

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Thursday 3rd September 2026, commencing at 7.05pm in the Village Hall.

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

Present:

Cllrs: Jack Norman, Alison Bourne, Frank Domoney, Jane Ranzetta, Chris Robinson and Michael Sherman. Seven members of the public.

Opening Statement by the Chair:

The Chair (Cllr Norman) welcomed everyone highlighting that the formal introduction to the meeting had been included in the published agenda.

1. Apologies and approval of Absences

Cllrs Falconer, Lamont, Mawford, Mitchell and Muckian had sent their 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 tonight's agenda Cllr Robinson had informed him that concerning the application regarding Land West Of Bury Road Lavenham DC/26/03298 he will be discussing this application but not voting because he used Jack Wilkinson as an expert planner on the first application for the Wellness Centre which was subsequently refused in 2024.

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

Motion: To approve as accurate minutes of the 6th August 2026 meeting of the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta **Decision:** Approved unanimously. Cllr Domoney abstained.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair (Cllr Norman) told Cllrs that was aware that concerns have been expressed about the parking situation over the Bank Holiday weekend. She will try to organise a meeting with other village organisations to discuss how we can all work, in collaboration, to improve the situation in the future. Four events had taken place at the church end of the village.

She was not aware of any more incidents or near accidents in the Cock Inn car park. The Clerk has written to Babergh Council to find out if they are aware of any further incidents and what the Babergh Officer who was scheduled to visit the August Farmers Market had seen and his conclusions.

She has spoken with very nearly all of 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 post and therefore the device before the post can be applied for. She aims to complete this exercise very shortly and will report the outcome of those discussions to Council. So far all residents have expressed their approval.

The Clerk has made her aware that donations for the toilets which were better than expected in the early part of summer have been disappointing in July and August.

She is also aware that there have been several reports that trade in the Village Shops has not been of the level hoped for. She thanked District Cllr Clover for the work he has done to obtain information concerning the number of visits by coaches saying that she is aware that he will cover this in his report and that Babergh is open to the idea of a banner advertising local businesses.

Ma Norman.
1026

She told Cllrs that recent changes to the bus service have not been entirely welcomed. The Clerk has written to the Bus Company who have responded as follows:

'The last journey on the Sudbury to Bury St Edmunds route was very lightly used. As part of our timetable redesign, we have brought the final departure forward to offer a more even headway and determine if this better meets passenger demand'.

The PC has taken up these concerns with County Cllr Lindsay who will report tonight. We have also received correspondence from a Member of the Public about the lack of Suffolk County Council school bus provision to Thomas Gainsborough School (TGS). We have put that Member in touch with County Cllr Lindsay to update them on SCC school transport provision.

The Planning Group met this month she reiterated that any Councillor who wishes to join would be most welcome.

She continued to speak about Planning Issues saying:

Firstly, Babergh Council has made us aware that from 1st July 2026 Government Policy has meant that Babergh must have a 20% buffer when calculating its five-year Housing Land Supply. As a result, Babergh's current housing land supply is 4.68 years and so 'tilted balance' applies. Babergh describe 'tilted balance' as 'a national planning rule that promotes housing delivery above other matters and comment that 'The Tilted Balance gives greater weight to the benefits of new housing, but it does not override good planning. Well-planned schemes are more likely to succeed, while poor proposals can still be refused'.

And secondly the New National Planning Policy Framework effective 14th August 2026 has been described as pro development.

A draft lease for the allotments site was received in the middle of August from the developer of The Paddocks, regrettably the lawyers have not yet reviewed this lease and their work on the possible Boundary Dispute remains incomplete. The Clerk has chased both these matters and awaits a response.

She thanked Sudbury Cycle Club for their kind donation of £30 towards the cost of running the Public toilets.

Cllr Ranzetta asked if First Meadow Car Park had been made available for cars to park in. The Chair replied that it could be made available but marshals would be required and that this is one of the topics she wished to discuss with village organisations.

6. Public Participation Session

A Member of the Public expressed her concerns about the car parking on busy weekends. The Chair said that she wished to work with village organisations and explore all the possible places that could be made available as extra car parks.

A Member of the Public expressed her concern about the new increased prices charged by the bus company for children to get to Thomas Gainsborough School and described to Cllrs the close connections between Lavenham Primary and TGS.

