

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 2nd July 2026, commencing at 7.pm in the Village Hall.

All supporting documents can be found on the Parish Council website under Meetings, July 2026.

Present:

Cllrs: Jack Norman, Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Lizzie Falconer, Iain Lamont, Roy Mawford, Irene Mitchell, Janice Muckian, Jane Ranzetta and Chris Robinson. Six members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair (Cllr Norman) began by welcoming everyone and introduced herself explaining to all present that this meeting is being recorded. The Chair reminded all that this is not a public meeting, but a meeting of the Council held in public. Members of the Public were respectfully asked to maintain silence during the Council's deliberations and not to approach the Councillors. Councillors were requested not to engage with Members of the Public when Council is in session. All were asked to ensure that their mobile phone was on silent and were reminded to treat all present with respect.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

The Clerk reported that Cllr Sherman was unwell and had sent his apologies. No absences required approval.

2. Declarations of Interest and item 3 Requests for Dispensations

The Clerk said that he had received no updates from Cllrs concerning their Interests and reminded Cllrs that they have 28 days to lodge any changes. He had received no requests for dispensations.

He explained that in connection to items on the agenda for tonight:

- a) Item 9b. Cllr Robinson had informed him that until further notice he will not be participating in planning discussions concerning parish-level planning matters at meetings of this Council, he will continue to participate in the Planning Working Group.
- b) Item 9d. Cllr Robinson had informed him that since item 9d relates to one of his Disclosable Interests that will leave the room for that item.
- c) Item 15 Cllr Robinson had informed him that, following a complaint raised with the Monitoring Officer, which has been dismissed, he considers it prudent for him not to participate in Item 15.
- d) He is anticipating that a number of Cllrs will need to leave for the Report and Motion concerning a Land Boundary.
- e) He is also aware that there will be a motion to defer item 9c.

He asked Cllrs whether they wished to declare any interests concerning tonight's agenda of which he was not aware and secondly, in general, whether Cllrs had any updates to their previously declared interests. None said that they did.

4. Approval of Minutes

To approve as accurate minutes of the 4th June 2026 meeting of the Council.

The Clerk explained that he made two changes to the circulated draft minutes. With respect to the last agenda item he had added a missing sentence: 'Cllr Robinson left the meeting as the only remaining item related to one of his pecuniary interests'. Concerning the item about establishing a Footpath Working Group he had added the explanatory sentence: 'Cllr Robinson explained that he considered it inappropriate for him to participate in the debate because he owns land over which one of the longest public rights of way in Lavenham and did not participate. Cllr Muckian pointed out that the Chair had not made the introductory announcement as reported in the minutes, she had actually just requested the usual introductory announcement to be taken 'as read'. The Clerk agreed to delete this introductory announcement from the recorded minutes.

Approval Motion Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllrs Domoney, Falconer, Mawford, Mitchell, Ranzetta and Robinson abstained.

Norman

To record no objections to the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2026.

The Clerk explained that Cllrs Bourne, Domoney, Ranzetta and Sherman had been present.

Approval Motion Proposed: Cllr Bourne **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllrs Falconer, Lamont, Mawford, Mitchell, Muckian, Norman and Robinson abstained.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair (Cllr Norman) told Cllrs that concerns had been raised concerning the functioning of the fire hydrants during the Spring St Fire. County Cllr Lindsay has reported that Suffolk Fire Services believe that the fire hydrant was capped because it was awaiting repairs by Anglian Water which they have now done. It appears that the timing of the fire was unfortunate.

She thanked District Cllr Clover for his work over many weeks to understand who is responsible for the resolution of the flooding issues adjacent to the Lavenham Butchers and to get a full reply from Suffolk County Council. She said that she recognised the answer may not be what the residents would wish.

She told Cllrs that work has commenced to improve the Harwood Place play area. Babergh Council had consulted with residents who live around the Harwood Place play area last Summer. Babergh had door-knocked and letter dropped everyone in the area to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to give their views as to what could improve the play area. It had been generally agreed to be rather tired looking and that it could be improved to provide more activities. The guidance from the residents was then used to develop plans to improve the playpark, which are now being carried out.

She said that she was aware that the Clerk has repeatedly unlocked and locked the electricity cabinet in the Water St Car Park to enable Connected Kerb to have access and has nagged them to complete the project. She was glad to report that these chargers are now operational. The Clerk had also informed her that he has heard from the Connected Kerb operational team concerning the Prentice St chargers and so she was pleased to say that these will at some point be active.

She told Cllrs that it is her intention to speak shortly with the residents who live near the proposed Speed Indicator Post on the First Meadows side of Brent Eleigh Rd. Each needs to agree to the placement of a post and therefore the device, before any further action.

