

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 20th October 2025, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors, A Brun, K Frazer, P Harries, P James, O Locke, and the Clerk, Sarah Harvey.

Member of Public: 5

County Councillor S Dark

1. In the absence of Cllr K Hobart (Chair) and Cllr R Arbenz (Vice-Chair), Cllr P James was duly appointed to chair the meeting. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** it was AGREED to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs R Arbenz, K Hobart, S Nash and M West. Apologies for absence were also noted from Borough Councillor A Beales.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr A Brun declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 17b.
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15 September 2025, having been circulated prior to the meeting and amended as proposed by Cllr K Frazer under item 17b, were PROPOSED by Cllr A Brun, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke, and AGREED as a correct record of the proceedings. The Chair, Cllr P James, then signed the minutes.
5. **To consider the Clerks Report (Matters arising for information only):**
New Council Domain and Email Accounts: The new Council email address would go live on 1st November. All Council channels would be updated accordingly. The Clerk's current email would continue to be monitored during the transition.
DBS Checks for Play Area Inspectors: Councillors undertaking play-area inspections were reminded to obtain a Basic DBS check via GOV.UK and provide the certificate to the Clerk for verification. In line with data-protection requirements, only the name, date, certificate number, and outcome would be recorded. Certificates must be renewed every 3–5 years.
9 Rectory Row – Licence to Occupy: The Licence to Occupy had been completed and the Licensees' contribution to legal fees received. Approval previously granted for installing wooden sleepers (subject to agreed conditions) stands, and no further action was required.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** A parishioner raised concerns regarding the condition of the property at 29 John Morton Crescent. Issues reported included an overgrown hedge obstructing the footpath within the Crescent; and the presence of pallets, rubbish, and an abandoned vehicle on adjacent land, described as unsightly and potentially attracting vermin. It was also noted that buses were having to pull further into the road to avoid vegetation from the property. The parishioner asked whether the Parish Council could take action to have the area tidied.
A parishioner queried reports that several items of existing play equipment may be removed and asked why, if any items were unsafe, they have not been fenced off, signed, or assessed by an independent inspector. They noted that the slide, trackway, swings, rocking horse and see-saw were well used, durable, and had previously passed safety checks.
They questioned the value for money of replacing equipment, raised concerns about the suitability and maintenance of wooden equipment and wood-chip surfacing in the proposed plans, and suggested seeking alternative quotes, including from Wicksteed. While supportive of improving the play park, they asked that their comments be taken into account.
A parishioner thanked the Parish Council for the recent upgrade to LED street lighting on Walcup Lane.
A parishioner thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the Preschool and Trustees for the considerable work they were undertaking to improve the Play Area.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** Cllr S Dark informed the meeting that a new Mayor would be elected in May 2026 to lead the newly established Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk. Cllr S Dark also provided an update on the County Council's position regarding local government reform. He explained that the Council had undertaken a thorough review of the available evidence, including financial assessments and feedback from residents and stakeholders. As a result of this work, the Council had concluded that establishing a single council for Norfolk represented the most effective and sustainable model for future governance.
Cllr S Dark advised that he had allocated £2,500 towards the new trod at Little Massingham from his Local Member Fund.

Cllr S Dark also drew attention to the Norfolk Community Fund, explaining that this funding stream enabled him to allocate £5,000 within the ward to support local grassroots projects and community initiatives. He encouraged groups and organisations with suitable project ideas to come forward, noting that further information about eligibility and the application process was available on the Norfolk County Council website. Residents were also welcome to contact him directly for guidance or to discuss potential proposals.

