



LAXFIELD
ANNUAL
PARISH MEETING

Monday 9 May 2022

At 7 30 pm

In Laxfield Village Hall

This booklet contains all the reports from across the parish submitted for the annual parish meeting. If you have any questions resulting from the information contained within, please don't hesitate to contact the clerk, Karen Gregory on laxfieldparishclerk@gmail.com or 01728 638061 or the relevant contact from the report.

After the Annual Parish meeting, this report will be available on the website –

www.laxfield.online

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Too large to include in the report booklet. Please see the website for details.

www.laxfield.online

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

This is a graphic report and Julie Flatman, District Councillor, will present on the night. Following the meeting, the graphic report can also be found on the website - www.laxfield.online

LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIR'S REPORT

Another year has flown by! I find it difficult to believe that twelve months have passed since I last wrote a report for this meeting. Some things have changed a great deal, but thankfully some things have also remained the same - I commented last year on the strength of community support in this parish, and that has again been clearly demonstrated: most recently with the setting up of a support group for Ukrainian refugees and their hosts. So many people who perhaps are unable to host refugees themselves have volunteered to provide help in whatever other ways are needed. Laxfield is acting as a local beacon in this way, as there doesn't seem to be a great deal of this kind of support elsewhere in Suffolk, and there are people from quite a wide area involved in this group now.

Some of the plans and projects that I mentioned last year have now been implemented, which is very satisfying. Top of the list for me, of course, is the fact that we now – finally - have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. It has taken a great deal of work to get it to this point, and I'd like to thank all those who have played a part in achieving this milestone. There will be a separate report about the Plan later on in this meeting.

Our Quiet Lanes have been designated and signage put in place. Whilst we do realise that there is no legal enforcement that can be taken beyond the normal safe driving requirements, we do hope that the signage will remind drivers of all vehicles of the need to be considerate of other road users such as walkers, cyclists and riders.

We are very pleased that we now have a Footpath Warden who is monitoring the footpaths in the Parish and will liaise with the County Council team responsible for footpaths to ensure they are aware of any problems that need to be addressed: missing waymarks and signs, for example. Where we can, we will of course resolve these things ourselves.

This spirit of community self-help is also evident in the work that has been done with the Environment Agency and the council Flood Team to reduce the risk of flooding along Gorams Mill Lane. Work is due to take place over this calendar year to improve the drainage around the area, and we will also have a community flood kit that a team of people who live in the village will deploy if it looks as though the road and the properties along it are still at risk of

flooding. We do know that flooding can't be prevented entirely, but we and other agencies are doing our best to reduce the likelihood that it will happen.

Some of our Working Groups are well-established and are delivering the plans that we set out in our Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) – particularly the Highways and Green Spaces Working Groups. You will see more of these plans put in place over the next year, and of course we will also be considering what else needs to be added in to our existing list! If you have ideas for things that you think should be included, please do talk to (or email) one of the Parish Councillors or contact our Parish Clerk, Karen.

We do need to establish some of the other Working Groups too and would welcome your involvement; you don't have to become a Parish Councillor to join these groups, and the more input we have from people who live in Laxfield, the more we can achieve for everyone who lives here. Again, do get in touch with one of us if you'd like to find out a bit more about what aspects these groups cover, and what might be involved. We do always try to keep our meetings short and focused, and there are also practical things that people can do if they don't like attending meetings!

One of the things I believe is really important about what the Parish Council should aim to achieve is actually what it shouldn't do. We as Parish Councillors should not try to be responsible for everything that happens in the parish – although we do, of course, actually deliver a great deal, our most important role is to try to create an environment that encourages and supports people who live here to take things forward themselves, for the benefit of other people too.

Finally but importantly, the Laxfield community has once again come together to create a magnificent programme of events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2nd, Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June. There is something to appeal to everyone. Details of all the events are contained in the recently distributed Jubilee programme, the back of this report and also on the website, www.laxfield.online. Thanks must go to Sally Clarke, who has co-ordinated the event.

Sue Innes – Chair, Laxfield Parish Council

LAXFIELD PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE

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

Current account:	£ 7 665.33
Saver account:	£41 580.38
Reserve account:	£48 582.53
TOTAL:	£97 828.24

This indicates a very healthy bank balance; however much of this is reserved (CIL money) or earmarked to fund a number of projects during 2022 – 23 as identified in the PIIP (Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan). Please note that all financial information for the Parish Council is shown on the website (www.laxfield.online) and updated monthly.

