



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

LAXFIELD ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday 13 October 2025 at 7:00 pm in the Guildhall Parish Room

www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

Peter Lowe, Parish Clerk

OPEN FORUM

Three members of the public attended the meeting.

Reports were received from Cllr Linder, Cllr Lloyd and MSDC and these are available to view on the website. Cllr Linder confirmed that Local Authorities are supporting the 3 Unitaries approach, rather than a single Super-Council, for the pending Local Government Reorganisation, and they are now awaiting the government's response. It is still unclear when local elections will take place, but the Mayoral election is definitely happening in May 2026. The current phase of consultation now involves 'Community Governance', with Town and Parish Councils being asked to submit any requests by 27th October.

The cost of providing SEND in our region has increased significantly and in some cases, we are spending 54% more per child than the national average, which is having an impact on local authority budgets, alongside other social service costs. This is expected to get worse, with population forecasts for our region growing 33% by 2045.

Essex and Suffolk Water are about to start consultations on improvements to water supplies through two NSIPs (*National Strategic Infrastructure Projects*), covering water recycling, transfer and storage. This includes a new reservoir in North Suffolk.

MSDC have asked whether there could be potential community tensions within the parish, if asylum seekers were housed in Laxfield. Nothing has been formally proposed for the village or region as yet, and MSDC are just 'testing the water' beforehand. It was also confirmed that this new policy plans to move away from using hotels and is more about 'dispersed accommodation', which involves renting from private householders.

MINUTES

1. Attendees, apologies and approval of absences:

Attendees: C Baldry, P Bicheno, S Ellis, O Hackett, D Martindale, Z Rushmore, H Scorey, L Sharman, R Smith, R Sutton (Chair), S Sutton, A Linders, P Lowe (Clerk).

Cllr Henry Lloyd sent his apologies.

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Approval of minutes

25/10/01 The minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 9 September 2025 were agreed.

Proposed S. Sutton, seconded D. Martindale, AIF.

4. Planning

- a. The following decisions made by Mid Suffolk District Council were noted:

CONSENT GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS - DC/25/02846

Proposal: Discharge of Conditions 3 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures), 7 (Access Surface Material), 8 (Surface Water Discharge) and 10 (Electric Vehicle charging points)

Location: Aldridges Farm, Fressingfield Road, Laxfield, Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8EN

CONSENT GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS - DC/25/03896

Development proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed Erection, Extension or Alteration of a Building for Agricultural or Forestry use The Town and

Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 6.
Erection of detached agricultural store for machinery and plant storage.

Location: Hill Farm, Hill Farm Road, Laxfield, IP13 8HA.

CONSENT GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS - DC/25/03297

Development proposal: Application under S73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents), Condition 10 (Parking and Manoeuvring), Condition 11 (Cycle Storage) and Condition 12 (Provision of Refuse/Recycling Bins) of planning permission DC/22/04908 dated: 03/02/2023 - Erection of 3no. self-contained holiday lodges

Location: Land South West Of, Station Road, Laxfield, Suffolk

CONSENT GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS - DC/25/02646

Development proposal: Discharge of Conditions Application for Condition 5 (Porch), Condition 6 (Fenestration) and Condition 7 (Facing Materials).

Location: St Helens, High Street, Laxfield, Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8DU.

- b. The comments submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council regarding the following applications were noted:

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/04180

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - Weeping willow fell to ground level. Re-plant new 4m cherry in garden to replace amenity value.

Location: 1 Pump Lane Laxfield Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8FA.

This application was referred to the Laxfield tree warden and there were no objections

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/04190

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - large European lime to be crown raised by 1.5m-3m over the Suffolk house garden, lower limbs to also be target pruned. Small Eucalyptus to be reduced in height by 1-1.5m. Small Himalayan Birch to be removed to ground level to allow the larger more appropriately planted tree to flourish. Medium Hornbeam to be crown raised by 1-2m and crown reduced by 1-1.5m. Eucalyptus to be removed to ground level. Small weeping judus tree to be pruned. Large Walnut tree to be deadwood for safety.

Location: Suffolk House High Street Laxfield Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8DU.

This application was referred to the Laxfield tree warden and there were no objections.

- c. The following planning points were also discussed:

- i. *Land At Corner Farm (Banyards Green) development:* The Parish Council expressed thanks to Steven Jordan for installing hedgehog grates in fences along the boundary of the development.
- ii. *Royal Oak:* A resident raised an issue regarding whether planning permission was needed for the gazebos and seating outside the front of the premises (adjacent to Church Plain), which were originally erected during the Covid pandemic to support business continuity through social distancing. The Parish Council will contact the MSDC Planning to verify the situation.