6. Public Participation Session No Member of the Public wished to speak.

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

The Clerk reported that County Cllr Lindsay was unable to be present but had reported that

- a) The new Reform Administration has decided to make a legal challenge concerning the Governments decision to create three unitary councils in Suffolk.
- b) The new administration has decided not to increase the charges paid by parents for travel to school. This is the second year without an increase.
- c) The UK employer apprenticeship levy is a payroll tax requiring businesses with an annual pay bill over £3 million to pay 0.5% of their payroll into a fund used for apprenticeship training. Norfolk has a scheme that allows such businesses to donate any of the levy they don't use themselves to smaller businesses in the County that might want apprentices but cannot afford them. Suffolk has now joined this scheme.
- d) Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has invested over £3 million in eleven new fire engines.

District Cllr Clover reported that, after much chasing, he had been advised that concerning the broken grille and trash screen adjacent to the Lavenham Butchers that Suffolk County Council considers the matter to be a Riparian Owner responsibility. District Cllr Clover offered to facilitate an approach to the Riparian Owner. Cllr Robinson asked Cllr Clover if locality funding might be available for this work.

He reminded Cllrs that a scoping consultation has been launched concerning the new Joint Local Plan inviting residents to share their views. He has been informed that further news about the Call for Sites register will be published towards the end of the year.

£250,000 has been awarded to improve Sudbury bus station. Babergh DC and Suffolk CC are also to carry out a feasibility study to explore long term options for the site.

Amador

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8. Clerks Report

The Clerk told Cllrs that the Accounts for May contain no substantial variances except the £10,000 saving because no tree work has been done. He reminded Cllrs that tree maintenance is on this agenda as an individual item. A much less substantial variance is the cost of answering the FOI request which was not £1,500 as feared, it was about £1,000, ~~and most importantly has been resolved including the requests for any emails to and from non-councillor members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group concerning the design of the survey which were not supplied.~~

Motions: to approve Accounts and Receipts and Payments for the month ending 31st May 2026
Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decisions:** Approved unanimously.

The Clerk reported that the toilets are in a much better state, the new cleaner is really getting on top of the ingrained grime. Sadly, again a lock started to fall off and has had to be repaired and the coin box in Prentice St was either broken into or the tape holding it together failed in the heat. Such coin boxes are no longer made and the cash collected there is not significant. The Clerk will see if a permanent repair can be done.

The Clerk has asked Suffolk Street lighting, but not had a response, concerning whether a bollard style light can be installed in Church St next to the tree.

The leases for the Office and Toilets have been signed which say that rent is only payable from the start of the leases and so it maybe that these have been effectively rent free for the last three years. If they do only bill the PC from the start of the leases there will be a write back of some £3,600 of accrued rent payable.

It had been the Clerk's intention to order replacement street bins for the High St this week but a family emergency had got in the way. Council has repaired a sign on the Lavenham Walk.

The Clerk has advertised that Council would like to receive applications for Grants. The Clerk reported that he has instructed our Solicitors regarding the Paddocks Allotments. They still wait for a draft lease from Hartog Hutton.

9a. Planning Register

The Clerk said that he had one update to the published Planning Register. Babergh approved the application for Listed Building consent concerning the Gates on the Hall which was in line with the recommendation of Cllrs.

Cllr Lamont informed Cllrs that the application for the dog walking area had been withdrawn.

9b. Planning Applications

Application. No: DC/26/02367: The Lavenhams, Bridge St Rd.

Application for Listed Building Consent – various Internal alterations.

Council notes that the Design and Access Statement explains that no historic features in this Grade II listed property are affected.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Robinson abstained.

Application. No: DC/26/01817: Perseverance House, 47 High St.

Application for Listed Building Consent - installation of a small fibre broadband box at a low level, on the front elevation of the house, positioned adjacent to the existing telecommunications entry point into the cellar.

Motion: Recommend Approval

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Robinson abstained.

*as agreed
 M. Robinson*

9c. Motion to change Terms of Reference for Planning Working Group

Cllr Norman said that she would like to defer this motion to a future date.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Falconer **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Robinson abstained.

9d. Motion to write to Babergh DC concerning the status of a recent document submitted to Babergh DC with respect to Planning Application DC/28/01302 (Erection of a Wellness Centre)

Cllr Robinson left the room.

Cllr Mitchell explained that she had been surprised to find that the recent LNP Household Survey had been submitted to the portal without comment such as a covering note. She said that she considered this document to be 'of no status and not a made plan, it is resident opinion expressed in quantitative form and comments from approximately 20% of those who completed the Survey'.