The precept is the main income source and the precept demand remained at the same level as the previous year, £42 430.00, which actually meant a reduction for households within the parish.

Cllr Flatman gave £2 650 to Laxfield from her Locality Award. This supported a number of projects in the Parish including the Kids' Games Club, gazebos for the community market and the jubilee activities.

The rebate from the Rix oil syndicate enabled the Parish Council to support Laxfield pre-school's request for a peripatetic music teacher.

The Parish also received a number of additional grants as a result of Covid-19 and CIL money was higher than expected at £18 772.

In addition to regular expenditure, projects including Light Up Laxfield and Fressingfield Scouts Group were also supported.

See page after next for Parish Council accounts summary for 2021 – 2022. If further detail is needed, please contact Karen Gregory, the Parish Clerk.

SNOOK BEQUEST

This is a charity run by the parish council. Its objective is to help the needs of the older members of the community. The balance at April 1 2021 was £13 782. If anyone has any projects that could potentially tap into this fund, please let Karen Gregory, the parish clerk, know.

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 2021 – 2022 financial year the expenditure was £6 232.

BANK ACCOUNTS YEAR BEGINNING APRIL 2021		
Current	£ 6,380.59	31/03/2021
Saver	£ 21,942.11	31/03/2021
Reserve	£ 48,532.68	31/03/2021
Opening Balance Total	£ 76,855.38	31/03/2021

RECEIPTS	BUDGET	ACTUAL	VARIANCE	% v Bud
		2021-22		
Cemetery Fees	£ 900.00	£ 1,105.00	£ 205.00	122.78%
Grants	£ 3,000.00	£ 19,931.64	£ 16,931.64	664.39%
Groundworks Nbhd Plan	£ -	£ -	£ -	#DIV/0!
MSDC CIL	£ 15,000.00	£ 18,771.64	£ 3,771.64	125.14%
Miscellaneous	£ -	£ 2,619.95	£ 2,619.95	#DIV/0!
Bank Interest	£ 80.00	£ 9.84	-£ 70.16	12.30%
Precept	£ 42,430.00	£ 42,430.00	£ -	100.00%
VAT Reclaim	£ 1,400.00	£ 1,220.60	-£ 179.40	87.19%
Transfer from Reserves	£ 40,000.00	£ -	-£ 40,000.00	0.00%
Total	£ 102,810.00	£ 86,088.67	-£ 16,721.33	83.74%

PAYMENTS	BUDGET	ACTUAL	VARIANCE	% V Bud
Clerk's Salary	£ 11,300.00	£ 10,997.71	-£ 302.29	97.32%
Expenses/Stationery	£ 500.00	£ 273.88	-£ 226.12	54.78%
Chair's Allowance	£ 500.00	£ 100.00	-£ 400.00	20.00%
Parish Room Cleaner	£ 330.00	£ 300.00	-£ 30.00	90.91%
Street Lighting	£ 2,200.00	£ 1,856.84	-£ 343.16	84.40%
Pond/Vill Hall/Paths	£ 24,000.00	£ 3,402.51	-£ 20,597.49	14.18%
Street Cleaning	£ 1,000.00	£ 904.00	-£ 96.00	90.40%
Parish Room Lighting	£ 150.00	£ 367.34	£ 217.34	244.89%
PWLB	£ 11,290.00	£ 11,289.18	-£ 0.82	99.99%
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 2,000.00	£ 467.65	-£ 1,532.35	23.38%
Cemetery Caretaker	£ 1,000.00	£ 635.00	-£ 365.00	63.50%
Subscriptions	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,289.58	£ 289.58	128.96%
Insurance	£ 1,800.00	£ 1,810.75	£ 10.75	100.60%
Churchyard/War Mem	£ 1,900.00	£ 2,218.10	£ 318.10	116.74%
Section 137	£ 8,000.00	£ 9,819.15	£ 1,819.15	122.74%
Bin emptying	£ 800.00	£ 729.40	-£ 70.60	91.18%
Rental fees	£ 300.00	£ 300.00	£ -	100.00%
Training	£ 600.00	£ 1,132.80	£ 532.80	188.80%
Cemetery Expenses	£ 12,640.00	£ 5,828.69	-£ 6,811.31	46.11%
Repairs & Maintenance	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,544.50	-£ 455.50	77.23%
Playing Field	£ 17,000.00	£ 6,231.53	-£ 10,768.47	36.66%
Village Hall	£ 400.00	£ 485.00	£ 85.00	121.25%
Church clock	£ 200.00	£ -	-£ 200.00	0.00%
Miscellaneous	£ 500.00	£ 2,321.00	£ 1,821.00	464.20%
Audit	£ 750.00	£ 703.20	-£ 46.80	93.76%
PAYE	£ 150.00	£ 108.00	-£ 42.00	72.00%
Election	£ 500.00	£ -	-£ 500.00	0.00%
Total	£ 102,810.00	£ 65,115.81	-£ 37,694.19	63.34%

