

**Draft Minutes of Langham Annual Parish Meeting/ Annual Assembly held on:
Thursday 1st June 2024 6pm at
Langham Community Centre**

Present: Cllr Armstrong, Cllr Bottwood, Cllr Freeman,
Cllr Piper-Hunter
Colchester City Council - Cllr Tom Rowe
Apologies were sent by Cllr Brockman, Cllr Ogawa,

Attendance: Clerk Carol Harbach

7 members of the public

The Chairman started welcoming everyone to the meeting and with a reminder that this was not a Parish Council meeting but an assembly of the village electorate and it is an opportunity for Langham residents to discuss and debate issues in an open forum.

The PC has a duty to facilitate this meeting on behalf of the electorate and provide a report. This would be completed in two sections which is the Chairman's report and a report on our financial position. Following this the Chairman of the Langham Community Council will provide an update on the Community Centre activities during the past year.

Thank you to Cllr Bottwood who has served the council for the past 20 years. Thanked for all his hard work over the years.

This meeting also provides an opportunity for our County and City Councillors to provide us with an update.

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were agreed to be an accurate account of events.

Proposed Cllr Freeman seconded Cllr Armstrong All agreed.

24/40 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly meeting in 2023

These had been circulated and were available on the website and were agreed as an accurate account of events.

Proposed Cllr Freeman seconded Cllr Armstrong All agreed.

24/41 Parish Council's Chairman's Report for 2023

Cllr Armstrong stated that as he has just been elected Chairman, he asked Cllr Bottwood (previous Chair) to give the report.

Cllr Bottwood reported as below;

Looking back at the past year

This year was another election year for the Parish Council (they happen on a four-year cycle). We had six Councillor nominations which left us with a single vacancy. As the number of posts were not exceeded by the total number of nominations there was no requirement for Langham to engage in the formal

election process which took place on 2nd May. The Parish Council can now co-opt another Councillor and work has been undertaken to recruit an additional Councillor which is planned to happen at the PC meeting on 5th June.

Recreation Ground Projects

The formal opening of the Children's Play Area extension took place on 20th April this year. Although the extension has been in use since the King's Coronation event the formal opening was delayed as we were undertaking snagging work and the wet weather conditions made the field very boggy. The event was attended by a good number of residents, their children and our major sponsor Enover. The equipment supplier Kompan also attended the event. We had mixed weather on the day but the new pop-up marquee purchased by the PC helped us congregate in a dry area during the rain periods. We also had great support from the Community Shop who provided refreshments on the day.

We have had three football teams using the Recreation Ground this year at various times and new Goals have been provided by the Parish Council. The Ground maintenance contract has also been renewed and we have moved our grass cutting contract to Moser. This seems to be working out well and a number of residents have commented on the good condition of the field and the Children's play area.

A lot of time was also spent in evaluating the Recreation Ground for potential use by local cricket teams. This activity was supported by Essex Cricket and a local team that were keen to use the facility and ran a number of "All Stars" fun day events for juniors.

Part of the evaluation was a ball striking assessment which was carried out by LaboSport. Unfortunately, this indicated that the field was not large enough to cater for long hitting to certain of the boundary locations. So, from a health and safety perspective we were unable to progress this project even though we searched unsuccessfully for an organisation that could provide safety netting to the desired height. The irony of this is that a number of grounds that are in current use in Essex would not pass this assessment if it were carried out retrospectively but as this would have been a new site current rules and regulations have to be applied.

The cricket assessment and the possible impact of safety netting in the tennis court area delayed the progress on the multi-use games area and we are now moving forward with the tender process on this. As a reminder a new multi-use sports court would also provide an additional tennis court, thus allowing the expansion of the tennis club. We have two courts at the moment and an additional court would allow the tennis club to enter tournaments.

There has also been a lot of recent interest in the use of the football pitch both for regular matches and training facilities.

Funding for new Recreation Ground facilities continues to be a key challenge and to supplement the Parish Council Precept we have successfully obtained funding from Grants and developer contributions also referred to as S106 funding.

This money should be earmarked to ensure that local bodies can make use of funding to enable new residents to have access to a reasonable range of facilities and so that they can integrate with the community without causing capacity issues, thus mitigating the impact of the local development. The Parish Council, the Community Centre and the Community shop have all benefitted from this funding since the process was introduced.