5. New Councillor

25/10/05 The Council welcomed Zoe Rushmore as the Parish's 11th Councillor, after the *Declaration of Acceptance of Office* and *Register of Interest* was signed.

6. Finance

- a. 25/10/02 BACs payments, direct debits and receipts as listed in Register of Payments for September 2025 were agreed. *Proposed S Ellis, seconded H. Scorey, AIF.*
- b. 25/10/03 Bank reconciliations for July and September 2025 were agreed. *Proposed P. Bicheno, seconded S. Ellis, AIF.*
- c. 25/10/04 Performance versus budget and cumulative monthly spend up to September 2025 were reviewed. Currently on track with the operational and funding spend at just over £30,000, once CIL spend has been deducted. VAT returns will also reduce this further. Spend to date currently excludes the first 6 months of playing fields maintenance, which will be billed in October. All 2025/26 precept payments have now been received.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106

- a. 25/10/06 The Parish Council has spent £31,987 on CIL related schemes, such as the War Memorial and New Cemetery improvements. However, this will reduce to £24,325 once £4587 of VAT is reclaimed. The Parish Council's CIL funds balance currently stands at £95,482. A further £44,672 of Section 106 money is available to fund open spaces, sports and recreation type schemes - which was ringfenced from the Cullingford Close Beauly Homes development infrastructure levy contribution. Any project/s using this funding must be completed before 2028, so a meeting has been arranged with the MSDC Infrastructure Team to look at possible improvements to the Pavilion and the playing fields car park/access road.

8. Village pond safety/risk assessment and river pollution

- a. 25/10/07 *Village Pond*: Cost of Open Water Risk Assessment quote from RLSS is £1,222. Final report will cover legal compliance, risk assessment; hazard identification and control measures, signage, rescue equipment, access control, maintenance and specific considerations on fishing, ecology and silt dredging. Work will be completed in autumn and will feed into a village consultation, planned for 2026. Clerk to also benchmark other Parish Councils with similar ponds, to ask about how they undertake safety certification.
- b. *River pollution*: Colin Baldry and Helen Lowe are now Laxfield's designated pollution testers, but additional volunteers are required, as testing needs to be done in pairs for safety. Deben Climate Centre have agreed to come to Laxfield to train all volunteer testers on our section of River Blyth. The Four Rivers Project (of which the Blyth is one), are providing equipment and consumables necessary to monitor the river. The Parish Council has been asked to contribute something towards the costs. Green Spaces Working Group and the Wildlife Group have been approached for potential volunteers.

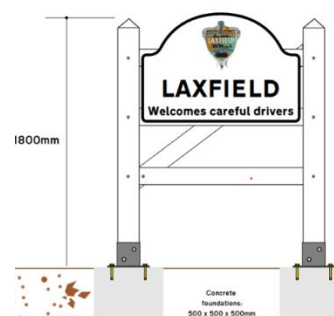
Village consultation on pollution and planned village pond improvements/use will take place in second half of January 2026. Clerk to book Village Hall ASAP.

9. Roads, Footpaths, Infrastructure, Green Areas

- a. 25/10/08 Action points from the *Green Space Working Group* meeting held on 30 September 2025, were noted with no comments. The following points were also discussed:
 - i. *Churchyard hedge improvement plan*: A survey of hedge around Church, bordering Church Villas and Church Walk has been completed. A five-year rolling plan of improvement has developed to support the detailed survey, and these documents are available on the Parish Council website and notice board.
 - ii. *Footpath 13 and Bickers Hill footpath maintenance*: SCC Public Rights of Way Maintenance team have been notified that footpath 13 requires overhanging branches to be cut back. Clerk to follow up on this via the reporting portal and also purchase logs to secure the edge of the footpath, which is falling away. The footpath area near top of Bickers Hill also requires maintenance and cutback, however an audit of the flora in this area should be carried out beforehand. Clerk to organise.
 - iii. *Wildlife monitoring and recording*: Clerk to place advert in the Parish Newsletter and on Parish Council website, to advertise apps that residents can use to record wildlife, including insects. These apps have a link that allows the details to be recorded and e-mailed to the Laxfield Wildlife Group.
 - iv. *Dog exercise area*: A number of residents have asked whether a designated area can be allocated on the playing fields to exercise and/or train dogs. This would be similar to the one in Fressingfield, called "Run Free". Councillors did not want to progress this and asked that residents be notified of facilities in neighbouring villages. Alternative sites in Laxfield may be investigated, including Jubilee Meadow and an area near the Kablang campsite.