BANK ACCOUNT TO END MARCH 2022	
Current	£ 7,665.33
Saver	£ 41,580.38
Reserve	£ 48,582.53
Total	£ 97,828.24

LAXFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

We now have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan! After such a long time, it has finally been through all the legally-required stages in its development, and has been formally adopted. This means that it has legal force in the planning process, and it must be taken into account when Mid Suffolk District Council is making planning decisions: it is a statutory planning document.

We mustn't forget, though, that the Plan is about much more than just the development planning process. It is also very much about what we can do as a community working together, and about the kind of place that we want Laxfield to be. It will continue to set the strategic direction for what the Parish Council delivers, because as part of writing it we consulted as many people in the Parish as we could to ask for their views on a wide range of issues. We know it isn't perfect – it isn't possible to achieve perfection! – but it is the best guide we have as to what people who live here want.

Although we are of course delighted that the Plan is now in place, a number of people voted against its adoption in the Referendum. It would be very useful to understand why they did not want the Plan to be adopted – was it perhaps because there were things in the Plan that they didn't agree with, or was it that they didn't agree with the idea of having a Plan at all? Was there something that we missed out completely? If you voted against it, we'd really like to hear from you; it's clear that there was strong feeling about this.

We will review the Neighbourhood Plan at the annual Parish Meeting every year, and in fact we have already made one change to it as a result of a resident pointing out a mistake that had been made in the description of one of the listed buildings in the village. We will look at both small and significant changes that need to be made, whatever the reason for them, so please do let us know your views on what should be included.

Again – thank you to all those who worked so hard throughout the very many stages of writing this Plan, and to those who contributed in any way to the document that we now have.

Sue Innes on behalf of Laxfield Neighbourhood Plan Group

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH REPORT - CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

As the covid situation eased from Easter onwards we were very gradually able to return to normal services in the church. The Christmas Eve Carol Service, normally such a highlight of church and village life, was held around the Royal Oak pub and on Church Plain to avoid a large crowd in the church. Approximately 200 people attended, many with a glass in their hand, singing carols and listening to the Christmas Story. It was a joyful ending to another challenging year. As most of our fundraising takes place in and around the church, opportunities were once again limited by covid restrictions, but the Community Market was welcomed back to the village in May, and stalls were back in church from August. The Christmas Market brought welcome noise and bustle back into the church, and the tower, blazing with strings of new lights, was visible all around.

Standing as it does in the centre of the village, our aim is always to ensure that the church is a place that is valued and used by the community, so it was also good to start a new initiative of free monthly lunchtime concerts in the church in September.

Mike Turton has expertly spearheaded our eco church activities in and around the church and churchyard, funds have been raised for swift boxes to be installed inside the louvres, and we are proud of achieving bronze eco church status as well as having twinned our toilet with one in South Sudan.

Meet Up Friday, held since July at the Royal Oak pub, thanks to the generosity of the late Mike Downer, offers friendship (and cake!) on the second Friday of the month. The initiative developed from a dementia awareness session held in 2020, and we are pleased that it is proving very popular.

The church clock was removed in September 2020 to prepare for the installation of new bells in the tower, and after a considerable amount of fine tuning, the clock was returned in September 2021. Lottery funding for the new bells also ensured that a walkway could be built around the old mediaeval bell frame, and this has become an interesting feature for visitors to the tower.

A huge thank you is due to Rev'd David Burrell and his team for all that they do for us, and all to those who have helped with the services – both live and via Zoom – in so many ways. We will greatly miss David once he and Sue move away to Somerset. David has brought his wonderful singing to our services, and he has brought his depth of theological knowledge, humour, kindness and approachability to his ministry. Future village pantos may struggle to find a Baddie of such distinction! Sue has left her unique mark on the churchyard flowerbeds, and we do thank her too for all her hard work.

