

The 2018 Report by the Layham Local History Recorder

THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Green Team of the Parish Council grows from strength to strength rooted in what has been an annual spring clean in which around 40 volunteers undertake a morning's work tidying up the village. 2018 saw the enthusiasm of those involved resulting (by popular demand) in both a spring and an autumn session. Effort was put into focussed tasks such as edging the pathways on Brett Green; cleaning back the vegetation that has grown over the pavement between Layham and Hadleigh; cutting back hedges that spill into the road; cleaning road signs; clearing the surface of Water Lane and cutting back the vegetation from the bank of the River Brett.



The Green Team has also been responsible for experimenting with wild flower seeds in parts of the conservation area. There was some rewarding first year success and we wait to see if plants continue to flower during 2019.

Some of the most significant matters dealt with by the Parish Council during 2018 have been, working towards the provision of a fourth

defibrillator in the village; promotion of CPR training; the development and adoption of an Emergency Plan; developing the community email system; promoting village-based businesses free of charge on the parish website; use of remaining Section 106 funding to provide another piece of play apparatus (suitable for pre-school children) on the playing field; the commencement of a new parish plan.

The quarterly Community Lunch promoted by the Parish Council and organised by volunteers continues to thrive – always a sell-out.

During the year Doreen Sillett resigned as a Parish Councillor due to a move to Ipswich. This created a casual vacancy and resulted in five parishioners showing interest in filling the vacancy. They were a strong field and after meeting them all Charlotte Britton was the applicant chosen, due to her recent experience in community development.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

Regular church services are held in St Andrew's Church.

The PCC continues, energetically, to promote fund raising and social activities including: hot Sunday lunches; coffee mornings; a plant sale; barbecue; coffee, cakes and chat; the making up of 'Samaritan's Purses' – shoe boxes of Christmas gifts for needy families in different parts of the world; Historic Churches Trust annual bike ride.



The Friends of St Andrew's raised £1150 through a sponsored walk around the Parish.



The big event in 2018 was the weekend of the commemoration of the end of the Great War in 1918. The PCC worked throughout the year on an accumulation of knitted poppies – some 3,500 - which were exhibited in the church, along with a small exhibition of memorabilia. About 200 people visited the church over Remembrance Weekend and the building was packed for the Sunday service. A total of £600 was raised for the British Legion.



As part of the Suffolk Great War Project, a small group of Layham children took part in a commemoration of the 19 Layham men who lost their lives and especially the one (Guy Buckenham) who was buried in Layham Burial Ground.



THE PLAYING FIELD

Members of the Playing Field Management Committee coppiced the overgrown hedge line between the Mill grounds and the field. Some members of the community were unsure about such drastic action but growth from the coppiced stumps in the spring and early summer soon dispelled concerns.



A second pic-nic table was purchased and installed using 100 Club profits. Section 106 money from the Parish Council was used to purchase gates to be installed between the playing field and the conservation area.



During the autumn the playing field was featured in the local East of England Co-operative token scheme and £300 was awarded to the committee towards meeting the cost of replenishment of safety surfaces.

LAYHAM PLAYGROUP

Layham Playgroup is a Charity Incorporated Organisation based in Layham Village Hall. A scan through their monthly reports of 2018 reveals a rich and varied programme judged as 'good' by OFSTED. The report states... *"A community playgroup. Staff have really close relationships with the children. Clear monitoring of progress through learning journals and a focus on fostering independence and outdoor play. Letter recognition, number and sharing games are part of everyday fun learning"*.

Examples of their work have included developing a playgroup garden and then observing and recording outcomes; observing and recording farming activities in the village; observing and recording insect life; a visit to Easton Farm Park.

LAYHAM MILL

The new owners of Layham Mill and Mill House have had had to wait most of the year for fundamental renovation of the Mill House to be completed. It would appear, from outside observation, the materials

used and the waste material appearing in skips, that the house has been made watertight, had new central heating installed, been insulated and totally redecorated. It is good to see new life being pumped into an iconic village building. The family moved in towards the end of the year.

LAYHAM LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

This small group started the year with each member working on a topic that could be exhibited for the interest of the community. Thus it was that, on the day of the church plant sale, several small displays were mounted in the village hall – The Mill; Layham School; 1851 Census; The Rectory; Men who came home safely from WW1 and Metal Detecting finds. About 100 people called in and engaged the exhibitors in conversation.



The second half of the year was spent transcribing the key words of some of the Overbury Hall Court Records.

LAYHAM SOCIAL CLUB

A dozen or so people have enjoyed a continuing regular programme of social activity in the village hall. In addition to that programme they had two major outings – to the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket and to the pantomime at the Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich. They also enjoyed a couple of meals out at local pubs.

UNEXPECTED HAPPENINGS

In midwinter 2017/18 a pair of tiny baby otters were found trapped in the mill wheel pit. They were taken by an RSPCA officer to a centre in Norfolk where, unfortunately, they failed to survive.

In June, Brian Smith, a local resident, had his painting of 'The Shelley Road' accepted by the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Brian has not painted for long and has had no lessons. He was very excited by his success.



In August, following a long period of very hot weather hundreds of fish were found dead or dying in the River Brett near the mill. The hot weather led to fast growing algae cutting oxygen levels. Local people and employees of the Environment Agency did their best to save fish showing signs of life after which aeration equipment was used for several days to boost oxygen levels in the river.





In November, Steve Laing, landlord of the Queen's Head saved the life of a visitor to the village who suffered cardiac arrest by performing CPR. One of the village defibrillators was then used to shock the heart back into action. As a result of this prompt action Steve was awarded a 'Special Recognition of the Year Award' at the annual Stars of Suffolk Award ceremony at Trinity Park.

Michael Woods
February 2019