



DRAFT

LAXFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday 19 May 2025 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall

MINUTES

42 members of the public were present including Parish Council Chair, Rob Sutton, who chaired the proceedings.

The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting 2024 were agreed as accurate.

As in previous years, an annual parish meeting booklet had been produced containing all the reports from organisations and groups across the village. The booklet was distributed to all attendees. It will also be delivered to every household in the parish and is available on the Parish Council website, www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk. Additional copies are available in the entrance of the village hall.

Reports from the chair of the parish council, Rob Sutton and the parish clerk, Peter Lowe were summarised for the meeting. The clerk asked that residents come forward with projects or ideas on how 'Snook Bequest' funding might be used to support the older members of our community.

Cllrs Anders Linder (Mid Suffolk District Council) and Henry Lloyd (Suffolk County Council) also attended the meeting. Both councillors outlined the contents of their annual reports, and these are available on the website and in the APM booklet:

- Henry Lloyd mentioned the budget and workload pressure that SCC Highways were under to maintain our road/footpath network and fix potholes, which was particularly difficult in rural areas with small roads and high amounts of heavy vehicles. The financial situation is made worse for the County Council, through significant increases in the costs of Adult Social Care and SEN.
- Anders Linder mentioned that the Local Government Reorganisation consultation period had now started and details of how residents could get involved under "*Shaping Suffolk Together*", were available on the Parish Council Notice board and online at - www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr

Michael Knights (Fressingfield Scout Group), thanked the public and parish council for their support over the past 12 months. Residents also thanked Laxfield for raising over £3,000 for the poppy appeal and for funding the 2024 Christmas lunch.

Questions from the floor were requested and the following point was raised and discussed:

Works carried out on war monument junction

- A range of feedback on the junction works was provided, with some residents unhappy about the number/type of bollards used and other saying that they liked how it looked. Significantly more positive comments were also posted on social media, although some of these were from people who lived outside Laxfield.

- A resident asked what permissions and consents had been sought, as there were concern that the parish council had not complied with heritage and conservation area regulations when the junction works were carried out. RS explained that this was not the case, and all requirements had been checked and met when the works were carried out. This has also been confirmed by the MSDC planning team.
- A resident asked if professional advice had been taken on the type of bollards installed and whether other road junctions or roundabouts with monuments across the wider region, had bollards surrounding them. The clerk said that they would check this and report back to the parish council. It was also confirmed that the parish council had met with the SCC Highway Enforcement Manager to make sure bollards chosen were suitable for the junction and that they would match well with the monument.
- R Sutton said that the parish council was happy to continue to take feedback and encouraged residents to contact the clerk if they had any potential practical solutions.

Information and engagement

- Some residents said that they only knew about the junction works after it had been completed. R Sutton encouraged residents to attend future Parish Council meetings and to regularly check the agendas/minutes.
- A resident expressed concern that meeting minutes were often hard to digest and not easy to access. The clerk thanked everyone for this feedback and agreed to look at ways this could be addressed/improved going forward. One solution was to provide additional, but much more summarised snapshot information, about key projects/work planned for the next 3 months - as well as other projects in the pipeline over a 12 month period. Basically, a simple Laxfield business plan delivery table that is available online and could feature regularly in the monthly Laxfield Newsletter.

Connexin 12m Telegraph Poles

- A residents asked what the parish was doing about the proposed installation four 12m telegraph poles in different locations across Laxfield village. The clerk explained that meetings had already been held with Connexin to change the locations of some of the poles, but that planning permission seems to have been granted by MSDC, so there is very little the parish can do at this stage.
- Cllr Anders Linder mentioned that Connexin had been bought by a larger telecoms company called City Fibre and that they had now started to abandon using poles and have opted for underground cabling instead. Unfortunately, this only seems to be happening in the North East of the UK at present and the 12m pole method continues to be installed across the South East. Cllr Linder will speak to the MSDC planning team to check that all planning procedures have been adhered to in relation to the planned installations across Laxfield.

Meeting ended 9:10 pm