We are very blessed to have such a large band of people who help and contribute to the life of the church in a huge variety of ways. Thank you to everyone who works so hard to look after the building - to clean it, to open and close it, to decorate with flowers and to organise and support such fund-raising as we were able to do.

Liz Hammond, Churchwarden

LAXFIELD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (LCLT)



The Community Land Trust (CLT) still awaits a decision from MSDC regarding their proposals for the future of their land in Bickers Hill.

The Housing Needs Survey (HNS) has now been returned and is awaiting discussion by the CLT members, Our Initial reaction is that it confirms our pre existing understanding that there is a shortage of suitable housing for rent in the Parish. This a national problem which is being exacerbated by rising house prices and the desirability of the village as a destination for second homes and for holiday lets.

The HNS was not well received by some but it was a pre requisite for obtaining funding from government and other bodies, and so unavoidable. Although the survey appeared intrusive, it was primarily designed for the benefit of those that sought assistance in finding suitable housing and did not require input of a personal nature from those whose needs were already being met. The survey did give an opportunity for sites for future Land Trust sites to be identified and this will be investigated.

The response rate was 32% and shows a need for smaller properties to allow families to expand from cramped conditions and to allow downsizing in some circumstances.

We continue as a group of 6 people, but would welcome interest from other parishioners as we have several members who will shortly be precluded from our constitution by virtue of age, although their support and advice will remain accessible.

Administrative support is also needed, both currently and as we proceed to development stages.

David Alchin on behalf of LCLT

LAXFIELD AND DISTRICT MUSEUM

After Government restrictions were lifted, the Museum welcomed the first visitors on Saturday 29th May 2021 and as there was a late start to the season, we deferred closing till the end of October. Something which we are continuing this year.

Comments in the visitors' book and oral feedback were very encouraging:

H&A: *Another gem in the Suffolk countryside – well done to the volunteers for keeping places like this alive.*

J&L B: *Lovely building, lots of information all very interesting and well presented, very helpful staff, excellent photos and drawings.*

J&A D: *This is just what a museum should be, thank you so much for looking after us.*

T&J B: *From Brighton, lovely place, so much to see! Lovely people running it, very helpful and knowledgeable. Thank you.*

The Museum Committee has been busy getting new displays ready for the opening on Good Friday. We will be open every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday between 2pm and 5pm from then until the end of October. On market days we will also open in the mornings from 10am – 1pm.

The Museum has plans for 3 major events in the 2022 season:

- ❖ **Laxfield's Henry** as our opening event in the Village Hall on April 29th. Our thanks again to all the cast for writing and performing in aid of the Museum. And entertaining us all!
- ❖ **The Queen's Jubilee.** The Museum will be mounting a display downstairs of Royal memorabilia from the past. Again, thanks to those local people who have loaned objects. The display will be on for the month of June.
- ❖ **Museum celebrations.** Covid stopped our plans to celebrate the Guildhall's 500th anniversary and the Museum's 50th in 2020. So we will be celebrating with the help of The Company of Merrie Folke on September 10th and 11th.

LAXFIELD VILLAGE HALL

Laxfield Village Hall, The Link, Laxfield, IP13 8DY

Charity No. 304781



Laxfield Village Hall

Laxfield Village Hall Management Committee:

The current management committee members are Bill Shuttle (Chair), Becky Winn (Secretary and Marketing), Caroline Emeny (Bookings and Treasurer), Colin Hamilton (bar stock purchasing and management), Colin Emeny (Building maintenance) and Monica Wilkins (fund raising).

Activities and events at the hall:

The pandemic has continued to cause disruption to activities in the hall, and support for regular events such as carpet bowls and table tennis is considerably lower than before the pandemic. Nevertheless the following Covid-compliant activities were run successfully when the hall had been fitted out with sanitising stations and social distancing was in place:

- Youth theatre group
- Kids games club
- Film nights
- Music nights
- Comedy night
- Zumba
- Parish council meetings
- Horticultural show
- Joy's Junk sale
- Local musician band practice nights
- Touring theatre performances
- Pantomime - four performances of Little Red Riding Hood.
- Celebratory events such as birthday parties, wedding receptions
- Photo shoot for an advertising project

Hall maintenance and plans for upgrades

Routine maintenance and checking of fire safety equipment and heating/air-conditioning system has been carried out.

