

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday 8 June 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, with the following point raised:

- Laxfield Parish Council is asked to facilitate the hosting of a *National Emergency Briefing* film about the climate and nature crisis the world is facing. This would involve showing a 40 min film, followed by open discussion on how the climate crisis impacts farmers, food supply chains and health - and what actions local communities can take to help mitigate the effects. This would be an a-political event and is not supported by a particular party. Clerk to contact the Village Hall and ask about a potential date for the event and whether the event could be hosted free, given the subject matter.

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

- MSDC have started consultation on the scoping preparation of a new Joint Local Plan to shape the future of the districts and help our area become sustainable, thriving places to live, work and visit. The plan will also guide decisions on housing, jobs, infrastructure, town centres, the environment, transport and community facilities. Consultation will last 8 weeks (5 June to 31 July 2026) and local residents and businesses are encouraged to participate: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/scoping/
- The name of the Unitary Council Laxfield will belong to is 'East and Central Suffolk' and all existing Councils will form 'Voluntary Joint Committees' to help prepare and facilitate the transitional period.
- A number of grants have been included in the recent 'Rural Funding Digest':
 - *Fisheries and Seafood Scheme* - includes funding for cleaning up rivers, ponds and lakes, to support nature recovery. Grants provide targeted assistance to prevent, mitigate, and irradiate aquatic pollution.
 - *Heritage Revival Fund* – created to help communities rescue and repurpose neglected historic buildings. It will do this by supporting community organisations to take ownership of, adapt and reuse the local heritage assets that matter to them, transforming them into thriving spaces that meet their needs.
 - NFU Mutual Charitable Trust grants - providing funding to any initiatives that can have a significant impact on rural communities, in particular the education of young people and relief of poverty.
- *Energy Sector Training* - West Suffolk College are launching the second phase of their Energy Readiness Programme to support training and employment for major developments, including Sizewell C, renewable energy, and the emergence of new clean energy technologies. The programme aims to help local people gain the skills needed for well-paid careers and to take advantage of the new opportunities emerging across the energy industry.
- SCC's REACT street cleaning taskforce has been in place for a year and now includes a specialist team to tackle fly tipping across Mid Suffolk. Incidents can be reported through the portal: www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/report-fly-tipping
- SCC may decide to remove the current climate emergency declaration and overhaul environmental spending at a Full Council meeting on 16 July. However, direct funding from the government for initiatives like the Cosy Homes Scheme, air source heat pump installation, solar panels and EV car charging grants should still be available for residents and local businesses.

Main meeting started at 7:19pm

MINUTES

1. Attendees, apologies and approval of absences:

Attendees: P Bicheno, D Martindale, Z Rushmore, H Scorey, L Sharman, R Smith, R Sutton (Chair), S Sutton, Anders Linders (MSDC), Sally Mittuch (SCC), P Lowe (Clerk).

Apologies were sent by S Ellis, O Hackett, C Baldry and these were approved.

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Approval of minutes

26/06/01 The minutes from Parish Council meeting held on 9 March 2026 were agreed. It was noted that Pen Bicheno has agreed to become a member of the Planning Committee.

Proposed R. Smith, seconded S. Sutton, AIF.

4. Planning

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

Planning permission granted - DC/26/01200

Proposal: Householder Planning Application - Erection of rear extension; Demolition of existing conservatory and part of the existing garden wall. *Location:* 20 Noyes Avenue, Laxfield, IP13 8EB.

Planning permission granted - DC/26/01107

Proposal: Householder application for erection of a single storey side extension. *Location:* Meadow Barn, Gorams Mill Lane, Laxfield, IP13 8DN.

No Objections - DC/26/01663

Proposal: Notification of works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Reduce crown of Silver Birch (T1) by 1.5m. *Location:* White Leaf Cottage, Market Square, Bickers Hill Road, Laxfield, IP13 8DP.

No Objections - DC/26/01665

Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Atlas Cedar (T1). *Location:* 10 Jubilee Close, Laxfield, IP13 8DQ.

Further information required for condition 4 - DC/25/01870

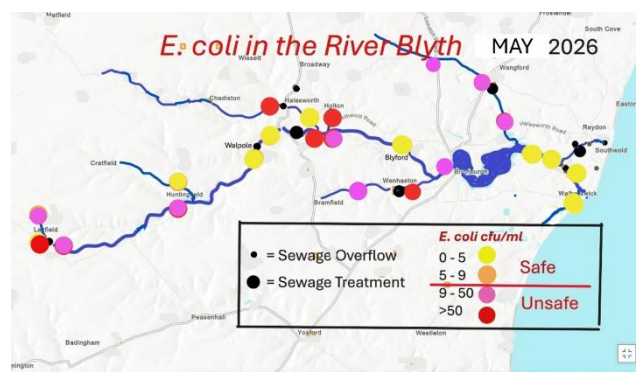
Proposal: Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/25/01870 - Conditions 3 (Noise Assessment), 4 (Post Installation Validation Report), 5 (Construction Management Plan) and 8 (External Lighting). *Location:* Laxfield Pre School Group, Framlingham Road, Laxfield.

5. Finance

- a. 26/06/02 BACs payments, direct debits and receipts as listed in Register of Payments for May 2026 were agreed. *Proposed S. Sutton, seconded Z. Rushmore, AIF.*
- b. 26/06/03 Bank reconciliations for May 2026 were agreed. *Proposed L. Sharman, seconded S. Sutton, AIF.*
- c. 26/06/04 Performance vs budget forecast based on 2 months spend and income was reviewed. Operational spend stands at £6,562 (10% of the annual budget), and there were additional receipts of £4,573 in May, which included a £2,436 refund from Npower for overpayment of streetlighting electricity in 2025-26. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spend so far this year is at £4,396, representing the costs of two village gateway signs, new SID batteries and a replacement lifebuoy unit for the village pond.

