

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Wednesday 25 October 2017 in the Village Hall

Present: Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran (JDC)
Steve Laing - Vice Chairman (SL)
David Pratt (DP)
Sheila Roberts (SR)
Michael Woods - Chairman (MW)

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

Apologies: Ron Gunn (RG)
Doreen Sillett (DS)

17.10.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from RG, who was recovering from an operation; apologies from DS were also noted.

17.10.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

17.10.3 PUBLIC FORUM

The two parishioners present said they wished to set the record straight with regard to a planning application they had submitted in respect of Stows Cottage. Several parishioners had attended the PC meeting on 30 November 2016 to raise objections to the application; the applicants said there had been several inaccuracies in the information brought to the PC. The application had been refused by Babergh on grounds of sustainability and not because of any concerns about flooding or access. The applicants had now decided to leave the village.

17.10.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

17.10.4.1 District Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

With regard to the Boundary Review, JW said the Boundary Commission had now published draft recommendations and was inviting comments; both Raydon and Polstead had reservations about the new ward boundaries and would be responding. JW commented that he would have favoured including the Wenhams in the grouping containing Layham and Raydon, rather than Polstead. The Boundary Commission had suggested the name 'Polstead' for the new ward, as it was the largest parish; however, this had not yet been confirmed. JW said he would be sorry to see the old ward names replaced, as all sense of history would be lost.

With regard to the proposed merger with Mid Suffolk, JW said the two districts had resolved to move forward, but no formal decision had yet been made. It was unlikely that there would be another referendum, although there would be a telephone poll carried out by the same company, using the same questionnaire, that St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath had used. The poll would cost around £20,000 and 4,000 people across the two districts would be contacted. In addition, information packs would be sent out. In response to a question from SL, JW said the cost of another referendum would be around £100,000. JW stressed that Babergh and Mid Suffolk were keen to understand people's concerns and were not looking for a 'yes' or 'no' response.

In response to a question from JDC, JW said the move to Endeavour House was a separate issue and nothing to do with the proposed merger; the two districts already had a shared CEO and staff and the move had been the most cost effective solution for both. SL disputed this, saying it would have been better for both councils to have moved to the offices in Hadleigh. JW said the move to Endeavour House was now back on schedule and the Hadleigh offices would close in November, as originally planned. In response to a further question from SL as to the financial situation if the merger did not go ahead and the two councils separated again, JW said Mid Suffolk's general fund was more robust than Babergh's, but Babergh's housing revenue account was in a much stronger position. JW also confirmed that the Sudbury satellite office was now open to the public; it was located in the Town Hall.

A new Community Housing Fund had been launched by the Government at the end of December 2016, to help councils to pump prime community housing projects. Babergh had been allocated £189,742 to date.

17.10.4.2 County Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plans were debated by Cabinet on 10 October and were now out for consultation. The quarry at Layham was included as a possible site for extraction. It was agreed that JC would contact the chair of the Layham Quarry Liaison Group to ask when their next meeting would be held. GJ said he would be catching up on various highways issues later in the week. Following the departure of Deborah Cadman, GJ said Sue Cook, Director of Children's Services, was currently acting as interim CEO. A permanent appointment would not be made until the new year. In response to a question from SL concerning sprinkler systems in schools, GJ said he would support this if there was funding available, but such systems were more for the protection of buildings rather than people.

17.10.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by DP, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27 September 2017 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

17.10.6 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Most of the actions were either ongoing, or were on the agenda. There were updates on the following:

17.10.6.1 Bench on B1071 between Upper Layham and Hadleigh

SL would consider whether to bring a proposal to a future meeting.

17.10.6.2 Hadleigh Market

JW confirmed that Babergh retained the income from the market, but paid Suffolk Market Events a fixed monthly management fee. As far as the vintage monthly market was concerned, there would be a 50/50 split on the stall fees.

17.10.6.3 Sale of Babergh's offices / Members' expenses

JW said that Lambert Smith Hampton had undertaken an assessment of options for relocating Babergh and Mid Suffolk DCs, the fee for which was £24,223. More recently, Carter Jonas had undertaken a valuation of all property owned by the districts; approximately £12,000 of their fee related to the two office buildings. Since March 2017 a design and planning exercise had been undertaken by Purcell to provide detailed design options and estimated costs for the reuse of the buildings. This report would be presented to councillors so that a decision could be made as to which option to proceed with. The estimated cost for this was £420,000, split between the two councils. In response to a question from SL as to whether there would need to be a 'parallel application' for expenditure once the building was sold, JW said he would investigate.

JW confirmed that members' expense claims were primarily for journeys to Hadleigh or Needham Market for meetings; these had not changed significantly since the last elections. It was not yet clear how the move to Ipswich would affect claims in the future.