Cllr Lamont proposed an amendment so that it additionally says 'The Clerk is also instructed to ask Babergh Council to remove the document'.

Motion to amend Motion so that it reads: Council instructs the Clerk to inform the Local Planning Authority that the LNP Revision survey report should be disregarded and specifically, any findings of the LNP Survey Report cannot be construed as needs assessment of any matter including a Wellness Centre. The Clerk is also instructed to ask Babergh Council to remove the item.

Proposed: Cllr Lamont **Seconded:** Cllr Muckian **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Domoney abstained

Amended Motion proposed: Cllr Mitchell **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Domoney abstained

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.

10. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 3: Minutes and Report

Cllr Bourne and Cllr Norman agreed to obtain more details concerning the insurance that could be offered by the Community Council concerning public events

11. Motion concerning Bullying and Harassment Policy

The Clerk reminded all Cllrs that he had, in response to a request from a Cllr, drafted and circulated a draft Bullying and Harassment policy. Cllr Mawford had, in response, prepared an alternative policy and motion for Cllrs to consider.

Cllr Mawford reminded Cllrs that Babergh Council is the responsible authority for handling complaints concerning Cllr Behaviour and that should such behaviour be exhibited by Members of the Public, the Council could only act if that behaviour occurred during a Council Meeting.

Cllr Lamont said that the Bullying and Harassment Policy could only really apply to Council Employees and Council Contractors. Cllr Ranzetta agreed saying that the Councillors Code Of Conduct covered all such behaviours by Cllrs. The Clerk told Cllrs that any PC policy concerning Cllr behaviour would have no legal standing and could not be enforced. Cllr Mitchell spoke of her concerns about the behaviour of Councillors saying that she agreed that currently the policy concerning managing Cllr behaviour is with Babergh District Council and that is where it must remain.

Cllr Ranzetta wondered if it was a legal requirement to have a Bullying and Harassment Policy. Cllr Mitchell suggested that the Clerk contact SALC concerning the legal requirements.

The Chair reflected that all need to focus on the needs of the village.

Neither motion attracted a proposer or seconder

12. Motion concerning possible improvements to local bus services

Cllr Mawford proposed that the next steps should be that the Council should contact our neighbouring parish and town councils along the bus route between Sudbury and Cockfield, to ascertain whether they have submitted their own LABG bid. We should ask:

- a) If they have submitted a bid, how is it progressing, and can we learn things about bidding from them
- b) If not, would they be interested in working with us in a joint bid (which might be more successful than separate bids from individual town/parishes)

We should also remain open to further ideas from Lavenham residents and workplaces, develop initial draft proposals, and make initial contact with Suffolk CC about bidding. The results of these contacts and draft proposals should then be brought back to a future Council meeting, for further consideration.

Motion: The Clerk is instructed to progress this matter, as set out above in 'Next Steps'.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Robinson **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Bourne was briefly absent from the room.

13. Report and Motion concerning purchase of Speed Indicator Device Brackets

The Clerk explained that Suffolk County Council had confirmed that the Bury Rd SID post was approved for use and displayed the quote obtained for extra brackets.

Motion: Council instructs the Clerk to purchase an additional backplate with clips for the SID post on the Bury Rd at a cost of £118.00 including VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Robinson **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

14. Report concerning the maintenance of trees

The Clerk explained the history of the item and how the recommended scope of work and cost had changed. The Clerk suggested that the Clerk and Chair meet with the Tree Surgeon and report back to Council. Cllr Robinson urged Council make sure that it does not commission work that UKPN is intending to do on trees adjacent to power lines. The Chair and the Clerk agreed.

15. Report and Motion concerning the proximity of water courses to First Meadow

Councillor Robinson left the room. The Clerk detailed the risks and the possible solutions.

Motion: That the presence of watercourses adjacent to First Meadow is added to the Risk Register and that signage is purchased up to a cost of £500 to warn users of the watercourses.

Proposed: Cllr Mitchell **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Cllr Robinson returned to the room.

16. Motion to consider excluding the press and the public for item 17 because of the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed.

Proposed: Cllr Falconer **Seconded:** Cllr Mawford **Decision:** Approved. Cllrs Domoney and Cllrs Robinson abstained.

Cllrs Domoney and Robinson left the room at 9. pm.

17. Report and Motion concerning Land Boundary

Motion: The Clerk was instructed to engage the retained solicitors and other professional advisers as required to an initial amount not exceeding £5,000 and share the outcome of this legal advice with Babergh planning.

Proposed: Cllr Mawford **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne **Decision:** Approved unanimously.

Meeting ended 9.25pm.

Date of next meeting –Thursday 6th August 2026 7pm.

M. Domoney