

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15 April 2015 in the Village Hall

Present:	Louise Allen - Vice Chairman (LA) John Curran (JDC) Jane Cryer - Parish Clerk (JC) Lesley Garnett (LG) Ron Gunn (RG) Steve Laing (SL) David Pratt (DP) Michael Woods - Chairman (MW)
In attendance:	Gordon Jones, Suffolk CC (GJ) Sue Wigglesworth, Babergh DC (SW) Members of the public: Sue Curran, Peter Garnett, Mike Kelly, David Pearce, Sheila Roberts, Dorren & Robert Sillett
Apologies:	PCSO Amanda Coleman Sonia Groom Robert Keeble

The Chairman welcomed everyone. He explained that, as the current Parish Council would stand down in May, Councillors would be reporting on the last four years and not just 2014/15.

15.04.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

15.04.2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by SL, seconded by LA and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 30 April 2014 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

15.04.3 REPORTS

15.04.3.1 Suffolk County Council

Councillor Gordon Jones said it had been a pleasure to represent Layham at Suffolk County Council. Some of the main points covered were:

- Council tax had been frozen for the fifth year in a row; however, a further £80m in savings would have to be found by 2018. In response to a question from SL about Children's Centres, Councillor Jones said that savings of £10m had to be found through two projects: 'Making every intervention count' and 'Signs of Safety' - ie putting the family at the heart of issues. With regard to the closure of the Brett River Children's Centre in Hadleigh, Councillor Jones said the governing body was in favour of the move to the Leisure Centre and take-up was forecast to be high;
- Plans to extend the roll-out of super-fast broadband to more households and businesses continued; SCC and BT had signed a contract, under the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme, to continue working together on the delivery of a fibre network for Suffolk to parts of the county not covered by previous plans. People would be able to use the 'Better Broadband for Suffolk' website (www.betterbroadbandsuffolk.com) to check to see if they could receive faster broadband services;
- A £1.5million campaign aimed at doubling the number of apprenticeships in Suffolk and creating thousands of new jobs and training opportunities for young people had been launched. SCC and the New Anglia LEP were leading the programme, calling on employers to help create the target of 5000 new opportunities by 2019;
- The UK's first-ever dedicated youth employment centre had opened in Ipswich. The MyGo centre would offer all 16-24 year olds in Ipswich and the surrounding area free training, career and employment support. The project was funded through the Greater Ipswich City Deal - the

government's flagship programme to devolve power to local authorities and businesses to put them in control of economic opportunities and challenges - and would be staffed by Jobcentre Plus, EOS and Tomorrow's People employees working together;

- Speeding continued to be an issue in Layham, especially in Upper Layham, and Councillor Jones was working with the highways department at SCC to try and extend the 30 mph limits at both ends of the village;
- The roadworks on the A12 between Stratford St Mary and the Copdock interchange were proving to be problematic, with significant overruns and challenging signage etc for the overnight diversions. The latest estimate for the completion of the work was now June 2015.
- With regard to the ongoing traffic problems in Benton Street, Margaret Woods urged Councillor Jones to do anything he could to work towards a solution.

15.04.3.2 Police

During the period 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015 there had been 7 crimes reported, 1 of which was detected, compared to 8 reported and 2 detected during the previous year. Burglaries from dwellings were still occurring across Suffolk, with jewellery being the main target. Thefts of heating oil and catalytic converters were still an issue across Suffolk, although reports of these had decreased over the past year within the Babergh area. A full list of team members and the areas covered could be found at www.suffolk.police.uk or via the one Suffolk web page: www.onesuffolk.net

15.04.3.3 Babergh District Council

Councillor Sue Wigglesworth said it was four years since Babergh and Mid Suffolk started their programme of appointing an integrated workforce and both councils continued to face the challenge of making enormous savings; in 2013 this had been estimated at £3-5 million for each Council over the following three years. She was confident that the new Strategic Plan would work and help to meet housing needs, improve infrastructure, increase employment opportunities and assist healthy communities to flourish. Councillor Wigglesworth was standing down after 24 years as a district councillor; Polstead and Layham had been the first two parishes she had represented. The Chairman presented her with a bouquet of flowers and thanked her for all her help and support over the years.

15.04.3.4 Budget/finance

The clerk said she was in the process of finalising the accounts for 2014/15 which would then go for internal audit, before being formally approved by the Parish Council in June. As usual, they would then be sent to BDO for external audit in July. She said she was pleased that the parish council had been able to keep the annual precept at the same level - £8500 - for the past four years. The main items of routine expenditure were insurance, grants to the PCC, the Village Hall Committee and the Playing Field Committee - and, of course, the Clerk's salary. Some examples of 'one off' expenditure included the reception held in January 2013 to say thank you to those parishioners who had volunteered over the years to help with jobs in the village and support the parish council, and the Chairman's presentation on the history of the War Memorial and the publication of the accompanying booklet. The council had been able to access various grants - for example, section 106 funding from Babergh which had enabled the hard play area to be installed on the playing field, and a Lottery grant to build the recycling centre, for which the parish received credits from Babergh - over the past 4 years these had totalled £1370.35. Other, smaller grants had helped to fund activities such as the art workshop in November 2014 which had led to the wooden crosses being made for Remembrance Sunday. Suffolk County Council had made donations from their Locality Budget which had funded improvements in the village such as the kissing gates at the bottom of Church Lane, and repairs to the Village Hall roof.

