MINUTES of the MEETING of **LEAVENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 16th September 2026 at 7.00 p.m. at Leavenheath Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllr C Morgan (Chair), Cllrs C Davy, P King and S Whitelaw. District Cllr L Parker, County Cllr P Faircloth-Mutton, D Hattrell (Clerk) and 8 members of the public attended in person. There were no requests for a video link.

PUBLIC FORUM: A resident attended as he had just heard about the plans for the Orchard site. He didn't feel the proposal had changed as the infrastructure including drains could not support it. On the matter of parking at the pub, they are trying to find a solution including investigating the possibility of renting a nearby field. The Chair spoke about the sad news of the passing of Peter Pratt. He was Footpath Warden for about 10 years and made a valuable contribution to village life. We have given our condolences and included a tribute on the Parish Council PC website.

APOLOGIES: were received and accepted from Cllr Jeremy Evans.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: Nothing was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 1st JULY 2026: These were accepted as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Nothing was raised.

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 reported that they currently have 9 committee members, even so, it was decided not to go ahead with the proposed quiz due to limited organiser availability. However, plans are progressing well for their Christmas Fayre on Nov 29th, and they look forward to presenting another lively event for the community. August is traditionally a quiet month at the hall due to the school summer break and many regular hirers taking holidays. The Fish and Chip van under new management contributes a small charge for use of the car park on Wednesday afternoon and early evening. There was a Seniors fair, sponsored by our MP, offering a wide range of advice and support for older residents. Removal of the glass recycling bins is still awaited. They have installed a new Bluetooth sound system utilising a pair of existing speakers. This enables hirers to stream music from a device, and it comes with 2 remote mics. They thank Richard and Gay Ammott for donating funds from the closure of carpet bowls. The District Council have agreed in principle to switch the CIL money from the solar project to the provision of disabled parking bays, however, the solar project is still being considered for the future.

An agenda item under Village Hall was for the PC to consider a contribution towards the surfacing of the parking bays. This was resolved in principle and agreed to include on the November agenda for the exact amount to be agreed. In the meantime, the PC asked to be kept appraised of this project.

Tree Warden's Report

Nothing had been received in relation to trees apart from a request under correspondence later in the meeting.

Footpath Warden's Report

The September Report has been uploaded to the website and reported on Footpaths 14 and 20 and the new circular walks leaflet which is available in a printed and digital version. The latter can also be viewed on the PC Website and from QR codes around the Village.

Police Report -

May - none
June - 1 x Vehicle crime on or near Hawthorn Way - under investigation
July -1 x Violence and sexual offence on or near Hawthorn Way - unable to prosecute suspect
1 x Criminal damage and arson near SBN Golf Club - investigation complete, no suspect identified
1 x Vehicle crime on or near The Old Road - under investigation

Village Green Report

Legal work has been undertaken updating the Lease which is ready for signing. It was agreed for the PC pay for the cost of Registering the Lease, which is a legal requirement as it is for more than 7 years. It was agreed for Cllrs C Morgan (Chair) and Cllr S Whitelaw sign the Lease on behalf of the PC. Three Trustees from the Village Green Committee were signing the Lease. This was completed. The Chair of the Village Green gave a report and confirmed they have 5 members on their committee, and they have all registered with the Charity Commission. The Lease had been discussed. They were sourcing signs to help encourage more responsibility to be taken by dog owners on the Village Green. The Cricket Club reported a mole problem near the play area and would also speak to the captain following reports of bad language on a match day. Ivy on a tree overhanging the pavilion was discussed and this was to be followed up. The Clerk had explained the insurance requirements for our new maintenance contractor. Finally, the Chair of the Village Green reported that the new playground contractor has taken responsibility for reported issues under warranty.

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT: District Cllr L Parker attended and reported: -
Cllr L Parker confirmed the Local Government Review had been withdrawn for the present, so District Councillor Elections will take place in May alongside the Parish Councillor ones. Significant planning changes are coming forward. As part of the Joint Local Plan, landowners have put forward sites, and the suitability of each site will now be considered ahead of a Consultation. CIL funds are continuing to support local projects. Cllr Parker was then asked whether notices had been arranged for the Orchard site. It seemed this was imminent.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT: County Cllr P Faircloth-Mutton attended and his report covered: -

Local Government Reorganisation for Suffolk Withdrawn

This was included in his report and had also been covered by our District Cllr.

Suffolk creates 648 new school and SEND places

More than 600 new school and SEND places will be available for children and young people this academic year. As a local member, he is pleased to have secured 8 additional places at Hillside Special School for Leavenheath children.

