

Notice boards

There are three Parish Council noticeboards - one at the top of Mill Lane and one on the fence at the Recycling Centre, both in Upper Layham; a third one is located next to The Queen's Head pub in Lower Layham. Notices are also often posted on the Village Hall notice board and on or near the gates of the Playing Field.

The Playing Field



The Playing Field is in Upper Layham, immediately adjacent to Brett Green. It can be accessed from Mill Lane and from Brett Green. It is run by a Management Committee – Chairman: Michael Woods, tel. 01473 823 798.

At the far end of the field, beside the River Brett, there is an area hedged off from the play area which is being developed as a conservation area. It is accessible to walkers but children are dissuaded from playing there.

The story of Layham Playing Field

Twenty seven years ago our Playing Field was a pasture. It was part of the land associated with Layham Mill and there was no public access.

In 1981 representation had been made to the Parish Council to seek a play area as all the agricultural land was fenced off and the only open space for children to play on was roadways or the greens in Brett Green. Under the chairmanship of Tom Partridge the Council made enquiries and obtained the agreement of the then owners of the land (Mr and Mrs Duffield) that when they sold Mill House and the land around, they would give first option to the village to purchase the pasture. It was a happy coincidence that they were about to move away.

An interest free loan for £12,000 was obtained from the National Playing Fields Association and the pasture was bought in September 1982. The loan was paid back over 10 years by a local

charge being made on the Council Tax – thus the field was truly bought by the people. It was a courageous decision by the Parish Council and we are for ever in their debt.

The field was put in Trust and a committee formed to manage it. Over the following 27 years, bit by bit, what you see now has been built up. Local people paid for the trees that made up the willow plantation (a source of income ever since) and a grant was obtained to buy the first piece of play equipment. Fund raising was varied – a sponsored footpath walk, barn dances, firework evenings, fetes, a Burns Night in the Village Hall – many and varied activities. The 100 Club was launched and has been supported by local people ever since.

Gates were put in, more apparatus purchased, a garage store built and more trees planted – many members of the community have donated trees for different reasons. In recent years, goalposts and a picnic table have been provided and most recently a living willow shelter built.

At the far end of the field a Conservation Area has slowly taken shape – the small posters on the field describe what has been done there.

What shouldn't be forgotten is that all through the 27 years a small group of people have worked to maintain and develop the field – cutting grass, thickening hedges, planting the trees, developing the conservation area – in fact almost everything has been done by local voluntary labour. We pay to have the main field cut as that is just too much for a small committee.

We know how much you all value the field – whether a child who loves to play, dog owner, nature lover, sports enthusiast, fisherman or just someone who likes to walk in an open space. Please find ways to help your village maintain this very important place.

The Village Hall



The village hall is beside the church on Church Lane and is run by a Management Committee – Chairman: David Pratt, 01473 827 667. Bookings for use of the hall can be made through Richard Groom, 01473 822 220. Crockery and cutlery can be hired if required.

The history of the Village Hall in its own words

“I became a feature in Layham on the 20th November 1928. At that time I was known as ‘The Hut’, a name that stuck with me until 1967.

The Men’s Club to whom I belonged not only used me as their clubroom, but also allowed

functions for the village, for which they obviously obtained rent to help with my running costs. There were dances, whist drives and a 'Mixed Club'. They even held 'Smoking Parties' - something that would not be allowed today! All these functions were arranged and discussed at monthly meetings. Every year Christmas was celebrated with a children's party organised by the Men's Club.

The Men's Club purchased a billiards table just before I was built and with darts, table tennis and carpet bowls, I was regularly used.

After the war years the membership flagged slightly and the age limit was reduced to 15yrs. in an effort to rejuvenate activities.

Membership fees, which used to be 2d per week, were the maximum allowed by the Government of the time, before the addition of tax. In 1957 they eventually decided that they would have to increase this sum to 4d a week.

In 1960 they installed a 'Bering' stove, which was positioned against the side wall, as the old oyster stove in the centre was inconvenient when dances were held.