The lighting systems project is complete and the hall now has very flexible dimmable LED lighting in main hall and bar area.

Quotations for repair and repainting of the exterior woodwork have been received. This work, which is essential to prevent deterioration of the building's structure will be carried out in the summer.

Finance

Despite the loss of revenue from bookings the hall's finances are stable thanks to grants from the local authority.

New committee member Monica has also had great success in winning grants to fund activities to enhance the community served by the hall. The intention is to offer free or low-cost events covering the wide-ranging interests and ages of members our community. The committee is currently investigating the feasibility of using this grant to run activities such as cooking on a budget, checking safety testing of home electrical equipment (e.g. PAT testing), basic IT skills, art and crafts sessions, chair yoga, dance classes, adult games sessions and gardening club.

Laxfield Village Hall Management Committee



FRESSINGFIELD SCOUT GROUP

Well, what a year for Fressingfield Scout Group. We have gone from meeting online in lockdown via meeting outside maintaining social distance, then small groups indoors with face coverings, to meeting normally.

The other difference now is that, after an awful lot of hard work and an extremely generous loan from a parent, we have our own fantastic headquarters building on our own site. There is much to do to complete the outside works and fitting out of the kitchen and we are working our way through these as time and funds allow. Very many thanks to everyone that contributed, in whatever way, to the project. We are incredibly grateful.

One of the Scouting highlights of the year was the Group Camp which had to be run on a blended virtual/actual basis as we weren't allowed to camp. The Friday evening and Sunday morning sessions were on line on Zoom and an activity day on Saturday was physical activities face to face. The activity day was run in a socially distanced way with three different sets of outdoor activities at three different sites by Leaders and Explorers and our Young People could move around to suit themselves. The day was a huge success and was our first big step back towards normal activity. This year we have a site booked in early May as normal and plans are being pulled together for a Group Camp and the chance to meet as a group.

As you may have read in the Parish Magazine the crisp packet recycling scheme has been closed. Since June 2019 we have raised £548 towards the first recycled plastic kayak, we reckon that equals 450,000 crisp packets weighing almost 1 tonne! The packets are used to make the hard plastic garden furniture often seen in parks and amenity areas.

Another highlight of the year, and an important part of our fundraising was the Santa Run which saw numerous santas running 5 kilometres around Fressingfield, with Gift Aid this raised £1500 and we plan to make it an annual event. Thank you to everyone that took part and to all the sponsors.

The HQ building has also been used for a Christmas Craft Fair which, gave our Young People the chance to show their crafting skills, raised several hundred pounds and gave members of the public the chance to have a look around.

Our Cub sections attended a day with Cubs from all over the county at Flixton Air Museum, this was one of the first “return to near normal” all day activities they were allowed to attend, the site put on a fantastic day of activities that was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Explorer Scouts (14-17 year olds), have started to train and plan for an expedition to Kenya, our fourth visit, working at an orphanage on the outskirts of Nairobi. The visit was scheduled for Easter 2022 but will now go ahead in 2023.

Moving from our oldest to our youngest, earlier in the year our Group received permission to create a ‘Squirrel Drey’ a new scout section for pre-schoolers aged 4 and 5. We have started developing this provision and hope to launch it in June or July of 2022.

We aim to provide and expand quality Scouting experience to young people (boys and girls) aged from 4 (Squirrel Scouts) to 24 (Network Scouts) and are inviting new members now in all sections. At present we have 74 youth members in Fressingfield Scout Group and 80 Cubs and Beavers in our School sections. But more young people are welcome.

Scouting is fun, rewarding and challenging not only for the young people that we serve but also for the dozens of adult volunteer leaders and helpers that support the Scout Group. Subject to the necessary safeguarding checks and some training and support, we are also seeking to expand the number of adults that volunteer with us. Opportunities in a number of roles exist for anyone aged between 18 (and more than 18)! Get in touch through our website, Facebook, twitter or Instagram pages. You can also email Andrew the Group Scout Leader at andrew.aaldersdunthorne@talk21.com

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

LAXFIELD COMMUNITY MARKET



The Laxfield Community Market continues to grow from strength to strength, helping to support local organisations raise much needed funds. It also provides the opportunity for local and non-local stall holders to sell their produce and enables people from all areas to come and spend a morning visiting Laxfield, enjoying the market and other attractions such as the Church tower tours, the museum, tea, coffee and cakes inside the church and the Royal Oak which opens at 9:30am on market days.

