

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30PM ON WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL 2019 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Charlotte Britton (CB)
John Curran (JDC)
Ron Gunn (RG)
Steve Laing - Vice Chairman (SL)
David Pratt (DP)
Sheila Roberts (SR)
Michael Woods - Chairman (MW)

Apologies: Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
Friends of St Andrew's

In attendance: Gordon Jones, Suffolk CC (GJ)
John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)
Parishioners

19.4.1 INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

19.4.2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Margaret Woods, seconded by Ron Gunn and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 25 April 2018 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly. It was noted that Sue Curran's name had been recorded as Sue Currant; this would be amended. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

19.4.3 REPORTS *(full reports are held on file with the minutes)*

Suffolk County Council

GJ highlighted some of the key items from the previous twelve months - these included:

- The launch of the new Light Rescue Pump (LRP) at Wrentham Fire Station. The LRP was a new-look fire and rescue vehicle and was developed following feedback from local residents and staff through the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-2018 consultation. The LRP, unique to Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, included the latest firefighting and rescue equipment and was specifically designed to provide flexible crewing in rural areas;
- On 22 May 2018, it was announced that Suffolk County Council was looking to develop a 4.5-acre site, part of its County Farms estate in Cockfield, near Lavenham. The plan was for 51 affordable homes to be built to offer local people on low incomes the opportunity to get on the housing ladder;
- On 12 July, it was announced that Suffolk's 2017 Public Health Report had taken third place in the Association of Directors of Public Health Annual Report Competition, from 54 UK entries. The most recently published report for 2017, 'Working for Wellbeing', focused on inclusive growth and the links between health and work. Prepared and published by Suffolk County Council's Public Health team, the report was commended for its ease of reading, accessibility and relevance;
- On 24 July, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet approved a plan to invest £6million into upgrading Suffolk's recycling centres. £1m had been earmarked for a site to replace the Portman's Walk Recycling Centre in Ipswich town centre, and a further million for the same in Stowmarket. Construction for improvements was expected to start in 2019/20;
- Suffolk's tourism trade saw its biggest boom for a decade, with the visitor economy reaching the £2 billion mark for the first time. Interim figures released on 8 August 2018 by Visit Suffolk showed that tourism grew by at least five per cent in 2017, more than double the year before. The number of jobs in the sector rose by 6 per cent to 42,428, 13.6 per cent of all employment in Suffolk;

- On 19 October 2018, it was announced that the standard of care provided by Mid Suffolk Home First had been rated as Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission. Mid Suffolk Home First, provided by Suffolk County Council, provided a short-term reablement service and a longer-term care service;
- On 5 November, it was announced that the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership had received a national award for supporting local communities to be more energy efficient. An expert panel of judges awarded the Local Authority Award to the Partnership for its close working with local organisations, including exploring how organisations could be more energy efficient, helping to source funding, producing a community energy toolkit, providing technical support and investing in energy efficiency installations;
- By November 2018, the construction of The Hold building was well underway. The Hold would deliver a new home for the majority of Suffolk's unique archival collections, as well as state-of-the-art public facilities including seminar rooms and a 200-seat auditorium;
- A report published on 18 December 2018 revealed the importance of the Sport and Physical Activity sector to the Suffolk economy. The report showed that the sector contributed £270m a year to the Suffolk economy, accounting for over 10,000 jobs or 3% of all employment in Suffolk - almost double the proportion seen at national levels;
- January 2019 saw Suffolk Highways celebrating road repair success following a £300,000 investment in Nuphalth Thermal Patching technology. The investment, which has been funded from the extra £9.67 million received from central government in the autumn, has aided the county's Highways teams to carry out more effective, longer-lasting repairs to Suffolk's road surface;
- On 29 January 2019, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet agreed recommendations to move forward with creating more specialist education places in Suffolk. The recommendations included three new special schools and 36 specialist units attached to existing mainstream schools, which would create over 800 new specialist education places in the county. Following approval of the recommendations, the proposal to borrow up to £45.1 million to fund the new places would go to the county council's Capital Strategy Group to be reviewed;
- In January it was announced that Suffolk had won a grant of £4.4 million from the Government for a pioneering project to develop "smart" streetlighting. The project would see streetlights adapted in a range of innovative ways, including being equipped with wind vanes and solar panels to generate rather than consume energy;
- EO Charging, one of the UK's leading electric vehicle (EV) charging manufacturers, launched 'Plug In Suffolk' in partnership with Suffolk County Council and renewable energy provider Bulb. This is the country's first 'fully open' public fast charging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles, meaning EV drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register with networks or become members of organisations. The 'Plug In Suffolk' charging network forms part of Suffolk County Council's ambition of Creating the Greenest County in the UK;
- On 14 February 2019, Suffolk County Council concluded its budget setting process for this coming financial year (2019/2020). Over the period 2011-12 to 2018-19 the Council made over £260 million of savings in response to reductions in funding from Central Government and increasing demand for services. For 2019/20 the Council proposed a range of savings totalling around £13 million;
- On 1 March 2019, it was announced that Suffolk County Council, working in partnership with West Suffolk Council, East Suffolk Council of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney, and Babergh and Mid Suffolk district councils, had been successful in securing £1.725 million from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. The funding would contribute to providing Superfast Broadband access to many businesses across Suffolk's most rural areas, who were not scheduled to receive Superfast Broadband as part of the current fibre broadband rollout;
- Highways and speeding continued to be an issue. GJ had recently written again to the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding ANPR cameras. He was also monitoring the impact of the new VAS in Capel which he had part funded.

