

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29 October 2025 in the Village Hall

Present: Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
John Curran - Vice Chairman (JDC)
Will Dunn (WD)
Steve Laing - Chairman (SL)
Sheila Roberts (SR)

In attendance: John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)

Apologies: Gillie Cranfield (GC)
Sue Keeble (SK)
Julie Thickpenny (JT)
Georgia Hall, Suffolk CC (GH)

25.10.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from GC, SK and JT. It was proposed by SL, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously to approve a leave of absence of up to six months for GC.

25.10.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

25.10.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No parishioners were present.

25.10.4 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

25.10.4.1 District Council

Written reports for August and September had been circulated prior to the meeting, copies of which are filed with these minutes. Public consultation on local government reorganisation would start in November and would run until January 2026. JDC asked whether, should there be more than one new unitary council, would certain activities be allotted a 'lead' council; JW said there was no detail at the moment. In response to a question from WD, he said the new Mayor would have responsibility for strategic transport including road and rail links, the Police, and Fire & Rescue. With regard to the Local Plan, a 'call for sites' had gone out and submissions would be accepted until the new year. There would then be a consultation period before the draft Plan was issued. It was noted that Babergh and Mid Suffolk DCs had restated their objections to the Norwich to Tilbury project. There would be more information available soon on the new arrangements for bin collections. JW reported that some of the properties in the Corks Lane development had already been sold. SL was pleased that the response time from the Repairs & Maintenance team had improved significantly. JDC was disappointed that the electric vehicles available for hire in Hadleigh were not being used; he suggested the scheme could benefit from increased publicity.

25.10.4.2 County Council

Written reports for August and September had been circulated prior to the meeting, copies of which are filed with these minutes. In response to a comment from JDC about the seizure of unsafe electric vehicles at the Port of Felixstowe, JC would ask GH for more information. JDC was also pleased that the footpath from Layham to Hadleigh had been cut back.

25.10.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by SR, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 September should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

25.10.6 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

25.10.6.1 Emergency Plan - rest centres

The working party had met with SL to discuss the possibility of using the Queen's Head as a rest centre in the event of an emergency. The minutes of the meeting were noted and the course of action being taken was endorsed.

25.10.7 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.10.7.1 RFO's report

It was proposed by WD, seconded by JDC and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 29.10.25 should be approved and payments of £1,621.23 authorised. It was noted that a CIL payment of £2,133.83 had been received; JC would clarify which properties this related to.

25.10.7.2 Budget & Precept

It was agreed that the working party would comprise JDC, SK and JC - JC would circulate possible meeting dates and would provide background information to aid the discussion. The working party would bring recommendations to the November meeting.

25.10.7.3 Internal audit report recommendations

It was agreed to adopt the recommendations made in the internal audit report relating to budgetary controls and the asset register.

25.10.8 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

25.10.8.1 Bramford-Twinstead Reinforcement

JDC had attended a TEAMS meeting about this project to upgrade the Bramford to Twinstead grid. A community benefit fund of £4m had been made available over 4 years; more detail was currently awaited on the process for submitting bids.

25.10.8.2 Autumn Tidy Up

SR's report was noted. She thanked the fifteen volunteers for their hard work collecting litter, trimming hedges on the playing field and tidying up the Green at Blacksmith's Corner; she also thanked BMSDC for loaning additional brown bins and removing the rubbish collected.

25.10.9 PLANNING

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

It was noted that consent had been granted for works to trees.

25.10.10 SIGN FOR JUNCTION OF MILL LANE / WATER LANE

In October 2024, following a request from parishioners, JC had contacted SCC Highways about the possibility of a sign indicating no vehicular access from Upper Layham to Lower Layham, past the Mill. She had finally received a proposal from Highways, recommending signage at both the Mill Lane and Water Lane junctions. However, this would have to be paid for by the PC, although GH had kindly offered to make a contribution from her Locality Budget. Councillors felt that one sign, rather than three, would be sufficient; it was agreed that JC would respond to Highways accordingly. She would query whether SCC had an obligation to provide such signage and whether, if the PC had to pay, would it then own the sign(s) and thus be responsible for maintenance.

25.10.11 RISK ASSESSMENTS

25.10.11.1 Management & Financial

Councillors approved the risk assessment for 2025/26 with no amendments.

25.10.11.2 General

Councillors approved the risk assessment for 2025/26 with no amendments. It was noted that this covered both impact and severity.

25.10.12 INTERNAL CONTROLS

JC would update the wording under 'Audit' to clarify the difference between internal and external audit; with this amendment, the Internal Controls Statement for 2025/26 was approved.

25.10.13 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

25.10.13.1 Mill Lane

A parishioner had raised the issue of an excessive amount of leaves from a council-owned tree falling into her garden and onto Mill Lane, where there was already a hazard caused by tree roots under the tarmac. JC would find out whether the tree was owned by Babergh or SCC, and would also report the problem on the pavement caused by tree roots.

25.10.13.2 Speeding along Stoke Road

Following a complaint from a parishioner, this ongoing problem would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

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

None.

25.10.15 FUTURE MEETINGS

25.10.15.1 Date of next meeting

7.30pm on Wednesday 26 November 2025, in the Village Hall.

25.10.15.2 2026 meeting dates

Dates were agreed for meetings during 2026 (see below). JC would ensure these dates were posted on noticeboards and on the website.

Wednesday 14 January
Wednesday 25 February
Wednesday 31 March
Wednesday 29 April (Annual Parish Meeting)
Wednesday 13 May (AGM)

Wednesday 24 June
Wednesday 29 July
Wednesday 30 September
Wednesday 28 October
Wednesday 25 November

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