

THE 2019 REPORT BY THE LAYHAM LOCAL HISTORY RECORDER

THE PARISH COUNCIL

April saw all seven parish councillors standing down as is required every four years. Five of the seven put themselves forward for re-election and, as there were no other applications, the five were elected. A recruitment exercise found two members of the community who were prepared to be co-opted. Thus, in May Charlotte Britton, John Curran, David Pratt, Sheila Roberts and Michael Woods took up their posts and shortly after, Bill Paton and Tony Stenning completed the group – replacing Ron Gunn and Steve Laing, both having served since 2011.

The new council is photographed below: Back from left: Bill Paton, John Curran, Jane Cryer (Clerk), Charlotte Britton. Front from left: Michael Woods, David Pratt, Sheila Roberts, Tony Stenning. Michael Woods, who had been Chairman for eight years, stood aside and Charlotte Britton was unanimously elected as Chairman for 2019-2020.



A parish review exercise consisting of a questionnaire and an exhibition of responses took place in the Village Hall in April. A great deal of information was gathered and analysis shows the following priority issues and suggestions:

PIORITY ISSUES

- Reduction in speeding on village roads and particularly on the B1070.
- Further encouragement to dog owners to clean up after their pets.
- Combat flooding issues.
- Negotiate better management of road closures and diversions.
- Improve safety on the pavement beside the B1070 to and from Hadleigh.

MOST POPULAR SUGGESTIONS

- Promote walking in the village.
- Improve grass and hedge cutting
- Set up a cinema club.
- Revive the village fete.
- Improve cloakroom facilities at the Village Hall.

The Parish Council Green Team continues to flourish – organising village Spring and Autumn Cleans, arranging an I-Spy Wildlife session for children and continuing to develop the Conservation Area on the Playing Field.

Our fourth defibrillator was installed on a purpose-built frame on Brett Green. Featured in the photograph below are members of the Parish Council (recently past and present), our County Councillor

(who helped the project financially), Robert Keeble and Neil Riches (who designed and made the stand respectively) and John Byham (representing Hadleigh Health Centre). Everyone living in Upper Layham now resides only a few minutes from a defibrillator. The physical provision of this equipment is a success but less successful have been attempts to attract residents to Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training.



The Community Lunches (Spring, Summer and Autumn) continue with a two course meal and coffee for just £6. This event is appreciated by a regular group. Advertising does not appear to attract new faces.

When our Post Office was closed down the Parish Council put the village forward to be visited by a mobile Post Office van. After several years the service has been offered and a van now parks in Brett Green for two hours each Tuesday morning. Unfortunately, use of the facility is poor.



ST. ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH

A new Rector of the Benefice of Hadleigh, Layham and Shelley arrived in December 2018. The Rev. Jonathan Delfgou was instituted by the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich on 3 December. This should have been recorded in the 2018 Recorder's report.



In addition to the regular Sunday services the PCC organises a programme of social and fund-raising events through the year:

- The hot Sunday lunches in the Village Hall are popular and always a sell-out although the members of the St Mary's, Hadleigh congregation present far outweigh Layham people.
- Coffee, cakes and chat – a very simple formula but an arrangement that provides for local people who enjoy the contacts.
- The annual plant sale and cream teas is always well attended. This year Rosey Nicholls mounted a show of her nature photography in the church and drew more people than usual to the event.
- The Hadleigh Community Choir brought their 'Songs from the Films' programme to Layham for a well-attended fund-raising concert.



- The Friends of St Andrews organised a Christmas fair at Water House with profits going to the church building fund.

THE PLAYING FIELD

Using S106 funds (£6000), the Parish Council decided to fund a new piece of play apparatus suited to pre-school children. A survey amongst parents had established that this was the age group most needing more play facilities. A small, good quality climbing frame and slide was installed surrounded by a safety surface. A donation of £300 was obtained from the East of England Co-op Community Token Scheme – and used to help fund the purchase of chippings under two pieces of apparatus.

The photograph below features the Assistant Manager from the Hadleigh Co-op Store presenting the cheque to a group representing the Playing Field Management Committee (from left Michael Woods, James Mosley, Sylvia Miller, Dusty Miller and Simon Bewsher) and some of those who use it.



- A second gate was installed in the hedge line dividing the playing field from the conservation area. The intention is to, eventually, persuade everyone to treat the natural area with respect. The gates are intended to send a signal that one is moving into a special place which is not for play, nor for dogs to run free.
- The Management Committee decided to bolster the 100 Club to a 120 Club. It was felt there are enough potential subscribers to seek a bit more profit – and this has proved to be the case.

THE VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall Management Committee has been successful in winning a substantial grant from Viridor (the waste management company) and Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils. This will enable the complete refurbishment of the entrance way and toilets – a long held ambition.

LAYHAM LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

This small group continues to collect contributions for the village archive, notably, this year, from the farming community – including the Essex and Suffolk Hunt, the kennels for which are in Layham parish. Substantial work has been done on the background stories of 51 men and women from the village who served in uniformed organisations during WW2, and whose photos hang in frame in the Queen's Head



public house. Part way through this project, work done was exhibited in St Mary's church in Hadleigh, resulting in several valuable new contacts. Holding the framed collection of photographs are Sue Keeble and Jeff Ward, two members of the group.

SOCIAL CLUB AND LAYHAM EVENTS COMMITTEE

Sadly, the Social Club wound up during the year. They had been a successful group for several years but reached a point where there was nobody prepared to take responsibility for the programme. Popping up to take their place has been a group calling itself The Layham Events Committee – great to see some younger people taking a lead. Their first two events have been an August family fun event, based on a rounders tournament, on the village playing field and a Christmas 'Fayre' in the village hall – the latter raising a massive £520 to help with the refurbishment of the village hall.



Michael Woods
January 2020