GJ said it had been a pleasure to work with Layham Parish Council during the past year and wished those councillors not standing again a happy 'retirement'. He said he was pleased to be able to contribute some of his locality budget to the latest defibrillator in the village, on Brett Green. Layham now had good coverage and was a fine example to other villages.

In response to a question about the new VAS in Capel St Mary, GJ said the cameras collected evidence but did not produce fines as there was no link to the police. He explained that was why he would like to see ANPR devices; however, there was resistance from Suffolk Police regarding the increased workload. GJ said he felt people in

rural areas were expecting some return on the increased precept to address issues that affected rural areas, eg speeding. ANPR cameras also recorded number plates, so could be used to identify vehicles unusual to the area, thus contributing to general crime reduction. In response to a further question, GJ said he would be meeting the Police & Crime Commissioner to discuss the matter further. With regard to the roll-out of Superfast Broadband, GJ said he would be happy to discuss 'cold spots' in Broadband connectivity.

Babergh District Council

JW highlighted some of the key items from the previous twelve months - these included:

- Commercial investments created an additional net revenue income stream that could be used to pay for Council services; these investments were now an integral part of Babergh's medium-term financial planning. The aim was to create a diverse portfolio, ensuring no single market, sector or tenant contained a disproportionate level of the overall funds invested, therefore mitigating any risk of tenant or market failure. The focus was on properties with secure, longer term, leases to strong covenants, in order to lower the likelihood of tenant failure and fluctuations in income;
- The council was continuing to add to its council housing stock, with schemes in Sudbury, Hadleigh, Holbrook, Shotley and Brantham either in progress or soon to be started. In March 2019, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the former HQ site at Cork's Lane. Babergh and Mid Suffolk had set up a joint venture company with the Norse Group to develop this and the Needham Market HQ;
- Suffolk was one of ten areas across the country to take part in a pilot scheme in 2018/19 allowing 100% of business rates growth to be retained by local authorities for use in their districts. This was a one year pilot and funds had to be allocated for projects that promoted economic growth. Just over £1m was allocated, to be divided between key projects in Sudbury and the Angel Court affordable housing development in Hadleigh;
- Following the closure of the Tourist Information Centre in Lavenham, Babergh worked with the parish council to enable them to take over the building to provide a Community Hub. A successful application for CIL funding helped them achieve this. A new Visitor Information Point network, giving visitors to the area more choice about where and how they access visitor information across the two districts, would be housed in the new Lavenham Community Hub;
- In July 2018 Babergh was able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, meaning the Council could show there was enough land readily available to meet the number of homes that needed to be built over that period, giving it more ability to resist inappropriate planning applications;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions on new developments were growing - over £400k of successful bids had been made to the central CIL pot. In addition, in the period April to September 2018, Babergh towns and parishes received over £119k of the neighbourhood portion of CIL payments collected in their areas. Babergh and Mid Suffolk had created a database of all Section 106 agreements and developer CIL contributions - the first of its kind in the country;
- In addition to the main Customer Access service in Sudbury, there were now two pop-up services in Hadleigh and Shotley, providing support for residents to access the council's online services.

