

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 23 September 2015 in the Village Hall

Present: Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran (JDC)
Ron Gunn (RG)
Steve Laing - Vice Chairman (SL)
David Pratt (DP)
Doreen Sillett (DS)
Michael Woods - Chairman (MW)

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

Apologies: PCSO Amanda Coleman (AC)
Sheila Roberts (SR)

15.9.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

15.9.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

15.9.3 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

15.9.3.1 Police report

There had been one reported crime since the last meeting: criminal damage to a motor vehicle on Brett Green, between 28 and 29 August.

15.9.3.2 District Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. In response to a question from JDC, JW said the Conservative Group Vision was the view of the Conservative majority on the Council. However, individual issues would be voted on by full Council after robust debate, and amendments would be made where appropriate; full Council meetings were open to the public. In response to a comment from SL that the PC's comments on planning issues were not always taken into account, JW said he would make enquiries at BDC. JW passed some information about the Babergh Community Awards to JC.

15.9.3.3 County Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. In response to a comment from JDC about the improved Key Stage 2 results for Suffolk schools, GJ said the local authority could hold schools to account and give advice; RAG (red, amber, green) ratings would be carried out again during the current year. As far as academies were concerned, GJ said some of these were amongst the best performing, and some the worst. Funding was always an issue; Suffolk was in the bottom quarter but the Government had promised to address fairer funding. With regard to the Positive Choices programme and defibrillators, GJ confirmed that he was looking into this; there was a possibility that the the St John Ambulance might be involved. It was noted that the new path leading to the church had been part-funded from GJ's Locality budget.

15.9.4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by DS and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 August 2015 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

15.9.5 ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING - PURPOSE AND USE OF LIST

The list of actions from the previous meeting was noted. The following actions had been completed:

- CAS conference - JC had circulated details;
- Footpaths - MW had sent to GJ examples of some footpaths that it might be possible to open up/extend;
- Defibrillators - JDC had completed the funding application and sent it to BHF.

15.9.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

15.9.6.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by DP and agreed unanimously that payments of £396.16 should be authorised. JC confirmed that she would re-invoice the allotment holders for the water supply. In response to a question from SL, she also confirmed that the recycling credits received were in respect of the Recycling Centre; payment for the textile bin at the Queen's Head had not yet been received. It was noted that the second half of the precept had been received from Babergh DC.

JC would bring the external audit report from BDO to the October meeting.

15.9.7 WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

15.9.7.1 Chairman's report

MW's report on the SALC Babergh Area meeting held on 7 September was noted. MW said a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would be extremely time-consuming and very expensive; it was more appropriate for larger Town Councils where there was likely to be large development which would significantly change the area. GJ said East Bergholt was preparing an NDP and this was costing in the region of £20,000. Capel St Mary had decided not to do one, but was working closely with the developer. In response to a question from JDC, MW said a Village Design Statement only covered the style of buildings but did not carry much weight as far as planning was concerned; he felt Babergh's Core Strategy would cover Layham. JW said that hinterland villages such as Layham would not be expected to take large developments; however, if the PC was able to identify possible sites for smaller development, this would be helpful.

15.9.7.2 Emergency Plan (verbal update)

JDC said that the Emergency Plan had not yet been published; it was still a working document. He explained that it was a response document aimed at dealing with emergencies affecting the parish and it was important to review the risks regularly. Good communication was essential, and a communications tree had been set up. A number of parishioners had agreed to act as Emergency Liaison Volunteers (ELVs); however, over the past year some of these people had moved out of the village and would need to be replaced. A list had been drawn up of skills and equipment available in the parish; this would also need to be reviewed. In addition, details of a 'rest centre' would need to be included in the Plan - ie a place where people could go in the case of an emergency. JDC would draw up a list of actions and bring this to the next meeting for discussion.

15.9.8 ASH DIE-BACK CRISIS

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, MW confirmed that he had put a piece in the next issue of the HCN publicising the Woodland Trusts's offer to provide 45 native trees as suitable substitutes, together with canes and plastic sleeves, at a subsidised cost of £60 per pack. He proposed that a letter should also be sent to the major landowners in the parish alerting them to the opportunity; this proposal was seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously. JC would send the letter in early October. GJ commented that Suffolk CC was also extremely concerned about ash die-back.

15.9.9 BENTON STREET PAVEMENT

MW explained that he and Lesley Garnett had met with Hadleigh Highways representatives a few years ago, to discuss what might be done to make the road between Upper Layham and Hadleigh safer for pedestrians, as the pavement was not a satisfactory width for the whole way. £3,000 had

been raised to fund a feasibility study which had been carried out by a Highways technician in 2010; however, there had been no available funds at Suffolk CC to take this forward. It was noted that a new pavement had been installed in Holton St Mary, partly funded by the PC, Section 106 funding and some Locality money. SL suggested this could be part of the 'chicane' experiment in Benton Street; GJ said he would check on what was happening on the whole Benton Street issue. It was agreed to have a further discussion when more information was available; in the meantime, JC would check the parish files.

15.9.10 WAR MEMORIAL / REMEMBRANCE DAY

It was agreed that the Parish Council should purchase a wreath, as usual; it was proposed by MW, seconded by DS and agreed unanimously that this should be laid by DP. RG had checked the War Memorial and said the only action required was to clean the base, and to mow the grass nearer the time.

15.9.11 CORRESPONDENCE

15.9.11.1 Layham PCC

A thank-you letter had been received from Dusty Miller, Treasurer of the PCC, for the PC's donation of £600.

15.9.11.2 Defibrillator

James Cartlidge MP had written to congratulate the PC on the installation of the defibrillator in the phone box in Lower Layham, and praised "the great sense of community being fostered in Layham".

15.9.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 28 October 2015, in the Village Hall.

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