A change occurred on 30th March 1967, when the keys and responsibility for my care was transferred to a 'Village Hall Committee'. This Committee was given a kick start with £366.19.6d from the village fund.

Things ran smoothly for a few years until my committee had an administrative breakdown with only £2.88 left in the kitty! A new committee was formed with the help of the Parish Council.

In 1974 I was fixed up with running water.

The next event I remember was the application to give me charity status. This was granted on 23rd July 1986.

October 1987 was a disaster, for as I was resting peacefully one night, a terrible gale forced me to lean over towards the field next door and I was retired for about six months."

More facts about the Village Hall

The Village Hall was originally built for the ex-service men of Layham after World War I. The plans to build the hut were proposed and accepted in January 1928 and the tender was given to a Mr. A. Dunningham at a sum of two hundred and fifty three pounds four shillings (£253.20 in today's money).

The Hut (the name by which it was affectionally known at that time) was finally completed in

November 1928 and was opened officially on the 20th November by Mrs Tenison. On the 21st November the first whist drive and dance was held.

A little snippet of interest is that the Men's Club bought one hundred stick-back chairs at a price of twenty-one pounds five shillings, (£21.25). In today's money this works out at approximately 21 pence each! (In the Autumn of 1996 the Village Hall Committee sold 30 of these chairs, all of which were damaged, for £17 each!)

The keys of The Hut were officially handed to the Parish in March 1967 and it subsequently became known as The Village Hall.

The hall is managed by the Village Hall Committee, whose core members are Richard Cromwell, Treasurer, Richard Groom for bookings, Kim Partridge our Secretary and David Pratt as Chairman. They are responsible to a trust, for the care and maintenance of the building.

The Committee is responsible to the Trustees, who are Mr. John English, David English and Nigel Thorpe.

The major users are Layham Playgroup and the Ladybird Group (toddlers) during the mornings and the Men's Club which meets on Tuesday evenings. The Parish Council and St. Andrew's Church are regular customers and the hall is available for private parties & functions etc. throughout the year.

We are indeed fortunate to have what is now becoming a unique building. Those of you who use the hall will know that it has a very 'personal' feel about it and over the years the Committee has done its best to bring the hall into the 21st century in a sympathetic way retaining as much of the original charm as possible.

Layham Men's Club

The Men's Club meets in the Village Hall each Tuesday evening where snooker is played in a relaxed setting with convivial conversation and repartee! If you are interested to check it out then either just turn up, or phone David Pratt on 01473 827 667. You will be very welcome.

Layham Social Club

Layham Social Club meets once a month (except August) at 2.30pm on a Tuesday - the members decide which Tuesday on a month-by-month basis. Meetings are always held in the Village Hall.

The Club's activities are very informal - the members decide the programme. Activities to date have included quizzes, bingo, darts, miniature golf, party games, a boat trip on the River Stour from Sudbury to Henny, and in December a Christmas lunch with a 'Secret Santa'.

Plans for future activity include visits to the Recycling Plant at Blakenham and the Wattisham Airfield Museum, another boat trip and a visit to a pantomime.

Please come and join us - everyone is welcome. The cost is £1.50 per meeting, which covers hire of the hall and refreshments: tea / coffee and cake.

For further information, please contact Ann Tracy or Bob Davy on 01473 824 658.

Layham Allotments

Five small allotments are situated behind Gardeners Close, off Mill Lane. These are owned and administered by the Parish Council. If you would like your name to be placed on a waiting list then contact the Clerk to the Parish Council (Jane Cryer) on 07920 713 940.

Public Footpaths



We have a good network of footpaths in the Parish. A map showing their routes is published separately and available from Steve Laing, the Footpath Warden, on 01473 829 776, or at the Queen's Head Public House. Steve Laing will also deal with any problems over a footpath.

Bins for dog waste



Four bins are provided at points where most dog walkers pass (one near each gate on the

Playing Field; one at the top of Water Lane and one outside the Village Hall). These are regularly emptied by a contractor.