



Laxfield
PARISH COUNCIL

Laxfield Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 18th May 2026

at 7:00 pm

in Laxfield Baptist Church

*Working for
our Community*

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This booklet contains all the reports from across the parish submitted for the annual parish meeting. It has been distributed to all households and additional copies will be available at the Annual Parish Meeting on 18 May 2026.

If you have any questions about information contained within this booklet, please don't hesitate to contact the clerk, Peter Lowe on 07711 822503 or e-mail him at parishclerk@laxfield-pc.gov.uk

Alternatively, if you have questions for a particular community organisation or charity from this report, please contact them directly.

This booklet is also available on the website – www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS AND CLERK

Colin Baldry	Hayley Scorey
Pen Bicheno	Lisa Sharman
Sarah Ellis	Rae Smith
Ollie Hackett	Rob Sutton
Debbie Martindale	Sally Sutton
Zoe Rushmore	Peter Lowe (Clerk)



LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIR'S REPORT

It hardly seems like a year since the last annual parish meeting. Looking back at last year's report, Sue reflected on the changes to the parish council. With a new Clerk taking over and her stepping down after several years of hard work on the parish council. Many of you will have seen Peter, our clerk, around the village, putting up notices and liaising with different groups. The councillors, along with the clerk, have been putting in a tremendous amount of work and effort to improve our communication with our residents. We now run two stalls a year at the community market, in April and September. Where residents can chat directly with one or more councillors, ask any questions, raise concerns or simply put across their views. All the councillors that have been involved in these sessions have said how positive the experience has been and how much it has helped to shape their decision making.

Sadly, last summer we had another incidence of fish dying in the village pond. It is obvious from the comments we received that the village pond is important to the residents of the village. There were concerns expressed about safety, and fish welfare. It was decided that we would include the village pond into our consultation event that we held in the village hall. All the feedback from that event is being used to formulate a plan for the future of the village pond. The current economic climate does restrict the options, but safety remains our priority. It is hoped to improve the village pond for the benefit of the residents and visitors alike.



Also discussed at the consultation event was the playing field and the pavilion. Some ideas were presented and there was a very healthy discussion with all being able to express their views. It is evident that the area is an important amenity that has benefited from the play area refurbishment last year and those attending the events are keen to see further improvements. There is a group of people (councillors and residents) working hard to come up with a viable long-term plan. We are also looking at options for attracting funding from elsewhere to help maximise the restricted funds available from the parish council's coffers.

During the last twelve months we have become aware of a serious pollution issue affecting the River Blyth. It was brought to the parish councils' attention that there had been several outflows of sewage from the pumping station into the River Blyth on the outskirts of the village. The parish council had a presentation regarding the water quality on the River Blyth and the number and duration of these outflows. After raising awareness of this with residents at the community market it became apparent that we needed to include this in our consultation event. It is fair to say that most people were shocked and horrified to see and hear the extent of the pollution. We now have a group of volunteers who are undertaking sampling of the river at different locations. If you would be interested in getting involved or would like to know more, please contact the parish council. This work is in conjunction with the Four Rivers Project, which is receiving support from East Suffolk District Council.

During the year we had another scrap metal collection, with funds raised being distributed to local charities and organisation. It is hoped to run another event again in 2026, so please save your scrap metal, we will take it and turn it into cash for local causes.

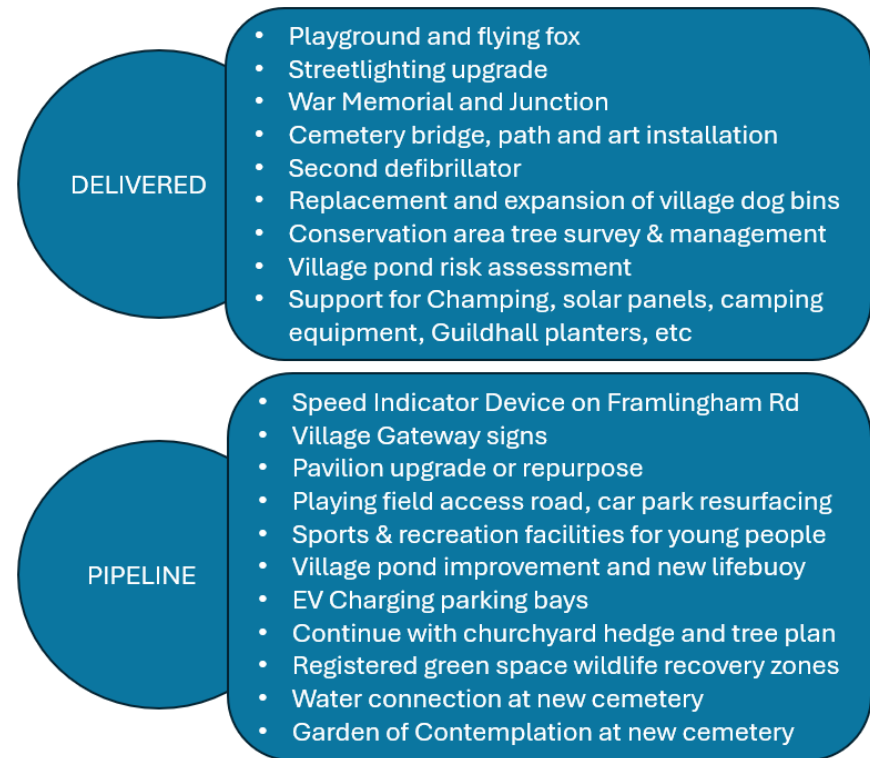
We have continued with our litter picking events in the spring and autumn, both have attracted a lot of volunteers, and you collected a lot of rubbish from our verges, hedgerows and ditches. Helping to keep Laxfield looking lovely. An excellent effort and well done to all that helped!

We had another successful Christmas lunch for the more senior residents of the village, thanks to the hard work of a talented team of volunteers (cooks, servers and organisers). We hope this can continue for 2026.

I would like to close this report with a huge thank you to the Parish Councillors, for their hard work and commitment to Laxfield. Thanks also to Pete Lowe, the Parish Clerk, for his tireless efforts to support the Councillors and residents of the village.