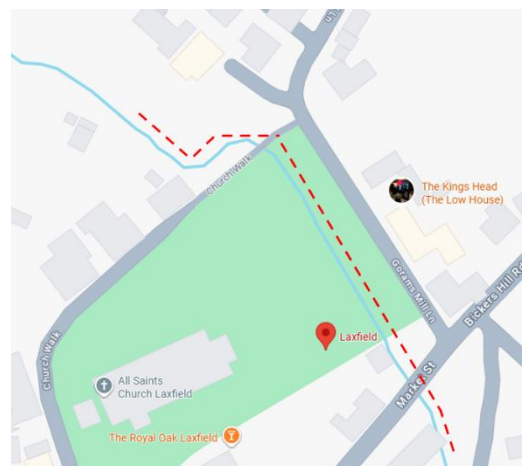
- b. 25/10/09 Action points from the *Highways Working Group* meeting held on 2 October 2025, were noted with no comments. The following points were also discussed:

- i. *Village Gateway Signs*: The Council approved the purchase of two village gateway signs, which will be installed on Station Road and Vicarage Road. The purchase costs will be £2946, excluding installation. It was agreed that the gateways would include the village crest, but would not have speed limit circles. *Proposed C. Baldry, seconded S. Sutton.*
- ii. *Sign Cleaning*: Many road signs and fingerposts around the parish are now very dirty and the Parish Council have been notified by SCC Highways that these won't be cleaned due to budget pressures. Clerk to get 3 quotes



from local window cleaners to carry out an annual clean and these will be reviewed by the Highways Working Group.

- iii. *Flooding mitigation on Gorams Mills Lane:* The stretch of Laxfield's Blyth river at the bottom of the Churchyard that runs along Gorams Mill lane and across Market Street, is now very overgrown and blocked. This is a flooding hotspot and needs to be properly assessed for potential cutback and plant/silt removal. Agreed to do an assessment prior to carrying out remedial work to improve the flow of our river, and prevent/mitigate future flooding.
- iv. *Connecting path from Billingford Close to Mill Close:* Clerk to provide MSDC Planning Team with a *Cost Benefit Analysis* that shows case for acquiring a 5 ft section of the garden that is blocking the completion of works that would link up the path.



10. Correspondence and other issues

- a. 25/10/11 *Laxfield 800:* David Leng provided documents showing an outline of the different activities planned for the anniversary day and where they would take place. Further work on developing a budget was also provided. An outline flyer will be produced next, that can be used to secure sponsorship and additional funding, as well as for advertising the event in the coming months.
- b. 25/10/12 *New defibrillator:* Laxfield's second defibrillator has now been installed on the Church Plain and is operational. A temporary power supply is coming from the Royal Oak and further work needs to be done to link the defib to the existing street electricity supply. The telephone box outside the Co-op is still the preferred place for this defibrillator over the long term. Clerk to purchase 2 additional chest connectors kits.
- c. 25/10/13 *Driving hazards on entrances to Jubilee Close and Home Meadow:* A number of residents have raised issues with vehicles parking on the road at the entrance of Jubilee Close. Clerk to speak to contractors currently working on bungalow at entrance to the close, to ask if they could move their vans to less congested areas on the High Street. Clerk to also contact SCC Highways about removal or maintenance of a hedge on entrance to Home Meadow, which is protruding 2 ft into the road.
- d. 25/10/14 *Dog Litter bins:* Three new bins have been installed in the Parish. Two are on the Gorams Mill Lane route (30lt and 60lt) and the third is at the side of the bridge in the New Cemetery. We now have confirmation from MSDC that these bins have been added to their collection route, so no further overflows should occur.
- e. 25/10/15 *FOALS funding for Disco and Easter events:* Clerk to send out requests to community group about applying for funding this year's scrap metal proceeds.
- f. 25/10/16 *Remembrance Day:* Received confirmation from SCC Highways that the Special Events application has been approved and the Legal Order for the temporary road closures has been received. This year the Church will be leading the event management and Cllr Debbie Martindale will be laying the wreath on behalf of Laxfield parish. Carlton Sands has managed to secure a trumpeter to play the Last Post.
- g. 25/10/17 *Litter Pick on 8 November:* Still looking for more volunteers, so need to keep advert in next Newsletter. R Sutton and Sally Clarke will be away, so Parish Clerk to help organise and look at volunteers to help with refreshments.

11. Date of next meeting

- a. The date of the next meeting is **Monday 10 November 2025 at 7:00 pm** in the **PARISH ROOM**.

Meeting finished at 8:30 pm

If you would like to attend a parish council meeting, please come along. Alternatively, if you would like to raise a matter of concern, please do not hesitate to contact the parish clerk or a member of the council.

Peter Lowe (Parish Clerk), 21 Talbot Road, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8FP

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