



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

LAXFIELD ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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

www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

Peter Lowe, Parish Clerk

OPEN FORUM

One member of the public attended the meeting to ask about whether the final safety audit had been carried out by MSDC planning and the developer. If so, is anything being done regarding the footpath onto the corner of Framlingham Road with regard to the slope and safety barriers?

Reports were previously received from Cllr Linder, Cllr Lloyd and MSDC and these are available to view on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Linder confirmed that the May local elections will definitely take place and that the District Council preparations are well on track. New safety rules for litter pickers along roads are being introduced, as a result of a fatal accident on a regional A-Roads. The District Council have asked that progress on the Norwich to Tilbury pylons scheme be paused and reassessed, to allow further investigation work on underground and off shore alternatives. Current proposals on Council tax include a 2.99% increase for 2026/27. Parish Councils could be offered planning support and more *Community Infrastructure Levy* funding, if more land could be made available for development.

SCC is inviting applications from experienced local business people to join the Suffolk Business Board, which was established in 2024 to help drive economic growth across the county. The board meets 6 times a year to help shape economic strategy and priorities for Suffolk, oversee delivery of funded programmes such as business support and skills training, and works closely with partners and national economic bodies. Further information from SCC, including the trial for the ADASTRA driverless shuttle, can be found at the following link: <https://www.henrylloyd.co.uk/p/march-county-report-26>

MINUTES

1. Attendees, apologies and approval of absences:

Attendees: C Baldry, P Bicheno, D Martindale, H Scorey, L Sharman, R Smith, R Sutton (Chair), Anders Linders (MSDC), P Lowe (Clerk).

Cllrs Ollie Hackett, Zoe Rushmore, Sally Sutton, Sarah Ellis and Cllr Henry Lloyd (SCC) sent their apologies.

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Approval of minutes

26/03/01 The minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 9 February 2026 were agreed.

Proposed D. Martindale, seconded C. Baldry, AIF.

4. Planning

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

Consent Granted - DC/26/00282: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - T1- Dead Sycamore- *Acer pseudoplatanus*- Remove to a 2-3m habitat pole to match adjacent monolith. Tree has sooty bark disease and is dead with basal rot hangers are present in tree. T2- Crab Apple- *Malus sylvestris*- Reduce away from house by approximately 2m to create 3m of clearance. T3 - Yew-*Taxus baccata*- Reduce over extended branches away from the corner of the house by 2m. T4 - Yew-*Taxus baccata*- Reduce branches away from house by approximately 2m and crown raise drooping branches over driveway by approximately 2m.
Location: 2 Pump Lane, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8FA.

Consent Granted - DC/26/00323: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - T1- Conifer - Remove to ground level due to the tree getting too big for the space. T2- Apple- Hard prune by 1-1.5m to encourage new healthy growth. *Location:* 3 Church Walk, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8DL.

a. Note the following planning decision under consideration by Mid Suffolk District Council:

Planning application - DC/26/00625: Application of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Apple Crown reduce by 0.5m-1.0m and deadwood. T2, T3- Lilac- Target prune and raise where needed to bring into shape. *Location:* Pansy Cottage, Gorams Mill Lane, Laxfield, Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 8DN.

b. The following planning points were also discussed:

- i. *Bickers Hill Housing development:* The planning committee do not feel they can support the proposed development, based on concerns about the safety of vehicle and pedestrian access to and from the site, and the lack of a safe route to the village centre. They had concerns about sewage capacity in the village and surface water drainage from the site, given its proximity to a high-risk flood area at the bottom of Bickers Hill. Residential housing on the site would also connect Banyards Green to the village, and the area would eventually be lost as an historic hamlet.
- ii. *Pig Farm off Badingham Road:* The Parish Council has been in contact with the developer to discuss concerns raised about the proposed rearing hangar, which will house up to 2000 pigs. The developer does not want to hold a meeting with neighbouring residents, but they are considering talking to a representative to discuss more details about the farm set up and operation. A number of residents still have significant concerns about the slurry pit, how pig waste will be captured and the impact of large articulated lorries on the small road leading to and from the farm.

5. Finance

- a. 26/03/02 BACs payments, direct debits and receipts as listed in Register of Payments for February 2026 were agreed. *Proposed P. Bicheno, seconded D. Martindale, AIF.*
- b. 26/03/03 Bank reconciliations for February 2026 were agreed. *Proposed L. Sharman, seconded P. Bicheno, AIF.*
- c. 26/03/04 Performance versus budget and cumulative monthly spend up to February 2026 were reviewed. Total spend after 11 months is £96,771, with £71,531 in receipts (including both precept instalments). Approx 36% (£34,594) of the current spend will be allocated to CIL, which leaves an operational spend to date of £62,177.

6. PIIP and Community Infrastructure Levy

26/03/05 Cllrs Ellis and Scorey carried out a review of the Parish Infrastructure Improvement Plan (PIIP), to remove completed projects and update others where circumstances have changed (*i.e. following risk assessments, linked funding or where there is an associated delivery deadline*). A further 5 projects were removed by councillors, and this has reduced the final PIIP list down to 27. The next step will be to:

- prioritise which capital works that should be delivered in 2026/27;
- develop cost estimates and identify possible external match funding;
- allocate the projects to the relevant working group or committee.

7. Annual Risk Assessment and Policies Review

26/03/06 The annual risk assessment for 2026/27 and the following 11 updated policies, previously sent to Councillors in early February, were approved and adopted. *Proposed P. Bicheno, seconded H. Scorey.*

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 for 2026/27

8. Internal and External Audit for 2025/26

26/03/07 Full Council gave approval for the clerk to book SALC for the annual internal audit process and P. F. K. Littlejohn to carry out the external audit. The audit process will take place in April.