Rob Sutton – Chair, Laxfield Parish Council

PIIP SNAPSHOT (Parish Infrastructure Improvement Plan)



LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE

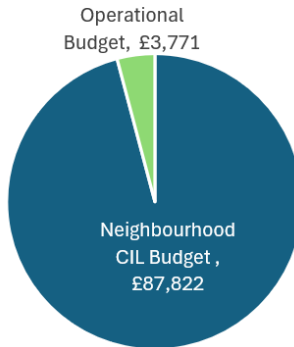
The Parish Council ended the financial year 2025/26 with bank balances as follows:

Current account:	£ 2,236.39
Saver account:	£ 1,685.49
Reserve account:	£ 87,670.42
TOTAL:	£ 91,592.30

Although this looks like a healthy balance, £87,822 of this is earmarked reserves (Neighbourhood CIL money), which cannot be used for operational spending. Over the next 3 years the Parish Council aims to increase its operational reserves to ensure it meets guidance, which advises we should retain at least 3 months of operational budget as 'general reserves' at the end of each year.

Year-end budget 2025/26

Operational budget is used to pay for day-to-day costs incurred by the parish council, including street lighting, bin emptying, clerk's salary, street cleaning, cemetery maintenance, etc. The money for this comes from the precept part of the council tax

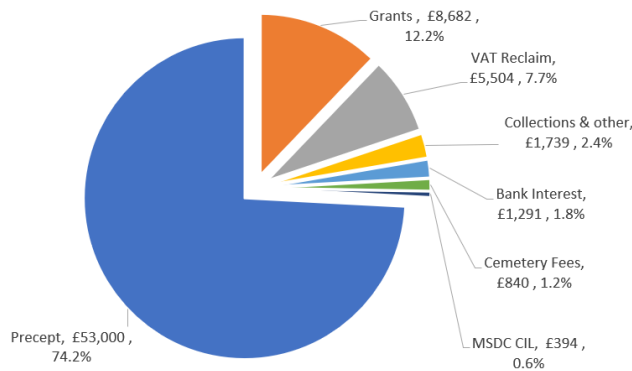


Neighbourhood CIL budget is used for infrastructure items that improve the parish and its amenities (i.e. upgrade of the play equipment or building renovations). The money comes from Community Infrastructure Levy payments made by developers to the planning authority. CIL money CANNOT be spent on operational activity or items.

We achieved £18,056 of receipts in 2025/26, in addition to precept and a very small CIL income.

Income for 2025/26

- Grants were given for a new speed indicator device, power tools for local volunteers to maintain our public rights of way, funding to support the Community Market's 800th anniversary event, and support for the Community Caretaker Scheme.
- Collections and other include proceeds from the Scrap Metal and Good



The precept is the main income source for the parish council, which was set at £53,000 for 2025/26. This has been increased to £58,000 for 2026/27, due to increased running costs.

Neighbourhood CIL Spend

This year we spent £31,986 on various schemes identified in the *Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan* (PIIP), which supports the delivery of our *Neighbourhood Plan*:

- New cemetery improvements, including a bridge, path and artwork
- Streetlights upgrade to low energy units
- Conservation area tree survey & management
- Support for community group asset purchases
- War memorial junction project
- Village pond risk assessment
- New and replacement dog bins
- Second village defibrillator

The highest area of spend this year was on cemeteries, with £16,300 spent on CIL funded improvements to the new cemetery and around £9,000 on general cemetery maintenance. We also allocated over £2,500 to local community groups and charities. Our operational costs continue to increase, similar to most organisations in the current economic climate. The Parish Council's electricity costs increased significantly in 2025/26, and we have been notified that further 'above inflation' increases are expected in 2026/27.

Please see next page for Parish Council accounts summary for 2025/26. All financial information, including audit reports for the Parish Council, are available on the website (www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk) and are updated monthly.

Saving, Collecting and Sharing

For a number of years now, the council has been proactive in accessing free native hedging and trees from MSDC, which has enhanced the All Saints Churchyard area at no cost. The annual scrap metal collection organised by Ollie Hackett and Rae Smith raised £1,000, and the Good Neighbour Scheme raised £104. The rebate from the Rix oil syndicate was £197.

These enabled the Parish Council to support the following local groups and various projects:

- Fressingfield Scout Group
- FOALs
- Laxfield Pre-school
- Community Market
- Parochial Church
- Laxfield Museum
- Local classical recital event
- Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau

As the above demonstrates, the parish council was keen to ensure monies gained through local activities and from regional/national grant schemes, is ploughed back into our amazing local community groups and charities. Our sincere thanks to everyone involved this year.

Snook Bequest

This fund is held by the parish council in a separate account. It aims to help support the needs of the older members of the community. This year it supported a very successful older residents Christmas lunch in the village hall. The balance of the fund at 31 March 2026 was £11,657.99. If anyone has any projects that could potentially tap into this fund, please contact the parish clerk.

Laxfield Playing Fields Association

This is a registered charity that has the parish council as its custodian trustee. All its expenses are met by the precept so the only figure supplied to the Charities Commission is a cost. During the 2025/26 financial year the expenditure was £8,507. This is expected to increase significantly next year, if planned infrastructure improvement projects are successfully funded and delivered.

Reporting Period: 1/4/2025 - 31/3/2026

BANK ACCOUNTS YEAR BEGINNING AND END OF YEAR		
	As at 1 April 2025	As at 31 March 2026
Current Account	£ 24,636.87	£ 2,236.39
Saver Account	£ 751.46	£ 1,685.49
Reserves Account (High Interest)	£ 101,149.25	£ 87,670.42
Balance Total	£ 126,537.58	£ 91,592.30
CIL Budget	£ 119,413.59	£ 87,821.84
Operational Budget	£ 7,123.99	£ 3,770.46
Balance Total	£ 126,537.58	£ 91,592.30

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR 2025/26		
RECEIPTS	ACTUAL	% of Total Receipts
Cemetery Fees	£840.00	1.2%
Grants	£8,682.28	12.1%
MSDC CIL	£394.24	0.5%
Miscellaneous	£1,738.98	2.4%
Bank Interest	£1,291.12	1.8%
Precept	£53,000.00	73.8%
VAT Reclaim	£5,916.39	8.2%
Total	£71,863.01	100.0%