8. Working Group Updates

- a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr O Locke advised that the audit work was being finalised and would be available for presentation to the Parish Council following a further working group meeting.
- b. **Budget - To formally approve the creation, membership, and terms of reference of a Budget Working Group for the purpose of reviewing the Council's financial requirements to aid with budget and precept recommendations:** The Council considered the proposal to establish a Budget Working Group to review the Council's financial requirements and support the preparation of budget and precept recommendations.
It was formally agreed to create the Working Group, approve its Terms of Reference, and confirm its membership. Cllr P Harries and Cllr K Frazer were appointed as members of the group.
- c. **Christmas Lighting – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr A Brun reported that the majority of the new Christmas lighting had been installed. The Clerk advised that an application had been submitted to Norfolk County Council for consent to place the cable across the highway from 1st December for a six-week period. It was noted that Harpley Community Choir had confirmed that they were able to perform at the Switch On event planned for the 12th of December. The Clerk would confirm arrangements with The Dabbling Duck.
- d. **Play Area – to receive project update, consider allocation of parish funds, approve submission of FCC Communities Foundation grant application (including agreement of Contributing Third Party funding), and consider approval in principle of a Deed of Dedication required by the National Lottery Community Fund:** The Council considered the Community Funding requirements relating to the FCC Communities Foundation grant application.

CTP Requirement

1. The total Contributing Third Party (CTP) requirement at £10,750 for the FCC Communities Foundation grant was noted.
2. Council approved the allocation of £5,000 from the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) earmarked reserve to contribute toward the remaining CTP balance.
3. It was further approved that any small remaining shortfall, currently £20.43, be met from general reserves if necessary.
4. Council noted the Expression of Interest submitted to the Freebridge Community Housing Fund for £5,000, which, if successful, would reimburse most of the CTP and reduce the Council's net cost to £275.43.
5. Council acknowledged that although the Freebridge decision was expected in mid-December 2025, the CTP funding must be committed immediately in order to meet the FCC submission deadline of 10 November 2025.

Grant Application

6. Council approved submission of the FCC Communities Foundation grant application.
7. Council confirmed its commitment to providing the required CTP contribution as part of the application.

Deed of Dedication

8. Council approved in principle the requirement for a Deed of Dedication, as stipulated by the National Lottery Community Fund, and noted that the associated legal costs would be reimbursed by the National Lottery.
9. After receiving a second quotation from Hayes & Storr for £2,000, the Council appointed Wellers Hedley as its solicitor on the basis of best value (£1,950 + VAT).

All decisions above were unanimously agreed, following a formal proposal by Cllr A Brun and seconded by Cllr O Locke, with the Council recognising the importance of progressing the funding and governance requirements in order to meet external deadlines and support ongoing community projects.

The Council also formally recorded its appreciation to Cllr P Harries for his significant contribution to organising and facilitating the village fete. Members acknowledged the time, effort, and coordination

he devoted to the event, noting that his work played an important role in ensuring its success and community benefit.

- e. **The Mallard – to review the meeting notes and approve recommendations:** The Council received and reviewed the meeting notes from The Mallard Sub-Group held on 29th September 2025 and AGREED the recommendations presented.

The Clerk noted that additional colour pages would not be included in the November edition of *The Mallard*, as only three of the seven contacted businesses had submitted a colour advertisement to date.

A suggestion was also made that, in future years, the short story competition should be extended to include Little Massingham, allowing wider community participation.

- f. **Village Greens - To formally approve the creation, membership, and terms of reference of a Village Green Policy Working Party:** The Council considered the proposal to establish a Village Green Policy Working Group to support the development of a clear and consistent policy for the management and future use of the Village Greens. Following discussion, it was formally agreed to create the Working Group, approve its Terms of Reference, and confirm its membership. Cllrs S Nash, A Brun and P James were appointed as Council representatives on the group, and it was further agreed that two parishioners would be co-opted to contribute additional local knowledge and expertise. Cllr P James was appointed as the lead member of the Working Group.

9. **Consideration of Pre-School Proposal and Parish Council Land behind GM Doctors Surgery:** The Council received and considered the Briefing Note prepared by the Clerk, which set out the legal, governance, financial and procedural requirements relating to the Pre-School's request to explore potential use of Parish Council-owned land behind the Great Massingham Doctors Surgery. Members noted that the Council did not currently hold the General Power of Competence and must therefore act only within specific statutory powers when considering any future use or disposal of the land. Council also noted the need for clarification regarding legal title, land status, planning feasibility, community views, and financial implications before any substantive decision could be considered. It was recognised that the Council had no budget provision in 2025–26 for professional fees such as valuations, surveys, or legal advice, and that restricted reserves could not be accessed until after January 2026.

