**LAYER DE LA HAYE PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**MONDAY 11th MAY 2026, LAYER VILLAGE HALL, 7:30pm**

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| Chair | Councillor Mrs M. A. Hughes MBE | Present |
| Vice Chair | Councillor Mrs C Chambers | Present |
| | Councillor Mrs S Bennett | Present |
| | Councillor Mr C. Chambers | Absent |
| | Councillor Mrs M Holmes | Present |
| | Councillor Mrs S.E. Hughes | Present |
| | Councillor Mr I.P. Moore | Present |
| | Councillor Mr P.R. Pyke | Present |
| | Councillor Mr. B Turner | Present |
| In attendance | Clerk & RFO | |

**2627/014 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

a. **RESOLVE** election of chair to the council *It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Mr. B Turner as Chair, nominated by Cllr Mrs. M Holmes, seconded by Cllr Mr. P Pyke, agreed by all.*
b. **RECEIVE** declaration of acceptance of office *Cllr Mr. B Turner signed the acceptance of office forms, countersigned by the Clerk & RFO.*

**2627/015 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

a. **RESOLVE** election of vice-chair to the council *It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Mrs. C Chambers as Vice Chair, nominated by Cllr Mrs. S Hughes, seconded by Cllr Mr. B Turner, agreed by all.*
c. **RECEIVE** declaration of acceptance of office *Cllr Mrs. C Chambers signed the acceptance of office forms, countersigned by the Clerk & RFO.*

**2627/016 ADOPTION OF COUNCILLORS**

a. **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** adoption of additional councillors to the Parish Council
    - Sarah Hughes *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the co-option of Sarah Hughes as councillor for the parish Council, nominated by Cllr Mrs. S Bennett, seconded by Cllr Mr. P Pyke, agreed by all.*

**2627/017 APOLOGIES - RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** apologies for absence – *It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the apologies of Colchester City Councillors K Bentley and A Ellis.*

**2627/018 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - RECEIVE** declarations of interest relating to the agenda, **NOTE** decisions of requests for dispensation relating to the agenda *Cllr Mrs. C Chambers in relation to finance due to occupation/employer. Dispensation given to remain in the meeting.*

**2627/019 CONFIRMATION OF SIGNING OF DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE/RETURNS**
*All councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office as well as the Nil Returns for the elections.*

**2627/020 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** *(not exceeding 15 minutes, individuals can speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each)*

a. **RECEIVE** reports from City Councillors - *NONE*
b. **RECEIVE** public comments relating to the agenda or matters for future consideration
    - *Mark Jones gave his views on the proposed placement of bollards around Malting Green*
    - *Lucy White suggested cameras instead*
    - *David Cash asked about fencing around the play area on the recreation ground*
    - *Martin Hopkins asked about the school designing signs to help with dog waste issues*

**2627/021 MINUTES** (previously circulated)

a. **APPROVE** minutes of the previous meeting – for signature by the Chair *The minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED**, proposed by Cllr Mrs. S Hughes, seconded by Cllr Mrs. S Bennett, agreed by all.*
b. **RECEIVE** minutes of the *previous* Personnel & Finance Approval Committees Meeting *The approved minutes of the previous committees that had meetings were **RECEIVED**.*

**2627/022 GOVERNANCE**

- **CONSIDER** and **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** recommendations of the Personnel Committee - *NONE*
- **CONSIDER** and **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** recommendations of the Finance Approval Committee – *The Finance Approval Committee received the AGAR forms and recommend that the main PC meeting sign these.*
- Risk Register review - **CONSIDER** then formulate any resolution deemed necessary, along with any further actions *The Clerk & RFO reported that the risk re the cycle race had been removed as agreed at the last meeting. The Internal Auditor had signalled that, in her opinion, the risk about the village envelope should not be on our risk register as it was not something in our control. The meeting discussed this and the view was to keep the risk as any redrawing of the village envelope would have an impact on village life.*
- **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** the amended Asset Register (post internal audit) *It was RESOLVED to **APPROVE t**he amended Asset Register post Internal Audit.*
- Receive Annual Internal Audit Report *The Internal Audit Report was received*
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return
    - Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 - **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** and sign
    - Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26 - **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** and sign

