

The 2021 Report by the Layham Local History Recorder

As we entered 2021 the Covid 19 pandemic was still determining the degree of face-to-face activity in the village. The church and the village hall remained closed for general use and plans for the annual litter pick were shelved. Only the playgroup managed to function as they took advantage of small numbers, good ventilation and lots of space including an outdoor area. Parish Council meetings continued with the aid of Zoom technology

Significant occurrences and events during the year were as follows:

January saw an urgent appeal for parishioners to put themselves forward to join the Village Hall Management Committee. Three key figures: David Pratt, Richard Cromwell and Richard Groom (below)





who, between them, had put in eighty years of service, were all to retire from the very small committee in the summer, leaving a yawning gap.

April saw the Parish Council applying to be involved with the Suffolk Quiet Lanes Project. The lanes identified were Water Lane and part of Mill Lane; Shelley Road and Layham Road (Shelley); North Hill – the boundary Lane between Shelley and Layham. The idea is to establish lanes in which pedestrians, runners, cyclists and horse riders have equal status with motor vehicles.

May. The Parish Council moved back into the village hall for well-spaced and well-ventilated meetings. Services recommenced at St Andrew's Church. The Parochial Church Council has been suffering from more than a year with collapse of income as a result of church closure and the suspension of social and fund-raising activities – a very serious situation for such a small congregation. It was a great relief to the PCC as it became possible to organise the May plant sale to raise much needed funds (see queue for entry below).



Refurbishment of the village hall has continued.

The village has been successful in its application for the installation of swift nesting boxes on the Netherbury Hall barns opposite the church.



The boxes were provided by the Dedham AONB and the Stour Valley Project and fitted with electronically driven whistling devices designed to attract swifts to establish new nests (from the existing church colony).

The playing field committee is experimenting by providing a box of small games equipment for use on the hard surface area.



The items are being used frequently and responsibly by many children and families (Smith family seen here). There have been some losses and breakages caused by visitors to the field. Overall, the experiment is thought to be positive.

Our long-serving and supportive County Councillor (Gordon Jones) stood down from the County Council prior to the County elections. He has been replaced by Georgia Hall (a fellow Conservative).

July. A new and larger Village Hall Management Committee was recruited during the AGM: Chairman Richard Cranfield; Secretary Jan McNelly; Treasurer Judith Hermite; Bookings Rosey Nicholls; members - Michelle Elmer; Elizabeth Chisnall; Colin Brown; Christine Hempstead; Sue Keeble; Laurence Nicholls; Pam Holland; Richard Boorman.

August. Ed and Glenda Hall, the owners of Layham Mill set the wheel running and opened the building for a Sunday afternoon to raise funds for the church.



It was a busy and enjoyable social afternoon attracting many people to look round and enjoy refreshments. A small exhibition about the mills of Layham was displayed by the Layham Local History Group.

September. A casual vacancy on the Parish Council, due to the resignation of Bill Paton, was filled by the appointment of Sue Keeble – selected from a group of four applicants.



After years of research and campaigning the members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk celebrated the installation of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) on Upper Street.



Members of the Upper Layham community have been recruited to manage and service the equipment. Initial reaction to ‘traffic calming’ is positive.

The new Village Hall Committee circulated a survey to all homes to get a better idea of how local people would like to see the hall used and what type of activities they might support.

December. The Parish Council has purchased and distributed strong plastic 30mph stickers to be fixed to the sides of waste and re-cycling bins along Upper Street and in places in Lower Layham.



These will appear on collection days and consolidate the message promoted by the SID.

Michael Woods

Layham Local History Recorder January 2022