Note: there is now a petition concerning this: <https://c.org/YG9pTTMpGc>

A Member of the Public spoke of the development and funding needs of the Lavenham Football Club. He told Cllrs of the Clubs fundraising efforts and desire to purchase portable floodlighting. He asked if the Parish Council could help with funds. The Chair and the Clerk explained that the PC had advertised in May on Facebook etc for Grant applications and had awarded £2,500 and that it was the intention to advertise again in November.

A Member of the Public spoke of the upcoming blessing of the Lavenham Riverside Allotments by Rev Simon on 22nd September at 2pm. All are welcome. He spoke of his concerns about the upcoming super El Nino year explaining that the Association will share any surplus food with the Community. Note: Cllr Robinson left the room for this item.


1.10.26

7. Local Authority Councillors' Reports

County Cllr Lindsay explained that in 2019 the County Council had changed its school travel scheme to funding travel only to the nearest school and not to the catchment school. He detailed the efforts that he had made in 2019 to oppose this policy change. He has contacted the Suffolk CC Bus Officer expressing his concerns about the fare increases but the Bus Company is a private company and Suffolk CC has little influence. He will inform Council and the Member of the Public of any reply he gets from the Suffolk CC Bus Officer.

He has contacted the Suffolk CC Bus Officer concerning the change of the time of the last bus from Sudbury. This service is subsidised by Suffolk CC and so Suffolk CC may have more influence. He will inform Council of any reply he gets from the Suffolk CC Bus Officer.

He spoke of the Grants now available to make it easier for Suffolk residents to replace ageing gas, oil or LPG boilers with heat pumps. The Clerk said that he had put this information on the PC website.

Cllr Sherman asked about the recycling of the plastics and whether plastics were recycled as advertised. The Chair suggested a visit to the Great Blakenham Waste Incinerator. District Cllr Clover said that he would try and organise this.

District Cllr Clover reported that following last month's meeting, at which the downturn in coaches visiting Lavenham was raised, Babergh has responded that coach visits are marginally up by 12 coaches to 83 visits Mar-Aug 2026 v 2025. It appears that Babergh is prepared to consider free coach parking for limited hours. This would have the benefit of acting as a 'control' for comparison and open the door to contacting the coach companies identified as no longer visiting Lavenham. The same Babergh Officer would deal with siting of the banner at the entrance of the Church St car park.

District Cllr Clover reported that he is working to ensure adequate rehousing for the lady who lost her home in the Spring St fire. The house needs more work than previously anticipated. Cllr Bourne reported that an elderly gentleman unable to live in his house because of smoke damage was living in a Travelodge in Haverhill. District Cllr Clover said that he would be happy to help this gentleman.

He reminded Cllrs that all areas offered for car parking need appropriate public liability insurance.

District Cllr Clover spoke of the recent changes to the NPPF saying that he had not yet been fully briefed. Cllr Robinson expressed concern about the slow progress by Babergh of assessing a higher proportion of Planning Applications at Officer rather than Councillor level. District Cllr Clover said that he was not aware of any delay and would enquire.

8. Clerks Report

Accounts:

The July Accounts contain no substantial variances except the £10,000 saving because no tree work has been done and a timing difference of £3,000 concerning Grants spend. The spend on the LNP which is being paid for from CIL funds not Council funds is running substantially below budget, this appears to be timing. The draft August Accounts do not contain any additional significant issues.

The Clerk has informed the Grant Applicants of Council's decisions. Good Neighbours will receive their money in a week or so when we do the August payments. The Grant to the Paddocks Allotments Association will be paid when there is a lease and the Grant to the Hub to assist with their conversion to Charitable Status will be paid when their application is approved and the costs of conversion are a little clearer. This has been agreed with the recipients.

Public Realm:

The repair to the flushing mechanism of the toilet at Church St had resolved the leak. Another lock has failed and will shortly be fixed, a small leak developed in a Prentice St toilet which has been fixed. Donations have been disappointing these last few months with May being our best month. Repairs have been done, as we are obliged to under the lease, to the fan, sink and toilet at the Hub.

