

## LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30PM ON WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL 2018 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

**Present:** John Curran (JDC)  
Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)  
Ron Gunn (RG)  
David Pratt (DP)  
Sheila Roberts (SR)  
Doreen Sillett (DS)  
Michael Woods - Chairman (MW)

**Apologies:** Steve Laing - Vice Chairman

**In attendance:** Gordon Jones, Suffolk CC (GJ)  
John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)  
Parishioners

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#### 18.4.1 INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 18.4.2 PRESENTATION - EAST OF ENGLAND AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Chairman introduced Peter Harrison, a volunteer with the Air Ambulance Service. Peter said the service now operated seven days a week, including at night, with five helicopters active in East Anglia. There were also two rapid response vehicles. The service relied on public donations and needed £11.2m to keep going.

#### 18.4.3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Lesley Garnett, seconded by David Pratt and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 27 April 2017 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

#### 18.4.4 REPORTS *(full reports are held on file with the minutes)*

##### **Suffolk County Council**

Councillor Gordon Jones said Suffolk Highways had declared war on potholes opening up on the county's roads, following one of the worst winters in recent years. Since the start of 2018, Suffolk Highways had received in excess of 11,000 customer reports, compared to approximately 6,000 reports in the same period last year. This demonstrated the impact the bad weather Suffolk had experienced since November 2017 and its effect on the county's road surfaces. Work was being assisted by an extra £21 million funding borrowed to resurface a quarter of all roads managed by Suffolk Highways by 2021. Suffolk County Council's bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) had reached the next stage and meant that the schemes had been shortlisted and would undergo further development work. The £5 billion Housing Infrastructure fund (HIF) formed part of a comprehensive programme to enable the government to fulfil its commitment to build 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s; in Suffolk's case the HIF would be used to construct enabling road infrastructure in Bury St Edmunds and to the east of Ipswich. The next stage would require the councils to work with Government officials to further develop the bid and a final decision on the bid was expected later in 2018. Suffolk Waste Partnership had been awarded £10,000 from the Government's Litter Innovation Fund to run innovative local projects aimed at reducing litter. The 2018 Suffolk Walking festival was shaping up to be the biggest yet. The festival would be launched with two walks at St Peter's Brewery in Bungay, on Saturday 12 May.

## **Babergh District Council**

Councillor John Ward, who had been elected Leader in January 2018, said there had been some major changes at Babergh over the past year. The council continued to face financial challenges, but both officers and councillors were working hard to meet these and to ensure the sustainability and future of services for the communities. Homelessness and the provision of affordable homes continued to be a high priority, both nationally and locally. Supporting and growing the local economy was another of Babergh's top priorities. In November 2017 Babergh moved from its offices in Hadleigh to Endeavour House in Ipswich, which would provide savings of £5.8M for Babergh and Mid Suffolk over a 10-year period, based on a comparison of the capital and running costs of retaining the two existing buildings with those for Endeavour House and the two new Customer Access Points in Sudbury and Stowmarket. As core funding from Central Government had decreased again and would reduce to zero by 2019/20, Babergh had made the difficult decision to increase its portion of the council tax by 3.25%, equivalent to £3.89 a year for a Band B property, and had decided that those residents most in need would have to pay only 5% of their council tax bill. Public consultation on the first stage of the emerging Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils took place during 2017 and councils were currently preparing the next version of the Plan. The Boundary Commission had released updated recommendations on the Boundary Review and was now inviting further comment; the final recommendations were expected to be published on 7 August. MSDC and BDC had put on hold their potential merger, pending a review of local government structure across the county. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils had taken the silver award in both the Working Together and Council of the Year categories of the 2018 Public Sector Transformation Awards. In response to a question from Richard Cranfield concerning the retrospective planning application for external lighting at The Marquis, Councillor Ward said he would make some enquiries and report back on the status of the application. With regard to a comment that people were having difficulty communicating with Babergh now that it was no longer based in Hadleigh, Councillor Ward said the number of people who had actually visited the Hadleigh offices was quite small. Babergh was currently looking at having an information point in Hadleigh and possibly some other locations, and was encouraging people to use the online services. Councillor Ward commented that Layham was a well run and friendly parish.

## **Budget & Finance**

The Clerk said she was in the process of finalising the accounts for 2017/18 which would then go for internal audit by SALC (Suffolk Association of Local Councils), before being formally approved by the Parish Council at its June meeting. The arrangements for external audit had now changed, but all smaller authorities, regardless of size, must still comply with proper practices; complete and approve an Annual Governance & Accountability Return; provide for public rights to view the accounts. The main items of routine expenditure continued to be grants to the Village Hall, the Playing Field and the PCC; insurance; Clerk's salary and tax. The Parish Council continued to receive recycling credits in respect of glass and textiles - this money was used for the benefit of the community. To date, more than £2000 had been raised from recycling. The Clerk said she was pleased to confirm that there had been no increase in the PC's portion of the Community Tax for 2018/19, which remained at £10,500. The PC had been successful in accessing some funding towards a fourth defibrillator on Brett Green, to be installed during the coming year.

