



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

LAXFIELD ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday 9 February 2026 at 7:00 pm in the Guildhall Parish Room

www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

Peter Lowe, Parish Clerk

OPEN FORUM

Six 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 Parish Council website.

- The MSDC Housing Revenue Account 30-year business plan is due to be reviewed, including 'rent convergence', which allows rental increasing in social housing that is presently below 'formula rent'.
- MSDC are lobbying the government for stronger regulation for sewage sludge spreading on arable fields and DEFRA are carrying out a review aimed at ending the present practices of mixing effluent sludge from chemical companies with sewage sludge from water companies.
- SCC has set out an £850 million plan aimed at safeguard frontline services and supporting the most vulnerable. This involves making savings and efficiencies of £46.5m. Their capital programme has also been shortened from four to three years, ahead of the local government reorganisation in 2028, but it will continue to fund essential projects like school expansions, bus service improvements and cycling/walking infrastructure.
- SCC have introduced a new 20mph speed limit policy for residential and high-pedestrian areas across mid-Suffolk. Under the new scheme, Parish councils, will be invited to come forward with proposals that are supported by their local county councillor and backed by local engagement. Application for 20mph zones can be submitted if an area has regularly recorded average traffic speeds are 28mph or under.
- Further information on how SCC is appealing against the Department for Transport's red rating for highways maintenance and information on how households can be helped to save money, eat well and reduce food waste - can be found at the following link: <https://www.henrylloyd.co.uk/p/february-county-report-2026>

A number of Laxfield residents attended to express their concerns about two new pig rearing sheds for up to 2000 animals, which is being built at Manor Farm on Badingham Road. Residents living near to the development, including households down Dennington Road, are concerned about the potential noise and smell it will produce. MSDC Planning has provided information on the legalities and protocol regarding this application, including why it did not require full planning consent. There are still significant concerns on a number of environmental/highways issues, including where the waste from the sheds will go, whether a biodigester will be used and large vehicle traffic on the narrow lane that leads to the farm. The Clerk will contact Manor Farm to ask for further information and to set up a meeting with the local residents

Kevin Dunkley also provided an updated on the Seniors Christmas Lunch – see item 12a below.

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, Anders Linders (MSDC), P Lowe (Clerk).

Cllr Henry Lloyd (SCC) sent his apologies.

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Approval of minutes

26/02/01 The minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 12 January 2026 were agreed.

Proposed P. Bicheno, seconded R. Sutton, AIF.

4. Planning

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

Consent Granted - DC/25/05211

Proposal: Notification of works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order T1/438 - Oak - Target prune over extended limbs to bring back into a natural shape, clean up areas of 'bad tree surgery', remove any deadwood. *Location:* 9 Felgate Close, Laxfield, Eye, Suffolk IP13 8FF

Consent granted - DC/25/05454

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1- Prunus- crown reduce by 1m. *Location:* 2 Old School, Church Walk, Laxfield, Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8DL

Consent Granted - DC/25/05169

Proposal: Householder application for erection of a New Woven Willow Fence. *Location:* Blyth House, Bickers Hill Road, Laxfield, Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8EZ.

Consent Granted - DC/26/00067

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Prunus – to reduce the crown by approx 2 - 3 metres. *Location:* 2 Old School, Church Walk, Laxfield, Woodbridge IP13 8DL.

- b. The following planning point was also discussed:

- i. *Bickers Hill Housing development:* At the 20 January planning committee, Beauly Homes presented revised development plans, following previously highlighted concerns relating to drainage/surface water run off; sewage management; ecology of the path/surrounding hedges; and site access safety. A new site layout proposing building 15 Homes (including 5 social and affordable homes) was presented, including further details of proposed drainage/sewage plans. Beauly Homes indicated that they would only go to full application at this stage, if the development received the backing of the Parish Council. They also said that they would be willing to carry out village consultation on the development.

