LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday 12 October 2026 at 7:00 pm in the Laxfield Parish Room

www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

Peter Lowe, Parish Clerk

OPEN FORUM

Four members of the public attended the meeting, with the following point raised:

- Candida Wingate and Claire Kelly attended to give an update on the People's Climate Emergency screening, which took place on 9 October in the village hall. Over 80 residents took part in a fascinating and constructive discussion on how we can take action to address, as well as prepare for, our fast-changing climate. Nearly 70% of people who attended said that they were keen to stay involved. Further work is planned to keep the momentum going on this issue, both via MP lobbying and as local collective action. Attendees at the event were skewed towards an older demographic and it was agreed that screening should also be aimed at younger residents and local schools. Getting children more involved may also attract younger parents to a future event, possibly advertising via social media. ACTIONS: Clerk to add Adrian Ramsey's Climate Emergency video to the Parish Council website. Claire Kelly will work with the event facilitators to create a one-page advert on the next steps and publish it on the parish council website and monthly parish newsletter.
- David Alchin attended on behalf of the Highways Working Group and asked for new members to join the group, which currently has three people, including one parish councillor. The parish council is looking for local volunteers to help with the *Community Speedwatch*, or to provide support for the village's three *Speed Indicator Devices* (SIDs). ACTION: Clerk to place advert in December newsletter.
- Richard Flack attended to ask if any residents who had been affected by the noise from his last music event at the Kablang campsite, would be willing to hold a meeting so he can hear complaints and discuss solutions before next season. A number of parish councillors said they would also attend if residents wanted to meet. ACTION: Clerk to contact residents that complained about the excessive noise and breach of license conditions.

Reports were previously received from Cllr Linder, Cllr Mittuch and MSDC, and these are available to view on the Parish Council website. Key headlines this month include:

- MSDC expressed their disappointment at the Government's decision to halt the long-announced plans for Local Government Reform (LGR). A huge amount of time and money has been spent on meeting the timeframes imposed, and regional local authorities were keen to implement new ideas and ways of cooperating. They also have concerns about recent changes to planning policies and regulations, which includes removing funding for Neighbourhood Plans.
- The government is changing the legislation on 'Empty Dwelling Management Orders' (EDMOs). In the past the Residency Property Tribunal had powers to seize empty properties that had been vacant for 2 years or more. This has now been reduced to six months, which could cause issues where a relative may have died and an estate often takes longer to conclude.
- SCC have provided guidance on how residents can protect their homes or buildings from flooding, by checking all ingress points (i.e. doors, windows, drainage, wall apertures, air bricks). The booklet can be found on the SCC website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Flood-Smart-Living-Digital-Handbook-FINAL-NOV-27.pdf
- A Waverley Valley identity Group has been formed to address logistical and cultural challenges faced by residents in the constituency. Its purpose is to preserve and discuss a unified local identity through community collaboration across towns and villages in the region. This could include identifying what makes Laxfield unique.

Main meeting started at 7:35pm

MINUTES

1. **Attendees, apologies and approval of absences:**
   Attendees**:** C Baldry, P. Bicheno, O Hackett, D Martindale, Z Rushmore, H Scorey, R Smith, R Sutton (Chair), S Sutton, P Lowe (Clerk).
   Apologies were sent by L Sharman. Approved.

2. **Declaration of interests**
   None.

3. **Approval of minutes**
   26/10/01 The minutes from Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 14 September 2026 were agreed. *Proposed C. Baldry, seconded S. Sutton, AIF.*

4. **Planning**

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

Planning permission granted - DC/26/03356

Proposal: Application for works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 2 No. Thuja (T1 and T2), Fell 1 No. Prunus (T3). Location: 3 Elm Lodge Road, Laxfield, Suffolk IP13 8ET.

Planning permission granted - DC/26/03444

Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Re- Pollard 4 No. Lime (T1 - T4) to previous pruning points. Location: The Villa, High Street, Laxfield, IP13 8DU.

Planning permission granted with conditions - DC/26/00905

Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of a garage and shed. Location: Birdcage, Pump Lane, Laxfield, IP13 8FA.

Planning permission granted with conditions - DC/26/03197

Proposal: Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for DC/26/01200 (Householder extension) for the variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans and Documents).
Location: 20 Noyes Avenue, Laxfield, IP13 8EB.

Planning permission granted with conditions - DC/26/02996

Proposal: Householder Application - Timber framed, single storey, detached cartlodge for use as secure parking, digger store, logstore, and workshop (following removal of existing storage container).
Location: Martins, Badingham Road, Laxfield, IP13 8HT.

Planning permission granted with conditions - DC/26/03245

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Construction of garage, shed and workshop area (Addition to Plot 3 of commenced planning permission DC/20/05953). Location: Plot 3, Land At Pump Lane, Laxfield.