We were very fortunate in 2021 to be funded by the Parish Council and supported by Julie Flatman (District Councillor) to purchase new colourful, stronger and branded gazebos to replace the temporary interim ones. These now brighten up the Church Plain and really make a colourful spectacle for all visiting on market day.

Our Christmas markets have always been a special day but our 2021 event was surely the best ever. The church tower was illuminated and could be seen from miles around and, due to generous funding from Graham Bridgeman (grandson of Mr Pip Murton), the market was able to purchase festoon lighting which truly lit up the place. A big thank you also goes out to Brian Moran who assisted in making all the electrics work on the day.

Covid still caused problems in 2021 and we were only able to run 8 markets and some of these without any stalls inside the church. We continue to have home-bake stalls run by local organisations and income from the stall holder fees (divided by a 1/3 going to Market, Church and each home bake stall) resulted in raising £2992.75 all going back in the community. In 2022, at our 10 markets, we have 10 village and local organisations booked in to run a home-bake stall and at the end of the year, these organisations will all receive a share of the income.

The market continues to employ 3 young people to assist in erecting and dismantling the market equipment, helping stall holders unload and load

their stock, look after stall holders with refreshments and help with our bacon and food bank stalls.

In 2022 additional costs have occurred in obtaining the necessary public liability insurance cover which will result in the shared 1/3 split fund from stall holder fees being reduced at the end of the year. We also need to update the banner displayed on the church plain and road signs advertising the market on entry routes to the village. Other equipment was purchased to make the market self-sufficient and comply with health and safety requirements. Thankfully, as we run the bacon stall, the profit from this helps fund our requirements.

We have a great committee of about 12 people but are always looking for additional helpers, especially as members of the committee now run the food bank stall as well.

Going forward this year, we hope to incorporate the market into a CIO, this will then enable us to get our own bank account and apply for funds and offers from large corporations – something we at present cannot do. The market improves every year as we continue to 'RUN THE MARKET BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY'

Adrian Heard, Chair - Laxfield Community Market

HIGHWAYS WORKING GROUP

We are a small, very active group of three and have been in existence for a couple of years and want to use this report to highlight those matters which we have resolved, fully or partly, during the last twelve months. If Highways matters appeal to you and you want to be part of this vibrant group, you'll be very welcome to join us. Contact Karen, the clerk for details.

Our main conduit for action is via the County Council Highways (Suffolk Highways), supported by our elected member, or to the Police for matters involving traffic speeds.

County funds remain very limited, and are primarily for maintenance, with improvements requiring elected member input. Although some funds are distributed via our elected members, there remains a distinct shortfall which is often expected to be borne by the Parish or others. Our distinct impression is that District Council and Suffolk Highways support for minor improvements or even maintenance of infrastructure via development is not fully appreciated or supported.

The police, via Suffolk and Norfolk SafeCam have carried out radar checks on the B1117 Station Road. The other main entry points into the village 30 mph zone are not regularly checked by mobile camera, mainly we believe due to lack of suitable areas to park a vehicle within their guidelines.

Other maintenance matters are usually brought to the attention of the County via their online Reporting Tool, although we do have alternative means of communicating urgent or complicated matters. A reminder that anyone can access this Tool without reference to the PC, although in some circumstances it is useful if we are aware.

We hope to present via the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) our suggestions for local improvements, sometimes to restore street-scene and sometimes to make safety improvements. These will all require costing, including design, which is managed by Suffolk Highways, and shortfalls for

funding not covered by our elected members will need to be from Parish reserves.

Please find below a small sample of our achievements and efforts, usually obtained by persistence:

