



LAYER DE LA HAYE PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Mrs Mary Hughes MBE

Parish Clerk: Mr Mark Large

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT – The Annual Parish Meeting for Layer de la Haye will be held at the Village Hall, New Cut on Monday 11th May 2025, commencing at 7pm.

Local Government electors for the parish will be entitled to vote at the meeting which will be open to the public and members of the press.

The business to be transacted at the meeting will be as follows:-

1. *Acceptance of minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 12th May 2025 (appendix 1)*
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, proposed by Terry Hoyle, seconded by Barry Hughes, all agreed.
2. *To receive the Chairman's Annual Report for the year 2025/26*
The Chairman delivered the annual report (see below) followed by words provided by the Colchester City Councillors who were unable to be present, read out by the Clerk & RFO (see below).
3. *To receive the Annual Financial Report for the year 2025/26 (to be circulated at the meeting)*
The Annual Financial Report was received with no questions being raised.
4. *Parish Question Time*
Questions from the audience were invited:
 - *Lucy White informed the meeting that an agreement had been reached re the permissive footpath being used by horses so long as they stay the right side of the hedge. Lucy asked who was responsible for cutting the hedge/replanting. The land owner is responsible for cutting hedges, however, the Solar Farm need to replant hedging that has not survived.*
 - *Terry Hoyle asked if more benches could be positioned round the village to help those less mobile*
 - *Mark Jones asked when the solar farm income would be received. It was confirmed that the first payment had been received this year and was used to fund a deep clean of the multi sports courts. It was also confirmed that the majority of solar farm income in future years would be used for projects benefiting the village.*



- *Dave Cash asked about s106 money and when the village would receive it. It was confirmed that Denbury had paid all that was due so far to Colchester City Council and that Layer de la Haye Parish Council has various projects in train to improve the village, including new recreation ground equipment for children, teens and adults, updating the flat roof on the village hall and adding solar panels, protection Malting Green from drivers illegally using the green, maintain Malting Green Pond to name but a few.*
- *Many thanks were offered to Anne as she steps down by members of the public, councillors and the Clerk & RFO.*
- *Terry Hoyle also thanked all councillors for the voluntary work they do.*



2026 Chairmans Final Report

With enormous sadness, after 50 years, on Layer's Parish Council I am now retiring.

I have enjoyed being a part of a thriving community, I have enjoyed helping those who have asked for help, I have enjoyed contributing to life in the village, but I am still here, and if you need me, just bang on my door.

In 1975 the new estate had just about been finished, and we worried about integrating the new families into the Village. Now we have another new estate.

I was 35 and quite terrified when I first joined and completely over awed. The Chairman was Betty Bunting who was a formidable WI chairman. She was a very kind woman, and she made me plant the first trees in 1977 for Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee- three red oak trees next to the pond on Malting Green which are still standing strong. Who would ever have thought I would be planting another red oak in 2022 for the Queens Platinum Jubilee!

The first clerk I knew was Edward Ronca, he wrote the minutes the night before the meeting, and then read them out, expecting everyone to have forgotten what had been agreed the month before, and would change them as he would like, and of course no agenda. After Edward was Virginia Bunting, and then Sarah Hughes, plus a few shorter-term Clerks, they did wonders for the PC.

Canon Allen was the Priest at the time with only one Church to look after, most knew him and his wife who did much around the Village and they lived in the Vicarage, their door was always open. Now we are onto our eighth Vicar, Rev. Jo Wood and sadly the Vicarage about to be sold.

Over the years there have been so many changes, we are now hide bound with rules and regulations and a mountain of policies govern us, so that we are not meant to use too much common sense!

The next big change coming, are the new Unitary Authorities being set up. So far Parish Councils are to be left alone, there is always the mutter the PCs will have more devolved power, I watch that space with interest, normally it means something else has been taken from us.

Many of the same problems we had back then are the same problems we still have now, namely; dog poos and bad parking. We used to have a Policeman who came routinely to meetings. They were always around the Village and joined in the Youth Club activities, not always popular. Once two Policeman where even seen riding around on horses. Now I think we wonder what they even look like.

A big excitement was the building of the 10 houses at Mill Fields for local people, HRH The Princess Royal who is patron of the Rural Housing Trust came to open them, and then onto the Village Hall where she met a few people. About this time the Bunting flats were built in Waterworks close for the Village. This has been a bit of a disappointment as Village rights to nominate was removed. When I joined, we were allowed to nominate people for council houses, which meant they had to be locals, wish that still happened.

The play area was nothing like today's, there had been a massive fundraising in the Village to install a roundabout, that didn't last too long, Health and Safety said it was dangerous. Once again new equipment is to be erected from section 106 money.