JW said Babergh was facing some big challenges; however, he was proud that, through careful management of finances and different ways of working, no services had been cut - and some had been improved and enhanced. In response to a question about the the Corks Lane site, JW confirmed planning permission had been granted with no conditions attached, despite concerns raised by Hadleigh Cricket Club and Sport England. He was sure the developers would discuss the Club's concerns and ensure mitigation was in place.

Budget & Finance

The Clerk was in the process of finalising the accounts for 2018/19 which would then go for internal audit by SALC (Suffolk Association of Local Councils), before being formally approved by the Parish Council at its June meeting. The arrangements for external audit had changed the previous year, but all smaller authorities, regardless of size, must still comply with proper practices; complete and approve an Annual Governance & Accountability Return; provide for public rights to view the accounts. The main items of routine expenditure continued to be grants to the Village Hall, the Playing Field and the PCC; insurance; Clerk's salary and tax. The Parish Council continued to receive recycling credits in respect of glass and textiles - this money was used for the benefit of the community. Councillors had agreed a small increase of £500 in the precept for 2019/20, taking it to £11,000 - this small increase was to cover election costs and training for the new council, which would take office on 7 May, with the first meeting of the new council being the AGM on 21 May.

Publicly owned land and property

RG said the Parish Council owned and maintained the following: War Memorial, Village Hall, Playing Field, Recycling Centre, Bus Shelter, 6 Grit Bins (not used much during the winter), 2 Telephone Boxes, 4 Defibrillators, 6 Allotment Plots, 3 Notice Boards, a number of seats (one in need of repair / replacement), Dog refuse bins. The Village Hall and the Playing Field each received a grant of £1000 from the Parish Council towards maintenance. The Recycling Centre bottle and clothing banks were a valuable source of income and were well used; RG encouraged residents to continue to use them. RG reminded residents that emptying the dog refuse bins cost the PC £321 during the past year, and asked parishioners to encourage all dog owners to pick up after their dogs and use the bins. During the past year Suffolk Highways had been pro-active in telling the PC when they were coming so that cars could be moved out of the way, making road sweeping a lot easier and more effective.

Emergency Planning

JDC said he had reported at last year's Annual Parish Meeting that the Parish Council was looking to install a defibrillator on Brett Green so that all of the residents of Brett Green, Mill Lane, Watermill Close and - very importantly - the users of the playing field, would be able to comply with the requirement to get to a defibrillator and back within 8 minutes. He was pleased to report that the defibrillator had been installed during the past year. A number of organisations contributed towards the cost of the defibrillator and its mounting; JDC thanked the Brett Valley Masonic Lodge 9479, The Layham Queen's Sports and Social Club, the Hadleigh Thrift Shop, Boxford and Hadleigh Group Practice, and Gordon Jones for the donation from his Locality Fund. Without these donations, the project would have been far harder to accomplish and would have taken a lot longer to complete. He also thanked the designer of the mounting, the people who constructed it, and those who erected it - eleven parishioners who gave their time freely. The defibrillator in the telephone box outside the Queen's Head in Lower Layham was used during the year, helping to save a visitor's life. This was possible, not only due to the defibrillator being available, but due to the CPR training taught by local volunteers to parishioners - Steve Laing had received the training and so was able to save a life. JDC urged everyone to add this life saving skill to their list of achievements. Fortunately, 2018/19 had not been a bad weather year with only a few Yellow weather warnings and no Amber warnings, so the Plan has not been needed. The Layham ELVs were an essential part of the Emergency Plan; JDC thanked them for their help - also the group of snow and ice clearers who helped to make the roads safer to travel on. Simon Daunt and Charlie Panting continued to help with CPR courses when they were requested by parishioners - JDC thanked them for their time and effort in providing this free service. At the recent Parish Plan event, quite a number of parishioners put their names forward to go on a CPR course and these would be organised in the near future. In response to a question, JDC gave details of the location of the new defibrillator on Brett Green. He said the total cost was c £5000, with around 50% of this secured through donations (see above). There were additional costs for this defibrillator due to the electricity supply, which partly dictated its location. The defibrillator was designed to be all-weather and easily accessible.