- Quiet Lanes. Earlier this year, Laxfield's proposal for three routes out of the village selected for their popularity for walking, cycling, and horse riding, were signed off by the relevant authorities. The Quiet Lanes signage was received in March and is now in place
- Gorams Mill Lane, flooding outside the Low House. Links have been made with Highways and progress has been made to have a community self help kit to mitigate any potential flooding. A number of residents are soon to embark on the relevant training and will be ready and willing to use the kit should the need arise
- Station Rd. Flooding by cemetery being addressed by Highways and the problem has currently eased
- Potholes and other defects. Where reported they have been attended to, but some defects, especially on footways, fail to meet the Highways stringent criteria for repair. The Highways Group continues to report issues of this nature and follows them up on a regular basis
- A couple of Public Right of Way signs have been repaired and reinstated but generally the visibility and condition of road signs and posts is very poor. We continue to report
- A group of seven volunteers have come together to resurrect the speed watch camera in the parish. Links have been made with Suffolk Constabulary and this plan will be progressed during 2022
- Parking by vehicles with their wheels on the footway, obstructing passage by pedestrians continues, despite gentle efforts to dissuade drivers. We ask that drivers give fair consideration to others and follow the example of most drivers by keeping their vehicles on their drive or on the carriageway
- Information continues to be collected from the speed indicator device (SID) which can sometimes make frightening reading at the speed of some vehicles through the village. Bill does a great job at moving this device around key points to remind people of the speed limits. Pole brackets have been purchased to be able to move the SID to Bickers Hill on occasions and it is hoped that a new pole will be erected near the cemetery.

GREEN SPACES WORKING GROUP

A large number of projects in Laxfield's green spaces were identified as part of the Parish Infrastructure investment plan (PIIP) and therefore a green spaces working group was set up to progress these objectives. We are a varied group of seven volunteers consisting of residents in the parish and parish councillors and have been meeting every month for about eighteen months. Although very obvious challenges have been facing us all during this time, the group has managed to achieve a number of successes as follows:

- Rob Sutton was appointed as the volunteer footpath warden and has embarked on a plan to identify all the footpaths in the parish, check their state and also the signage and ensure that they are maintained. Rob is doing a great job with this for the parish. A relationship is also being built up with SCC so that we have access to an individual who can support us with any issues rather than simply relying on the reporting tool
- the group was instrumental in requesting funding for IBCs (water collection units) from the Parish Council. As a result of this 21 IBCs have been bought for the two allotment sites within the parish
- the Sicon Fondation have been very helpful in providing hedging for the perimeter of the Bickers Hill allotments and this should arrive in the Autumn
- plans to conduct a survey of hedgerows across the parish is moving forward. The purpose of the survey is to establish the range and current condition of woody species in hedges. Mike Turton has now trained 16 volunteers to carry out this review and the survey will start soon on parish owned land. Permission will obviously be sought from each landowner before any work commences on private land
- the district council provided the parish with 40 fruit trees and these are now planted at the far corner of the playing field and at Bickers Hill allotments. It is envisaged that, in future years, these will provide varied fruit for anyone in the village who wishes to pick them
- through the suggestion of this group, the Parish Council funded four benches for the community space at Bickers Hill allotments. All are welcome to use and it's recommended that you sit awhile and take in the view!
- the conveyancing of the ownership of the tank pond is progressing. It has been very slow but should be completed soon. The group will

then be asking for volunteers to look at ideas to restore this area appropriate to the surroundings

- the Parish Council agreed, from Autumn 2022, to fund an allotment plot at Bickers Hill for a community nursery

The group is always looking for new members so if you are interested do get in contact with Karen, the clerk. There are a number of exciting ideas we wish to progress this year including a contemplation area for the new cemetery, making the path through the new cemetery to the garden of remembrance wheelchair friendly and developing the community nursery.

ALLOTMENT SOCIETY OF LAXFIELD

*The Deeds to the Allotment Society land were lost sometime in the 1990s and the land was finally formally registered with the Land Registry in early 2021, thus safeguarding the land for the foreseeable future.

* The land currently not used for allotment plots was sown with grasses and wild flowers in May 2021. The intention was to increase biodiversity, offset pollution and enhance the well being of plot holders and footpath walkers. Our thanks to Eddie Baker for his invaluable assistance and advice. The grasses and wildflowers grew well last summer and are thriving this spring, encouraging an increasing diversity of insects, ground nesting birds and other wildlife.

* New plots can be marked out for use in the autumn, after topping.

* The old footpath, running behind the Jordan estate and across allotment land has been reinstated and is well used. We are awaiting the promised post and wire fence to be installed along the hard surface footpath.

* Eleven fruit trees, donated by the district council have been planted along the reinstated footpath across the allotment land.

* Four additional benches have been installed where the footpaths meet. Our thanks to the Parish Council for funding these benches. They are intended for everybody's use.

* The Parish Council also funded large water containers for plot holder's water conservation. This is much appreciated as there is no accessible mains water.