PAYMENTS BY CATEGORY	ACTUAL	% of Total Spend
Clerk's Net Salary	£10,922.43	10.2%
Expenses/Stationery	£814.38	0.8%
Chair's Allowance	£0.00	0.0%
Street Lighting	£6,981.25	6.5%
Pond/Vill Hall/Paths	£6,191.22	5.8%
Street Cleaning	£1,690.93	1.6%
Parish Room Lighting	£372.21	0.3%
PWLB (Loan)	£11,289.18	10.6%
Subscriptions	£710.67	0.7%
Insurance	£2,590.72	2.4%
Churchyard/War Mem	£12,810.80	12.0%
Bin emptying	£942.53	0.9%
Rental fees	£500.00	0.5%
Training	£55.20	0.1%
Cemetery Expenses	£26,348.56	24.7%
Repairs & Maintenance	£702.00	0.7%
Playing Field	£8,507.38	8.0%
Village Hall	£1,138.71	1.1%
Church clock	£0.00	0.0%
Miscellaneous	£8,716.54	8.2%
Audit	£1,344.00	1.3%
PAYE (incl Tax and NI)	£4,179.58	3.9%
Election	£0.00	0.0%
TOTAL	£106,808.29	100.0%

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH - CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

It has been another busy year for the church with opportunities for mission and some ongoing challenges with regard to the building. We have maintained our service pattern, with a morning service in church on three Sundays of the month. In January 2026 we started 'Chatty Church', a more informal gathering with a chance for discussion.

The 4th Sunday evening service in Hartismere House continues to prove popular. We have enjoyed joining with the rest of the Four Rivers churches to celebrate the agricultural festivals of Plough Sunday, Rogation, Lammass and Harvest. We are very grateful to all our clergy and lay elders for their commitment and hard work in planning and leading our services.

The church building continues to be used for a wide range of social and fundraising activities. Regular activities include the monthly Community Market, lunchtime concerts (during the warmer months) and 'Saturday Social', our 3rd Saturday morning coffee morning. This last event, which was introduced in 2024, is proving to be very popular and significant donations have been made to a number of charities. A new venture in 2025 was making the church available for 'Champing'; the opportunity to stay overnight in the church in (relative) comfort. This proved to be far more popular than we had imagined and made a good contribution to our fundraising efforts.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for the grant that we received towards the Champing set up costs. Champing will start again in May and we already have a number of bookings.

Meet Up Friday, our monthly get together for coffee and cake in the Royal Oak, continues to be popular with approximately 30 people attending each time.

The church continues to have a strong link with All Saints Primary School. We welcomed the school, and a good number of family and friends, to the church for Easter, Harvest and Christingle services. Our Lay Elder occasionally takes Collective Worship in school and visits the Pre-School on a regular basis. The Pre-School visited the church just before Christmas to decorate the tree with the beautiful angels they had made.

We are very grateful to everyone who has supported the church during the last year, both practically and financially. Thank you to the large group of volunteers who help and contribute to the life of the church in so many different ways: cleaners, flower arrangers, bell ringers, newsletter deliverers and those who organise and support our fund-raising events.

Thank you too to the Parish Council for their financial support towards the ever-increasing cost of printing the Village Newsletter. And, of course, thank you to those who assist in the leading and running of our weekly services. It would be impossible to maintain and run the church without all this help, and the PCC is very grateful.

Jackie Turton, Churchwarden



LAXFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

It is such a privilege for us as a church fellowship to serve the Lord we love by serving our community and this past year, we have tried to do that through the various activities that are held at the chapel.

Our Thursday morning Coffee Stop continues to be a time when people can come for coffee and a chat. Any donations are given to Caring for Life, a charity near Leeds which cater for people with learning difficulties. Everyone is invited to come along to *Coffee Stop* which runs just about every week of the year; occasionally Coffee Stop stops to allow us to have our Friends and Neighbours Lunches which are enjoyed by all who attend and eat.

Our children's and youth work continues at pace with a really good number coming along to toddlers on Friday mornings, and to our primary and senior groups on Friday evenings. We held our annual Holiday Bible Club during the Easter school break. 68 children/teenagers registered to come along. We worked our way through the four chapters of the book of Jonah in the Bible, learning how we cannot run and hide from God and how he is willing to save those who repent and seek his forgiveness. There were games and crafts, and even learning to tie knots. We all had a whale of a time!

Various other activities have taken place during the year including a jumble sale, Christmas and Easter activities and services, and many more beside.

We have two Sunday services each week, both of which are generally well attended. A good number of children and young people join us particularly during the morning service, and we lay on Sunday School classes for them. We have had some Donut Sundays during the year, which is what we have been calling our all-age services, they have also been a good excuse to have some doughnuts. You'll have to come along to one to find out why we use donut and not doughnut in the title!

The chapel has also hosted Knit and Natter, the Community Choir Rehearsals, children's dance classes and Laxfield Primary school's leaver's service, dance practice and traveling theatre day.

As a church we believe we are here to encourage and help one another and to share the good news of Jesus Christ to those around us. That is our ultimate intention with all the activities, services and events we organise.

There are many people who work and pray very hard to continue the work of the Baptist church in Laxfield but ultimately it's God's faithfulness to us that enables us to do this work and we give him all the glory, honour and thanks that he deserves.

Tim Mawson – Pastor, Laxfield Baptist Church



LAXFIELD AND DISTRICT MUSEUM

2025 was a very positive year with some exciting events and good feedback from visitors. The footfall was higher: 1083 adults; 173 children; 1369 overall. This was our second best total since the Queen's Jubilee year, 2022. The total last year included two very successful visits from other museums and history groups.

The two occasions we displayed the Laxfield Hearse outside the Museum created a lot of interest. Each time, we decorated the hearse with flowers and greenery, in honour of the Laxfield people, who had been borne on the vehicle. Over 100 people came to view the carriage in May and over 40 in September. On the second occasion the hearse was drawn by a horse and was a splendid sight coming down the High Street. The film is now on our website. We have to thank Rae Smith, Roger Wright, their partners and Ollie Hackett for facilitating these events.

Paul Taylor's update on activities on his wildlife farm was as popular as ever at the beginning of the season. So was Charlie Haylock's talk, 'Charlie & the Dig' at the end of the season. Charlie was very complimentary about the Village Hall facilities and the help he received that night. He will no longer be giving his talks and so we were very privileged to host one of his final performances. He says he wants to spend some time looking around Laxfield & District Museum this year. Provision for children and attracting them to visit the Museum is one of our priorities for the future.