5. Finance

- a. 26/02/02 BACs payments, direct debits and receipts as listed in Register of Payments for January 2026 were agreed. *Proposed O Hackett, seconded S Sutton, AIF.*
- b. 26/02/03 Bank reconciliations for January 2026 were agreed. *Proposed D Martindale, seconded P Bicheno, AIF.*
- c. 26/02/04 Performance versus budget and cumulative monthly spend up to January 2026 were reviewed. Total spend after 10 months is £92,021, with £68,338 in receipts (including both precept instalments).

Based on forecast spend for the last 2 months of 2025/26, spending will still be just within budget, after adjustments for CIL related spending and a pending VAT reclaim. Additional CIL spend still to be funded in 2025/26 includes:

- Removal of Horse Chestnut Tree in Churchyard
- Village Heritage/Trail Sign
- Village gateway signs x 2
- Safety and infrastructure renewal works for the village pond (may be incurred after March).

6. Budget setting for 2026/27

- a. 26/02/05 At an Extraordinary Finance Committee on 26 January, the final 2026/27 budget was approved and a Precept application for £58,000 was submitted to MSDC. In addition to proposed changes to the way the budget will be monitored, which was discussed at the January Full Council meeting - further actions were also agreed:
- All maintenance activity and spend needs to be reviewed and controlled better. In some cases standardised specifications, activities and annual costs will need to be developed.
 - Future charity/voluntary organisation donations can no longer be funded from the Parish Council operational budget. Only annual fundraising or grants should be used to fund this going forward (i.e. Scrap Metal Collection, Good Neighbour Scheme, Localities Grant, etc).
 - Need to review future electricity contracts due to significantly increased costs for street lighting energy.
 - Meeting to be held with Village Hall representative to discuss the Public Works Loan and options for moving Parish Full Council meetings from the Guildhall to the Village Hall.

7. Annual Risk Assessment

- a. 26/02/06 This year, a comprehensive review of the Parish Council’s budget management and planning was undertaken. This was reflected in this year’s annual financial risk assessment (for period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027) and an updated Financial Regulations Policy. Councillors to review these documents, prior to approval at the 9 March meeting.

8. Annual Policies Review

26/02/07 Councillors were sent 13 Parish Council *policies* and *procedures* to review, prior to final approval at the 9 March meeting. This includes a new Safeguarding Policy for Laxfield Parish Council, which is aligned with the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. A lead Councillor has been requested.

Complaints and Grievance Procedure	Internal Controls
Data Protection Policy	Laxfield PC Standing Orders
Document and Data Retention Policy	Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct
Equality Policy	Open Media Policy
FOI Requests Policy	Laxfield Parish Council Publication Scheme
Health and Safety Policy	Training and Development Policy
Safeguarding Policy *	

* *New policy which the Parish Council will be adopting for the first time.*

9. Village Hall improvements

- a. 26/02/08 The Parish Council (as Trustees) approved £11,042 of capital spend to carry out internal redecorations and to upgrade the stage lights / hall sound system. Three market quotes were gathered. *Proposed C. Baldry, seconded R. Sutton*

£7,136.72	Complete preparation and decoration of interior of village hall. All walls, ceilings, trims, windows, doors and woodwork to be fully prepped including dustless sanding, ceiling and walls to have 2no coats and trims, windows, doors and woodwork to have 1no undercoat and 1no top coat.
£3,904.80	Upgrading of stage lights and hall sound system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace 8 x stage lights that are ageing and noisy • Tidy up cabling in the hall and provide two central patch points (by the stage and at rear of the hall) to operate hall lights, sound and projector without trailing wires
£11,041.52	Total includes VAT. Spend excluding VAT will be approx. £9200