Sudbury's Fire Station Commended

He extended his thanks to our local firefighters for their bravery played in the recent Dunwich Heath fire in the north of the county.

Highways – Reporting Back

Following the local highways engineer visit which Cllr Davy attended, Cllr Faircloth-Mutton reports the following:

a) Funding a Speed Survey

The PC may wish to consider funding a speed survey to establish the extent of the issue. At present, speeding has been raised as a concern, but we do not have any traffic data available to verify the actual vehicle speeds at this location. The approximate cost of a survey is £485 + vat. Suffolk Highways Speed and Safety Team would review the results and provide recommendations on potential measures. If average speeds are high, the PC could then make a request to Suffolk Police for targeted enforcement. Equally, if the survey demonstrates otherwise, the results may help provide reassurance to both the PC and the wider community.

b) Consider a Speed Indicator Device (SID)

The PC may also wish to investigate the possibility of purchasing and installing a Speed Indicator Device (SID). Further information on the application process and the requirements for SID locations can be found in the attached document, "Working Together to Reduce Speed".

c) Potential Installation of 30mph Roundels

Subject to approval, there may be an opportunity to install four 30mph roundel markings on the carriageway adjacent to the existing 30mph repeater signs. These markings can help reinforce the speed limit and provide an additional visual reminder to drivers entering or travelling through the area. Highways are happy to progress this proposal internally to establish whether it would be supported. However, any works would also be subject to an appropriate source of external funding.

d) Community Speed Watch

The PC may wish to investigate the possibility of establishing a Community Speed Watch (CSW) group in partnership with Suffolk Police. This has been attempted and is currently not viable.

The issue of nuisance weeds was also discussed within the road gutters. It was explained that Suffolk Highways carries out a countywide weed-spraying programme once each year and that this year's programme has now been completed. A possible way of addressing this issue locally would be through the formation of a Community Self Help Group. Such groups can assist with the manual removal of weeds and undertake a range of other agreed minor maintenance activities that help improve the local environment.

Village Magazine

As promised, Cllr Faircloth-Mutton has requested funding to be allocated from his local community budget for the new magazine in Leavenheath. These funds should be with the PC shortly, who have covered the cost in the interim. He welcomes feedback on its success.

URGENT HIGHWAYS SAFETY MATTERS: A report of the site meeting was given as part of Cllr Faircloth-Mutton's report. Cllr C Davy also attended on behalf of the PC. A decision needs to be made of priorities and whether to fund or contribute to a traffic survey and replacement roundels. Cllr Faircloth-Mutton can support one of the above financially. He agreed to chase the post installation on the A134. It was agreed to add an agenda item for November of the Community Self Help Scheme – **Action Clerk.**

LEAVENHEATH EVENTS: Request by L/Events CIC for the PC to fund a cash prize for Bingo. Following discussion, it was resolved to contribute £150 towards the cash prizes at the forthcoming Bingo – **Action Clerk.**

FINANCE: The **Bank Balances** as of 27th August 2026 were £3,919.56 in the Community Account and £30,386.70 in the Rate Reward Account making a total of £34,306.26.

The following **pre-agreed payments** were made: -

Cheque No.	Amount	Payee	Details
At 1st August 2026			
Funds Transfer	1105.67	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	1555.20	Babergh DC	bin empty charges
Funds Transfer	760.80	Moser Groundcare	VG maintenance
Funds Transfer	77.59	J Dunkley	Link newsletter holders
Funds Transfer	16.00	Leavenheath VH	hall hire
Funds Transfer	66.80	Filcris	posts for asset repair
Funds Transfer	36.00	Spingold	Link printing
At 1st September 2026			
Funds Transfer	1077.80	Clerk/HMRC/SCC	Staffing costs
Funds Transfer	359.00	J Foster	VG Maintenance
Funds Transfer	36.00	Spingold	Link printing

The above payments were resolved.

Review of Risk Management Policy 2026

Members reviewed the document on our website and resolved adoption of the Risk Management Policy for 2026. The document will be updated on the PC Website – **Action Clerk.**

Review of Asset Register and Insurance 2026

Cllr S Whitelaw has started the review of the current assets in liaison with Paul Mortlock (previous Chair of many years). It was agreed to conclude this review ahead of the November Meeting – **Action Clerk (Agenda item) and Cllr S Whitelaw**. Additionally, any purchases during the current year will be added to the Register ahead of the Financial Year End.

The current period of the PC Insurance started on 1st June 2026; the cover was reviewed and premium reduced by just under £30 in exchange for a 3-year Long Term Agreement. This was paid for on 1st May 2026.