Planning permission granted - DC/26/03736

Proposal: Notification of Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - (T1) - Stone Pine - crown raise over driveway and crown reduce by approximately 0.5-1M. Location: Dairy House, High Street, Laxfield, IP13 8DU.

5. **Finance**

a. 26/10/02 BACs payments, direct debits and receipts as listed in Register of Payments for September 2026 were agreed. *Proposed O. Hackett, seconded D. Martindale, AIF.*

b. 26/10/03 Bank reconciliations for September 2026 were agreed. *Proposed S. Sutton, seconded Z. Rushmore, AIF.*

c. 26/10/04 Performance vs budget forecast based on 6 months spend and income was reviewed. Operational spend stands at £28,799 (47% of the annual budget), although the annual liability insurance policy of £2,300 was paid a month earlier this year, so spend is -8% on the same period last year. CIL spend for the year to date is at £5,667 (7% of the remaining CIL budget). Total income for the year now stands at £67,085.

d. 26/10/05 *Asset Management Plan* – Councillors approved the annual review of the parish council's asset management plan. The asset register is now at £130,720, which is a net reduction

of £3K due to revaluations of certain ageing assets, as well as some additions. If any new assets are purchased before March 2027, the register will be updated. *Proposed R. Sutton, seconded H. Scorey, AIF.*

e. 26/10/06 *Annual Returns for Charity Commission* – Councillors acknowledged the completed returns for the Laxfield Playing Fields and Village Hall. The amount of operational information required for the village hall accounts has changed significantly this year, so this now needs to be reviewed to ensure the Parish Council meets audit and financial transparency guidelines. *Proposed S. Sutton, seconded D. Martindale, AIF.*

6. Regional river pollution

a. 26/10/07 The majority of Laxfield's testing points were completely dry in September and rivers across our region have been stressed by the exceptional lack of rainfall and high temperatures. There is consistently high pollution in the river Wang, especially upstream of the Wangford Sewage Treatment Works, and high E coli concentrations in the tidal Blyth estuary. Residents can access the official website www.sas.org.uk/sewage-map/ to view the live discharges for Laxfield. CB explained that planning for an outfall pipe safari will start soon and initial testing of 3 outfall pipes that flow directly into the river have already shown poor results. More Laxfield pollution testing volunteers are now required. Clerk to include advert in the December parish newsletter.

7. AGAR 2025/26

a. 26/10/08 *AGAR report for 2025/26* – Councillors reviewed and approved the final AGAR report and closure letter, which included the SF0240 certificate. The Notice of conclusion of audit statement was posted on the website and notice board for the statutory period. *Proposed R. Sutton, seconded H. Scorey, AIF.*

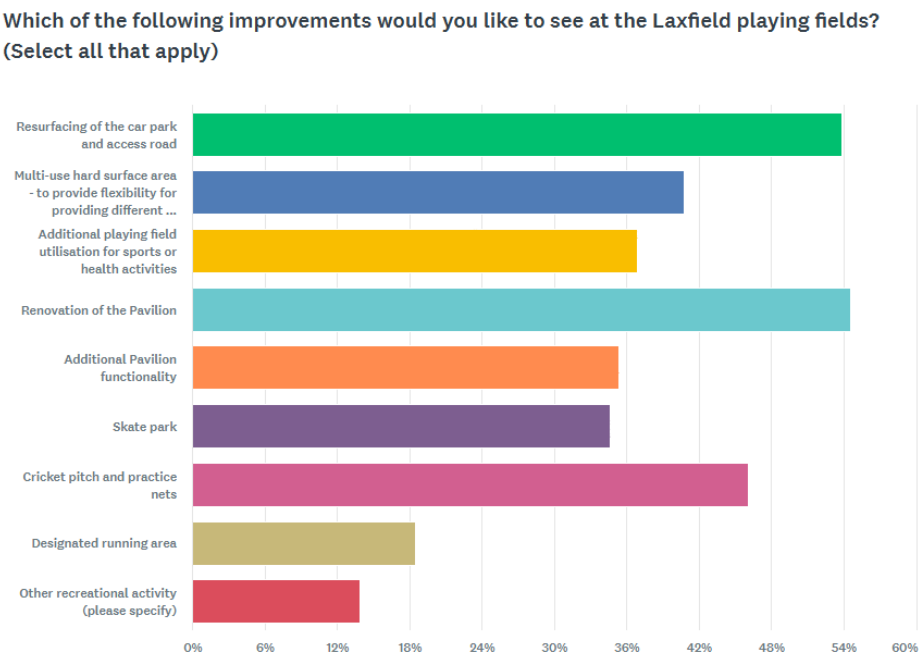
b. 26/10/09 *Review of audit action plan* - Some of the audit recommendations set out in the plan have now been actioned. However, further work is still needed on IT compliance under 'Assertion 10', including:

- Testing website compliance and publishing a website accessibility statement, in line with new regulations;
- Adopting an IT Policy aligned with proper practices, to provide a clear framework for secure and effective use of our data.