10. Roads, Footpaths, Infrastructure, Green Areas

- a. 26/02/10 *Church Walk bridge repair* - SCC Highways have confirmed that the repair of the footbridge will be funded from the 2026/27 structure's maintenance budget. The scheme is currently with contractors for planning/costing and works will include arch stabilisation, masonry work and parapet repair.
- b. 26/02/11 *Church Walk/Villas Hedge Planting* - The Parish Council’s application for hedge whips and trees has been approved and these will be supplied in the coming weeks. Hedge plants will be placed in the recently maintained gaps around the churchyard and new Black Poplar and Lime trees will be planted in the lower end of the churchyard.
- c. 26/02/11 Consultation event - next steps for Village Pond: There was overwhelming support to ban fishing and make improvements that establish the pond as a wildlife venue. Next steps include:
 - Acting on the RLSS recommendations, to purchase a new Lifebuoy with casing, and to fix the rotted decks on the platform.
 - Fish need to be temporarily relocated and the build-up of silt needs to be removed. Clerk to speak to local farmers, prior to getting market quotes. Native fish need to be introduced to ensure the right species mix.
 - Carrying out testing on the silt and water, before undertaking maintenance work and removing weed. Need to find an oxygenation solution for the pond (i.e. solar operated pumps).

S Ellis to contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Clerk to develop a critical path of actions, prior to review at the 9 March meeting.

- d. 26/02/12 *Consultation event - next steps for Playing Fields & Pavilion*: Received wide ranging feedback on the three improvement schemes proposed at the event. There was some support for resurfacing the car park and access road, but this should not be completed until a masterplan has been done, to check where it should be located in light of future developments. Other:
- Need to consider more activities for young people – in particular those aged between 10-17 years old. This includes a skate park (or designated tarmac area).
 - Support for upgrading the Pavilion to allow additional functionality that could compliment patronage for other recreational activities. This includes extending the front covered area and possibly introducing better facilities for a self-run café.

Further meetings have already taken place to start acting on the feedback, given the looming deadline to submit a CIL project scheme to MSDC that can attract District CIL match funding. These will look at a masterplan for the whole 8-acre site and carrying out further consultation with young residents in Laxfield.

- e. 26/02/14 *New speed Indicator Device (SID)* - Quotes for a new SID on Framlingham Road (near the Primary School) have been sent to the SCC Community Liaison Engineer to confirm specification for funding. Cllr Henry Lloyd has agreed to provide £3000 in total and the Laxfield Highways Working Group are investigating the costs of a Direction Finger Post sign replacement for the Banyard's Green junction, with the remaining money.

Item	Cost (excl VAT)
Message Maker SID	£2395.00
Additional battery	£97.85
Delivery	£140.00
Total	£2632.85

11. Correspondence and other issues

- a. 26/02/15 *Seniors Xmas Lunch 2025* – The final spend for the lunch event was £886 and this was approved by Councillors, pending a final receipt for the table gifts.
- b. 26/02/16 *Laxfield 800 anniversary update*: The artwork for anniversary banners, posters and leaflets has been completed by Chris Saddler free of charge. These will be printed and used from early spring to ensure communication and advertising well before the event. Total funds committed so far is £3525, including sponsorship donations, Heveningham Hall grant, and MSDC Localities funding of £500. There is still a potential for an additional £750 of funding, which would allow for further activities and advertising material. Activities planned for the weekend event include: Bell Ringing, Community Market, Station 366, Museum display/talks, Afternoon teas, East Anglia Music Group, 800 Acts of Kindness, Maypole, Rumburgh Dance Group, Longshoremen Shanty Singers, Band in Low House and children's games/school artwork display.
- c. 26/02/17 *Spring Litter Pick*: Agreed Saturday 28th March as a new date for the event. The Royal Oak have agreed to prepare bacon sandwiches and provide free tea and coffee. Clerk to ensure bacon and breadcakes are provided. This year, the event coincides with 'Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean'.

www.keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean

12. Date of next meeting

- a. The date of the next meeting is **Monday 9 March 2026 at 7:00 pm** in the **PARISH ROOM**.

Meeting finished at 8:40 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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