LAYHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 9 September 2026 in the Village Hall

Present:	Gillie Cranfield (GC) Jane Cryer – Clerk (JC) Sue Keeble – Vice Chair (SK) Steve Laing – Chairman (SL) Sheila Roberts (SR)
In attendance:	John Ward, Babergh DC (JW) Bob Barbiaux (BB) - see 26.9.4 Parishioner
Apologies:	John Curran (JDC) Will Dunn (WD) Simon Dowling – Suffolk CC (SD)

26.9.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from JDC and WD.

26.9.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

GC expressed a non-pecuniary interest in item 26.9.11.

26.9.3 PUBLIC FORUM

SL had been asked by a resident to enquire about the reported £5m loss by Babergh relating to the Corks Lane development. JW said there was provision of £4.8m in the budget until sales were completed and he was hopeful that the council would break even. He pointed out that the site would have become derelict if it had been left, and no private developers had been interested; he would bring an update to the next meeting. SL had heard that someone from Babergh had said people did not need to use the food caddies; JW said this was incorrect information as the council was bound by government legislation.

26.9.4 CO-OPTION

It was proposed by SK, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously to co-opt Bob Barbiaux to fill the casual vacancy; an acceptance of office form was duly signed and Bob joined the meeting. JC would send him a Register of Members' Interests form to complete.

26.9.5 ADJOURNMENT TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

26.9.5.1 District Council

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. With regard to local government reorganisation, the legal instrument that had been issued for Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Hampshire had now been withdrawn. There was no timetable for the next steps, although it was hoped the situation would be addressed as soon as possible. There was due to be a mayoral election in 2027, but this was still to be confirmed. JW said the Local Plan would need to be updated to take into account changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. Neighbourhood Plans should not result in less development than outlined in the Local Plan, and must include site allocations; any surplus could not be carried forward. Councillors were pleased that the recent 'Unconventional Constable' exhibition using virtual reality had been successful.

26.9.5.2 County Council

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

SL thanked SD for his response to the queries raised at the last meeting – with regard to the new fire engines, he would be interested to know what would happen to the old ones. SK wondered why Hadleigh did not appear to be included in the support for market towns initiative. JC would email SD with these queries and would request that future reports did not include political comments.

28.9.6 NEW LAPTOP

It was proposed by SK, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously to purchase a refurbished laptop from Home Computer Services, for downloading data from the SIDs.

26.9.7 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by GC, seconded by SR and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 July 2026 should be accepted as an accurate record, and signed accordingly.

26.9.8 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

26.9.8.1 New defibrillator at the Marquis
GC would contact Steve O'Leary about a new defibrillator to replace the one currently located at the Marquis, which would be obsolete in a few months' time. SK noted that the first aid kit was missing.

26.9.8.2 Coordination of road closures
SK had received a response from SD, which had been circulated. Whilst coordination of closures was taken into account, utility companies were able to take any action they felt necessary without prior notice.

26.9.8.3 Replacement owl box for playing field
SL would approach the Mens' Shed.

26.9.9 FINANCIAL MATTERS

26.9.9.1 RFO's report
It was proposed by SL, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously that the finance report for 9.9.26 should be approved; payments of £839.40 were authorised. It was noted that the second tranche of the precept had been received.

26.9.9.2 Budget comparison
The budget comparison was noted. JC would contact SALC to book BB on a training course for new councillors.

26.9.9.3 Insurance renewal
It was proposed by SK, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously to renew the PC's annual insurance with Zurich Municipal.

26.9.9.4 Clerk's pay increase
The national pay scales for 2026-27 had been agreed. It was proposed by SK, seconded by BB and agreed unanimously to approve the increase in JC's salary, backdated to 1.4.26.

26.9.10 INTERNAL CONTROLS

It was proposed by SL, seconded by GC and agreed unanimously to approve the Internal Controls Statement for 2026-27.

26.9.11 HOUNDS

GC said that the last time the hounds had come through the village after 7am was on 24 June. They now left the kennels before 7am and did not return through the village. The Hunt was happy to compromise and use their 'best endeavours' to avoid conflict with parishioners, but the hounds were entitled to come through the village.

26.9.12 AUTUMN TIDY-UP

This would take place from 10am – 12 noon on Saturday 17 October, meeting at the Playing Field in Upper Layham and outside the Queen's Head in Lower Layham; John Cryer would lead the Lower Layham volunteers. SL said the trees at Blacksmith's Corner would be pruned, but not necessarily on that day. She would prepare a risk assessment; JC would put s reminder in the HCN and would send out a community email nearer the time.

26.9.13 CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

26.9.13.1 Anglian Water
Following the spate of water leaks over the summer, JC had asked Anglian Water to clarify the criteria for compensation. She had circulated their response on the community email.

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

None.

26.9.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.30pm on Wednesday 28 October 2026, in the Village Hall.

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