15.04.3.5 Publicly owned land and property

RG confirmed that members kept an eye on any jobs that needed doing, eg overgrown hedges. The War Memorial was usually cleaned by PC members, but as 2014 had marked the 100th anniversary of WW1, the Memorial had been given a professional clean by Neil Luxton, who had very kindly carried out the work free of charge. It was hoped that the approach to the burial ground and the War Memorial, including the gateway, would be improved during 2015. Volunteers continued to help the Playing Field Committee members at regular work parties. Grit bins were situated around the village and volunteers regularly monitored the level of grit in the bins. Bob Barbiaux had kindly made a new noticeboard which was located next to the Queen's Head, and had refurbished the old one which was now in Mill Lane. The tenancy agreement for the allotments had been revised and updated, and had been sent to all allotment holders on 1 April, together with their rent invoices for the coming year. The telephone box in Lower Layham had been refurbished and painted, ready for the defibrillator. RG thanked MW and JC, Chairman and Clerk respectively for the last four years.

15.04.3.6 Emergency Planning

JDC had been co-opted to the Parish Council in October 2012, and had taken on the role of Emergency Planning. With the help of Ron Gunn and David Pratt, a risk assessment had been carried out and consideration given to what measures could be put in place to minimise or mitigate the effect of the risks identified.

The first task was to ensure procedures were in place, and volunteers prepared to help, with snow clearing and gritting. All volunteers were covered for any insurance claims made by third parties. A good communications system was achieved by appointing a parishioner in each group of homes as an Emergency Liaison Volunteer (ELV), to pass messages between parishioners and the Parish Council. Questionnaires were distributed to all parishioners asking them what skills and specialist equipment they could offer during an emergency.

The Parish Council had looked into the purchase of defibrillators to help parishioners or their visitors to survive heart attacks. The first defibrillator had been purchased and installed in the telephone box outside the Queen's Head in Lower Layham. The PC was currently looking at the best position for a defibrillator in Upper Layham; possibly the telephone box either in its current position, or moved to Brett Green, the largest population location in Upper Layham.

15.04.3.7 Green Team / Community Lunch

The 'Green Team' had worked to achieve targets set by the original Parish Plan, one of which was recycling. In April 2012 the Recycling Centre, sited on the Playing Field in Upper Layham, was completed. This was achieved with funding of £10,000 from a 'Big Lottery' grant. The recycling of textiles provided an income, through Recycling Credits, to the Parish Council. The money had provided grit bins and would be used to help meet the costs of installing defibrillators in the village. A second textile bank was sited in Lower Layham in 2013.

The Annual Spring Clean had become a permanent fixture in the Parish Council calendar with more and more volunteers turning out to help; LG commented that the community email system had helped to recruit volunteers. In 2015 the focus was on the main routes into Hadleigh, on both sides of the river.

In 2014 the PC had worked with a Community Wildlife Advisor from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to start to clear the conservation area of the Playing Field in line with their habitat management advice. There was an initial work day with 14 volunteers who, as well as the clearing, cut two paths across the site. During the same year two Barn Owl boxes were installed and six owlets were raised in the first season.

The Green Team was also working with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England to organise a 'Swift Event' at 7.00pm on 2 July 2015 in the Village Hall.

Following a review of the Parish Plan, new targets were set. One of these was to initiate a Layham Community Lunch; these lunches were now a well established event in spring, summer and autumn and helped to bring the community together. Local food suppliers were used wherever possible, in order to provide seasonal food at a reasonable cost.

15.04.3.8 Footpaths & Highways

SL gave an overview of some of the key achievements over the last four years, which included replacement of defunct road signage, the installation of two new kissing gates, building a good working relationship with Highways department and some land owners, pot hole reporting - and encouraging parishioners to report faults, both online and via community email, and Popes Green Lane, Wyncolls Lane and Water Lane cleared to a high standard. Ongoing works would include replacing cats' eyes at Upper Street / Watermill Lane junction; new kerbing (Uplands); high friction surfacing drain covers; Rands Road spring water problem and possible resurfacing in the next 3 years.

