

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm On Wednesday 24 September 2025 in the Village Hall

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

In attendance: Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GH)
John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)

Apologies: Sue Keeble (SK)
Steve Laing - Chairman (SL)

25.9.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from SK and SL.

25.9.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

25.9.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No parishioners were present.

25.9.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

25.9.4.1 District Council

Written reports for August and September had been circulated prior to the meeting, copies of which are filed with these minutes. With regard to local government reorganisation, Babergh had voted to submit their preferred option for three councils, along with Mid Suffolk and Ipswich. Babergh's website had a breakdown of their campaign costs. SL and WD had attended an interesting meeting with James Cartlidge and the county and districts. SCC's preferred option was for one new unitary council. They were also keen to see a different relationship with the parishes. With regard to the number of councillors after reorganisation, the Boundary Commission favoured a maximum of one hundred. There was no clarity on finances yet, as the new council(s) would make these decisions. In response to a question from WD, JW said it was possible that CIFCO might sell one or two assets in order to reinvest. The Orangery at the Marquis would be discussed at a meeting later in the month between Babergh's planning department and the architect, as this had been erected without planning permission and was not thought to be in keeping with the listed building. A decision would be made on a retrospective planning application later in the year.

25.9.4.2 County Council

Written reports for August and September had been circulated prior to the meeting, copies of which are filed with these minutes. With regard to local government reorganisation, GH commented that it was not really about the number of councillors, more about appointing the right people to the right roles. WD commented on SCC's use of reserves to publicise their campaign for one new unitary authority. Data from the recent ANPR trial was now available; JC had circulated this to councillors. Parish archives were now available to access online, free of charge.

25.9.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by SR, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 July should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

25.9.6 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

25.9.6.1 Village signs

WD said the working party was exploring alternative quotes as the metal option was too expensive.

25.9.6.2 Emergency Plan - rest centres

JDC was arranging a meeting with SL first, to discuss what was required; the working party would then arrange a meeting with the Marquis.

25.9.6.3 Parking in Mill Lane

It was agreed to keep a watching brief on this and discuss again at a future meeting.

25.9.6.4 Blocked drain in Overbury Hall Road

JC had reported this, but the response had been that the problem '*did not meet criteria for intervention*'. She would follow up on this, as Highways had cleared the drain a couple of years ago but this was not a one-off solution.

25.9.7 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.9.7.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by GC, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 24.9.25 should be approved and payments of £1,394.53 authorised.

25.9.7.2 Insurance renewal

The PC was currently insured with Zurich Municipal. The renewal date was 1 October and JC had obtained three alternative quotations, all of which were considerably higher than Zurich, whose policy was tailor-made for parish councils. It was proposed by SR, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously to renew with Zurich.

25.9.7.3 NJC pay award

The national pay scales for 2025-26 had been agreed. It was proposed by WD, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously to approve the increase in JC's salary, backdated to 1.4.25.

25.9.8 PLANNING

25.9.8.1 DC/25/02997 - Uplands House, Upper Street

The part-approved discharge of conditions was noted.

25.9.8.2 DC/25/03302 - The Barn, Popes Green Lane

The part-approved discharge of conditions was noted.

25.9.8.3 DC/25/03892 - White Gable, Upper Street

There were no objections to the application for works to trees.

25.9.9 DEFIBRILLATOR AT THE MARQUIS

The defibrillator located at the Marquis had been purchased in 2016. JC had ordered some replacement pads in July and been advised that this particular defibrillator was taken out of production in 2019 and spares were becoming difficult to obtain. The pads were finally received in September, but would no longer be available from the end of 2026 / the start of 2027. The supplier had suggested that consideration should be given to purchasing a new defibrillator, or considering a rental package. The new pads would last for two years, so it was agreed to review the situation in twelve months' time. In the meantime, JC would clarify the position with regard to the other defibrillators.

25.9.10 ALLOTMENTS

New tenants had been confirmed for two of the vacant allotments; the third required some tidying up and a fence repairing before being re-let. JC said the current rental agreement stated that plots could only be let to residents of Layham; however, some interest had been shown by people in Hadleigh and she felt that it would be better to let a plot than have it stand empty. It was proposed by GC, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously to amend the agreement accordingly, making it clear that priority would always be given to Layham residents. It was further agreed to review the annual rent before 1.4.26.

25.9.11 AUTUMN TIDY-UP

This would take place on Saturday 11 October, at 10am. SR had produced posters for the noticeboards and would publicise the event in the Hadleigh Community News; JC would send out a community email. SR had ordered additional brown bins from Babergh.

25.9.12 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

None.

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

None.

25.9.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 29 October 2025, in the Village Hall.

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