

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Wednesday 27 July 2022 in the Village Hall

Present:	Charlotte Britton (CB) Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC) Steve Laing (SL) David Pratt (DP) Sheila Roberts (SR) Michael Woods - (MW)
In attendance:	Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GC) John Ward, Babergh DC (JW) Parishioner
Apologies:	John Curran (JDC) Sue Keeble (SK)

CB welcomed Steve Laing, who had joined the Parish Council following the election held on 14 July.

22.7.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

22.7.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

22.7.3 PUBLIC FORUM

The parishioner present raised the following issues:

- There appeared to be more traffic using Water Lane, which had been designated a Quiet Lane; however, there was no QL sign at the top of the lane. MW said the post installed by SCC was too high; the QL team was aware of this and would rectify it. However, in the meantime the sign would be installed as soon as possible. CB commented that designating Water Lane a Quiet Lane would not necessarily solve the problem of increased traffic; the PC would pick up these concerns at a future meeting.
- The footpath alongside the B1070 was almost inaccessible due to overgrown vegetation (it was noted that this was already on the agenda for discussion - see 22.7.7).
- There was concern over several large garden bonfires at a property in Upper Street, causing unacceptable smoke pollution and adding to the risk of fires in the current dry and hot weather conditions; JC had received an email from another parishioner raising the same concerns. JW would report the bonfires to Babergh's Environmental Health team.

22.7.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

22.7.4.1 District Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes (in future JC would circulate the reports as soon as she received them, rather than waiting to send them out with the agenda papers). Plans to revitalise the Hamilton Road Quarter in Sudbury, and the initiative to bring new workspaces to Hadleigh had both been approved by Cabinet. The latest report from CIFCO (Babergh and Mid Suffolk's commercial property company), showing the draft accounts for 2021-22, had been due to go before the councils' joint overview and scrutiny committee in July but this had been postponed to September; the report was on the Mid Suffolk and Babergh websites, and had also been sent to Companies House. SL commented on losses made by CIFCO, which JW said were based on portfolio valuations; in fact, income had increased by 12% over the last year.

In response to a further question from SL, JW said he did not foresee any decrease in rental income, and the unpaid rents that had been written off had not impacted on payments to the two councils as they had been absorbed into CIFCO's running costs. However, he would check that the report on the website was up to date.

22.7.4.2 County Council report

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. SCC had objected to the National Grid's proposals for the East Anglia GREEN pylon run. Extra funding had been agreed by Cabinet for the second phase of the five-year project for the creation of more SEND places for children and young people. In response to a question from SL, GH said the locations for the new schools had not yet been confirmed.

22.7.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by DP, seconded by MW and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 June 2022 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

22.7.6 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

22.7.6.1 Broken marker post

JC had contacted the Fire Service to ask them to either repair or remove the marker post at the junction of Mill Lane and Watermill Close. *

(it was subsequently confirmed that the post had been replaced)*

22.7.6.2 Noticeboards

The noticeboard at the top of Mill Lane had been refurbished. The working group would bring a recommendation to the August meeting concerning a replacement board for the Playing Field.

22.7.7 B1070 PAVEMENT

MW's paper was noted. JW said Babergh had been allocated £150,000 from the new Suffolk Climate Action Community Match Funder scheme, but he was not sure that it was the right fund for this project. He would look into whether the Community Development Grant would be more appropriate; he would also speak to Babergh's Grants Officer. GH said she had forwarded to Highways the email received from a parishioner who now found the footpath impassable in his disability buggy. She confirmed that Layham was now on the list for funding from the Highways Investment Fund, but the anticipated cost - based on widening the pavement - would exceed the limit. MW said the pavement was actually the correct width, but the bank had slipped over the years and thus reduced it. He said a site meeting was required; GH agreed and would organise this.

22.7.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

22.7.8.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by DP, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 27 July 2022 should be approved and payments of £5,355.84 authorised. It was noted that two cheques written to the Village Hall in May had been paid back into the PC's account due to a processing error at Barclays; replacement cheques had therefore been raised.

22.7.8.2 Internal audit report

JC's report summarising the recommendations made by SALC was noted. suffolk.cloud had now published an accessibility statement on the website; she would bring an update to a future meeting on actions taken concerning the other recommendations.

22.7.8.3 Website costs

The PC currently paid suffolk.cloud an annual fee to host and support the website. This covered publishing all documents that were required by law to be on the website, as well as regular updates; however, other work incurred additional costs.

It was agreed that development of the website should be addressed in three stages:

- Parish Council information and documents required to be on PC websites under the Transparency Act (already being actioned);
- Basic information about the village and local organisations, eg Village Hall, Playing Field, St Andrew's Church etc (next stage);
- Additional information - eg publicity about events, photos, local services etc - for which a charge would be made (for future discussion and consultation with parishioners).

22.7.9 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

22.7.9.1 Emergency Plan

JDC's update was noted. The desk-top exercise offered by the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit would be a joint one for any interested PCs, and would last around two hours, with the cost of the venue being split between the participating PCs. JDC had offered the Village Hall as a possible venue; the date and venue would be confirmed in due course. SR commented that she was happy with the revised wording for emails concerning yellow warnings.

22.7.9.2 Parish trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme

SR's report on the 2022 scheme launched by Babergh and Mid Suffolk DCs was noted. The scheme offered free trees hedgerow plants and wildflower seed mixes to all parishes, but required the land to have public access; MW commented that there were few areas in Layham that met the criteria. SR suggested part of the churchyard might be turned into a wildflower area; she would talk to the PCC. The deadline for applications was 31 August; this would be an item for the August meeting.

22.7.9.3 Layham Events Group

SK's report was noted. MW had been asked by a parishioner to query the distribution of the funds raised by the Jubilee Fete as the programme had stated that the proceeds would go to "*local charities: St Andrew's Church (new flagpole), Layham Playgroup, Village Hall*", but the Events Group was now inviting any community groups, clubs, societies and voluntary organisation in Layham to apply for funding. SR explained that the Fete had raised more money than anticipated, hence the decision to widen the field; applications for funding of up to £500 could be made. CB said the reason for the application process was to show how the money would be used.

22.7.10 PLANNING

22.7.10.1 DC/22/03305 & 6 - Lots Farm, Rands Road

Councillors had no objections to the application for the erection of a two-storey rear extension and single-storey side extension, new porch, erection of annexe/home office, entrance gate and boundary fencing, and parking with turning area.

22.7.11 INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Internal Controls Statement was reviewed; it was proposed by DP, seconded by SL and agreed unanimously to approve the Statement for 2022-23.

22.7.12 DISCOVERING SUFFOLK PROJECT

Suffolk CC had contacted the PC about a project to install new QR code plaques to rights of way fingerposts, and also to identify and deliver a bespoke walking app for Suffolk; Parish Councils were asked to assist by installing the plaques. It was proposed by MW, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the PC should participate in the project.

22.7.13 CORRESPONDENCE

22.7.13.1 Scope Play Fair campaign

This campaign highlighted the need to make playing field equipment for children with disabilities a part of any provision throughout the UK; more information was available on the Scope website, where people could also sign up to an open letter.

SL said the campaign was not just about new play equipment, but also - for example - giving consideration to having fenced areas around existing equipment. It was agreed that MW would take this forward with the Playing Field Committee.

22.7.13.2 Footpath

A parishioner had said the footpath leading from Church Lane to the bridge near the Mill was in a state of disrepair. JC was investigating its ownership and who was responsible for its upkeep; this would be an agenda item for the August meeting.

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

None.

22.7.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 24 August, in the Village Hall.

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