15.04.3.9 Local History Recorder

Following the resignation of Dee Byham due to ill-health, MW had taken on the role. He explained that the role included recording the present by noting significant happenings in the Parish, especially interesting events and the changes taking place; being on the look-out for items of historical interest which might be overlooked or lost for ever and trying to arrange for their acquisition for the Suffolk County archive; sending the Suffolk Local History Council a short report at the end of each calendar year with an account of activities in Layham and the changes that had taken place. A small Layham Local History Group had recently been formed, members of which would research the material in the local archive and any Layham material identified in the county archives, with a view to putting on small exhibitions at different locations in the village.

15.04.3.10 National Grid & Gravel Pit Liaison Group

Quarry Liaison Committee

LA explained that during the past four years the quarry had remained 'mothballed'. There was a lack of inert waste suitable to use as landfill for the site and it was possible that the areas of landfill could be returned to 'ecology' sooner than expected. A review of quarry sites in Suffolk was being undertaken and SCC would report back at the next meeting of the group in October. Planning permission to extract had been extended, but this also covered restoration. Awareness of the flora, fauna and ecology of the area had increased and attention to its preservation had improved since workings were initiated, which was encouraging for the village.

Pylon Liaison Group

There was not a great deal to report since last year, when the project timeline was extended. The Parish Council representatives and a dedicated team of informed individuals from Layham had worked hard to raise awareness that a second line of larger high voltage power lines would obliterate the landscape of Layham and consequently wreak havoc with residents' lives. LA thanked John Curran, David Pearce, Mike Woods, Robert Keeble and Nick Reid, and warned that the issue had not gone away for good. She thanked her fellow Parish Council members for their support over the last four years, and previously when she was Parish Clerk.

15.04.3.11 PCC / Friends of St Andrew's

David Pearce thanked the PC for their continuing grant towards the maintenance of the churchyard. In response to his query about the entrance to the War Memorial, SL said the work had been scheduled to be carried out in time for the Remembrance Day ceremony in November 2014, but the PCC had not been able to meet in time to approve the plans. The Sunday lunches had continued to be well supported.

The work on the church tower had now been completed; the roof had been replaced as it was leaking. Some members of the community had contributed towards the cost of the work, and grants had been obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Suffolk Historic Churches. The Friends of St Andrew's had made a major contribution, raising funds by holding events such as the Race Night, and Robert Keeble had managed the project, giving his time free of charge.

15.04.3.12 Playing Field Management Committee

MW, chairman of the committee, thanked his fellow committee members: John Millman (Vice-Chairman), Jane Elliott (Secretary), Andy Thorp (Treasurer), Sam Millman (100 Club organiser), Lester Bennett, Colin Brown, Nick Elliott and Neil Riches. He was also pleased to announce the recruitment of a new resident of Layham - Simon Bewsher. The financial position was healthy following the sale of cricket bat willows for £2500 in 2014, and the continuing successful sale of 100 Club tickets. In 2014 the grass cutting of the main field was managed by employing someone from another village with his tractor and hay topper, with the surrounding areas being kept tidy using the committee's own ride-on mower. However, this arrangement had now ended and the committee would need to decide whether to pay commercial contractor rates to have the grass cut, or purchase a larger mower. Following concern from property owners in Brett Green about the height of the Lombardy poplar tree beside the recycling centre, a local farmer had felled the tree free of charge, just keeping the timber. During 2015 the Parish Council, recognising the value of the amenity to the Parish as a whole, would be paying for the reinforcement of the path line between the Brett Green and Mill Lane gates. Other plans for the year included the replacement of the basketball back board, replacement of some of the seating and possibly the purchase of a second picnic table and benches.

15.04.3.13 Village Hall Management Committee

Refurbishment during 2014 had included new toilet doors, stripping the lobby door to match, new door furniture, and externally the renewal of the cladding on the field side. The committee had decided to install a false ceiling in the main hall in an effort to reduce heating costs. The Playgroup, PC and PCC remained the regular hirers of the hall, together with some private hire. DP thanked the PC for their annual grant. He also thanked his fellow committee members and those who volunteered to help at various functions.

15.04.3.14 Layham Social Club

The Social Club had maintained a core group who attended regularly, enjoying activities such as bingo, darts and quizzes.

15.04.3.15 Chairman's summing up

MW said the community as a whole should be proud of what had been achieved over the past four years. He thanked his fellow councillors, and the clerk, for their commitment towards helping the parish a better place in which to live. Lesley Garnett and Louise Allen were not seeking re-election - Lesley had served nine years and Louise four, preceded by three years as Parish Clerk. He was pleased that Sheila Roberts and Doreen Sillett had applied to join the PC and, along with the other five, had been elected unopposed.

(FULL REPORTS ARE HELD ON FILE WITH THE MINUTES)

15.04.4 MATTERS RAISED BY PARISHIONERS

There were no matters raised not covered by the agenda. David Pearce proposed a vote of thanks to the PC from the community.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

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Chairman

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Date