Our outreach event in the Village Hall was another popular coffee morning where Michael Poole's photographic record of modern-day Laxfield was shown alongside Ron Fuller's one from the early 1970s. There were also some village scrapbooks and a hands-on display of unusual objects. The more recent, pop up café and mini museum event on March 28th this year was also very well attended.



The main theme for 2026 is celebrating the Market Charter and after a very busy winter the Committee's efforts finally came to fruition and 3 large new displays made ready for the new season. The Parish Room features the history of our market since 1226; the Gibson Wynes Room (Bells Room) displays a history of Laxfield Trades and upstairs in the Marchant Room is an exhibition of things that could be made and sold in Laxfield through the centuries. This includes a display of items of clothing, which could be sold in the many local grocer/drapers shops plus some documents gifted by Neil Grayson from the family's 100+ years of trading in Heveningham and Laxfield. The museum is extremely fortunate to have so many friends and an incredible number of volunteer stewards – well over 50. Many others have helped by painting, repairing and preparing for the new season

The Committee thanks the PC for their past generosity and for sponsoring the new planters outside the Guildhall.

We are all looking forward to a successful 2026 season.

Thank you from Lynne Ward and the Museum Committee.

ALL SAINTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

We currently have 96 children on role spread over 4 classes: reception, Year 1/2, year 3/4 and year 5/6 taught by 8 teachers, 7 of whom are part time. We also have 8 teaching assistants, 1 of whom is part time.



We have continued to build upon our previous OFSTED grade of OUTSTANDING (November 2024) through rigorous monitoring of standards by senior staff in school and across the All-Saints Trust. The standard of work in children's books was recently praised by the CEO and senior member of the Trust when they came to look at the teaching of English.

We continue to invest in our wonderful library. I keep up to date with new releases of children's books and regularly purchase new titles for the children to enjoy. This is often paid for by our excellent FOALS group who fundraise for our school. We have several volunteers from the volunteer reader scheme who come in weekly to listen to children read – a highlight of their week.

The FOALS and I are currently looking to upgrade the garden area by the side of the school to provide a quiet, relaxing place to sit.

Mr Robson, our SENDCO, with help from Mrs Reed, our administration assistant, has nearly completed an outdoor sensory garden to support children with additional needs and our Sensory room, completed last year, is in regular use.

Despite our rural location, we are determined to give our children access to great music, theatre, sport, museums and other experiences to broaden their horizons and develop their 'cultural capital'. Every child has the opportunity to visit places of worship, watch theatre productions, go on at least 2 residential trips, listen to live music, visit a museum, travel on a train, learn to play a musical instrument, represent their school in sport and perform on stage. Our clubs currently include Makaton (sign language), origami, diamond art, library, art, sewing gymnastics and dance.

We are supported by both church communities in Laxfield and appreciate the use of their buildings for services at the end of each term. The Baptist church have also been kind enough to lend us their space when we have needed room for a theatre or (as is the case this term) a maypole!

We are currently looking to upgrade the play area for our reception class with new flooring and resources and to upgrade the look of the interior of the school by starting a programme of painting.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful staff for their continued commitment, dedication and professionalism which makes this school such a wonderful place to work and learn.



Katharine Minns, Head of School, All Saints Primary, Laxfield

LAXFIELD PRE-SCHOOL

Laxfield Preschool is a charity run setting in the heart of our lovely village. We aim to provide a warm but stimulating environment, where children are provided with a range of opportunities to explore, learn and engage. Our inclusive environment



Charity No: 1165817

enables all children to be celebrated, whilst also promoting a supportive community to build those early foundations of basic life skills to move them through to the next chapters of their lives. The last 12 months have been busy and we've made further positive changes to the setting. We have completed a total refurbishment of the 3 & 4 year olds garden area, plus made significant improvements to our baby and 2 year olds outdoor space.

We have installed new all-weather surfacing in the gardens & woodland area to enable the children to access the outdoors all year round. With lots of new and exciting play equipment, the children are really enjoying their new learning environments. The new resources assist with supporting all areas of their development and encourage learning about the world around them. We have 4 rooms where the children can play, learn and thrive. We are utilising all the building and garden space available to us, ensuring the children have an enriching learning environment. We have 70 children enrolled with us and as the village continues to grow, we will be looking at ways in which our preschool can continue to evolve ensuring we can support all families within our local community.

With this in mind, we are building a new classroom onto the rear of our building during the summer months. Our annual Easter & Christmas fundraising events have been really successful and we are so grateful to everyone that has so kindly supported us. As a charity preschool we have to continually fundraise for additional resources and provisions for the children in our care. We are looking forward to what the next year brings. Keep a look out for our up-and-coming fund-raising events.

Laxfield Preschool Team, Framlingham Road, Laxfield, Suffolk IP13 8HD
Tel: 01986 798091 E-mail: office.laxfieldpreschool@gmail.com
Website: www.laxfieldpreschool.org



The Laxfield Preschool Team

LAXFIELD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Laxfield CLT has welcomed three new people over the last year. Sally Clarke and Mark Derwin have joined as Trustees/Directors and Dave Spennock has joined us as a consultant. We are pleased to have them all – plus of course the diverse skills that they bring to the CLT.

Laxfield CLT has partnered with Community Action Suffolk to launch the 2026 Housing Needs Survey. These surveys are valid for five years; since the last was undertaken in 2021, a new one was needed to evaluate current housing needs in the village.

If you have any questions at all regarding Laxfield CLT please contact Freddie (LCLT Administrator) at: kdunkley@laxfieldclt.uk.
Laxfield CLT.



Debbie Martindale, LCLT

FRESSINGFIELD SCOUT GROUP

1st Fressingfield Scouts provides wonderful opportunities for boys and girls aged 4 – 25 (we start young as Squirrels) to contribute to their communities, whilst learning new skills which will stay with them for life.



Regardless of our title we are not just Fressingfield Scout Group but also the Scout Group for the surrounding villages. We have over 160 young people and it is great to see such enthusiastic support for what we do from our local communities – a big thank you!

