



Laxfield Parish Council Grounds Committee



11 November 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Guildhall Parish Room

MINUTES

Attendees: O. Hackett (Chair), S. Sutton, S Ellis, M. Payne, S. Chesworth, P Lowe (clerk)

1. Apologies and approval of absences

L. Sharman.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Frequency of committees

General consensus was to hold meetings every three months. However, in light of the pending village consultation in January 2026, and the need to start work on the Section 106 funded project ASAP - it was agreed that meetings would be held monthly on a temporary basis, with the next one in December.

4. Section 106 and review of MSDC site visit

The meeting took place on 27 October with Josh Holmes and Sloane Potter from the MSDC Community Infrastructure Grants Team. Laxfield PC have £44,672 of section 106 money available for funding leisure, recreation and open spaces related capital schemes, and any projects using this funding must be completed before July 2028. Whilst this money is dedicated to Laxfield, there is also other funding schemes available through an evaluated application process – including District CIL funds of up to £100,000. District CIL funds can only be used to make up 75% of a project's costs and must be match funded. It was agreed that a previous application submitted by Laxfield PC in 2023 to repurpose the Pavilion, would need to be replaced with new development scheme options, covering a wider remit of works.

5. Potential capital schemes

The wider list of capital schemes listed in appendix A was briefly discussed. It was agreed that there are a number of potential options to refurbish and/or extend the outside area of the pavilion, with benches and better refreshment facilities. However, the concern was that the building ideally needed to be rebuilt to provide a more integrated and multi-functional offer. There was also general consensus that any future work must be considered alongside the functionality of the Village Hall.

The following points were discussed:

- The Parish Council should examine options to consolidate the Village Hall and Pavilion into one multi-functional building on the planning fields site. This could provide wider functionality and offer a more modular and integrated outside space.
- Parking requirements in the village have changed considerably over the past 20 years. The availability of parking will be crucial going forward, given the wide range of meetings,

classes, events and sports that take place in Laxfield. This is also linked to the pending EV charging bays, which are already planned for installation near to the existing Pavilion.

- Laxfield has one of the largest playing fields in Suffolk, which is currently under-utilised. This superb outside space, supported by a good building has huge potential for providing a much better recreational offer. We therefore need to consider how it can be better utilised for outside recreational and healthy activities. Also, when events take place on the grounds, marquees need to be hired and erected, due to the lack of a functional building on the site - incurring unnecessary costs.
- The playing fields car park and access road is a priority for maintenance/renewal, as it is full of large holes and unsafe to drive along at night. The car park is heavily used and has the potential to become a village parking area for other events, and for the village hall. Any scheme would need to also address drainage and should include a new footpath with lighting and fencing (timber knee rail).

Actions:

- a) The playing field is owned by the Parochial church, so we need to check the **covenant** for any future use and development.
- b) Collect **information on the activities** that happen in the Village Hall and Pavilion, as well as other activities that have the potential to take place in the village, rather than travelling to other venues.
- c) Develop a vision/**masterplan** for the complete playing fields site, before any capital developments or renewals work is scheduled. This is crucial to verify where assets, paths and facilities should be situated. Incremental improvements may stifle potential, or lead to re-work.

6. Playing Fields

- Agreed to identify costings for weeding, dressing and partially resurfacing the main sports pitch.
- The proposal to create a designated dog free run / training area on the unused playing field was rejected, due to dog litter risk on an area used for recreation and sport.

7. Deferred items and next meeting

Items relating to the playground and cleaning contract were carried over to the next committee.

Meeting closed at 7:35 pm.

<p>Peter Lowe (Parish Clerk), 21 Talbot Road, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 8FP Tel: 07711 822503 Email: parishclerk@laxfield-pc.gov.uk Visit our website: www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk</p>
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