

LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the AGM of the Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13 May 2026 in the Village Hall

Present: Jane Cryer - Clerk (JC)
Sue Keeble (SK)
Steve Laing - Chairman (SL)
Sheila Roberts (SR)

In attendance: John Ward, Babergh DC (JW)

Apologies: Gillie Cranfield (GC)
John Curran (JDC)
Will Dunn (WD)
Simon Dowling - Suffolk CC (SD)

26.5.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by SR, seconded by SK and agreed unanimously that SL should be re-elected Chairman for 2026-27. JDC had proposed that SK should be elected Vice-Chairman; this proposal was seconded by SR and agreed unanimously. Acceptance of Office forms were duly signed.

26.5.2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from GD, JDC and WD.

26.5.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

26.5.4 PUBLIC FORUM

No parishioners were present.

26.5.5 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

26.5.5.1 District Council

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. Simon Dowling (SD) was the new SCC representative, replacing Georgia Hall who had not stood for re-election; he was also a Babergh councillor and chair of the Planning Committee. Following Babergh's annual meeting, JW had handed over the leadership to Deborah Saw and was now Deputy Leader, retaining responsibility for finance. The new arrangements for recycling and bin collections would come into force in June; new bins had already been delivered to residents.

26.5.4.2 County Council

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes; the report was noted. Reform had won control of Suffolk CC and the new Leader was Michael Hadwen, a Felixstowe councillor. SD (see above) had forwarded a report on SCC Green / Independent / Lib Dem activities during 2025-26; SL said he hoped that representation would remain a-political.

26.5.6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by SK, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

26.5.7 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Most of the actions were either ongoing or were on the agenda. There was an update on:

26.5.7.1 Allotments

WD was continuing to carry out research into re-installing fencing around Plot 6; a decision would be made at the June meeting.

26.5.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

26.5.8.1 RFO's report at 31.3.26

It was proposed by SL, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 31.3.26 should be approved and payments of £33.97 authorised.

26.5.8.2 RFO's report at 13.5.26

It was proposed by SK, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 13.5.26 should be approved and payments of £4,415.10 authorised. The first instalment of the precept for 2026-27 had been received, as had the final recycling credits.

26.5.9 CASUAL VACANCY

Following the resignation of Julie Thickpenny on 27 April, the Notice of Vacancy was displayed on the noticeboards and website. Unless ten electors called for an election, the PC would proceed with co-option; the process would be discussed at the June meeting.

26.5.10 PLANNING

26.5.10.1 DC/24/00501 & 00557 - Marquis of Cornwallis

It was noted that retrospective planning permission had been granted for the Orangery, with certain amendments to be made. Listed Building Consent had also been granted.

26.5.11 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

It was agreed unanimously to renew the General Power of Competence; the PC continued to meet the eligibility criteria (ie a qualified Clerk and at least two-thirds elected councillors).

26.5.12 CLERK'S ANNUAL REVIEW

It was agreed that SK, SR and JC would meet during the first week of June; JC would circulate possible dates. The report would be brought to the June meeting.

26.5.13 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

26.5.13.1 Affinity Water

Affinity Water was due to start work near the Mill, to alter the stepped area near the bridge to a slope, more appropriate for the fish. SL had met with the foreman and also the on-site ecologist; blue tits had been found to be nesting, so the work was on hold until the young fledged. The work was estimated to take 6-8 weeks, but the bridge would remain open during this time.

26.5.13.2 Hedge cutting

National Grid had started to cut vegetation along the route of the Bramford-Twinstead line. This work should be done outside breeding season, but SCC had issued a permit. SL had spoken to the ecologist who said her preference had been for work not to start until October. SL had contacted Balfour Beatty, NG's contractor, but had not yet received a response.

26.5.13.3 Cricket bat willows

Several residents had expressed concern that cricket bat willows in the playing field conservation area had been felled during the breeding season; an owl nesting box on one tree had been lost. It was felt that the contractor should have employed an ecologist, and councillors felt that the whole process should be reviewed and discussed with the Playing Field Committee. This would be an item for the June agenda.

26.5.13.4 Brett River Festival 2027

Feedback from the meeting held by Hadleigh Environmental Action Team (HEAT) on 7 May was noted; the Layham Events Group (LEG) would discuss the project further at its next meeting.

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

None.

26.5.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 24 June 2026, in the Village Hall

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