

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 15th September 2025, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors, K Hobart (Chair), A Brun, K Frazer, P Harries. P James, O Locke, S Nash, and the Clerk, Sarah Harvey.

Member of Public: 10

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** it was AGREED to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs R Arbenz and M West.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr K Frazer declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 17b.
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on the 18th August 2025 which were circulated before the meeting were PROPOSED by Cllr P Harries, SECONDED by Cllr P James and AGREED as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair, Cllr K Hobart.
5. **To consider the Clerks Report (Matters arising for information only):**
Boundary Agreement – Weasenham Road: Hayes and Storr clarified that the £500–£750 + VAT previously quoted covered only the topographical survey. Mr Purslow's own charges were £175 + VAT per hour, estimated at 10–12 hours, plus disbursements. The solicitors apologised for the earlier misunderstanding and would review with Mr Purslow whether the work could proceed without the topographical element to reduce costs. They would obtain a detailed written quotation outlining scope, rates, estimated hours, disbursements, and comparative costs with or without the topographical element. A further update would follow once this information is received.
Swing Unit: Installation of the single-point swing had been scheduled for the week commencing 8th September. The Village Hall had been informed.
Mallard Subgroup: Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 29th September.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** A parishioner commented that the working group planned for the 13th September to undertake clearance work at Scotsman's Pit had been rescheduled and the work was carried out on the 12th September.
A parishioner declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 and indicated they had relevant expertise which could assist the Council's consideration of the matter. It was agreed by members that the parishioner be invited to address the Council at the appropriate point on the agenda in order to share their informed perspective.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** no reports were received.
8. **Working Group Updates**
 - a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr O Locke advised that the audit work carried out by the working group would be presented at the next meeting.
 - b. **Christmas Lighting – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Following Council's decision, the quotation from Cozens (UK) Ltd had been formally accepted and they had been instructed to proceed with the works. Further information had been requested from Cozens regarding an installation date, RAMS and insurance details, and warranty and maintenance arrangements. An application would be submitted to Norfolk County Council for a permit to extend the catenary wire across the road to provide the electrical supply to the tree.
The community switch-on event was proposed for Friday, 12th December. The Harpley Choir had been invited to perform, and confirmation of their availability was awaited.
 - c. **Play Area – to consider and approve the recommendations of the Play Area Working Group:** Council received and considered the Play Area Working Group (PAWG) Recommendations to Council (September 2025) relating to the *Massingham Together: Inclusive Playground* project and associated fundraising fete.
Following discussion, it was RESOLVED, following a proposal by Cllr K Hobart and seconded by Cllr A Brun, to approve each of the recommendations set out below:

1. Raffle Arrangements

Approval of the raffle arrangements, including registration under the Small Society Lottery provisions, appointment of Cllr P Harries as promoter, ticket pricing (£1 each / £5 per book), and permission for school-gate sales subject to legal safeguards and RFO oversight.

2. Financial Control Measures

Approval of the purchase and restricted operation of a SumUp Solo card reader by authorised councillors, together with adoption of best practice for volunteer cash handling in accordance with the Council's insurance cover and Financial Regulations.

3. Fete Budget Line and Delegated Authority

Approval of the establishment of a dedicated budget line entitled "Fete Expenditure 2025" to cover costs such as insurance, licences, publicity, and equipment hire.

- The budget line will be funded initially from general reserves and reimbursed from fete proceeds where applicable.
- In accordance with the Delegated Powers Policy, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, is authorised to approve expenditure up to £1,000 within this budget line.
- All expenditure and income will be reconciled and reported to Council by the RFO and must comply fully with the Council's Financial Regulations, in particular FR 11 (Orders and Procurement).
- This arrangement ensures transparency, accountability, and timely decision-making for event-related costs.

4. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Approval of the MOU with the Village Hall Charity governing management of JustGiving and other online fundraising for the Inclusive Playground project.

5. External Grant Applications

Approval for submission of major external funding applications:

- the National Lottery Community Fund bid (approx. £140,000); and
- the FCC Communities Foundation grant bid (approx. £100,000, including a £10,750 Contributing Third Party payment if successful).

Council authorised the Clerk to prepare and submit both applications on its behalf, ensuring all supporting documentation meets funder requirements.

Council also formally accepted the £50,000 Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant and authorised the Clerk and Chair to sign the required acceptance documentation.

6. Deed of Dedication

Approval to prepare a Deed of Dedication required by the National Lottery Community Fund as a condition of grant award.