Following review of the options and risks set out in the briefing note, Council agreed that no negotiations, expenditure, or commitments relating to the land should be made at this stage.

After discussion, it was resolved that the Council would proceed with Phase 1 – no-cost fact-finding only, to gather essential background information and ensure compliance with all legal and governance requirements. Phase 1 would include initial enquiries using existing Council records, publicly available information, and free informal advice where obtainable. No land valuation, legal work, negotiations, or development discussions would take place during this phase.

A further report would be brought back to Council once Phase 1 was complete, prior to any consideration of potential future actions, funding requirements, or resourcing implications.

The Clerk confirmed that this work would be undertaken only within existing contracted hours and that any progression beyond Phase 1 would require a separate Council decision on staffing or external support. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr P Harries, SECONDED by Cllr K Frazer and AGREED (with Cllr O Locke abstaining) that the following resolution be approved: "That the Parish Council undertakes Phase 1 initial fact-finding at no cost to the Council and defers any professional expenditure until budget provision is considered within the 2026–27 precept and/or external funding opportunities were identified."

10. Finance

- a. **To note accounts for payment under the Late Payments Interest Act (1998):**

Minuteman Press (550 A5 Parish Magazines (September 2025))	162.00	BACS
Mrs Julia R Lodge (Delivery of September Mallard)	80.00	BACS
Fenland Leisure Products Ltd (New Swing Unit)	1,668.00	BACS
Sarah Harvey (SumUp Card Reader (Amazon UK))	69.99	BACS

- b. **To approve the accounts for payment (list at meeting):**

Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (September 2025)	54.00	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance Work (as agreed May 2025)	4,932.00	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Supply & Installation of new LED unit (9024)	456.00	BACS
HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd (Grass Cutting September 2025)	877.80	BACS
PKF Littlejohn LLP, Limited assurance review of AGAR 2024/25	252.00	BACS
TD Build, Installation of Noticeboards & Dog Waste Bins	660.00	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (18 th August to 14 th September)	831.25	BACS

HMRC (Income Tax Payment)

21.20

BACS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr P Harries, and unanimously AGREED that all payments as presented be authorised.

The Clerk advised that an internal transfer would be made from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account in order to draw on earmarked reserve funds for previously approved expenditure. The transfer would cover the following payments to Cozens (UK) Ltd:

- £4,932.00 for street lighting maintenance works (approved by Council in May 2025)
- £456.00 for the supply and installation of a new LED unit (column 9024)

This internal transfer would ensure that sufficient funds were available in the Current Account to meet these authorised payments.

c. **To note the finance received during September 2025.**

BCKLWN Parish Precept (2 of 2 Six Monthly Instalments)	16,467.00
Credit Interest (Instant Access Account)	154.19
CTP Donations for Play Area Project (Stall Fees)	130.00
CTP Donations for Play Area Project (SumUp Payments)	220.25

d. **To approve the September 2025 financial statement:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr K Frazer and AGREED that the financial statement for September 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair.

e. **To note the September 2025 Budget vs Actual Financial Review:** the Council noted the Budget vs Actual Financial Review for September 2025. No concerns were raised, and the figures were reviewed as presented.

f. **To receive the External Auditor's Report following the Limited Assurance Review of AGAR 2024/25:** it was noted that PKF Littlejohn had completed their review of the AGAR for 2024/25 and that no issues had been brought to the Council's attention. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit along with sections 1,2 and 3 of the AGAR would be available to view on the notice board and parish council website.

11. Governance

- a. **To review and adopt an IT Policy:** Members considered the draft IT Policy, prepared to meet new requirements under Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance (effective April 2025). The Policy set out procedures for data security, use of council IT and email systems, backup arrangements, and password/access management to ensure compliance with UK GDPR and good digital governance. It was RESOLVED that the IT Policy be approved and adopted.