Proposed R. Sutton, seconded D. Martindale.

9. Meeting with Village Hall committee on 11 Feb 26

- a. The Parish council had a meeting with the Village Hall management committee to review the existing loan that is paid by the Parish Council. The loan was to pay for the provision of the village hall. The Village Hall management committee will be holding a meeting on the 16th March to see what, if anything, they can do to lighten the burden. The Parish Council is looking at its current use of the Guildhall for meetings as it does not have any facilities nor access for those with restricted mobility. However, any change in venue must be at zero extra cost to the Parish. The Village Hall Committee is meeting on the 16th March and will discuss options for supporting the parish council going forward.

10. Grounds committee update

26/03/10 This item was deferred to the April Full Council meeting.

11. Roads, Footpaths, Infrastructure, Green Areas

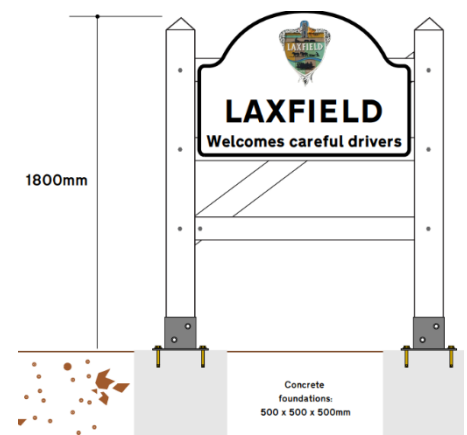
- a. 26/03/11 *River pollution* - Under the Four Rivers Project, run by the Deben Climate Centre, there are now 18 water quality testing volunteers across our region. Five of these are from Laxfield, who will be testing the river Blyth section that runs from Laxfield to Ubbeston. The Parish Council agreed to pay the £45 booking fee for Laxfield Village Hall, which is being used for the trial of water quality testing equipment on 21 March. All training has been endorsed by the Environment Agency. *Proposed C. Baldry, seconded R. Sutton.*

- b. 26/03/12 *Village Gateway and Historic Trail signs* - Now received final quote from Glasdon UK for 2 gateway signs, which will be installed on Vicarage Road and Station Road. Steve Jordan has kindly agreed to carry out the installation free of charge. The digital imaging of the village shield is still an issue, due to existing photos of the sign showing up the dirt and mould. Clerk to clean sign and then take new pictures ASAP. Actual wording for the gateway sign will be decided by the Highways Working Group:

- "LAXFIELD Welcomes Careful Drivers"
- "LAXFIELD Please Drive Carefully"

Further work is required to complete the new *Historic Laxfield sign*, which will replace the current *Village Trail sign* situated at the entrance to the Churchyard. The imagery and pictures on the new sign will be much larger and the overall theme will be a substantial change from the old sign. A full design concept is now required, prior to developing the final photos/annotations. A photographer has already taken photos, but many were taken in winter and these may need retaking. The siting of the sign also needs reconsidering, as the current position is not owned by the Parish Council and is prone to collecting dirt and bird droppings. A review will take place to determine the best location, item to remain on the agenda.

- c. 26/03/13 *Parish sign cleaning* - This work should ideally be done by SCC Highways, but under the current SCC budget pressures, it is not currently deemed to be a priority for work allocation or funding contributions. The clerk has approached 3 window cleaning companies, who would be willing to provide quotes to do the work, with some also offering to carry out a condition survey on all signs at the same time. Spring is the optimum time to carry out this work, so a specification will be developed and sent to contractors. The clerk will bring the quotes back to Full Council for consideration.



12. Correspondence and other issues

- a. 26/03/14 *Housing Needs Survey 2026* - Laxfield Community Land Trust (LCLT) has partnered with the Community Action Suffolk (CAS) to conduct a Housing Needs Survey for Laxfield, as the last one was completed in 2021 and is now out of date. Two drop-in sessions will take place at Laxfield Village Hall:
 - Friday 10 April (12:00pm to 3:00pm)
 - Saturday 11 April (10:00am to 1:00pm)

The purpose of the drop-in sessions is to answer any questions or queries about the HNS and to assist residents with IT access to complete the survey online. There will also be representatives of CAS (Community Action Suffolk) and Hastoe Housing Association present and confidentiality will be observed at all times. The deadline for survey completion is 1st May 2026.

- b. 26/03/15 *Mill Road verges* – There have been several complaints from residents about the state of verges along some parts of Mill Road, with bin bags left out, parking on verges and other structures left out permanently. Many of these are unsightly and have become a highways compliance problem. SCC is to be contacted to following up on the highways issues.
- c. 26/03/16 *Laxfield 800 anniversary* – No new update since last month, but progressing well and the event has already secured adequate funding.
- d. 26/03/17 *Seniors Lunch* – Final receipt is still outstanding and will need to be received before the end of the financial year, the clerk is to pursue as a matter of urgency
- e. 26/03/18 *Spring Litter Pick* – Confirmation that the event will take place on 28 March. Parish Council to provide baps/bacon, Royal Oak will do cooking and provide teas/coffees. This year, the event coincides with ‘Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean’ www.keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean

13. Date of next meeting

- a. The date of the next meeting is **Monday 13 April 2026 at 7:00 pm** in the **PARISH ROOM**.

Meeting finished at 8:55 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.

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