Concern has been raised by residents about vegetation on Lower Rd which is the responsibility of Suffolk CC. Suffolk CC has accepted that the work is required. The vegetation around the streetlights has been cut back and works to remove further vegetation and repair potholes have been ordered.

Sh. Sherman
1.10.26

We still await a proposal from Suffolk streetlighting, including a quotation, for a bollard type light.

Three replacement litter bins (two for the High St by the Green Co-Op and one for near Howletts) were delivered this morning and we will try and instal these without delay. The cost of these was nearly £1,200. Cllrs indicated that the Clerk should claim this from Neighbourhood Cil.

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

9a. Planning Register

Applications 2953/4 (De Vere House for a single storey rear extension) have today been approved. No differences of opinion between the PC and Babergh on the applications determined this month.

9b. Elect a leader of the Planning Group

Motion: to elect Cllr Norman to be leader of the Planning Group
Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Sherman **Decision:** Approved unanimously

Cllrs Bourne and Domoney expressed interest in joining the Planning Group when they have done the SALC course.

9c. Planning Applications

Application DC/26/03298: Land West of Bury Rd.

Application for Outline Planning Permission (Access to be considered all other matters reserved) - Erection of 6 no. self-build dwellings.

The Chair reported that the opinion of the Planning Group was 'We OBJECT to this application. There is no material change to the previous application that was refused by Babergh District Council and not supported by Lavenham Parish Council. We can see no reason to change the view of the Parish Council at this time.

Motion: That the PC supports the recommendation of the Planning Group
Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Domoney
Decision: Approved unanimously. Cllr Robinson abstained.

Applications DC/26/3394 and DC/26/3395: Box Cottage, 21 Prentice St.

Householder Application and Application for Listed Building Consent for replacement of existing rear extensions with new single storey extension and minor internal alterations

The Clerk reported that this application had been subject to considerable pre-application engagement.

The Chair reported that the opinion of the Planning Group was 'We SUPPORT this application with the necessary recommendations of the installation of bat boxes species specific bird boxes, hedgehog friendly fencing and bee bricks'.

Motion: That the PC supports the recommendation of the Planning Group
Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta
Decision: Approved unanimously.

Application DC/26/03515: Jane Taylors Cottage, Shilling St

Application for Listed Building Consent – Replace single glazed window and door units with timbalite 12mm softcoat slimline double glazed units

The Chair reported that the opinion of the Planning Group was 'We SUPPORT this application'

Motion: That the PC supports the recommendation of the Planning Group
Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne
Decision: Approved unanimously.

Anderson
1.10.26

Council discussed the application to reduce the height of two black poplars at The Hall concerning which an extension of time is not available to permit discussion at the next meeting and asked the Clerk to write and inform Babergh Council that the PC recommends that it follow the advice of its Tree Officer.

10. Motions concerning Tree Maintenance

Pine Tree T18 in the Cemetery

The Chair explained that the Clerk has received correspondence from a resident near the Cemetery expressing concerns about the Pine Trees adjacent their property. The Pine Trees are Parish Council responsibility. All are covered by Tree Protection Orders.

The concerns are about the safety of the trees and the pine cones, needles and twigs etc falling into his garden.

The Councils Contractor recently visited and removed the ivy from seven trees at £50 per tree so that the Contractor could properly inspect the trees and has reported:

- a) One tree has recently died and needs to be removed.
- b) One tree has a vertical fissure – This was sounded with a rubber-faced mallet and the timber is solid. There is no weeping or progressive splitting. The fissure appears to be an old, superficial historical wound that does not compromise the structural integrity of the tree. Monitoring will continue.
- c) One tree is slightly leaning – Its crown is shedding needles slightly more heavily than the others, but the tree is not considered unsafe and cannot be felled under the TPO without further sound reasons to do so. There are no signs that the lean is progressive and it has likely been like this for some years. Monitoring is the appropriate course of action.

Additionally, the Contractor has advised the PC that in general many local trees are going to struggle and possibly die in the next twelve months and the PC needs to be aware that further tree maintenance costs are likely to be required in addition to the current issues.

Motion: The quotation of not more than £850 to remove the dead tree and plant a replacement is accepted. No work to be done before permission has been obtained from the Tree Officer at Babergh District Council.

Proposed: Cllr Sherman **Seconded:** Cllr Ranzetta

Decision: Approved unanimously.