There was only one Village Hall with a kitchen at the back, this had started by being the meeting place for the Mothers Union from the early 1900s. The QEH was built in the 1980s with special permission for the hall to be named after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the second. 10 years ago, the annex was rebuilt, and now the PC are working on more insulation above the QEH plus solar panels.

A great excitement for me was being awarded an MBE, such a surprise and happiness going to receive it at Buckingham Palace from the then Prince Charles. When asked by friends as to why I received it, my dear husband said it was because I talk too much.

A great joy and Village event was the making of the Jubilee Tapestry hanging in the Village Hall, so many people took part in making this. It was truly a team effort by the whole village. 2000 the year of the millennium, there had been much discussion about how we as a Village should commemorate this important event. A meeting was called and two ladies came up with the idea of a tapestry. So many people took part in making this; we were very lucky to have an artist in the Village who designed the tapestry and coordinated the colours. Gill Brown who ran the post office collared anyone who went in there and sent them off with a picture, wools, and marked out tapestry to complete, most families got each member of their family to do at least a stitch. Eventually after sewing it all together, Mr Green framed it, and Mick Burtenshaw hung in it the Village Hall, and the Mayor came and unveiled the completed picture.

Covid was such an odd time, we set up the Village Volunteers in a couple of days (the wonders of modern technology) I never left the house for 4 months but organised everything from my kitchen table. People got their shopping, and cash was sent to houses when needed, buddies were found to befriend those living on their own.

We have always worked well with the water company. 30 years ago, they leased us some land for Multi Sports Courts, where tennis, netball, and walking football are played, and the adjoining bit of land is used for allotments. Thank you to the water company who also helped fund the Annex.

Heatherfields below the Village Hall is rented for use of people in the Village. This has become very popular, probably overused by non-Layer people, which is a shame, we used to go and sit there in the evening listening to the Nightingales.

Malting Green has ever been a joy; its pond has been cleared over the years and sometime this year we will have it cleaned again. There is always the worry that travellers might come and camp, also the boy racers from time to time think it's the perfect place to do doughnuts. As its common land it's illegal to drive on there. With this in mind, we are going to put bollards around the edge.

I think, to have a solar farm in the Village was a bit of a shock to all of us, not exactly beautiful to look at, but I personally am happier with this than more houses. The village also benefits with a yearly grant.

Before I finish, I must thank all those who give so much time to making this Village what it is. The unsung heroes, the litter warriors, Mike Strain keeping the bus shelter clear of rubbish, Ian Moore who rushes around doing small jobs, look how clean and tidy the Village Hall always looks.

And of course, our new Clerk who is now discovering what it is to be at everyone's beck and call. He does seem to have taken to the job like a duck to water, I have really enjoyed working with you, and thank you, and I know you will be of enormous help to the new Chairman.



I shall miss the friendship of the Councillors, our meetings, the fact that they are all here to work for the Village, the fact I can ring up any of them, for advice and assistance, and get help, also our two City Councillors who have always been there to help, advise and encourage.

So many things have happened over the years, my parents-in-law moved to the Mill in the 40's because it was such a sleepy small Village, I worry that there is now far too much building, and I worry we are losing the intimacy of a Village, when we all knew each other. On the other hand, I look back at the fetes, the big lunch when people came and joined in, so perhaps our family is just getting bigger, I believe it's called progress!!

Colchester City Councillors

Dear Anne and all on the Parish Council. Andrew and I are so sorry that we cannot be with you on this very special night where Anne will stand down as a Parish Councillor and Chairman with many decades of service behind her. We both have to be at an important City Council meeting following the elections last Thursday.

Anne is an extraordinary person in so many ways and for Andrew and I, she has been a constant at the Parish Council and at the heart of village life. I have known Anne for 24 years and Andrew for just over 20 as we also have had long associations with Layer de la Haye during our time as City and until last week me as a County Councillor.

Many of Layer's great achievements can be traced back to Anne and her family, including Barry. I can remember the annual dog show, as part of the village fete, which I compered once. It was sort of Crufts meets Horse of the Year. What fun.

The Cubs and Scouts and a whole lot of other activities which bind a village together are all down to Anne. And among all the battles with developers, potholes, speeding, solar farms, the list goes on, we've always had fun and had the chance to laugh together.

Anne is one in a million and people like her don't often pass this way; she is treasured by many, not least of all by Andrew and I, the boys, although we are old men now!

Anne - thank you for your guidance, friendship but above all your service to the community. There is a phrase that truly sums up Anne which is this:

'That there is no limit to what a person can do or what they can achieve, providing they don't mind who takes the credit.' That is Anne in a sentence.

Much of what is Layer de la Haye is because of Anne.

God Bless you

Love

Kevin and Andrew.