12. Planning Matters

a. **To consider Planning Applications received:**

Dealt with by Delegated Authority – No Observations

25/01463/F - VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 OF PLANNING PERMISSION 24/00431/F: Proposed residential development of 2 dwellings with 2 detached garages and associated external works at Land Between 60 And 64 Station Road

b. **To consider plans since publication of agenda:**

Decision - No Observations

25/01670/F - Detached outbuilding for parking and storage. at The Little House 24 Weasenham Road

c. **Applications approved/refused by Borough Planning Control:**

25/01355/F - Householder: Detached garden room Mandalay Walcups Lane
Application Withdrawn 9 October 2025

d. **Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update:**

Jess Cunningham (Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) reported that a Community Conversation had been held on Monday, 6 October 2025 to discuss potential changes to the existing Development Boundary that could support small-scale infill housing. A questionnaire seeking residents' views on the Steering Group's proposed changes had been made available for completion until the end of October.

It was noted that the Planning Consultant at Collective Community Planning, would be engaged to carry out a health check on progress and to help outline the next steps. A further Community Conversation was planned to give residents an opportunity to discuss policies relating to climate change, achieving net-zero, and the generation of green energy.

13. Highways

- a. **To note highway matters requiring attention and to receive any updates:**

Following the comments raised under Agenda Item 6, *Parishioners' Questions and Statements*, it was agreed that, in the first instance, the Parish Council would write to the relevant property owners regarding boundary hedging obstructing the footway and trees overhanging Castle Acre Road. Information on the UKPN service that may assist with addressing the overhanging trees would also be provided for the resident to investigate.

b. **To consider potential bids to the NCC Parish Partnership Scheme 2026/27:**

Councillors were reminded of the decision made at the September 2025 meeting regarding the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS) for 2026/27. At that meeting, the Council agreed to submit a PPS application for the installation of "Caution – Pedestrians in Road" signs on Castle Acre Road, and the alternative proposal for verge protection bollards on Abbey Road was not taken forward.

It was noted that £2,462.78 remained ringfenced in parish funds for this project, with additional potential support available through the County Councillor's Local Member Fund. The Clerk would submit the PPS application in line with Norfolk County Council requirements by the 1st December deadline. An updated quotation for the pedestrian warning signage would be presented at the November Parish Council meeting for consideration and approval.

Details of the proposed scheme would be forwarded to County Councillor S Dark for his information and to request his support for the scheme.

It was AGREED that Standing Orders be suspended (9.30pm).

14. **Street Lighting**

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems and approve any repair costs:** None.

15. **Correspondence**

- a. **Email from Parishioner, Parking on the Village Greens:** It was noted that the wider issue of parking on the village greens would be reviewed by the Working Group. The Group would consider the range of concerns raised, assess current usage, and examine relevant legal responsibilities. Their aim would be to develop a Village Green Policy that was both practical for day-to-day management and fully compliant with all applicable legislation.
- b. **Email from Parishioner, Great Massingham Community Day:** The Council noted the correspondence outlining a proposal to host a *Community Groups and Volunteers Day* at the Village Hall, intended to showcase local clubs and organisations, encourage new members and volunteers, support fundraising opportunities, and provide residents with information about activities available within the village.
Councillors expressed their support for the idea and agreed that such an event could offer valuable benefits to the community. The Council looked forward to receiving further details as the plans develop.
- c. **Email from Parishioner, Lamppost beside entrance to Lings /Mortons Lynn Lane:** The Council noted the email from a parishioner regarding concerns about the lamppost located beside the entrance to Lings / Mortons Lynn Lane. The Clerk had responded to the parishioner, acknowledging the issue and outlining the steps the Parish Council could take.
It was agreed that the Council would investigate the costs of installing extended bracket arms to improve lighting coverage in the area. In addition, the Clerk would contact the landowner to request that the boundary hedging be reduced to help alleviate the problem.
- d. **Jaguar XKEC Car Club, Thank You:** noted.
- e. **NCC, Highway Ranger Service:** noted.