  *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the signing of Section 1 and Section 2 of the AGAR forms, duly signed by the Chair – proposed by Cllr Mr. I Moore, seconded by Cllr Mrs. S Hughes, agreed by all.*

    - Note the Exercise of Public Rights dates *The Public Rights Dates were noted.*
- External Audit – update by Clark & RFO *The Clerk & RFO updated the meeting that all was ready for the External Audit submission with the signing of the forms and that the information pack for the External Audit would be sent the next day.*
- **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** all existing policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** all existing polices, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.*
- **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** the continuation of the Personnel and Finance Approval Committees with the existing membership and terms of reference *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the continuation of both committees.*
- **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** the meeting dates for the year (continuance of 2nd Monday of the month for PC and Finance Approval, quarterly on the same day for Personnel. *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the continuation of the second Monday of the month for all meetings.*
- Review bank signatories *Bank signatories were reviewed. The Clerk and RFO noted that Mary Anne Hughes MBE will shortly be removed as a bank signatory.*

**2627/023 PLANNING**

a. *NONE*

**2627/024 FINANCE**

a. **RECEIVE** update from Clerk & RFO/Chair Finance Approval Committee *The Clerk & RFO updated the meeting that a VAT refund had been received as expected and that EDF had been contacted to change the way we pay (and thus simplify book keeping).*

b. **RESOLVE** to **APPROVE** the increase in budget line for Payroll Services from £126 to £135 - from general reserves *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the increase in budget.*

**2627/025 PARISH MATTERS** – for each item, discuss and formulate any resolution deemed necessary, along with any further actions

a. Website help/FAQs *Following comments from a resident to Cllr Mr. P Pyke, Cllr Mrs. S Bennett provided a short guide to navigation around the website which has been uploaded by the Clerk & RFO. The Clerk & RFO also noted that Cllr Mrs. S. Bennett has access to the website for maintenance purposes to aid in business continuity.*
b. S106 Agreements/5 Year Plan Working Party – progress update from Clerk & RFO. *The Clerk & RFO updated the meeting on the progress of the following projects:*
    - *Recreation Ground (supplier selection started)*
    - *Pond (project ready – seeking s106 funds release)*
    - *Village Hall Roof (supplier selection started)*
c. CALC Meeting update – *Cllr Mrs. M Holmes updated the meeting*
d. Multi Sports Court/Allotments Lease - progress update from Clerk & RFO *The Clerk & RFO updated the meeting regarding the latest lease position and a potential Enovert grant application.*
e. Ponds update (s106) - progress update from Clerk & RFO *As above...*
f. Newsletter update – Feedback re Parish Magazine – changes for next year *Some corrections are needed for next year regarding parish magazine distribution points.*
g. PlayQuip – repairs required *It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the repairs to the nest swing and space climbing frame, proposed by Cllr Mrs. C Chambers, seconded by Cllr Mr. P Pyke, agreed by all. **ACTION:** Clerk & RFO to contact PlayQuip*

**2627/026 CLERK & RFO REPORT**

a. Correspondence received/sent *Contact from an organisation offering to take over unused sports fields was considered and deemed not to be suitable for the village.*
b. Business Continuity Planning (Clerk & RFO processes) – Clerk & RFO *As covered above re website, other functions carried out by the Clerk & RFO will be documented to ensure business continuity.*
c. **REVIEW** action tracker *The action tracker was reviewed.*

**2627/027 BRIEF REPORTS OF MEMBERS – matters for forthcoming agenda**

- *Cllr Mrs. C Chambers – Junction at The Fox – lines and signs all worn off so it is not obvious that it is a crossroads. There has been one serious accident and two near misses. **ACTION:** Clerk & RFO to log with Essex Highways*
- *Cllr Mrs. M Holmes – PROW 3 is now open again*
- *Cllr Mrs. S Bennett – Can we add photos to the website as placeholders cannot be removed and consequently that page looks unsightly*

**2627/028 RESOLVE** pursuant to s1(2) Public Bodied Act 1960 for the public and press to leave the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**2627/029** Process for co-opting further councillors *The process for co-opting councillors was discussed and agreed.*

**2627/030 NEXT MEETING - 8th June 2026 19:30**