

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm On Wednesday 23 July 2025 in the Village Hall

Present: Gillie Cranfield (GC)
Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran - Vice Chairman (JDC)
Will Dunn (WD)
Sue Keeble (SK)
Steve Laing - Chairman (SL)
Sheila Roberts (SR)
Julie Thickpenny (JT)

In attendance: John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)
Parishioner

Apologies: Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GH)

25.7.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

25.7.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

25.7.3 PUBLIC FORUM

The parishioner present commented that the Marquis had been granted permission to operate as a wedding venue, with planning permission underpinned by noise and traffic assessments and limited to 30 events per year. However, the venue was being used for other events more frequently. He wondered whether the parish council would consider approaching the planning department for comment. He also said he believed the Orangery did not yet have planning permission, but was being used for commercial purposes.

The parishioner also referred to a leaflet recently delivered to households bearing the website address 'onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk/residents-survey'. The leaflet did not make it clear that it was from Suffolk CC and did not give an address or state who had printed it. Despite purporting to invite people to respond to a survey, the text was not impartial.

25.7.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

JW said that Babergh and the other Suffolk districts were anxious to increase awareness of the impact of this process, which would shape local government for the next 50-60 years. Districts felt that a single council for the whole of the county would not meet the needs of the public. KPMG had been appointed to do some fact finding and ascertain whether several smaller authorities would be commercially viable; they felt they would be, and would provide cost savings. The deadline for final submissions was 26 September and three new authorities would be the option favoured by the districts; the final decision would be made by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon. The Leaders of the districts were due to meet at the end of July and planned to set up a public website. JW said SCC had employed an Executive Director with lead responsibility for Organisational Change and Local Government Reorganisation; the districts would continue to use existing staff. In response to a question from JDC, JW said the new Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk would preside over a combined authority for the two counties, with representation initially from the two county councils until the new unitary authorities were in place. Whilst Norfolk CC agreed with Suffolk CC that there should be just one new authority for each county, the Norfolk districts agreed with their counterparts in Suffolk that there should be more than one. With regard to the leaflet mentioned above (25.7.3), SL said he would contact the Electoral Commission.

25.7.5 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

25.7.5.1 District Council

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. SL praised the new system to improve the repairs process for tenants; WD said a contractor from Yorkshire had visited one of the houses in Upper Layham and wondered why someone local could not have been employed. In response to a question about the Local Plan, JW said Babergh would be able to maintain its 5 year housing target; Local Plans would be inherited by the new authorities following local government reorganisation. JDC said it was disappointing that the electric vehicles available for rent as part of the Plug in Suffolk scheme were not being used. SK asked whether any funding might be made available for local celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Constable in 2026; JW said he would be able to contribute from his locality budget.

25.7.5.2 County Council

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

25.7.6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 June should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

25.7.7 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

25.7.7.1 Insurance renewal

JC would bring quotes to the September meeting; renewal was due on 1 October.

25.7.6.2 SIDs

The formal complaint sent to Elan City had prompted a response and the SIDs were now back in place. However, unfortunately there was still a problem with downloading data from one of them.

25.7.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.7.8.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by GC, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 23.7.25 should be approved and payments of £1,907.01 authorised.

25.7.8.2 Internal audit report

The recommendations in the report were noted; JC would bring an update to a future meeting.

25.7.8.3 Annual CIL report

Following confirmation that CIL money could be spent on items such as speed devices, it was agreed to purchase an additional SID for Upper Layham in June 2024. However, the accounts spreadsheet for 2024/25 had not shown this expenditure in the CIL column - JC explained that this meant the reserves figure in the year end accounts differed from the figure stated in the CIL return, although the overall income and expenditure figures were not affected. It was proposed by SK, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously to approve the report.

25.7.9 PLANNING

25.7.9.1 DC/25/00761 - Cherry Orchard Farm

Councillors noted that permission had been granted for a detached dwelling and double garage.

25.7.9.2 DC/25/01841 - Brick Kiln House

The discharge of conditions was noted.

It was agreed that JC would contact JW concerning the Flood Risk Assessment attached by Babergh to a recent planning application in respect of a property in Lower Layham. The 2020 survey stated that Lower Layham had not been affected by flooding and there was only a 1 in 75 year risk of surface flooding. However, there had been several instances of flooded gardens and two instances of internal flooding during the past year.

25.7.10 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Following the announcement that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had stopped funding the neighbourhood planning support programme and therefore there would be no more funding for parish councils wishing to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, it was proposed by GC, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously not to proceed with a parish survey.

25.7.11 AUTUMN TIDY-UP

It was agreed that this would take place on Saturday 11 October 2025; the date would be publicised via HCN, the noticeboards and the website.

25.7.12 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

25.7.12.1 Parking issues

Emails had been received from two parishioners concerned about parking in Mill Lane (vehicles parking opposite the entrance to Brett Green, and also parking on the banks and causing erosion), and Brett Green (parking on kerbs between driveways). Councillors would consider what action could be taken.

25.7.11.2 Blocked drain

A parishioner had contacted Suffolk CC concerning a blocked drain in Overbury Hall Road, which had been reported in the past and cleared on one occasion. However, SCC's response this time was that the problem '*does not meet our intervention criteria*'. JC would contact GH for comment.

25.7.11.3 Footpath no 4, Lower Layham

Following the partial collapse of the steps down onto Stoke Road alongside Bartons Cottage, JC had contacted SCC who had been out to have a look and confirmed that a contractor had been asked to quote for repair / replacement as soon as possible.

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

None.

25.7.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 24 September 2025, in the Village Hall.

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