Council RESOLVED that:

- *"If the Lottery grant application is successful, the Clerk and Chair are authorised to execute the Deed of Dedication on behalf of the Council, following review and approval by the Council's solicitor."*
- This conditional authority ensures the approval is made by full Council in advance, avoiding delays once funding is confirmed.
- Quotes for the cost of preparing the Deed shall be sought and brought to Council for approval before any legal work is commissioned.

7. Use of Jubilee Field and Stall Sponsorship

Approval for the use of Jubilee Field for the fundraising fete, and adoption of stallholder pitch fees (£20 community / £50 commercial) and the stall sponsorship scheme as presented.

8. Event Risk Register and Safety Arrangements

Approval of the Event Risk Register and related safety documentation, confirming compliance with insurance and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) requirements.

Key measures include:

- Risk Assessment: Mitigation of risks relating to stalls, games, catering, electricity, weather, crowd safety, and financial controls.
- Insurance: Zurich confirmed cover under the Council's Public Liability policy (subject to < 2,000 attendees and completed risk assessments).
- First Aid: Designation of the Village Hall bar area as the first-aid point with equipment, accident book, and defibrillator.
- Fire Safety: Compliance with the Hall's Fire Risk Assessment; catering vendors must supply suitable extinguishers; evacuation and assembly procedures in place.

- Safeguarding: Appointment of a named Safeguarding Lead; display of safeguarding information and lost-child procedure; volunteer briefing on responsibilities.
 - Traffic & Parking Management: Implementation of the approved traffic plan (Appendix G) including stewards, signage, and emergency access.
 - Volunteer Briefing: Pre-event safety briefing covering emergency contacts, first aid, fire safety, safeguarding, and cash-handling procedures.
- Council noted that these arrangements collectively satisfy both insurer and statutory health-and-safety obligations.

9. **DBS and Training Requirements for Play Area Inspections**

Council RESOLVED that all councillors undertaking play-area inspections must obtain a Basic DBS check.

- Individuals apply via GOV.UK Basic DBS, providing ID and address proof for the past five years.
- Certificates (paper or digital) must be shown to the Clerk for verification.
- To comply with data-protection law, the Council will not retain copies of full certificates. The Clerk would record only:
 - Name of councillor or staff member
 - Date of certificate
 - Certificate number
 - Whether it was “clear” or “content disclosed” (without details).
- Updated certificates must be presented when re-checks are required, typically every 3–5 years.
- All inspectors must also complete approved playground-inspection training (e.g. ROSPA or equivalent).

10. **Stall List and Vendor Agreements**

Approval of the stall list, food and drink vendors, and associated vendor agreements to ensure compliance with insurance, risk, and public-health requirements.

11. **Publicity and Flyer Insertion**

Approval of the publication of raffle ticket prices and stallholder fees in all event publicity materials, and approval of payment of £30 to The Mallard for insertion of the fete and raffle flyer in the October issue to support parish-wide publicity.

12. **Post-Event Reporting**

Council noted that a post-event financial and evaluation report will be presented following the fete.

9. **Governance**

a. **To consider and approve the updated Play Area Inspection and Maintenance Policy:**

Council received the updated Play Area Inspection and Maintenance Policy, which outlined the procedures for regular safety inspections, maintenance schedules, record-keeping, and reporting of defects. Members noted that the policy aligned with ROSPA guidance and incorporated the new requirement that all councillors and staff undertaking inspections must hold a Basic DBS check and appropriate inspection training. It was RESOLVED – *following a proposal by Cllr O Locke and seconded by Cllr S Nash* – to approve and adopt the updated Play Area Inspection and Maintenance Policy, effective immediately.

b. **To consider and adopt a Safeguarding Policy:** Council considered the draft Safeguarding Policy, outlining the Council’s responsibilities for promoting a safe environment for all, particularly for children and vulnerable adults, during Parish Council activities and events. The policy confirmed that the Council did not provide direct care but would ensure safe facilities, appropriate supervision, DBS checks where required, and clear reporting procedures for any safeguarding concerns. The Parish Clerk was confirmed as the designated safeguarding contact, with the Chair as alternate. It was RESOLVED – *following a proposal by Cllr P James and seconded by Cllr P Harries* – to adopt the Safeguarding Policy (September 2025), to be reviewed annually or sooner if required by legislation.

c. **To consider and adopt an Equality and Diversity Policy:** Council considered the draft Equality and Diversity Policy, which set out the Council’s commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, and fostering inclusion in all aspects of its work and community engagement.

