



Laxfield Parish Council Planning Committee Meeting



29 October 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Guildhall Parish Room

MINUTES

Attendees: R. Sutton (Chair), D Martindale, S Ellis, C. Baldry, D Alchin, P Lowe (clerk)

Iain Jamie (*Director of Beaully Homes*) and David Barker (*Director of Evolution Town Planning Ltd*) attended the meeting with 2 additional colleagues to discuss a potential housing development.

Gary Oughton attended the meeting to discuss issues relating to the Royal Oak.

1. Apologies and approval of absences

None.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Bickers Hill development proposal by Beaully Homes

Beaully Homes are currently nearing completion of a new homes development on Cullingford Close in Laxfield. Beaully Land recently purchased a small plot of land (currently a meadow) to the right of Bickers Hill Road, and are considering building a 17 homes development on the site, with approx. 6 of these being social/affordable housing.

Beaully Homes feel that this development would support the Government's agenda to build more homes, (including social housing), which currently includes a target to build 131 additional homes in/or around Laxfield. They had also read our Neighbourhood Plan/Design Guide and understood that any built housing must be integrated into the Village and street scene.

The planning committee highlighted four key areas that need to be considered by Beaully Homes, prior to deciding whether to submit a planning application to MSDC:

- The completed site must have **adequate drainage** in terms of surface water and ensure that the proposed attenuation pond effectively *increases* water capture. This is particularly crucial, as any overflow of water would run down to the bottom of Bickers Hill, which is a high-risk flood area.
- Where would **sewage/foul water** from the site go? Previous housing developments in the village have connected to the main sewage that goes to the Laxfield Pumping station. The committee feels that the station has struggled to cope with increased capacity over the past 10-15 years and now regularly carries out *Combined Sewer Overflows* (CSOs) every time it rains, leading to the River Blyth now being badly polluted. Previous developments have paid a connection fees per dwelling to Anglian Water, who always say that they can cope with the additional capacity, but they have made no infrastructure changes, despite the significant increase in additional housing in Laxfield over the past 10 years.

- **Site access** to and from the proposed development - Walking up and down Bickers Hill, especially at night, can be fairly risky with traffic. There was also some concern about the proposed development entrance being opposite Blyth House entrance. Initial checks at the meeting suggested this was not the case, but the committee asked that this be verified. Also, the splay for the site entrance would be 60m wide, which would take up a large chunk of the current path and hedgerow.
- **Ecology** of the path that fronts the development - The Laxfield Wildlife Group recently carried out a flora/fauna survey of the plants around the path and a number of rare species plants that attract key entomology/biodiveristy have been identified. The committee therefore asked for the usual ecological report was undertaken and that, if the planning application went ahead, Beauly Homes would make sure any development protected and possibly improved the frontage and boundary of the site. Beauly Homes confirmed that an ecological survey would be done before any work was started.

David Barker agreed to look at all the issues raised and would possibly attend the next planning committee at the end of November.

4. Planning

- a. **The following applications as requested by MSDC, were discussed:**

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/04637

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1- Cordyline- Removal of 2x main leaders to bring back into shape. T2- Dead tree(species unknown)- removal to ground level T3- Hazel-removal of lower over extended limb.

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

Application received: 18 October 2025.

Comments: After consultation with the Laxfield Tree Warden, there are no objections to this application. Proposed R. Sutton Seconded C. Baldry

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/04656

Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 a Horse Chestnut – removal.

Location: All Saints Church, Church Walk Laxfield Suffolk.

Application received: 20 October 2025

Comments: After consultation with the Laxfield Tree Warden, there are no objections to this application. However, the tree needs to be removed in a way that leaves about 3m of the original stump and sections of wood should be placed around the Churchyard to provide habitats for fauna. The remaining tree should be chipped to provide mulch for local residents.

Proposed R. Sutton Seconded D. Martindale

5. The following point was discussed without any need for approval:

- **Path between Blacksmith's Way and Mill Close:** The case for completing the path has become more urgent, due to erection of 2m fence on neighbouring properties. The Parish Council have therefore sent additional information to MSDC Planning and the Tenancy Management department, showing the costs vs benefits and Cllr Anders Linder is also meeting with the relevant directors ASAP.

- **Royal Oak Gazebos** – A number of residents have asked about planning regulations for the gazebos, which were originally erected in the pandemic to allow safe distance drinking and socialising. There is concern that these have now become permanent structures. A resident has also asked if the lighting on the outside of the Royal Oak can be softened, as it is currently omitting a lot of light pollution to neighbouring households. Clerk to investigate the following points and report back to the November planning committee:
 - Acquire Land Registry plans that show clear delineations of the curtilage of the plain and the pub (i.e. where does the Church Plain start and end?). Also, who owns the paving bricks on the pub front?
 - What is the current time limit on temporary structures that were erected prior to April 2025?
 - What planning approval is required for permanent Gazebos outside Grade 2* Listed buildings?
 - Whether the Franchise owners of the Royal Oak would be willing to change the outside lighting?

Meeting closed at 7:25 pm.

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