Cllr Domoney asked if there was a plan to address the likely further work replied. The Chair replied that it was intended to survey all the trees in November.

General Tree Works

The Clerk explained that in 2025 Council had obtained a quote of £19,130 for the work required to trees from its retained contractor. This included £2,850 for works required to trees in the Recreation Ground which are the responsibility of the Community Council. Proposed cost to Council was therefore £16,280.

£4,000 of this work urgently required for safety reasons was completed in early 2026 leaving £12,280 of work incomplete. A full tree survey by a professional firm was then carried out as recommended by the retained contractor and the retained contractor had then submitted a revised quote.

Following a Meeting with the Contractor the Clerk and the Chair have:

- a) Determined that the Desired Spend is £15,300 because the Tree Survey has identified £3,020 of additional work largely in First Meadow though there is a possibility that £1,425 of work relating to a Crack Willow in First meadow can be deferred.
- b) Determined that the apparent saving of £8,030 between the Original Quote and the Revised Quote following the Tree Survey can be categorised as below:
 - a) Additional work as described above (£3,020)
 - b) Scope Difference Remit i.e. Works which are sensible to do, such as tidying up trees, which are not required for Safety Reasons £5,450.

Anderson
1.10.26

- c) The Survey did not recommend works to the large Cedar Tree in the Churchyard. The Contractor profoundly disagrees with the Surveyor citing the danger of snowfall on the branches and the risk of damage should branches break off above gravestones. £3,700.
- d) The Survey did not recommend works to the Lime Trees fronting Church St as these works are not required for safety reasons but are required to make the pavement easier to walk along and to protect the Christmas Lights from damage. £800.
- e) The Survey did not include pictus tests on two trees and grinding out the stumps of two felled pine trees. £1,100.

The Clerk will return to Council with cost estimates for the Recreation Ground when further research has been completed. These costs are the responsibility of the Community Council. Council could choose to assist with this cost by making a Grant available to the Community Council.

Cllr Robinson asked if more quotes could be obtained, the Chair replied she would like to give this local contractor 'a go' and that we did not have time to obtain further quotes particularly for work on the Large Cedar. The Clerk agreed to amend the motion to include the suspension of Standing Orders concerning the number of quotes.

Motion concerning Tree Maintenance

The Clerk is instructed to enter into negotiations with the Contractor to complete the desired tree work aiming to achieve a discount for the large size of the order. Standing Orders concerning the number of quotes suspended for this work. Should items need removing to achieve the budgeted spend of £11,800 (minor immaterial difference excepted) the work on the Crack Willow and/or one or more of the boundaries of the Churchyard could be deleted. No work to be done before permission has been obtained from the Tree Officer at Babergh District Council including applying formally where required.

Motion to amend Draft Motion and pass amended motion.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Bourne
Decision: Approved. Cllr Sherman voted against.

11. Motion concerning purchase of SID Solar Panel

The Clerk explained that the Sid equipment is difficult to move especially at the Bury Rd site. Having an additional Solar Panel would alleviate these difficulties.

Motion: Council instructs the Clerk to purchase an additional Solar Panel with fixings for the SID post on the Bury Rd at a cost of £570 excluding VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Sherman

Decision: Approved unanimously.

12. Local Government Annual Payrise

The Chair told Cllrs that the Annual Cost of Living payrise had been agreed between the Employers and the relevant Trades Unions. This payrise is 3.3% and is a contractual obligation.

Motion: That Council acknowledges and fulfils its legal obligations to increase the Clerk's salary to £39,481 with effect from April 1st 2026 and the Chair is instructed to inform the payroll bureau.

Proposed: Cllr Ranzetta **Seconded:** Cllr Domoney

Decision: Approved unanimously.

13. Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 3: Minutes and Report

The Clerk commented that changes to the NPPF had been covered elsewhere in the Meeting. Cllr Sherman apologised for ordering a small amount of expenditure without reference to the Clerk. He had reported himself to the Monitoring Officer who had not expressed any serious concerns. Cllr Sherman said that the Neighbourhood Plan Group would in future not respond to rude or threatening letters from Cllrs.

Meeting ended 9.03pm. Date of next meeting –Thursday 1st October 2026 7pm.

Domoney
1.10.26