

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the AGM of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Wednesday 24 May 2023 in the Village Hall

Present: Charlotte Britton (CB) - part
Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran (JDC)
Will Dunn (WD)
Sue Keeble (SK)
Steve Laing (SL)
Sheila Roberts (SR)

In attendance: Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GC)
John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)
1 Parishioner

Apologies: None

23.5.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

CB, the outgoing Chairman, opened the meeting and invited nominations for the position of Chairman. SR nominated SL, SK nominated JDC; both confirmed they were happy to be nominated and SL was elected Chairman by 3 votes to 2. Nominations for the post of Vice-Chairman were invited: SR nominated JDC, who accepted the nomination and was unanimously elected. All councillors duly signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms. SL then took the Chair.

23.5.2 APOLOGIES

None.

23.5.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23.5.4 PUBLIC FORUM

The parishioner present did not wish to speak.

23.5.5 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

23.5.5.1 District Council report

JW gave a verbal update. Following the recent elections, when no party had achieved an overall majority, the Greens, Independents and Liberal Democrat groups had formed a coalition administration for the next four years and had agreed on a rotating leadership; the Lib Dems would provide the leader for the first year, with Cllr David Busby being elected. Cllr Deborah Saw (Green) and JW (Independent) were elected as the coalition's deputy leaders. The Green party, which had won the most seats, would provide the leader for the second and fourth years, with JW as leader for the third year. In response to a question from WD, JW said the Greens aimed to improve the energy efficiency of social housing, and would support rural bus services; however, both these aims would face funding constraints.

23.5.5.2 County Council report

The written report for April had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. GH confirmed that Layham was next in line for inclusion in the ANPR trial, probably in July. JDC raised the question of improvements to the B1070 between Upper Layham and Hadleigh; some work had been carried in March and GH would check whether further work was planned over the summer. If not, the PC could consider using SCC's Community Self-Help Scheme, possibly assisted by some Locality funding.

23.5.6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by SL, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

23.5.7 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Most of the actions were either ongoing or were on the agenda. There were updates on the following:

23.5.7.1 Defibrillator on Stoke Road - possible street sign

JC had been advised by BDC that 'Cobblers Corner' was known as a 'locality' rather than an official address and so was not eligible for a street sign, although the PC could request a sign saying Stoke Road. She said the owner of Warwick Cottage, where the defibrillator was located, had suggested the PC could have a sign made to go on the wall next to it; it was agreed to discuss this further with him and make a decision at the June meeting.

23.5.8 CO-OPTION

Following the recent elections, the PC had two vacant seats. JC circulated suggested text to go out on the community email, in the Hadleigh Community News and on the website; she asked councillors to respond with comments by Friday 26 May.

23.5.9 FINANCIAL MATTERS

23.5.9.1 RFO's report for 31.3.23

It was proposed by SL, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 31 March 2023 should be approved and a payment of £227.38 authorised.

23.5.9.2 RFO's report for 24.5.23

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by SL and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 24 May 2023 should be approved and payments of £5,912.89 authorised; It was noted that the grant from the Tree Council for the community orchard, which had been paid into the PC's account, had now been transferred to the Layham Community Orchard's own account.

23.5.9.3 2022/23 external audit

JC said Layham PC was unable to certify itself as exempt for the year 2022-23, as income and expenditure during the year had exceeded the threshold; this was mainly due to the increase in funds held for other bodies. SALC had advised that holding funds for other bodies was not considered good practice; this issue would be addressed during the current financial year.

23.5.9.4 Signatories to bank account

The three retiring councillors had all been signatories. It was therefore agreed that SK and WD would be added to the bank mandate; JC would request the appropriate forms from Barclays.

23.5.10 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

23.5.10.1 Clerk's annual review (CONFIDENTIAL)

The report from the working group was noted. It was proposed by SK, seconded by SL and agreed unanimously to accept the recommendation that the Clerk's salary should move to point 23 on the national salary scale, with the increase backdated to 1 April 2022.

23.5.10.2 Emergency Plan

JDC's update was noted. As soon as the council was up to full strength following co-options, the communications tree would be reviewed. JDC would send a copy of the Emergency Plan to WD.

23.5.10.3 Village signs

SL's paper was noted. SK had requested further information and guidance from the Village Sign Society which she would circulate; it was agreed to involve the Local History Group in any discussions. A small working group comprising SK and WD would draft a survey to go to all parishioners, which would be finalised at the June meeting.

23.5.11 PLANNING

23.5.11.1 DC/23/01057 - 2 Upper Street

It was noted that permission had been granted for a dropped kerb.

23.5.11.2 DC/23/00961 - Mill House, Mill Lane

It was noted that Listed Building Consent had been granted.

23.5.11.3 DC/22/06372 & 06398 - Marquis of Cornwallis

It was noted that discharge of conditions had been approved.

23.5.11.4 DC/23/00907 - Uplands House, Upper Street

It was noted that permission had been refused for discharge of conditions.

23.5.11.5 DC/23/00040 - Maple Barn, Popes Green Lane

It was noted that permission had been refused for the erection of a dwelling.

23.5.11.6 DC/23/01265 - Rectory Cottage, Overbury Hall Road

It was noted that permission had been refused for extension and car parking spaces.

Councillors asked JC to write to Babergh expressing their disappointment that many decisions did not appear to take the PC's comments into consideration; Rectory Cottage and Maple Barn being two recent examples.

23.5.12 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

The General Power of Competence gave local councils in England *'the power to do anything that individuals generally may do'* and removed the need for councils to ask whether they had a specific power to act. Layham met the criteria, having a qualified Clerk and two-thirds elected members, and had adopted it in July 2019. It was proposed by JDC, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously to renew the General Power of Competence for 2023/24. JC would circulate more information.

23.5.13 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

23.5.13.1 Thank-you notes

A parishioner had written to say thank-you to the PC and other village organisations for the Coronation celebration events. A thank-you note had been received from Mike Woods, and verbal thanks from CB and DP, for their retirement gifts.

23.5.13.2 Planning decisions

The following decisions had been notified after the AGM agenda had been circulated:

- DC/23/01274 - Rectory Cottage: permission granted for change of use of agricultural land
- DC/23/01042 - Raworth Park: permission refused for change of use of annexe

23.5.13.3 Litter picks

An email had been received from James Cartlidge MP, offering to help with future sessions and any other 'action' days.

23.5.13.4 Environmental damage

Charles Partridge had emailed to report damage to trees apparently caused by the application of chemicals. It was agreed that SL would contact him and arrange for some councillors to visit the site to see the damage for themselves, and report back to the next meeting.

23.5.14 CLERK'S REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The plastic liner in the dog refuse bin near the Queen's Head had been reported missing; JC had ordered a replacement.

23.5.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 28 June 2023, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

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