Varied weekly activities are run by dedicated and qualified Leaders (uniform) and other volunteers (non- uniform). All give significant amounts of time planning and delivering different and engaging activities which include traditional map reading, cooking (healthy eating and eating on a budget), and staying safe on line as well as having fun! There are also regular camps where teamworking skills, communication and confidence are developed. Parents tell us how important it is to have other adults involved in their child's life – especially when communication at home or school can be challenging. Our Leaders have excellent skills to engage with young people to bring out the best in them!

We regularly help with different villages' activities; our fundraising Santa Run in Fressingfield finished at the village Christmas market where we provided the BBQ. We also run other BBQs to support others in their fund raising events such as Hoxne Village Church and we help with village litter picks.

Our Group undertakes quizzes, cake sales, sponsored runs and put together a fundraising calendar which was supported by many local businesses with advertising. We are involved in environmental surveys and have recently built bird boxes for our site and Hoxne Churchyard. Our Scout Patrol Leaders met up with Hoxne Youth Group to help them to make more boxes. Those of you attending Remembrance Sunday in Fressingfield, Laxfield and Hoxne will see our Scouts in attendance and we are affiliated to the Royal British Legion. We have been pleased to support Christmas Tree Festivals in Hoxne and Weybread.

As you would expect camping and outdoor activities are a big part of what we do. Last year our smallest camp was an overnight stop on a two-day Expedition hike for four 12/13 year olds who completed a survey comparing the churchyards in Stradbroke, Brome, Oakley, Hoxne and Denham to understand wildlife benefit.

The largest camp was seven nights at the Norfolk Jamboree (Norjam) , at Norwich Showground. Eighteen Scouts and Explorers and five Leaders had a fantastic experience during a very hot week in August. There were wall to wall activities, social opportunities and a reminder of the Scout Movement's Worldwide presence and positive impact. 2600 young people from 19 different countries attending, supported by their Leaders and 800 activity and support staff.

In feedback from parents after the event many of our members described it, "the best week of their lives, an amazing week, a phenomenal experience!"

Both Cub packs camped together at Thetford for a weekend featuring a day on the river canoeing and raft building. It was a great camp, needless to say most got very wet!

Our contingent also had a great time at the annual Water Activities Weekend organised by Norfolk County Scouts, getting wet there as well!

Autumn saw one of Scout Troops join 2nd Diss Scouts at Eaton Vale activity site in Norwich for camping, canoeing, shooting and many more activities. Our other Scout Troop joined our Explorers for a survival camp sleeping in bivouacs.

Our biggest project (led by our team of Trustees), has been to fundraise and complete the installation of solar panels and battery storage at our HQ. This is already providing free power for us and an income from sales of surplus power. We are extremely grateful to MidSuffolk District Council, Suffolk Climate Action Fund, SPAR, and Garfield Weston for grants as well as funds from Henry Lloyd (Suffolk County Council) and Lavinia Haddingham Fressingfield District Councillor and Fressingfield, Hoxne and Laxfield Parish Councils.

Our Trustees support the Scout Leader Team and manage our facilities. If you would like to add your skills to our mix, we should be very grateful!

Scouting is fun, rewarding and challenging not only for the young people from our communities but also for the dozens of adult volunteer Leaders and helpers who support our Scout Group.

Would you like to help us grow the Group as we have a waiting list?

Subject to the necessary Safeguarding checks and some training, we would love to increase the number of adults who support our young people - either face to face in the Sections, or in a background role. Opportunities exist for anyone aged between 18 and, well, anything really! Get in touch through our website, www.fressingfieldscouts.com or speak to any Leader. You can also email Andrew our Group Lead Volunteer at: gsl@fressingfieldscouts.com

There has been much positive comment about Scouting as we see our Young People grow and develop. Thank you to everyone from the many villages that our members come from for your support.

1st Fressingfield Scout Group is affiliated to the Southern Norfolk District Scout Council, Norfolk Scout Association. It is operated by volunteers and is funded solely by our members, fundraising and the generosity of sponsors and public subscriptions.

We are a registered charity (No. 1181154) our governance arrangements and accounts can be viewed at the Charity Commission website.

Michael Knights - Assistant Group Scout Leader, 1st Fressingfield Scout Group

GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

The Laxfield Good Neighbour Scheme is in its second year now and is currently helping people 2 - 3 times a week, mainly driving to doctors, hospitals & collecting prescriptions. We have about 20 active volunteers, 4 of which are phone holders.

We are currently helping one client on a regular basis, with contact with immediate family to make sure the client gets to socialise in the village. Our service is a lifeline to many and is vital for medical appointments outside the village. The small fees for travel collected are to pay for fuel, but with some of these being donated by drivers who feel they don't need to be paid, we have managed to handover £100 to good causes in the village.

We hope to keep growing the scheme with more clients and volunteers, and possibly expand to neighbouring villages if required. So please spread the word that we are here to help!

Ollie Hackett - on behalf of Laxfield Parish Council
e-mail: ohackett@laxfield-pc.gov.uk

LAXFIELD COMMUNITY MARKET



Community Market

Laxfield Community Market CIC (LCM) Report 2025

What a fantastic community we all live in. It's great to have the market on the first Saturday of the month (March – November 9:30-midday) and Christmas market on the first Friday in December (4:00 -7:00pm). We have and brilliant group of volunteers, stall holders and visitors that make this event such a success. Want to be part of the team? See email details below.

LCM is run as a non-profit making company, with any profit do make going to local charities and good causes at the end of the financial year. It is right therefore to highlight just how much the market brings to the community from all sources: stall fees, raffles, LCM Charity Stall, bacon stall, community bake stall, etc. We raised £9,529 for local charities and good causes, so from the Laxfield Community Market CIC a huge THANK YOU.

Next year we celebrate our 800th Anniversary of receiving a charter to hold a market in Laxfield from King Henry III. We celebrate this achievement on the weekend 6.6.26 – look out for all the events happening over the weekend, in addition to the normal market.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce my standing down as Chair of LCM after the 6.6.26 market. An enormous THANK YOU for everyone who has helped me in this period, we have seen the market grow to what it is today, made possible by an incredible team of volunteers, community and stall holders. I hand over the reins to the very safe hands of Mairi Doyle and wish her every success with the market going forward. Adrian Heard

Laxfield Community Market CIC – Registration no: 15183279
Email – enquiries@laxfieldmarket.co.uk

RUN BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Adrian Heard, Chair - Laxfield Community Market

ALLOTMENT SOCIETY OF LAXFIELD

Wendy Thomas stepped down in May 2025 after years of dedicated work to secure the allotments for the community of Laxfield. The current committee is building on Wendy's work, for example, by updating the banking arrangements.