Green Team

In the summer of 2015, SR and Doreen Sillett were given the joint responsibility of leading the Green Team in the summer of 2015. SR recognised the significant contribution Doreen made in promoting a greener Layham; however, she had to resign from the Parish Council when she moved away from Layham. At the Parish Plan event last month, parishioners were able to see Rosey Nichols' slide show of the flora and fauna in the conservation area, which highlighted the wonder of nature in Layham and the diversity of animals and plants needing protection. The Annual Village Spring Clean had been a successful and well-supported event for many years. This had now evolved from a litter pick into a multi-task event and it was pleasing to report that the Autumn Clean Up was now well established. There were 30 volunteers in October 2018 and 31 volunteers at the Spring Clean in February 2019. Teams cleaned village property and cleared away overgrown vegetation, making the green areas look better and pavements and lanes more accessible. On the morning of our Autumn Clean Up, volunteers erected the new gates into the conservation area. It was again pleasing to report that there was less litter to collect, thanks to parishioners who disposed of rubbish carefully and collected it on a regular basis. There were, however, a few places in Layham such as the Gravel Pit Road where take-away packaging and other rubbish continued to litter the verges. SR thanked Babergh District Council for providing brown bins and for removing the refuse collected. The PC shared hi-vis jackets and litter-pickers with neighbouring parishes. It was exciting to see all the 'Green Ideas' at our Parish Plan event, and to see so many names on the sign-up sheet for a Wild Life Group.

Footpaths & Highways

SL said it had been a relatively quiet year. More parishioners were taking advantage of reporting Highways problems online, which was helpful. He had been hoping to bring news of a resolution to the problem of the narrow pathway in Benton Street; however, work had started in that area and it was hoped this would see it widened. Trying to have the speed limit reduced along Stoke Road in Lower Layham should remain a priority for the next council - SL said he felt Suffolk County Council had an obligation to facilitate this.

In response to a question about the possible extension of the chicane in Benton Street outside no 75, which could not accommodate two large cars, SL said this was beyond the jurisdiction of the Parish Council. Although various proposals had been tabled regarding congestion issues, local residents remained unimpressed; SL said there needed to be the political will to address this.

Local History

Local History Group

Michael Woods, Chairman of the Layham Local History Group (LLHG), said membership of the group had fallen to nine, with two resignations and a new recruit having replaced one of the losses. At the last Annual Meeting, it had been agreed that an annual subscription of £10 should be introduced, due on 1 April, to ensure there was always a small reserve of funds. The major activity during the year was a general exhibition of research done by several members of the group. This was held in the Village Hall on Sunday 20 May - the same day as the church plant sale. 94 visitors were attracted in to see exhibitions on the mill; the school; the rectory; men who came home safely from WW1; the 1851 census and a special invitation display of metal detecting finds. The group reconvened in the autumn and set about transcribing details from the Overbury Hall Court Rolls. There was one social session when the group invited Nigel Crisp to talk about his family associations with Layham. He had since loaned his files of research so copies could be made of anything of interest that should be included in the village archive.

Local History Recorder

MW was also the Layham Local History Recorder and, as such, was responsible for making a record of the life of the village and submitting a report each year based on the content of the 'Letter from Layham' in the Hadleigh Community News. These reports accumulated in the Suffolk Record Office and remained there for ever as reference documents for the future. The reports were also on the village website.