Internal Audit Report

An action plan had been started ahead of the meeting including: -

1) Transparency Code – suggest publishing quarterly payments list over £500 – completed
2) Own Accessibility Statement – new page created on website signposting information – completed
3) Evidence within the body of the minutes of the budget being set and the reasoning for such a budget. This will need to take place at the January Meeting. We currently prepare the budget ahead of the meeting and share and then discuss during the meeting. It is important that clear discussions and proposals take place at that meeting in the interests of transparency. The budget setting and reasoning behind it should take place in a meeting held in public not in private – usually the January PC Meeting.

External Audit Report
The successful conclusion of the 2025-26 External Audit arrived too late for the agenda; however, the report and conclusion notice are now on our website. All matters were approved.

Review of effectiveness of Internal Audit and Appointment of Auditors
The report from SALC was again comprehensive and it was agreed to continue to appoint SALC as our Internal Auditors.

Schedule Review of Policies
This was scheduled for the November PC Meeting – **Action Clerk to include on the agenda**.

Any Other Urgent financial matters - Nothing was raised.

CORRESPONDENCE: On-going correspondence was noted by the meeting. Walks Leaflets were reported on under Footpath Warden's Report. Concern has been raised regarding the maintenance of trees on Wrights Way near the walkway to Sweet Briar Close. This is on one of the parcels of land the PC looks after. A resident had volunteered to assist between meetings by speaking to a tree surgeon for advice. *A quote for the work has since been received and accepted by the PC.

IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE: Nothing was raised over and above on-going matters**.**

MAINTENANCE OF VILLAGE ASSETS: It was agreed to press on with bin changes and installations that have been agreed and if more bins are needed in the future, this will be considered.

REPORTS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS: Our Footpath Warden, Cllr C Davy, was concerned at the lack of action following his reports. Cllr P Faircloth-Mutton agreed to support him. It was noted that the walks usually begin at the Village Hall, so their representative was asked to report to the PC if this causes problems in the future.

The meeting closed at **8.55 p.m**.

The next PC Meeting is scheduled for 4th November 2026. Our Chair, Cllr Clare Morgan gave her apologies for the next meeting.

Planning Meeting on 16th September 2026

The following Planning Applications were discussed: -

A) **18 Edies Lane – Household application - side extension – DC/26/02366.**
The PC had No Objections between meetings.

B) **30 Edies Lane – additional information added 29.6.26 – DC/26/02377.**
The PC repeated comments sent on 25th June.

C) 4, The Green – extension and garage conversion proposal – DC/26/02436.
The PC had No Objections between meetings.

D) **Oak Cottage, Breach Grove, Kingsland Lane – Entrance drive and summerhouse – DC/26/02959.**
Whilst the PC had No Objections, this was subject to a condition linking the summerhouse to the main dwelling. The PC suggested that the summerhouse should not be permitted to be sold, rented, or be used independently from the primary house. Additionally, the Right of Way network in the vicinity should always be kept clear.

E) 16 Maple Way – Applications to pollard 3 protected oaks – DC/26/03729
The PC had **No Objections** provided the trees were just taken back to previous cuts.

F) **Any other urgent Planning Matters**: - **Land South Of, High Road, Leavenheath – DC/26/03533**. Full Planning Application for 39 dwellings. *This consultation arrived too late for the agenda; however, information was shared in the few days before the PC Meeting.*
The Chair explained the substantial documentation to review against current planning policies and the previous planning history at this site. Cllr L Parker was invited to share some updates regarding National Planning Policy. He explained the definition has been widened to the "Settlement" rather than "Built Up Areas". The lack of 5-year housing supply also makes acceptance of development proposals more likely. He confirmed the Leavenheath Neighbourhood Plan is a recent document and has served the Parish well, so the proposal can be reviewed using our Neighbourhood Plan policies. The Chair allowed the public to share their comments at this stage. On a positive note, the number of homes had been reduced, and the design appeared well thought out as an initial impression. Concerns were expressed about the loss of the orchard and what it could lead to in the future. Sustainability came up and there were some errors reporting the pre-school as open and in relation to other amenities. Concern was expressed regarding traffic from the development to the High Road. Cllrs will continue to review all the documents and reach consensus on comments to put forward between meetings. Cllr L Parker confirmed every application is judged on its own merits, and this is a different application and should be regarded as such. Essentially sustainability is important. One resident suggested a more positive approach and cited her experience as an applicant in the past. All comments were listened to, and our Chair and other Cllrs have the hard task of reviewing all the documentation and assessing the compliance with our Neighbourhood Plan. The PC response will be reported to the next PC Meeting.