## **Publicly owned land and property**

Ron Gunn thanked Neil Luxton for continuing to clean and maintain the War Memorial despite moving away from the village. During the year the glass on the noticeboard at the Recycling Centre had been smashed; this had now been replaced with Perspex. All six allotments were taken - anyone wishing to join the waiting list should contact the Clerk. There were now two seats on the playing field, one in memory of June Gurr. The older seat, in memory of the Hitchcocks, would require some repairs in the near future. The defibrillators were checked on a regular basis. During the recent spring clean, the edges of the green on Brett Green had been trimmed thanks to several volunteers. Babergh DC was due to take away the spoil; Councillor Ward said he would remind Public Realm. Ron thanked all the volunteers who helped with various jobs around the village.

## **Emergency Planning**

John Curran said that, following the installation of two defibrillators in Upper Layham - one in the old phone box and another at the Marquis - residents of a large area of Upper Layham could now reach a defibrillator and back within 8 minutes. However, certain areas of Brett Green, Watermill Close, Mill Lane and the playing field did not meet this requirement and the PC was therefore looking at installing a third defibrillator on Brett Green. The PC was very grateful for donations from the Boxford and Hadleigh Group Practice Charitable Trust and the Thrift Shop in Hadleigh; further donations had been promised from other groups in the Hadleigh area and it was hoped that the defibrillator would be installed within the next two months. The Layham Emergency Plan had been reviewed and updated and submitted to Babergh District Council where it was now held on file. Babergh's Emergency Planning

Officer had inspected the Church and the Village Hall, both of which were now designated as Emergency Rest Centres. 2017/18 was a very busy year for weather warnings with numerous rain, high winds and snow warnings. Fortunately, most of these were Yellow warnings (be aware), but there were two Amber warnings (be prepared). A refresher training course was held in September 2017 and 10 ELVs attended, together with 5 members of the Parish Council.

Four years ago questionnaires had been sent out to record the skills in the village and what tools and equipment were available in the event of an emergency. A further questionnaire was sent out recently; John thanked all those who had completed the forms. The Parish Council aimed to provide CPR training to all parishioners who were interested and there had been a number of courses over the year in various locations around the village. On behalf of the parish, John thanked Simon Daunt and Charley Panting, two parishioners with personal experience of applying CPR for real, for running the courses.

### **Green Team**

Sheila Roberts explained that this was the third year that she and Doreen Sillett had led the Green Team; she was pleased to report the most productive year yet. An Insect Hotel had been constructed in November 2017 in the conservation area of the playing field by volunteers, including two children. It was designed to provide shelter for hedgehogs and other small mammals and to provide habitats for solitary bees and other mini-beasts. It was hoped that a greater variety of wild flowers would be seen growing in this area over the next few months. Last year volunteers worked hard to remove nettles and debris from the wild flower meadow. Regrowth had been mown back regularly, and part of it rotavated. The team had planted wild flowers and scattered seeds. In February 2018 over 40 volunteers carried out a variety of tasks as part of the Village Spring Clean. As well as litter picking, village signs were cleaned, barbed wire exposed when a playing field hedge was coppiced was removed, the main green in Brett Green edged, the lower end of Water Lane cleared of mud and weeds, a significant length of pavement between Upper Layham and Hadleigh cleared of vegetation and the riverbank at the edge of Brett Green cleared, improving the views. Less litter was collected than in previous years thanks to parishioners who disposed of rubbish carefully and collected it on a regular basis; however, it was disappointing to find a number of drink and takeaway good containers, and to see fly tipping in Layham. The PC was considering organising a second litter pick in the autumn. Information about green activity was disseminated via the Hadleigh Community News, community emails and posters. Any parishioners wishing to join the team of volunteers would be welcome. There were significant grants available to fund green projects and the Green Team would very much like to know about green ideas for future projects. In response to a question from Lesley Garnett about the footpath from Upper Layham to Hadleigh, which had been partially cleared during the spring clean, the Chairman said the Parish Council was discussing this with the County Council.

### **Footpaths & Highways**

Steve Laing had prepared a short report which was read by David Pratt in his absence. Potholes remained a problem and there seemed little prospect of that changing, partly due to lack of funding and also the failure of enough people to use the online reporting tool and check progress. Steve had requested a meeting with the new Community Engineer and would raise various Highways issues with him. The Parish Council had requested an extension to the 30mph speed limit on Stoke Road, but it was unlikely that this would happen in the near future. With regard to speeding, the Chairman said the Parish Council was discussing various options with Suffolk CC.