PCC

Sonia Groom reported that the Revd Canon Dr John Parr had left in July 2018 and the PCC was pleased to welcome the Rev Jo Delfgou, who was installed as the new Rector at St Mary's Hadleigh in December. In September a celebration lunch marked Jean Herring's retirement after 30 years as elder of the church. Several good fund raising events were held, including Sunday Lunches and the Plant Sale, as well as the Coffee, Cake and Chat meetings. The PCC remains involved with the Layham Playgroup. A notable event during the year was the celebration of the end of WWI. Many villagers knitted poppies (over 3,000), which were displayed inside and outside the church over the Remembrance weekend. Generous collections amounted to £600, which was sent to the British Legion. The church was packed for the Sunday morning service. In the autumn 29 filled shoeboxes were collected which were sent to Central Asia under the Samaritans' Purse scheme. The Community Payback service continued to cut the grass in the churchyard; however, in 2019 equipment would have to be provided by the PCC. The long term project of installing a servery / toilet in the church to make it more user friendly was progressing steadily. Final plans had been drawn up and agreed and the work put out to tender; the process of applying for funding would start shortly. The PCC was pleased to be able to pay its Parish Share in full. Sonia thanked the Parish Council for its annual contribution of £1,000.

Community Lunch

Sue Curran said there had been three Community Lunches during the year - on 18 July, 31 October and 27 March. Demand continued to be very good and exceeded availability at some events. The seating limit was 30, so parishioners were urged to book early for future events. The cost of the meal was now £6 as costs had risen - still amazing value for a two-course meal with tea/coffee to follow. All meals were made from fresh, local produce as much as possible so local businesses benefited as well. Sue thanked Steve and Tanith at the Queen's Head for continuing to host these events and for all their hard work for what was - for them - a non-profit making lunch. She also thanked Lesley Garnett, Sonia Groom, Sheila Roberts, Lyn Kelly and Marian Hughes for all their hard work preparing, serving, and washing up - without which the day would not happen. The next Community Lunch would be on Wednesday 3 July - a ploughman's lunch with gammon or cheese, followed by Eton Mess.

Playing Field Management Committee

MW said the committee had managed to keep the field up and running with only two committee meetings during the year (May and September), because members responded when there was a need to deal with an issue. He stressed the value of those who served with him on the committee: Lester Bennett, Simon Bewsher, Colin Brown, Graham Coleman, Lizzie Cousins, Glenda Hall, Dusty and Sylvia Miller, James Mosley, Rosie Owers and Neil Riches. He also thanked some other people who gave a hand when needed during the year: George Wyatt, John McLeod, Ron Gunn, Anthony Owers, John Willis-Betts and Geoff Dowie. The committee continued to be financially secure and had felt able to use some resources to fund the purchase of a second picnic table and to

top-up the bark in the safety surfaces. Once again, this time due to the unusually hot dry weather, heavy mowing costs were avoided by committee members doing the job. All committee members helped to sell 100 Club tickets in the autumn and, as usual, the £1000 grant from the Parish Council was gratefully received. In partnership with the Parish Council, Section 106 money held by Babergh District Council was used to purchase gates between the playing field and the conservation area and a small piece of climbing apparatus for very young children; the latter would be in place shortly. The willow dome was rescued and re-woven and was looking good as the leaves started to sprout.

Village Hall Management Committee

DP said no functions had been held during the year, as time had been spent on updating the committee's charitable status, in order to facilitate the acquisition of a grant. The toilet refurbishment was ongoing and quotations were being sought in order that a grant application could be made; the end result depend on what finance we can obtain for support in this respect. DP thanked his committee members for their support throughout the year, all those who volunteered to help at various functions and on working weekends, and also the Parish Council for their support. JW offered to support the VH Committee's application for funding; DP would discuss this with him after the meeting.

19.4.5 MATTERS RAISED BY PARISHIONERS

There were no matters raised not covered by the agenda.

19.4.6 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman said two members of the current Parish Council had decided not to stand again. He paid tribute to Ron Gunn's many years as a councillor, saying that his 'hands-on' approach and his willingness to help with anything and everything would be greatly missed - as would his sense of humour that often lightened up meetings. He also thanked Steve Laing for his eight years of energy and commitment as a councillor; Steve had been behind several initiatives. As a publican, talking to many people, he had also been a valuable source of contacts. MW referred also to the hard work of all the councillors, including Doreen Sillett who had resigned six months ago on moving to Ipswich, and their strength as a team. He thanked, in her absence, Jane Cryer, Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, for her unfailing commitment to the life of the village. Looking to the future, MW told the meeting that there had been only five applications to be councillors from May - so they were appointed unopposed. One of the first duties of the new council would be to decide how to go about co-opting two further members.