17.10.6.4 30mph speed limit in Stoke Road

GJ would follow this up with Jane Storey.

17.10.6.5 Upper Layham phonebox

SL had obtained a second quote for installing PIR lighting and proposed that this should be accepted. His proposal was seconded by JDC and approved unanimously; SL would take this forward.

17.10.6.6 Land in front of 7 & 8 Upper Street

GJ would discuss the issue with SCC's Highways and Rights of Way teams.

17.10.6.7 Monitoring of defibrillators

JDC said he felt the check list should be more detailed. JC would check her files to see if there was a copy of the British Heart Foundation's template; if not, she would request one.

17.10.6.8 CPR training

SL said Monday 6 November was convenient for the people he had recruited for the next training session, which would take place in the church. MW would liaise with Charlie Panting and Simon Daunt, who would once again deliver the training.

17.10.7 FINANCIAL MATTERS

17.10.7.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by DP, seconded by SL and agreed unanimously that payments of £788.45 should be authorised. It was noted that the second tranche of the precept had been received from Babergh; recycling credits totalling £167.15 had also been received.

17.10.7.2 External audit report

The only matter raised by BDO was that the 'no' box in Section 2 of the Annual Return, relating to Trust Funds Disclosure, had not been ticked. The approved Annual Return would now be displayed on the website.

17.10.7.3 Budget working group

It was agreed that the working group would comprise DP, JDC, SL and JC. The group would meet during November to discuss the budget and precept for 2017/18; JC would prepare a draft budget for approval at the November PC meeting.

17.10.8 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

17.10.8.1 Chairman's report

MW's report on his meeting with GJ regarding the pavement between Upper Layham and Hadleigh was noted. GJ was hopeful that some action could be taken with regard to removal/trimming back of trees, shrubs and vegetation, on safety grounds; he would also make enquiries about the possibility of widening the pavement, but felt it would be unlikely that any money would be available for non-essential work.

17.10.8.2 Emergency Plan - insurance

JDC's report on his meeting with Sue Hearne, Babergh's Emergency Planning Officer, was noted. JDC said he was happy with the various safeguarding measures required; it would be important to comply with these in order to be covered by District Local Authorities Insurance. It was agreed to accept Sue's offer to visit the church and the village hall in order to complete the rest room facility details. JDC would circulate the risk assessment and review the Emergency Plan before it was lodged with Babergh - this would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

17.10.9 DEFIBRILLATOR FOR BRETT GREEN

It appeared likely that planning permission would not, after all, be required for this; JW would request clarification as soon as possible from Babergh's Corporate Manager for Growth & Sustainable Planning.

17.10.10 PLANNING

17.10.10.1 DC/17/04334 - Hillside, Upper Street

It was noted that the application for an extension and associated works, including an increase in height of the front garden wall, had been approved.

17.10.11 BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL PLAN

It was agreed to defer a firm decision on whether to make a formal submission until the November meeting; in the meantime, JC would seek permission from the chairman of Raydon PC to circulate its working party's report.

17.10.12 ALLOTMENTS

Two issues had been raised by parishioners at the last PC meeting: parking on the accessway, and dogs on the allotments. With regard to the parking and access issues, it was agreed that JC would ask Flagship to write to residents to remind them that parking on, or obstructing, the accessway was not permitted. With regard to the problem of dogs, it was felt that the PC could not take any action; however, the issue would be discussed with RG, the parish councillor with responsibility for the allotments.

17.10.13 TREE AT ENTRANCE TO BRETT GREEN

MW said he had hoped that Babergh would replace the burnt-out tree, but this now appeared to be unlikely. His proposal that the PC should purchase a new hawthorn tree using some of the profit from the Lunch Club was seconded by SR and agreed unanimously.

17.10.14 USE OF SAT NAVS

MW said another delivery vehicle had recently become stuck after following his sat nav's instructions to use Water Lane. It was agreed that a sign at the top of Water Lane would solve the problem; JC would check the file for any relevant correspondence, as this had arisen in the past.

17.10.15 CORRESPONDENCE

17.10.15.1 Green Team

A working party was scheduled for 11 November to construct an insect hotel and plant wild flowers in the conservation area of the playing field. A rotovator and operator would be required, which would cost in the region of £20-£30. It was proposed by MW, seconded by DP and agreed unanimously that this expenditure should be approved.

17.10.15.2 Village Keeper

Anthony Owers had said the earliest he could carry out the edging of part of The Green would be February 2018. It was agreed to try and recruit volunteers to start the work in the meantime; MW would call for volunteers in the next HCN. JC would inform Anthony of this course of action, and would ask him to keep some time free in February.

17.10.16 CLERK'S REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

None

17.10.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 29 November 2017, in the Village Hall.

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