### **Local History**

Michael Woods, Chairman of the Layham Local History Group (LLHG), said there were now ten members, with a new recruit having replaced one loss. The Group had joined the Suffolk Local History Council, giving members access to meetings, visits and publications. The major activity during the year was the successful mounting of the 'Marriages in Layham' exhibition, working in partnership with members of the PCC to put on an event in St Andrew's Church. The grant of £722 obtained from the Suffolk Rural Fund through the Suffolk Community Foundation was used to purchase display screens, mounting materials and photographic prints. Over two years 89 photographs of couples who married in Layham were tracked down, copied and enlarged. These covered a period of just over 100 years to the present day and represented about half of those possible. From the outset, the LLHG offered the PCC the opportunity to create an income through the event, ie the profit from entry payments and refreshments. It was rewarding that 253 people visited and a profit of over £1000 was made. Members of the group were now working on individual research projects, including the school, the rectory, the mill, the 1851 census, and the men who came home safely from the First World War. All would be exhibited in the Village Hall on Sunday 20 May, to coincide with the annual church Plant Sale. Michael was also the Layham Local History Recorder and made an annual report on what happened in the village; these reports were on the village website.

## **PCC**

Sonia Groom reported that some repairs had been carried out during the year, including electrical wiring, paid for by grants, including £9000 from the Friends of St Andrew's (see below). Nine pews had been removed and sold, with the money raised going to the church fabric fund. Grass cutting and painting the railings had been carried out by the Community Payback service. Fund raising activities included Sunday lunches, the annual plant sale and the Coffee, Cake & Chat mornings. Sonia thanked the Rev Canon John Parr for his support, and the Parish Council for their annual grant.

## **Community Lunch**

There had been three lunches held during the year, in July, November and March. Sue Curran said demand remained high and there was usually a waiting list. The cost had been held at £6 for two courses and tea/coffee and local produce was used wherever possible. Sue thanked Steve and Tanith Laing for continuing to host these non-profit making events. She also thanked Lesley Garnett, Sonia Groom and Sheila Roberts for their help. The next community lunch would be on Wednesday 18 July 2018 and a community email would be circulated nearer the time; the lunches were also publicised in the Hadleigh Community News.

## **Friends of St Andrew's**

Richard Cranfield said there were now around 30 'Friends' who helped to organise fund raising activities. £9000 had been raised to pay for electrical work in the church (see above). There would be a circular walk on Friday 27 April leaving from Waterhouse Farm at 10.15am and finishing with lunch.

## **Playing Field Management Committee**

Michael Woods acknowledged and thanked the people who gave their time to keep the playing field in good order and develop its facilities. The committee had lost five members during the year, all of whom had given several years of service: Jane and Nick Elliott, John and Sam Millman and Andy Thorp. They had been replaced by Rosie Owers, Dusty Miller, Graham Coleman, James Mosley and Glenda Hall, joining Lizzie Cousins, Simon Bewsher, Lester Bennett, Neil Riches and Michael himself. All these members of the committee had made valuable contributions, whether it be acting as treasurer or secretary; maintaining the willow-dome; organising the 100 Club; stripping willows; mowing the grass; strimming edges; emptying rubbish bins; cleaning the apparatus pits; carrying out safety inspections. He also thanked other volunteers: George Wyatt, John McLeod, Ron Gunn, Anthony Owers, John Willis-Betts, Robert Sergeant, Colin Britton and Dave Martin had all put time in on different jobs during the last year. The Committee was financially secure, steadily building up reserves in case a new mower was required, or a need arose to repair or replace one of the pieces of play equipment. One reason for that healthy position was the continuing success of the 100 Club organised by Simon Bewsher; another reason was the annual grant of £1000 from the Parish Council, recognising the work of the volunteer committee, and for which it was very grateful.

## **Village Hall Management Committee**

David Pratt, Chairman, said there had been one fund raising event held during the year, which had raised around £200. A second event had had to be postponed but it was hoped it would take place later in the year. During the year a public address and hearing loop system had been installed, and the Committee had begun to explore the possibility of updating the toilets and entrance area. The Village Hall would be 90 years old in 2018 and it was hoped to organise an event to mark this at the end of November. David thanked the Committee members and volunteers, and the Parish Council for its continued financial support.

## **Layham Social Club**

The club met in the Village Hall each month on a Tuesday afternoon and there were currently 12 members. Activities included quizzes, bingo, darts and talks, and outings during the year had been to the Museum of East Anglian Life and a river trip on the Blackwater. A Christmas meal was enjoyed at the Queen's Head. Some possible events for the coming year were a cruise on the River Orwell and a visit to the Christmas pantomime at the Wolsey Theatre. New members would be welcome - the club was led by Ann Tracey and Bob Davey.

## **18.4.5 MATTERS RAISED BY PARISHIONERS**

There were no matters raised not covered by the agenda.

**18.4.6 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ward and Councillor Jones for their continued support. He also thanked all members of the Parish Council for their work over the past year.

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**Chairman**

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**Date**