6. River Blyth pollution

- a. 26/06/05 The data received in May compared to April demonstrates that pollution levels are definitely getting worse. May test results for Laxfield sites show significant increases in ammonia and E.coli, in particular at the bottom of Vicarage Road. The stretch of river from the new cemetery to the Laxfield pumping station is showing a depletion of dissolved oxygen in the water - falling from 60% to 19%. For complex life to survive in the river water,



dissolved oxygen should be over 75%. Additional testing is now being carried out using Environment Agency approved equipment.

7. Internal and External Audit for 2025/26

- a. 26/06/06 The internal audit process was successfully completed by SALC and was distributed to councillors previously. It is also available to view on the website. Councillors approved the AIAR, reviewed the detailed report and approved an action plan to address the main recommendations. This action plan has also been placed on the Council website. *Proposed P. Bicheno, seconded L. Sharman, AIF.*

A key part of the action plan relates to improving accessibility and compliance with the Laxfield Parish Council website. It was agreed that a fundamental review of the site will need to take place, which may include procuring specialist IT support and an upgrade from *Suffolk Cloud*, the site host provider.

- b. 26/06/07 Councillors reviewed and approved sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, in readiness for the submission to P.K.F Littlejohn to begin the external audit, together with any additional information required. Section 1 and 2 of the AGAR was signed by the chair and has been posted on the Parish noticeboard and website, along with the Notice of public rights and publication of the Annual Governance Accountability Return period, which runs from 10 June to 22 July 2026. *Proposed R. Smith, seconded H. Scorey, AIF.*

8. Training

- a. 26/06/09 Clerk to resend available SALC training courses to newer Councillors, as well as information on development pathways. Some of training is available to do online for Councillors who can't take courses within the weekly working hours, due to work commitments.

9. Roads, Footpaths, Infrastructure, Green Areas

- a. 26/06/10 *Playground equipment repair* - Following the MSDC Playground inspection report the Parish Council received a quote to fix the swing apparatus, which was much higher than anticipated. Clerk to gather additional market quotes and contact two local contractors to ask if they have insurance and certification to carry out the work. This needs to be reported back to Full Council at the July meeting, as the apparatus is currently out of use in the run up to the school holidays.
- b. 26/06/11 *Village Pond oxygenation* – Les Cotton has kindly agreed to supply a pond aerator, and have it installed, provided the Parish Council can install an electricity supply at the venue. Cllr Hackett has spoken to a resident that lives at the back of the pond, and they have agreed to allow a connection to their domestic electric supply. The Parish Council approved the costs of purchasing electric meter, socket and cabling equipment, estimated at £150.00. This will be installed by Cllr Hackett in June, so the aerator can be installed in time for the hot weather, which has previously caused issues with oxygenation and dead fish. *Proposed D. Martindale, seconded R. Smith, AIF.*
- c. 26/06/12 *High Street footpath survey* - After a number of unsuccessful attempts at reporting the condition of Laxfield's High Street pavement that runs from the Orchards to Church Plain, the Highways Working Group carried out their own survey and took pictures of areas that breach safety regulations. A report has now been submitted to SCC Highways to raise the risk liability profile of the pavement and put pressure on SCC to take action, or at least get them to carry out an inspection.
- d. 26/06/13 *Village gateway signs* – New village gateway signs have been installed on Station Road and Vicarage Road, to welcome drivers to the village and encourage them to drive carefully. Councillors expressed thanks to the Jordan Group for doing an excellent job on installation, at no charge for labour or materials. Thanks were also expressed to Cllr Martindale for the imagery work done on the Laxfield Shield, which features on both gateways.
- e. 26/06/14 *Consultation with young people* - The Grounds Committee are developing a questionnaire targeted at young people who live in the parish, which can be completed and returned via post or by e-mail. Further communications with local schools and via social media, is also being considered. Questions will focus on new infrastructure associated with the playing fields and pavilion. The results will be used to inform a CIL project application to the MSDC Infrastructure Team, to ensure the Parish Council utilises £56K of Section 106 funds, as well as asking for additional District CIL funding. Possible improvements include:
- A multi-use hard surface area
 - Cricket and practice nets
 - Skate park
 - A safe running area

- Additional pitch utilisation
- Additional Pavilion functionality

Clerk to ensure consultation results are analysed and reported before the end of August, to feed in to the CIL bid, which will be submitted in early Autumn.

10. Correspondence and other issues

- 26/06/15 *Mill Road verge issue* – A resident has been contacted by MSDC Housing Tenancy Management to remove structures on the tree and verge, and ensure bins are not left out. Parking on the verge along Mill Road is also becoming a problem. Highways Working Group to revisit the proposal for SCC Highways to carry out road drainage and resurfacing works on the road.
- 26/06/16 *Laxfield Community Market 800th Anniversary* – The event was a resounding success and was well attended by local residents and outside visitors. Councillors wanted to send thanks all those involved in the extensive planning and facilitation. The Parish Council is also grateful to all sponsors, who helped fund the costs of the event.
- 26/06/17 *Scrap Metal Collection* – Reminder that there are two collection weekends this year, 27/28 June and 4/5 August (9am to 4pm). Signs to be placed around Community Market and councillor volunteers are still required for facilitation.

11. Next meeting

- The next meeting will be Monday 13 July 2026 at 7:00 pm in the PARISH ROOM. A decision on the venues for future meetings held from September 2026 will be made at this meeting.

Meeting finished at 8:20 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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