Moving on to Recreation Ground Events

Bonfire Night was again a very successful event and we continued with the online ticket sales, live entertainment, food trucks and a beer tent with craft ales and card payment facilities. We had additional challenges this time around as the weather was not kind to us and a number of vehicles were marooned in the mud including several of the food trucks. The wind direction on the night also presented a challenge as we had to move our safety barriers back so that spectators were outside of the projected fall out zone for the fireworks. We gained some valuable experience from the challenges faced which should help us with the next event. Financial figures for this event are included in the finance report.

Moving on to Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Matters

Sewerage Issues

Housing development in Langham continues to be a major concern and the Parish Council have continued to engage with Anglian Water over worries about foul sewerage network overflows and headroom capacity at the Langham Water Recycling Centre. Residents are rightly concerned that housing stock should not be increased unless we have capacity to prevent overflows in the sewerage network, which continue to occur creating hygiene and pollution problems.

A third open meeting with Anglian Water took place on 2nd February this was again facilitated by the Parish Council and was attended by Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, representatives from Anglian Water and about 60 local residents. It was clear that no real progress had been made by Anglian Water during the past year and their responses mainly made reference to more extensive network monitoring so that over investment at the WRC did not occur. From their perspective preventing water ingress to the foul sewer network from

ground flow seemed to be their only course of action. Sir Bernard again made reference to the lack of progress and has taken this up again with Sir Peter Simpson CEO of AW. However, no emergency plan for Langham has materialised to date and there are still no concrete plans to upgrade the Water Recycling Centre infrastructure before the end of their 5-year investment cycle which runs until 2025.

Colchester Local Plan Review

We are now engaging with the LPA on the Colchester Local Plan Review phase. We had a meeting with Karen Syrett on 29th May at the Langham CC. We discussed the Settlement boundary review, the Langham Call for sites and desktop review, Neighbourhood plans, and the plan for a Langham questionnaire.

Settlement Boundary Review

This is reporting that there is scope for proportionate growth to provide infill to bring together two separate parts of the village whilst recognising that there are capacity issues at the Langham WRC and poor capacity to manage surface water and foul water

Langham Call for Sites

Six sites were submitted by landowners:

Three sites on land between Park Lane and School Road

1. One 40 Hectares (450 units) 10664
2. One 13.4 Hectares Land south of School Lane (100 units) 10666
3. One 8.1 Hectares north side of Park Lane west of Wick Road (120 units) 10250

One 9.9 Hectares east of Wick Road west of A12 10665 (100 plus units)

One opposite Wick Road 0.79 Hectares (11 Units) 10291

One 0.4 Hectares Land west of Langham Lane at Junction of Park Lane (4 units) 10185

Site evaluation is taking place and it is likely that each site will be assessed as Green/Amber/Red as previously done in 2017. No commitment on dates for completing this could be given and it was thought that the election impact may slow this down. It was intimated by the LPA that our housing survey may need to be done before the results are known.

Desktop Review

This is ongoing and the results of this will be reported to us when known by the LPA.

Neighbourhood Plans

This was discussed but it was not clear what the benefits of this would be as the LPA can override them if they are not signed off and the work required to do this is substantial. Further thought needs to be given to this by LPC.

Current Progress on key Housing Developments

Vistry Homes (46 homes)

Housing sales on the Vistry Homes site have dried up and homes are being passed to one of Vistry's sister companies for market rental.

Williamsons Developments Site next to the LCC

Progress on this is extremely slow and a number of the onerous planning conditions are still outstanding. It is unclear but it may be delayed by the Anglian Water issues.

National Grid's Plans for the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons network

Public Consultation

The date for returning comments on the public consultation has now been extended until 26th July 2024.

LPC held a drop-in session earlier today to engage with local residents on any issues that they have relating to the public consultation and to ensure that any concerns can be captured in the Parish Council's response.

LPC engaged with James Ryan of Colchester City Council at a Parish Council meeting and followed this up with a "walk the route" exercise where we accompanied James and introduced him to residents and key landowners that will be affected by the proposed construction work that will be required for burying cables across the AONB. James Ryan is the National Strategic Infrastructure Project Manager and is responsible for compiling CCC's response to the consultation.

Traffic safety issues

This subject continues to be an issue for residents in Langham, Dedham and Boxted.

We are now over a year on since the automatic traffic counts and speed checks for various locations around the village were carried out. Although Dedham has had a report issued for this exercise Langham and Boxted have not. A three parishes group including Langham, Dedham and Boxted was set up to address key issues around the traffic “rat run” which is occurring as a result of vehicles taking alternative routes from Colchester to the A12 and beyond to Mistley and Manningtree. Key housing developments in those areas are contributing to this situation and traffic calming and re-routing will continue to be addressed by the Parish Council. The Parish Council also identified a number of projects for traffic calming that were on the list of projects being evaluated by the Colchester Local Highways Panel. However, a lack of Highway’s funding and information has prevented any progress on this.