The allotment meadow grass was cut and removed in the summer of 2025. The removal of the grass has already made space for wildflowers to grow. At the time of writing, vetch and pink campion are flourishing. A conservation report by Suffolk Wildlife Trust supported the work to restore the meadowlands, suggesting it could take 10 years for the soil to adjust.

The hedging planted in 2023, on the perimeter of allotment meadows provides an important wildlife corridor, offering shelter and home for birds, insects and small mammals. Barn owls are seen at dawn and dusk and we would like to encourage as much wildlife as possible. The annual maintenance of the hedgerows was completed by the plot holders.

Seed Swaps were held in early 2026, funds raised were donated to GROW.

Plots are available to let, tenancy agreements may be backdated, and we are interested in hearing from anyone who might like to rent a plot.

Allotment Society of Laxfield Committee

LAXFIELD IN RELIEF

A number of requests for financial help were received and assessed over the past year which resulted payment(s) to individuals who met the required criteria.

Annual insurance for the Guildhall is approximately £8,000 which is significantly more than income gained from Guildhall, allotment and car parking rents, so the charity reserves are significantly reduced each year.

Trustees are currently developing a forward plan for this charity and its assets.

Thank you – Fiona Shuttle

LAXFIELD GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Making improvements to the Playing Fields and Pavilion have been on the back-burner for a while, but we now feel the project has gathered some momentum over the past year. It started with a few regular meetings of the committee, followed by a constructive site meeting with Mid Suffolk District Council's Infrastructure Team, to discuss capital investment support from Section 106 and District CIL funding. The site was positively discussed as an ideal project to receive funding if we can develop a good application that has the backing of local residents.

After this we had carried out consultation with the public at the village hall, to gather feedback and look at development opinions for the playing fields, Pavilion and access road/car park. This was very helpful and generated some new ideas. One great suggestion was to consult directly with the young people of the village, which is now being planned alongside some proactive parents.

We also realised that some parts of the project will not be completed quickly, and will require feasibility and planning work to be carried out first. We have therefore done further masterplanning work to look far into the future and consider a grand plan for the site, in terms of what it might look like year from now. This included the possibility of securing funds to build a multi-function facility. We have now considered all possible layouts of the site, to ensure we avoid having to do rework, as we deliver improvements in the next couple of years.

As with anything of this nature feedback from the community is very important so if you have any ideas for the playing fields, please get in touch!

Ollie Hackett - on behalf of Laxfield Parish Council e-mail: ohackett@laxfield-pc.gov.uk

GREEN SPACES WORKING GROUP

The Parish Infrastructure investment plan (PIIP) identifies many improvement and development areas, many of them in Laxfield's green spaces. The group is comprised of parish councillors and residents, meeting on a regular basis throughout the year. There is a lot of involvement with the Laxfield Wildlife group to bring all the related groups together.

Our public rights of way are an important link between the centre of the village and surrounding countryside. The group work with MSDC rights of way team to identify issues and to try and improve our footpath network.

Last winter there were more trees planted at the Bickers Hill allotments, these were monitored and watered during the dry summer, a big thank you for the volunteers who helped! During the winter months the churchyard hedge along Church Villas was cut back and cleaned up.

New hedging was also planted to help thicken the hedge and improve the species mix. It did look a little bare when it was done, but the hedge is growing quite vigorously now from the ground up. This should



continue to improve throughout the spring and into summer. The volunteers organised by the wildlife group did a fantastic job, well done to you all. This will continue to be monitored, and the rolling improvement plan should continue through 2026 and into 2027.

If you would like to learn more about the wildlife around the village or would like more information on how you could become involved, please contact the Parish Clerk and he will put you in touch with the right people.

Thank you from the Green Spaces Group

HIGHWAYS WORKING GROUP

The highways group continues to meet every few months and some matters are referred to the full PC if they are contentious or need funding. The group acts as a route to report matters to the highway authority, which is currently Suffolk County Council (SCC). This will change following the May 7th elections and we could come under the aegis of East Suffolk as a unitary authority within a couple of years. However, things are unlikely to change from the current situation where funds are extremely limited and the expectation is that Parishes will have to fund any improvements they think necessary. This will be compounded by the scramble that will probably ensue as officers look to position themselves for the best jobs, either locally or nationally.

On a more positive note, we continue to try and represent the needs of all parishioners and use the SCC Reporting Tool to raise matters such as potholes, road signs (absence of and condition), drainage issues, grass cutting, and traffic speeds and volume. All of these matters can be, and some are, raised independently by parishioners via the Reporting Tool. The greater the volume of complaint the greater the chance of reaching their criteria for action. So do not leave it all to the PC please.

The condition of footways remains of concern, particularly as we have an above average age of population. There is an insurance issue which may add weight to our case. In the current year we expect to be putting white village gateways (literally) on the outskirts of the central part of the village to gain extra consideration from drivers. Please help by observing speed limits.

We have asked Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) to help us resolve the issue of the absence of a footway link, which was promised, between the new "Blacksmiths Way" development and Mill Close/Mill Road which was intended as an alternative and safer link to the village centre. There remain concerns about the Blacksmiths Way footway which joins Framlingham Road on the bend and this is being addressed by SCC and the developer.

The battle continues....

Thankyou from the Highways Group

Laxfield has a new bus Service!

