officer at the District Council to follow up as they are responsible for the Wood – **Action Clerk.**

**FINANCE:** The Bank Balances as of 30<sup>th</sup> October 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> November</u></b>			
Funds Transfer	1319.78	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	900.00	Ablewhite Surveyors Ltd	Surveyors fees – VH & VG
Funds Transfer	344.40	Tree & Lawn Co	V Green Maintenance
Funds Transfer	58.50	Leavenheath Village H	L/Events NYE hire

The staffing costs include the recently agreed pay settlement backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

#### **Review of Standing Orders**

The document had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. It was resolved to approve the Standing Orders and update on the website – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw.**

#### **Review of Financial Regulations**

The document had been circulated ahead of the Meeting. It was resolved to approve the new Financial Regulations and update them on the website – **Action Cllr S Whitelaw.**

### **Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations**

We still need to tailor our Model Publication Scheme which is being carried out by Cllr T Taylor – **Action Cllr T Taylor**. Cllr S Whitelaw has reviewed the Local Transparency Code 2015 and noted that this code was issued to meet the government’s desire to place more power into citizens’ hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to local decision-making and help shape public services. Transparency is the foundation of local accountability and the key that gives people the tools and information they need to enable them to play a bigger role in society. The availability of data can also open new markets for local businesses, the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises to run services or manage public assets. Cllr Whitelaw concluded that this PC are doing the right things, by:

- Explaining clearly how and when money is spent and minuting it, especially anything over £500
- Explaining how and when decisions are made and documenting them correctly
- Making accounting/audit documents available promptly on website once approved by external bodies/council
- Data protection - email addresses and names are always approved by sender before circulation to councillors
- Fraud protection - controls in place such as dual signatory banking and maintaining audit trail for all transactions

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

Nothing was raised.

**IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE:** Nothing was raised in addition to the on-going village organisations and projects.

**MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS:** An item was agreed for the full PC Committee following the meeting of Village Green and Village Hall legal work updates. It was agreed to include an Agenda item for the next meeting of Quote for Village Sign plinth and to install the new noticeboard – **Action Clerk**.

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS:** Members expressed their sadness at the passing of David Rowe and the Parish Council has sent our condolences to Barbara Rowe. County Councillor J Finch is organizing replacement bollards outside Blackthorn Lodge on Stoke Road.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

## Planning Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### The following Planning items were discussed: -

- 1) Householder application to extend Webbs End, 27b Edies Lane – **DC/24/04691**.

The Parish Council had **No Objections**.

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

Questions were asked of District Cllr L Parker in relation to both Appeals and the difference in whether the Appeals are for written representations, or a hearing was due to the requests from the respective applicants. The District Council was not aware of the Appeals until they were received. The Inspector will take into consideration all the representations previously made, however, if matters have changed since then, it is sensible to submit additional remarks. A resident was directed to the Planning Department to ask his specific questions. The Inspector will decide purely on Planning Grounds and currently Cllr Parker does not think the legal position has changed since these applications were originally decided.

The meeting then resumed, and Cllr Morgan agreed to prepare further representations to be issued to the Planning Inspectorate ahead of the deadlines – **Action Cllr C Morgan**.

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

See above remarks.

- 4) Lady Anne Windsor Charity potential call for sites/representatives. This was discussed and it was noted that the call for sites is purely for affordable homes. Cllr C Morgan volunteered to represent Leavenheath PC on this project – **Action Cllr C Morgan**.

- 5) 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. Further work will be required in identifying an alternative location as County Highways would not proceed without the agreement of the resident nearby. District Cllr L Parker and County Cllr J Finch were asked for support with this matter.