Parish Council Marketing Activities

The PC Website and Facebook page continue to be stable and the website layout for events in particular has been modified. We continue to use social media platforms and where necessary leaflet distribution, including the Boxted and Langham Newsletter to get information out to residents.

Volunteers

Thanks to all of the following volunteers whose contributions and unwavering support make it possible to deliver projects and to support residents in order to make Langham such a great place to live and work.

- Starting with members of the Parish Council (and of course the Parish Clerk) who don’t always get the credit they deserve in trying to resolve local issues, supporting residents, running events and implementing change that benefits the local community.

- The Community Council play a really key role in keeping the Community Centre running and providing a home for the numerous club that we have in the village. Managing this facility is some challenge with the maintenance and security requirements, plus the facilities booking systems that are required. They are going through a challenging time at the moment maintaining profitability and with the turnover of key staff. The PC are committed to working with the LCC and trying to help where possible.

- The Community Shop

These volunteers are always ready to step up to the plate and work so hard to help local residents particularly through difficult times. They provide great help in supporting the Parish Council for events such as the Bonfire Night ticket sales and have helped considerably with upcoming D-Day Commemorations on 6th June.

- The litter picking team

Unsung heroes that regularly concentrate on litter picking around the village.

- The Local Heritage Group

That work to preserve and uncover knowledge on the history of the village.

- All volunteers that assist with Parish Council events such as the Bonfire Night and next week's D-Day celebrations.

Moving on to individuals:

- Ian Hollands who lobbies for recognition of past Langham people and groups so that important events are not forgotten. Plaques to commemorate the Basque children and Edith Pechey are the most recent projects.

- Charlotte Parker for support for all Parish Council events

- Suzanne Dawson and Dave Gill who provides their time and skills for the community garden.

- Elizabeth Ellis who does the village tub planting.

- Peter Dawson who ensures that the Defibrillator is kept in top condition and of course for his services as a First Responder.

- Bob Schofield, Chris Graves and Tony Ellis who continue to provide their valuable services as PC committee members.

And finally

- All other volunteers that may be missing from this list to which apologies are conveyed.

24/42

Parish Council's Finance Report for 2023

Langham Parish Council Finance report. 23/24 as at 31st March 2024

Total Income for 2023 2024 £ 130,055.06, and there were also transfers from other LPC accounts of £ 8,995.28 = total of £ 139,050.34.

Grants of £99,000 was obtained to pay towards the new play equipment.

Total Expenditure for 2023 2024 £ 126,510.10

Total balances held by LPC £58,341.40- of that the current Tennis maintenance fund is £ 15,415.36 and £73.92 for Langham Community Centre. The firework account is currently £16,420.16.

Overall increase of balance of capital is £29,222.92.

The income at the start of the year was anticipated to be around £85,512, the income was finalised at £130,055.06.

The increase is due to;

Grants being obtained for play equipment	£99,000.00
Precept	£22,998.00
Colchester City Council (CCC) Grants	£972.00
S106 claims for tennis benches and new football goals	£4,919.43
football lettings	£1,107.00
Verge cutting grant from Essex County Council	£363.18
Car park hire	£60.00
Refund of Clerk Bursary CiLCA course	£581.25
Refund from a supplier	£54.20

The expenditure was still at the expected levels for the year (£18,107.18 general expenditure) which includes the new play area equipment totalling £ 52,545.61 (ex VAT), and Langham Community Centre Projects £7,464.18. VAT has been paid at £15,416.92.

Maintenance of the recreation field which is the biggest expenditure item the council has totals £10,531.81 (Contractor - £1,842, Grounds Maintenance - £4,633.24, Recreation ground field expenditure of £3,986.72, water £69.85). Expenditure for Tennis benches - £1,824.93, VAS Sign - £4,640.

Fetes and events of £15,979.47 were other large purchases/expenditure for the village.

The parish council are now looking again at a new Multiuse games area (MUGA) for the forthcoming year.

There have been a few events this year with a Coronation celebrations which was very successful, and the firework event also taking place which was enjoyed and well supported by the village. There were the usual Remembrance services outside the Primary School and in Park Lane and poppies were also laid at the "unknown Soldier" on the Recreation Field. The playground opening day was also another event that took place recently. Other village activities are also currently being looked into for the forthcoming year.

The Christmas tree was also donated by the Parish Council and will be purchased again this year and hopefully a Carol Concert will also be returning outside, and around the tree just before Christmas Eve.

24/43

Visitors reports from City Borough and County City Councils

Cllr Rowe who attended the meeting gave a brief account of the year's events and spoke of his responsibilities and roles in CCC, Cllr Rowe is also on the scrutiny committee and there is a locality grant that he has available of £1500 which can be put towards council projects. Cllr Rowe will also be looking for a grant for public toilets for Langham, he will take this to CCC to see if they can help with this. Cllr Rowe will also be looking into S106 allocations in the future.

Conformation of the bus service was asked for and which contractor is going to be running it Cllr Rowe will follow this up and report back. Pot holes and verges were brought up and as this is mainly overseen by ECC he will follow this up to see what progress can be made. Cllr Rowe was asked to lobby for the removal of traffic lights over the A12 by the residents present. The Chairman thanked Cllr Rowe for his report and time and for attending tonight.

24/44

Alan Cadman Chair of Langham Community Centre report for 24
Langham Village Hall aka Langham Community Centre
Charity Commission Number 268187

Managing Trustees' Report 31st March 2024

The Managing Trustees present their Report for the year ended 31st March 2024, which should be read in conjunction with the attached Financial Statements for the same period.

Legal Status

The Charity was established on 4th April 1978 whereby Langham Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee of the freehold land now occupied by the Community Centre and Car Park.

Objects, Policies and Organisation

The Trust is established to provide and maintain the Community Centre for the benefit of the inhabitants of Langham, without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, with the object of improving the quality of life of the inhabitants,

The Centre is available for hire by any individual or organisation in accordance with the standard hiring agreement and scale of charges adopted for the year. It is intended that the scale is sufficient to generate enough income to meet the ordinary expenditure incurred in providing the Centre. Significant improvements are funded out of revenue by specific appeals, fundraising and utilising grants as available.

Review of the Year

2023/24 has been another challenging year. Carol Lloyd, our new Commercial and Marketing Manager, has seen an increase in enquiries to hire the premises but not all have resulted in a definite booking. Our hire charges remain at May 2022 levels but sadly this proves too much for some prospective customers. Our outgoings on regular maintenance and staff salaries are constantly increasing and the price of electricity has been very high. At Carol's suggestion, she has set up a SAGE accounting programme to deal with invoices and payments more efficiently.

We have had to chase the odd hirer for payment this year but all, with one exception, apologised and paid in full. Sadly, a Court order had to be raised against a third, under which the first instalment was paid last month. Another disappointment was the lack of volunteers at our King's Volunteering open morning in the Club Room on 13th May, when seven village organisations canvassed for more assistance and fewer than ten members of the public attended, one or two of whom did sign up. Without a supply of willing hands, we cannot keep village amenities going.

Local regular hires continue to make up the bulk of our income, which is pleasing, and we have three football teams on the field over weekends, The beekeepers are regular visitors to the Hall, as are various exercise groups. The monthly Community Café is becoming busier and Langham Film Nights has run some well-supported evenings, including a sold-out "Oppenheimer" in March. We need to increase sales of 100 Club lottery membership to bring this up to its maximum.

The last financial year saw the centre with a £800 loss but this year we are back in the black with a balance of £500.

24/45

Public Open Forum with questions from the public.

The public raised the following questions;

Call for sites – planning issues - does this still fit in with the local plan?

The numbers are in the plan and are being looked at and evaluated with CCC Local Plan. This current plan is 2017 to 2032. The dates are likely to be extended and these may change dependent on the results of the next general election. The process was explained and there will be a rolling programme every 5 years. Another questionnaire will be put out to the village by LPC and the answers will be taken to CCC.

Street Signs - these are getting a bit grubby and it was asked if they can they be cleaned this will be looked at.

Pylons replies – it was asked of the best ways to reply to this, it was suggested to look at long term consequences for the village in the replies by individuals. Deadline for the consultation is now the 26th July.

A question regarding the S106 was raised and residents would like to know where we are with that. The S106 is in 2 sections 1 has funds which have been allocated and 1 for other planning applications outstanding. There are 2 sections Parks and Recreation and Community facilities section. A monthly report is given to us by the CCC so the applications can be tracked by the LPC. LPC will be looking at ways to disseminate things also looking at ways that are already being undertaken by other councils and projects will be looked at for the future. A resident stated he would like more S106 information available. The parish council were thanked by the public present for the work that they undertake for the village.

24/46 **Date and Time of next meeting**
Wednesday 2nd April 2025 to be confirmed.

24/47 **Chairman's closure of the meeting**
The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 7:47 pm

Signed

Cllr Armstrong

Date