Buses will run 4 time per day (Monday to Saturday)

Please use it as much as you can – to save the environment and ensure it continues

Diss - Eye - Stradbroke - Framlingham 482										
Operator	Monday to Friday (Except Bank Holidays)					Saturday				
	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM
Notes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Diss, Bus Station (adj)	–	1015	1321	1533	1821	–	1015	1321	1533	1821
Diss, Waveney Road (SE-bound)	–	1019	1325	1537	1825	–	1019	1325	1537	1825
Eye, High School (opp)	–	1031	1337	1549	1837	–	1031	1337	1549	1837
Eye, Hartismere Hospital (opp)	–	1032	1338	1550	1838	–	1032	1338	1550	1838
Eye, Town Hall (opp)	–	1033	1339	1551	1839	–	1033	1339	1551	1839
Stradbroke, White Hart (opp)	0710	1048	1354	1606	1854	0710	1048	1354	1606	1854
Ashfield Green, Nursery (adj)	0712	1053	1400	1611	–	0712	1053	1400	1611	–
Laxfield, Village Hall (opp)	0716	1059	1406	1617	–	0716	1059	1406	1617	–
Badingham, Pound Corner (S-bound)	0725	1106	1413	1624	–	0725	1106	1413	1624	–
Badingham, White Horse (S-bound)	0726	1109	1416	1627	–	0726	1109	1416	1627	–
Dennington, The Dennington Queen (o/s)	0729	1116	1420	1634	–	0729	1116	1420	1634	–
Framlingham, Shelter (adj)	0746	1122	1426	1640	–	0746	1122	1426	1640	–
Sunday										
no service										

NOTES
1 Sponsored by Suffolk County Council
OPERATORS
SIM Simonds 01379 647 300
Suffolk 13/04/2026

Framlingham - Stradbroke - Eye - Diss 482										
Operator	Monday to Friday (Except Bank Holidays)					Saturday				
	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM	SIM
Notes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Framlingham, Shelter (adj)	0751	1125	1430	1718	–	0751	1125	1430	1718	–
Dennington, The Dennington Queen (opp)	0757	1131	1436	1724	–	0757	1131	1436	1724	–
Badingham, White Horse (N-bound)	0801	1135	1440	1728	–	0801	1135	1440	1728	–
Badingham, Pound Corner (NE-bound)	0804	1139	1444	1732	–	0804	1139	1444	1732	–
Laxfield, Village Hall (adj)	0811	1145	1450	1738	–	0811	1145	1450	1738	–
Ashfield Green, Nursery (opp)	0817	1151	1456	1744	–	0817	1151	1456	1744	–
Stradbroke, White Hart (o/s)	0822	1156	1501	1749	–	0822	1156	1501	1749	–
Eye, Town Hall (adj)	0837	1211	1516	1804	–	0837	1211	1516	1804	–
Eye, Hartismere Hospital (adj)	0838	1212	1517	1805	–	0838	1212	1517	1805	–
Eye, High School (o/s)	0840	1213	1518	1806	–	0840	1213	1518	1806	–
Diss, Station Road (NW-bound)	0852	1219	1524	1812	–	0852	1219	1524	1812	–
Diss, Bus Station (adj)	0856	1223	1528	1816	–	0856	1223	1528	1816	–
Sunday										
no service										

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LAXFIELD WILDLIFE GROUP

The group has been active over the past year, both with practical tasks and raising awareness of wildlife in the parish. These have mainly been driven by the Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 – 2030 for the parish which was produced by the group in conjunction with the Parish Council's Green Spaces group.

A full survey of the hedge around the churchyard has been undertaken and an improvement plan drawn up. Work started during the winter with the corner by the Co-op being cleared and new hedging planted. Volunteers from the group were also involved in cutting down the huge Cherry Laurel bush in the churchyard and reseeding the bare ground where it had once stood. The bush is regrowing, but will be kept in check. Nest boxes, a bug hotel and compost bins have been put up in the churchyard and new habitat created using some of the wood from the Horse Chestnut which had to be felled. Work parties are held on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9.30am – 12.30pm, mainly around the church, but may also be at different locations around the village.



Some members of the group are involved with Suffolk Barn Owl Project (BOSS) in monitoring many of the barn owl boxes around the parish during the breeding season and with Save Our Suffolk Swifts to plot the fortunes of Swifts in the village. We are also looking for volunteers with knowledge of wild flowers to help monitor some of the grassland regeneration schemes in the village.



We would encourage anyone in the village to send in records or photos of what they see, either by using the iNaturalist app or by putting the details in the box in the church porch. A nature trail around the village is in preparation and a draft version will be available for use during the summer. A start has been made on identifying important areas and corridors for wildlife which will help us to plan future work.

An article on local wildlife appears every month in the parish newsletter and we have had a display at the parish consultation afternoon in January and at the market in April – thanks to the Parish Council for allowing us to do this.

If you'd like to know more about what the group is doing or would like to get involved, please talk to Mike Turton or Rob Sutton or email laxfieldwildlifegroup@gmail.com

Mike Turton

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

It has been a busy, but fantastic first full year as your county councillor in the Hoxne and Eye division, and this report sets out what I have been getting on with on your behalf.



Locality Funding

I have used my locality budget to support a wide range of projects across our local villages, as well as reallocating funds from previously chosen projects where money could not be spent before it expired.

- Stradbroke Tennis Club - Equipment for junior tennis open day and coaching - £500
- Metfield Parish Council - Replacement laptop - £380
- Fressingfield Shed - Kitchen improvements, sink and hot water - £500
- Fressingfield Shed - Heating equipment - £500
- Stradbroke Parish Council - Winding mechanism for village clock - £2,000
- Denham Community Council - Kitchen equipment - £290
- 1st Fressingfield Scouts - Going Green project: solar panels at Scout HQ - £500
- Eyes Open CIC - Commercial oven - £500
- Eye Town Council - CCTV - £1,200
- Laxfield Volunteers - Power tool for public rights of way maintenance - £3,000

Local Highways Funding

In addition to my locality budget, I have been able to use my highways budget for the year, and maximising the funding available by reallocating some previous funding to new projects where the money would have otherwise been lost. This money will then be used to support the following projects through the town or parish councils over the next 12 months.

- Fressingfield - Speed indicator devices and posts - £1,000
- Laxfield - Speed indicator devices and posts - £3,000
- Mendham - Speed indicator devices and posts - £2,250
- Metfield - Speed indicator devices - £1,500
- Wilby - Gateways - £2,500
- Eye - Speed indicator devices and posts - £2,250

My Work at Endeavour House

At county level, I have:

- Voted to bring all 45 Suffolk libraries back under council control, protecting them for communities across the county
- Voted against the council's involvement in the EcoPower solar farm proposal, which would have seen 1,500 acres of agricultural land across Eye, Occold, Brome and neighbouring parishes removed from food production
- Supported Suffolk's devolution deal, paving the way for closer working between Suffolk and Norfolk on transport, infrastructure and economic development
- Backed increased investment in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision, with 200 new specialist places planned across the county
- Supported the £8m secured for new and improved bus services, with 17 new or enhanced routes launched in the autumn
- Voted for a budget that protects frontline services, while the council works through significant financial pressure from rising demand in adult and children's social care

Highways and Infrastructure

Highways remain a persistent concern across our area, from overdue resurfacing works to the replacement of fallen or rusting signposts. We have managed to have a number of roads fully

resurfaced, and with more planned for works later this summer, it should mean that the overall driving experience for residents and visitors is vastly improved in some places.