16. **Open Spaces**

- a. **To agree the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday:** It was AGREED to purchase a suitable poppy wreath from the Royal British Legion for laying at the Remembrance Sunday Service on 9th November. The Council further AGREED that, in the first instance, the Chair and Vice Chair should be approached to represent the Parish Council at the service and lay the wreath on its behalf.
- b. **To discuss and agree next steps for adopting the BT telephone kiosk in Great Massingham, including signing the contract, providing council address details, contacting planning, and arranging the £1 adoption fee:** The Council discussed the process for adopting the BT telephone kiosk and confirmed its intention to proceed. It was AGREED that the contract for adoption would be signed on behalf of the Parish Council and that the necessary Council address details would be provided to BT.

The Clerk would contact the Planning Authority to clarify any planning requirements associated with the kiosk's future use. It was further AGREED that arrangements would be made to pay the £1 adoption fee in accordance with BT's procedures.

- c. **To receive an update on the boundary agreement at Weasenham Road and to consider and approve the associated surveyor costs:** Councillors were reminded that Hayes + Storr Solicitors confirmed the previously quoted cost of £500–£750 + VAT from Purslow Building Surveyors covered only the topographical survey and excluded Mr Purslow's professional fees, estimated at 10–12 hours at £175 + VAT per hour.

The solicitors were reviewing whether the work could proceed without the topographical survey to reduce costs and have been asked to provide a formal written quotation detailing the full scope of work, hourly rates, estimated totals, disbursements, and the cost difference with and without the topographical survey.

No further update had been received to date. A further report would be brought to Council once new information is available.

17. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To consider any further information, actions and updates:** Cllr P James reported that the fishing community had provided a significant amount of positive feedback regarding conditions at the Pit. Several anglers had commented that the quality and health of the fish stock had noticeably improved since the Friends of Scotsman's Pit (FOSPGM) began their maintenance and improvement work around the area.
- b. **To agree review quotations for contractor-led work at Post Office Pit:** The Council reviewed the contractor quotations for the proposed clearance of bulrushes at Post Office Pit. Members considered the detailed quotation provided by J & J Renovations Partnership, which covered the hire of a 9-tonne digger, fuel, transport, and labour for the excavator operation, totalling £522.00 excluding VAT. It was noted that a comparable quotation from Orman was expected to be in the region of £1,000. After discussion, it was PROPOSED by Cllr K Frazer, SECONDED by Cllr P Harries and AGREED that the quotation from J & J Renovations Partnership represented good value for money and offered a practical and timely solution for the required works. The Council therefore resolved to accept the J & J Renovations Partnership quotation and approved the works to proceed accordingly. Cllr A Brun provided update regarding planned maintenance works at Malthouse Pond. It was reported that the farm intended to clear the bull rushes from the pond during the winter. As part of this work, the farm had offered to carry out similar clearance at the Rougham Road pond, where significant growth of bull rushes has also developed around the inlet and outlet areas, potentially leading to future issues if left unmanaged. The farm confirmed that it would cover all costs associated with the work, with no financial contribution required from the Parish Council. Permission is therefore sought from the Council to allow the clearance work to proceed at the Rougham Road pond (located opposite the track leading to the airfield). The Council agreed that the work should proceed and expressed its thanks to Cllr Brun for undertaking the works free of charge.
- c. **To note the Fishing Warden vacancy and to consider recruitment for the position:** it was AGREED to carry the agenda item forward to the November agenda.
- d. **To approve the cost for the supply of further daffodil bulbs for the village green:** Cllr O Locke informed the Council that he would be donating the bulbs for planting. The Council expressed its sincere thanks to Cllr Locke for his generosity.

18. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** no issues noted.

19. To note reports of any village incidents: None.

20. To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website: Play Area Update, Norfolk Community Fund, Christmas Lights Switch On, Short Story Competition.

21. To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting – Monday 17th November at 7.30 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.

..... Chairman, 24th November, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL