

**Draft Minutes of Langham Parish Council (LPC) Meeting
12th February 2025 held at Langham Community Centre 7:30pm**

Attendees: Cllr Armstrong, Cllr Bottwood, Cllr Brockman, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Freeman.

Present: Clerk – Carol Harbach
70+ Members of the public
Cllr Barber – Essex County Council (ECC)
Cllr Rowe – Colchester City Council (CCC)

24/163 Welcome and apologies for absence

Cllr Armstrong welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Cllr Hunter sent his apologies.

24/163 Declaration of Members interests

Any declarations of interest will be brought up and declared as they arise on the agenda.

Matters arising from the meeting on 8th Jan 2025

These will be picked up at the next meeting.

24/167 Public Open Forum (Maximum 15 minutes)

Questions may be noted and answered at the next meeting.
The Local Plan from Colchester City Council was released to the public last Friday and the village is proposed to have 900 houses in this plan.
The villagers have come to the meeting to discuss this further and put their views forward.

24/168 Visitors Reports (Colchester City Council (CCC) and Essex County Councillors (ECC)

Cllr Barber informed the residents of the update from CCC and the information of 900 new homes that are currently allocated for Langham.

24/169 Finance

169.1 To approve payments in accordance with the 2024/25 budget	
Clerk Salary Jan 25	£1,000.36
HMRC Due Feb 25	31.13
HMRC Due Nov/Dec 24	62.24
James Todd & Co payroll	28.80
Village Contractor 1/25	162.00
Wave Water Standpipe	22.21
Fred Smith Christmas Tree	300.00
Agrovista Ltd – white lining paint	195.00

New World Sport – new wheel for liner marker	25.94
	=====
Total	£1,827.68

Proposed Cllr Freeman Seconder Cllr Anderson All agreed
Cllr Brockman to start payment run and Cllr Bottwood to second
authorise.

169.2 Review and approve Finance Regs, Code of Conduct and
Standing Orders.

These had been looked at by the Finance committee and the new
finance regulations had been looked at in detail.

These policies had been circulated to the councillors before the
meeting and no further amendments had come forward.

Code of conduct Proposed Cllr Brockman seconded Cllr Freeman All
Agreed.

Finance Regulations: Proposed Cllr Armstrong seconded Cllr
Anderson All Agreed.

Standing Orders Proposed Cllr Freeman second Cllr Brockman All
Agreed.

Planning/Housing and Infrastructure

170.1 Items from last planning meeting

There had been a meeting on Monday 10th Feb 25 to discuss mainly
the notification of the proposed 900 new homes in the village.

This will be reported later in the agenda.

170.2 Planning Applications Decisions Received

242377 – Langham Hall, Dedham Road, Langham Colchester CO4 5PS

Application to discharge condition 5 (biodiversity) & 6 (lighting) of planning
permission 230965

CCC decision: Discharge of Condition (Approved)

242170- 2 Shepherds Retreat, High Street, Langham Colchester CO4 5NT

Proposed Single storey rear extension

CCC decision: Approve conditional

242169- Chilterns, Moor Road, Langham Colchester CO4 5NR

Single storey side extension. Two pitched roof dormer windows to front elevation,
flat roof dormer to rear elevation. Flat roof open porch roof to front elevation.

Garden store to rear of existing garage. Insulated render and cladding to full
exterior

CCC decision: Approve conditional

242124- Old Ipswich Road, Langham Colchester

Temporary marketing signage for a new business park at Systematic Business Park
on Old Ipswich Road.

CCC decision: Approve conditional

242493 – Lodge Park, Lodge Lane, Langham, Colchester, CO4 5NE

Application for removal or variation of condition 2 following grant of planning

permission. (212967)

CCC decision: Approve conditional

242222 - Wisconsin, Langham Lane, Langham, Essex, CO4 5HX

Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of porch, two storey extension and single storey side extension

CCC decision: Approve conditional

170.3 Planning Applications Received

242577 - West Lodge, Low Lift Cottage Road, Langham Colchester CO4 5QB

Proposed rear kitchen extension and front hall extension

PC Comment: None

242422 - Land south of, School Road, Langham Colchester Comments were sent to Colchester City Council in the consultation time.

170.4 Local Plan Update

This was the main part of the meeting where residents wished to discuss the the draft Local Plan released by CCC last Thursday.

Cllr Armstrong welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming along tonight to discuss the problem and concerns of the village. There followed a short introduction from Cllr Rowe and Cllr Barber who stated who they were and what/who they represented. Cllr Barber is on the Local Planning Committee and represents both the Borough and County Council and will be at the vote on Monday. Cllr Barber stated there will be a required 11k houses extra over the next 15 years. Cllr Rowe explained that they will listen to residents' queries and take these back to the council meeting on Monday.

Cllr Rowe introduced himself and noted that detailed briefing documents had only been released today for the Cllrs for information ahead of the meeting next Monday.

Cllr Rowe explained that the councillors must be careful about what they say tonight to avoid any suggestions of pre-determination. The other North Ward Councillors will not be representing us as they are not on the Local Plan Committee. The Committee is made up of councillors proportional to the political representations as per the election.

Cllr Rowe will represent the North Ward on Monday as a Visiting Councillor. Cllr Armstrong informed everyone that he will be recording this meeting and no-one present objected to this. Cllr Rowe stated the overview of the time table is as much as we know at the moment, we have only known about this for the last 7 days. There is a National Mandate for housing target for Colchester for 2025-2041 which is for a total 22,000 and the 11,000 is the extra amount to be found and gathered from the Local Plan call for sites. The other 11,000 homes comprise 6,000 already in the planning pipeline, just under 2,000 as part of the Tendring Garden Community, and just over 2,000 as expected "windfall" allocations at small sites. Having had a weeks' notice

of the housing requirement, there will be a final vote to adopt this as a recommended proposal by the Local Plan Committee on Monday. It will go forward into a public consultation period of 6 weeks, followed by a further review by planning inspectors over a further 8 week period.

10 years ago, proposed housing numbers were subject to early discussions between Colchester and Langham Parish Council, allowing for a public questionnaire to be organised by the Parish Council. No such early dialogue this time around.

The LPC planning committee met on Monday to review the published plans and discuss how we could support residents. A report has been sent to CCC today, outlining several reasons why we think the 900 home allocation for Langham is inconsistent with CCC's own stated Local Plan policies. Further input from residents is vitally important and we need to look at ways to gather this. We will try and get the local planning authority down to have a meeting with residents before long.

Langham Parish Council have issued a preliminary press release in anticipation of residents' likely objections to the plans for Langham. This has already been picked up and used by the Colchester Gazette today. There is a suspicion that the recent decision to block the building of 1000 homes at Middlewick may have resulted in Langham becoming a "sticking plaster" to plug the resultant shortfall. Cllr Barber stated that this was a fair question. Local Plan Committee Members had been told that sites cannot be removed once they are on the plan but this has now happened. All this will be raised at the meeting.

Several residents questioned what reasonable decision making logic could possibly lie behind the 900 home Langham allocation, and we have no answers at present, beyond the simple expediency of a suitably sized large building plot.

One very prominent problem is sewage treatment capacity, which has halted completion of new housing build from the existing Local Plan until Anglian Water resolve the situation.

A resident stated that all the new houses will need air source air pumps and these are very noisy, with 900 such devices operating in a densely built area, the amount of noise and light pollution will go up substantially.

LPC have sent a 5-page report to the Chairman of the Local Plan Committee for forwarding to all Committee Members ahead of the vote next Monday. It explains a number of reasons why the Langham 900 allocation fails to meet CCC's own strategies and policies, in areas such as transport, sustainability,

infrastructure, sewage & water, protection of local character etc and it also notes that Langham is being asked to shoulder 20% as many new homes as the whole of Colchester City. This report will be placed on the LPC website for everyone to see there.

If the village is willing to fight on this with the support the PC, we will do all we can to help your voices be heard.

Cllr Barber stated that CCC need a plan to tackle the infrastructure within the plan and the impact on the countryside and this needs to be infrastructure led. A mapped shaded areas of fields is not how a plan is supposed to take place. Cllr Barber's concern is that we are going back to piecemeal development with no plan of infrastructure and how this works in rural areas. Planning needs to be looked at as a whole and not just to fill in gaps.

Cllr Barber explained the next process steps in adoption of the Local Plan. The Local Plan Committee members are local people. The proposal is put to the members to vote to accept or not accept it before it can go forward to public consultation. A resident asked whether there were any grounds for a legal challenge regarding the lack of prior consultation, but this was thought unlikely.

The question was asked how CCC would have selected Langham for all this development. Cllr Bottwood explained that they would have had to talk to the land owners first during the Call for Sites stage. The land owners are asked if there are any areas they have available to take this forward. The big area that is being looked at now was in the previous Call for Sites 10 years ago, but was rejected last time around.

Langham's sewage problems were known about 10 years ago, leading to the planning conditions that have blocked completion of the housing projects within the existing Local Plan. Sewage problems have worsened since then, with no sign of any capital investment by Anglian Water to address the problem.

900 new homes could represent over 3,000 extra people, with no apparent plans in place to upgrade sewers, slip roads off and onto the A12, and local services and facilities.

Questions were asked regarding potential other rural or brownfield sites around Colchester and this will be followed up. It would be easier to understand if there was a complete land shortage but it is not like this and should be challenged, there are areas not being used and there are bigger areas locally that can be used and utilised. St Botolph area was mentioned as one candidate.

After some discussion about possible petitions or email campaigns, it was decided that a mass campaign of individual resident objection emails was the most effective next step ahead of the vote next Monday. It was christened the “Langham900” campaign. Emails could be sent to the Local Plan Committee Chairman and/or Committee Members and/or our Ward and Essex Councillors, but in all cases should be sent to the Langham Parish Clerk as well, so that we can keep track of the total number of emails received. It was agreed that further guidance on the email campaign would be published on the LPC website and local facebook group feeds as soon as possible after this meeting (next day). A door to door mailshot will also be followed up to maximise exposure of the campaign.

The result of next Monday’s vote will be shared as soon as possible after the meeting. The exact format of the proposed public consultation is not yet known. Cllr Barber stated the inspector has power to amend policies that do not go along with the government view.

The Local Plan meeting will be broadcast live and is being held in Charter Hall. LPC have submitted bids for two 3 minute speaking slots in the “Have your Say” agenda item. Cllr Rowe also kindly agreed to represent the village as a “Visiting Councillor”. He will receive a 5 minute slot.

Residents who have attended here tonight are also the voice to let other people and residents know what is going on. For example, the Coffee Morning this month on the 21st and people who are not on social media do come along to this.

There was some discussion about the forthcoming Local Government Reform which will see Essex County level and City level Councils abolished in favour of new Unitary level District Councils. The effect of this on the emerging Local Plan is not entirely clear at present.

Elections for this May are being deferred as a result of this reorganisation of Local Government. The clerk asked whether there was a legal right for the councils and government not to hold an election for the normal elections without asking the voters, as this takes their rights away from them to vote. Cllr Barber stated it was under the same legislation that was used during covid.

A resident asked whether we need to engage a planning expert to look at this before Monday, it was felt it was too late for Monday but that this will be looked at as part of the consultation if this goes ahead.

Middlewick was thrown out of the plan with the help of Natural England on ecology issues. A similar approach may also be worth investigating by Langham. Perhaps we can learn from the Middlewick campaign?

It is worth noting that the Dedham Vale National Landscape area is only 800 metres from the boundary of the proposed housing site, so Dark Skies and the Dedham Vale Society will also be contacted.

The land they are looking at used to be part of the Bosted airfield. It was noted that the solar panels site has been increasing and the original land lease was to run these for 25 years and then it has to be reviewed. The Bosted Society could help with this.

Local Plan Committee Members will not have time to read all of the briefing reports ahead of the vote on Monday, with many lengthy reports only becoming available in the last few days. Of particular interest to Langham may be the Infrastructure Audit & Delivery Report and the Water Cycle Study. The former document states that Anglian Water have no plans to upgrade Langham WRC prior to 2050. The more detailed Water Cycle Study has been delayed and has not yet been published. A very brief Interim Water Cycle has just been published and appears to contradict the Infrastructure Audit Report published the same day!

LPC will look to set up further information sharing sessions after next week's vote. This may include a drop-in session or a session with Local Planners from Colchester. We will be seeking volunteer support to work as effectively as we can to fight on behalf of the future of our village.

Cllr Barber clarified that the vote next week will be on the Local Plan as a whole Package (not just the Langham proposals). Other areas of Colchester may also be looking to resist their housing allocations.

Cllr Barber and Cllr Lewis were then thanked for attending the meeting and they left.

A resident wanted to record a vote of thanks to the council for all their work over the past few days.

170.5 AW Update village meeting

On next agenda

170.6 VAS/SID Update

On next agenda

170.7 Gigaclear box Moor Road.

On next agenda

170.8 Turnpike Close/Ipswich Road updates

On next agenda

24/171 Recreation Ground Committee updates

171.1 MUGA update

On next agenda

171.2 VE Day/Classic car show

On next agenda

171.3 Firework proceeds update

On next agenda

24/172 Councillor Vacancy

On next agenda

24/173 Councillor Reports

On next agenda

24/174 Clerks Report and correspondence

The clerk has had residents contact her to say they are in objection to the current proposal for the 900 homes in the village.

24/175 Training and events

Any training requirements then please let the clerk know.

24/176 Items for next agenda

Above

24/177 Chairman's closure of meeting

Meeting was closed at 9.30pm