LGR and Devolution Update

This year could have looked very different, as on the 7th of May we were due to have a Mayoral election for the new Norfolk and Suffolk Combined Authority. This was pulled by the government back to 2028 in December of last year, with them looking to prioritise the complete restructuring of local government in Suffolk before establishing the new combined authority. We put forward a strong case for a single unitary authority for Suffolk, and despite our best efforts, the government has not listened to our proposals, and gone against their own guidance on LGR to pursue a three-unitary model for our county. Residents of Hoxne and Eye will be placed into the new East Suffolk unitary authority, which will have elections in May 2027, before coming into force on the 1st of April 2028. As a result of the need to both reallocate existing district services to the new unitary authority, and now also the breaking up and disaggregation of the county council's existing services, it is unfortunate that we will likely see a reduction in the quality of services available to residents, due to both the governments misguided decision making, and the subsequent lack of funding that is being made available to the new unitary authorities to deal with this transition. It will be a difficult few years for local government in Suffolk, and so that I hope the government recognises this and steps in to provide the additional and necessary funding and resources that will be needed to not endanger crucial frontline services.

So What Next?

It has been a privilege to represent you on the council since October 2024, and as you may be aware, county-wide elections on the 7th of May 2026 will see the residents of Hoxne and Eye go to the polls to elect a new county councillor.

You can find out more about the candidates

here: <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/elections/local.suffolk.hoxne-eye.2026-05-07/hoxne-eye/>

As ever, I will be continuing to work on your priorities and can be contacted at Henry.lloyd@suffolk.gov.uk

Henry Lloyd, your County Councillor

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

The matter of LGR, Local Government Reorganisation, is continuing. In March the Government decided to opt for the three Unitary solution instead of only one for all of Suffolk. Elections for the Unitaries will take place in May 2027. The Unitaries will become functional on the 1st of April 2028. The first year is to be spent on creating functionality, a lot of work. The existing District Councils will cease when the Unitaries start in earnest. This means that present District Councillors will be able to, or even expected to, do 11 months past their 'expiry date'. During those 11 months I anticipate that some Officers may leave, others will without a doubt be seconded to help with the creation of the new administrations. Thus, we need to crack on with what we want done during this year. As we now know the government finally decided to go ahead with the County Council elections in May this year. Luckily, the District Council Officers were well prepared for this last minute change of heart. Anyone elected to be a County Councillor will serve for only two years, up to April 2028. To complete this piece, I'd like to add that the Mayoral Elections are still planned to happen in May 2028.



An unexpected problematic issue arose during the early summer of last year. A company called 'Connexin' started to put up 12 m high poles in various villages. It was stated to be in order to facilitate broadband. They even took it upon themselves to alter the previously announced locations on the very day of erecting poles. Highways had given a preliminary permit covering the entire county. That was withdrawn in light of the recent events. After these early events no more poles have emerged to my knowledge, the project seems to have entered a state of dormancy.

A Community Governance Review has been launched, this one not dealing with any boundary changes but looking at any wishes expressed by Parishes to alter their numbers of Councillors or to merge with a neighbouring parish. In this area it was only Stradbroke that requested a change, decreasing the number from 13 to 11, making it easier to maintain quorum. All requests were collected by Officers and discussed within a working group within the District Council. I am part of this group. The process has been smooth and the project is expected to be finalized late this autumn, after all due consultation has been done.

We all know too well that water resources are scant in our area. As more houses are being built and more need from businesses develop something needs to be done. A very vast NSIP (Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project) is proposed. It involves extraction of water from the Waveney, purification plants and storage reservoirs. One will be a 'Central Service Reservoir' located approx. 25 miles to the east of Heveningham Hall. This will be connected to the 'Western Service Reservoir', to be put in an area a few miles to the west of Eye. There are some options as to where the pipelines between these will be put. Members of the public, businesses, Parishes and district councillors were asked to give their views, based on written info plus maps. I did my best with this for our area trying to work out where the least disturbance would occur. Admittedly the map wasn't easy to assess. In the 3rd quarter of this year Essex and Suffolk Water will announce their preferred option corridors. In mid 2027 a statutory public consultation is planned. A DCO, (Development Consent Order) is scheduled to be applied for in the first half of 2028. After a few more somewhat briefer steps land can finally be acquired and the actual digging starts. The email address to the company is swsp@nwl.co.uk

This has been another year of struggling to get the New Street Close parking problem resolved in Stradbroke. This was first approved by the District Council some 14 years ago but after that nothing happened. After having spoken to several one Officer did get a quote for the works only for him somewhat later to tell me there was now no money. Since, amongst other things, I have been and am in touch with fellow Councillors who are in the Cabinet. We have visited New Street Close and met with people living there. Presently some ideas are being considered, whether it will be workable we don't yet know. There is a will to help.

In Laxfield there is a stretch of path connecting one area to another one, this has never been completed and Parish Clerks and I have seen a number of Officers to no avail so far. The Parish Clerk has and is, putting a lot of time into this. Presently there is another Officer on the case and we can only hope that this will be resolved. That would enable wheelchair users, mobility scooters and prams to use this connection.

As always there is so called 'case work', this when different members of the public get in touch asking for my input in trying to solve a problem. Sometimes there is success, at others there is disappointment.

Finally I'd like to encourage applications for neighbourhood grants, at this time of the year there is money in the till.

Yours Sincerely, Anders Linder, your District Councillor.

Visit our website www.laxfield-pc.gov.uk

E-mail: parishclerk@laxfield-pc.gov.uk



You are all welcome to attend future Parish Council meetings.

Future dates and agendas are available on our website and on the Parish Council notice board, outside the church.



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