* The Jubilee Committee has undertaken to fund an English Oak tree, to be planted this autumn, commemorating the Platinum Jubilee. The tree will be planted in the same area as the benches.

* The Sicon Foundation has agreed to supply sufficient hedging and trees to surround the perimeter of the allotment land, planting to take place next autumn/winter. The Allotment Society has agreed to sign up to The Sicon Charity Charter, undertaking to care for and retain this hedging in perpetuity.

* The Allotment Society's intention is to offer the best possible experience for allotment holders, at affordable rents, whilst safeguarding the land, improving the environment and increasing biodiversity.

Wendy Thomas, Secretary, Allotment Society of Laxfield

LAXFIELD RELIEF IN NEED

- A number of requests for financial help were received and assessed over the past year which resulted several payments to individuals who met the required criteria
- Some funding has been secured so that ramp access to Guildhall can be progressed
- The old museum office space is now new exhibition space
- All the Station Road allotments are allocated and are looking very well tendered
- In the next twelve months new trustees will be required to help develop a forward plan for this charity and its assets.

LOOKING FORWARD - QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE IN LAXFIELD

Thursday 2nd June, Friday 3rd June, Saturday 4th June, Sunday 6th June

Laxfield is celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in style with a myriad of events planned over the bank holiday weekend. For details, see the programme below. More information can be found on www.laxfield.online, the special jubilee programme and on social media.

THURSDAY 2ND JUNE (BANK HOLIDAY)

- 10:00 Coronation Coffee Morning at the Chapel Hall (screening of the Coronation – to be confirmed)
- 12:30 Senior Citizens' Lunch in the Village Hall
- 14:00 - 17:00 Laxfield Museum Exhibition – Royalty
- 21:15 Official Jubilee Beacon Lighting ceremony on the Playing Field
- Community choir
 - Town crier
 - Jubilee refreshments for all the family
 - Best Dressed House competition – Winner Announced!

FRIDAY 3RD JUNE (BANK HOLIDAY)

- 12:00 - 17:00 Open Gardens Day 1 (£5 tickets from All Saints Church)
Scarecrow Competition Day 1
- 12:00 - 17:00 Lunches & Teas in All Saints Church
- 12:00 Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Mugs for sale (in All Saints Church & Jubilee marquee on the playing field)
- 13:00 Platinum Paws Fun Dog Show (playing field)
- Side stalls + Burger Jam street food + Ice Cream van
 - Jubilee Café in the pavilion
 - The Oak-House remote bar
- 14:00 - 16:00 Church Tower Tours
- 14:00 - 17:00 Laxfield Museum Exhibition – Royalty
- 17:00 Live music with Axl Redwine in the Jubilee marquee
- 20:00 'The Bandemics' live music in the Jubilee marquee
- The Oak-House remote bar
 - Burger Jam street food

SATURDAY 4TH JUNE

Scarecrow Competition Day 2

- 09:00 - 10:00 Entries open for Laxfield Horticultural Society competitions x2 in Village Hall
- 09:30 Community Market
- 10:00 - 11:00 Entries open for Laxfield's Jubilee Cake competition on playing field
- 10:00 - 12:00 Church Tower Tours
- 10:00 - 13:00; 14:00 - 17:00 Laxfield Museum Exhibition – Royalty
- 12:00 – 17:00 Open Gardens Day 2 (£5 tickets from All Saints Church)
- 14:00 - 17:00 Cream Teas & Prosecco at The Villa
70 people for 70 years display opens in All Saints Church
Erasmus Centre open for healing
- 14:00 Children's Fancy Dress Parade (Church Plain)
- 14:45 Children's Party on the playing field (fancy dress not essential)
- Jubilee Café in Pavilion
 - The Oak-House bar
- 19:00 Live music with Vix and the Kicks
- The Oak-House bar

SUNDAY 5TH JUNE

- 11:00 for 12:00 start Royal Oak Pram & Wheelbarrow Race down the Street
- 11:30 Bell Ringing in celebration
- 14:00 The Co-op Big Jubilee Lunch (BBQ) on Playing Field (see in Co-op store for details)
- The Oak House Bar
- 14:00 - 17:00 Laxfield Museum Exhibition – Royalty
- 17:00 The Cheeserom Collective – live music at The Royal Oak into the evening
- 17:45 Bell Ringing in celebration
- 18:00 Thanksgiving service All Saints Church