Clerk to discuss next steps with DM, including buying in external support via Suffolk Cloud or a compliance check contractor.

8. Roads, Footpaths, Infrastructure, Green Areas

a. 26/10/10 *Playing Fields and Pavilion consultation* – the survey has now closed and the results have been sent to Councillors separately. The parish council received 134 responses, with a significant amount of useful narrative feedback/ideas. The top 3 improvement requirements were to resurface the access road/car park, renovate the pavilion and introduce a cricket wicket with practice nets. The survey will inform the development of the Section 106 and District CIL bid to MSDC. Clerk to identify ownership of the playing fields land before the bid is submitted and any capital money is spent. Also check with the Laxfield Bowls Club regarding shared responsibility.



b. 26/10/11 *Cricket club lease* – The new Laxfield Cricket Club have asked that LPC provide a new Lease Agreement for them to use the Playing Fields to develop a new cricket pitch. This is required to get ECB support and apply for funding. As an alternative, the clerk will explore setting up Community Use Agreement (CUA), which is recommended by Sport England. CUAs can offer more flexibility and lower administrative/legal costs. Clerk to verify playing field ownership and existing covenants, prior to developing the CUA (action linked to item 8 above).

c. 26/10/12 *Playground safety* – A number of apparatus in the playground are now out of use, due to defects or because they need to be maintained. An incident regarding 2 children hitting their heads on the playground gate was also discussed. Following the very high quotes received for the repair work from regional contractors, OH and RS carried out a site visit and assessed that most of the work (apart from the defective pole on the large swing), is general maintenance that just requires tightening or adjustments. Clerk has been in contact with MSDC Public realm to ask if they would inspect and certify any repairs if they were done by local volunteers. Councillors agreed delegated authority for the repair work to be done, once MSDC verify. The final costs or quote will be discussed and approved at the November Full Council meeting. *Proposed R. Smith, seconded H. Scorey, AIF.*

d. 26/10/13 *Speeding issues on Bickers Hill* – Clerk to include replacement or repair of the pole across from Blyth House, in the pending SCC Localities bid. This will allow a Speed Indicator Device to be installed for 2 months to gather data on the average speed of vehicles. The data is required to qualify for changing the road to a 20mph zone, along with a number of other criteria which would need to be met.

e. 26/10/14 Secure storage unit for Public Rights of Way maintenance tools – Deferred to next meeting.

9. Correspondence and other issues

a. 26/10/15 People's Climate Emergency Briefing – Main points and action discussed in open forum. Both the Parish Council and Village Hall reaffirmed their continued support to the local facilitation team. Agreed to keep action planning separate to the Laxfield Community Emergency Plan (CEP), covered in item 9c below.

b. 26/10/16 *Recruitment update* - A significant number of applications were received for the Clerk & RFO post and the panel shortlisted 7 candidates for interview. These will conclude on 14 October. Given that the new clerk would need to be in place by the beginning of November, Councillors agreed to delegate authority to the panel to recruit by 16 October. Depending on the notice required, the new clerk should be in place to meet Councillors and administer their inaugural Full Council on 9 November.
Proposed R. Smith, seconded O. Hackett, AIF.

Following the resignation of Sarah Ellis, the parish councillor vacancy notice cut-off date is 15 October and latest update from the MSDC Electoral Services Team is that there are presently no local requests that would trigger a local election.

c. 26/10/17 *Laxfield Community Emergency Plan (CEP)* – Following agreed formation of the project team to start completing the CEP template, the first meeting will take place in late October, with Nikki Morgan (MSDC's Emergency Planning Support Officer). Cllrs D Martindale and S. Sutton agreed to attend a Community Emergency Preparedness and Resilience webinar on the 27 October. Clerk to book places.

d. 26/10/18 *CAB funding request* – Agreed that a funding contribution decision would be delayed until all local community organisation bids had been received, after finalising possible funding sources, including the Scrap Metal collection funds, SCC/MSDC Localities funding and a possible grant from Heveningham Hall. Clerk to report back on total funds available at December Full Council meeting, prior to Community Funding Forms being sent out.

Date of next meeting

a) Date of the next meeting will be Monday 9 November 2026 at 7:00 pm at Laxfield Baptist Church.

Meeting finished at 9:05 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.

Email: parishclerk@laxfield-pc.gov.uk Visit our Website: www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/