

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26 March 2025

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: Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GH)

Apologies: John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)

25.3.1 APOLOGIES

See above.

25.3.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

25.3.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

25.3.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE WRITTEN REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

25.3.4.1 District Council

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

25.3.4.2 County Council

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. GH confirmed that SCC would be taking back responsibility for the county's library service and there were plans for more mobile libraries. Richard Rout had been appointed Cabinet Member for Devolution; SCC had circulated a paper on local government reorganisation in Suffolk, which favoured replacing all six councils in Suffolk with one new council, thus reducing costs and streamlining services. In response to a question from SK, GH confirmed that there would be some redundancies, but priority would be given to retaining the right staff members. In response to a question from SL, GH said an analysis had been done in order to identify annual savings; SL said PWC, who had carried out the analysis, had recently been fined following audit mistakes and he would therefore question the accuracy of their figures. WD said it would be useful to have a similar paper from Babergh. He hoped that there would continue to be representation from the new body at parish council meetings, and that existing projects would continue. He would also be interested to know how SEND would be handled. GH said SCC would present a full business case to government in the autumn.

25.3.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

JDC was concerned that, should a councillor fail to give apologies before missing a meeting, this should be recorded in the minutes. JC said she would record this in future as the councillor being 'Absent' rather than under 'Apologies'. With this agreed, it was proposed by SK, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 February 2025 should be accepted as an accurate record and signed accordingly.

25.3.6 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

25.3.6.1 Speeding

JC confirmed that she had written to ElanCity concerning the ongoing problems with downloading data from the SIDs. SCC had now confirmed that the next ANPR trial in Upper Layham would take place from 5 - 12 May.

25.3.7 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.3.7.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by SL, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 26.3.25 should be approved and payments of £1,918.97 authorised; the bank statement was noted.

25.3.7.2 External audit

It was proposed by JDC, seconded by WD and agreed unanimously to certify Layham Parish Council as exempt for 2024-25.

25.3.7.3 Financial Regulations

It was proposed by SK, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously to formally adopt the revised Financial Regulations (clauses 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11 relating to procurement).

25.3.8 DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

It was proposed by SK, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously to formally adopt the Document Retention policy.

25.3.9 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

25.3.9.1 Emergency Plan

The working party had not met since the last PC meeting, but JDC gave a brief verbal update. The communication tree was in the process of being updated and some new ELVs had been recruited.

25.3.10 PLANNING

25.3.10.1 DC/25/00727 - Hill Farm

The discharge of conditions relating to DC/24/05386 was noted.

25.3.11 DEVOLUTION

It was proposed by SL, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously to approve the draft response to the Devolution consultation; JC would submit this online.

25.3.12 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The draft agenda was approved. JC would continue to try and confirm a police representative at the meeting.

25.3.13 CLERK'S ANNUAL REVIEW

It was agreed that SK, JT and JC would meet in April; JC would circulate some possible dates.

25.3.14 ANGLIAN WATER

Following the recent leak which had resulted in the road between Lower Layham and Hadleigh being closed yet again, it was agreed that JC would write to Anglian Water and ask them to confirm how many leaks / road closures there had been over the last few years, and request an undertaking that action would be taken to bring an end to the ongoing problems.

25.3.15 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

25.3.15.1 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE IN BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK

Babergh and Mid Suffolk DCs had issued a briefing pack following the Government's announcement of significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was agreed that this should be on the agenda for the May meeting.

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

None.

25.3.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

APM at 7.30pm on Wednesday 30 April 2025, in the Village Hall.

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