Members noted that the policy reflected the Council’s duties under the Equality Act 2010 and applied to councillors, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

It was RESOLVED – *following a proposal by Cllr P James and seconded by Cllr K Hobart* – to adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy, to be reviewed biennially or sooner if required by legislative or policy changes.

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)	60.00	BACS

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

Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, July Account)	572.11	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (August 2025)	54.00	BACS
HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd (Grass Cutting August 2025)	1,155.00	BACS
Zurich Municipal (Insurance Policy Renewal)	1,133.02	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (18 th August to 14 th September)	823.84	BACS
HMRC (Income Tax Payment)	21.00	BACS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr K Frazer, and unanimously AGREED that all payments as presented be authorised.

c. To note the finance received during August 2025:

Norfolk Stores Ltd (CTP Donation for Play Area Project)	1,000.00
Hollick Art (CTP Donation for Play Area Project (Stall Fee)	25.00

d. To approve the August 2025 financial statement: it was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the financial statement for August 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair. It was noted that reserves earmarked for defibrillator use would be updated to reflect the purchase of new pads.

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

11. To consider the proposal from AED Sounds regarding the installation of amplification equipment in the Village Hall to support Parish Council meetings: Council received and noted the letter from the Chair of the Village Hall Trustees outlining proposals from AED Sounds for new audio-visual and public-address (PA) equipment for the Village Hall, including an option for amplification to assist those with hearing difficulties during Parish Council meetings.

It was AGREED that while the Council supports in principle the aim of improving accessibility for those with hearing difficulties, no financial commitment can be made at this stage.

Members noted that further technical information was required to ensure that any proposed system would be fit for purpose and meet the Council's specific requirements before any decision is taken.

It was AGREED to liaise with the Village Hall so that they could request a detailed written quotation and full technical specification from AED Sounds, together with any supporting documentation necessary to enable the Council to consider the proposal fully at a future meeting, alongside confirmation of potential funding options.

12. Planning Matters

a. To consider Planning Applications received:

NO OBSERVATIONS - 25/01355/F - Detached Garden room at Mandalay Walcups Lane

b. To consider plans since publication of agenda: None.

c. Applications approved/refused by Borough Planning Control: None.

d. The Drovers Solar Farm - Invitation to Participate in Targeted Consultation:

Council considered the proposed Drovers Solar Farm development and noted that the scheme, in its current form, was regarded as inappropriately large in scale and poorly located, conflicting with adopted local and neighbourhood planning policies.

Council also expressed its full support for the detailed submission made by Castle Acre Parish Council (11 July 2025) and agreed to endorse their objections alongside its own comments.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would prepare a formal consultation response reflecting these points for review and approval by Council prior to submission, ensuring it is submitted before the consultation deadline.

13. Highways

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

SAM2 Sign: Following an enquiry with Westcotec, it was confirmed that data collection had always been an additional optional feature. Previously, this function was cable-based, but that option had been discontinued several years ago as most customers switched to Bluetooth.

- The Bluetooth retrofit was now the lower-cost and most widely adopted option among parish councils.
- To enable Bluetooth data collection, the sign would need to be returned to the supplier.
- The total cost, including collection and delivery, is £630.00 + VAT.
- An alternative remote access system is available but would require a retrofit at just under £1,500 + VAT plus a two-year subscription.

It was AGREED that the unit would not be upgraded to allow data collection at the present time.

Highways Updates

- **Castle Acre Road** – Highways had confirmed that work was scheduled for the footpath from 5 January 2026.
- **Rudham Road** – Works were in the system but not currently a high priority. Members were advised that if the condition deteriorated or became hazardous, this should be reported via the online portal to trigger a reinspection.
- **Weasenham Road** – Two staggered 30mph speed roundels were to be painted between Sandy Lane and Parsley's Barn. Highways confirmed these works have been ordered at no cost to the Parish.
- **Castle Acre Road** – An additional 30mph roundel was to be painted near the Drunken Drove junction. This order has also been confirmed at no cost to the Parish.
- **"Caution – Pedestrians in Road" Signs (Castle Acre Road)** - Placement options were reviewed using the images provided. Highways advised that the supply and installation of two signs, including posts and subplates, would cost approximately £1,500 in total, although final traffic management costs are yet to be confirmed.

It was AGREED, with five councillors in support and two abstentions, that this project should be pursued through a future Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS) bid.

- **Abbey Road – Verge Protection** - Council considered a proposal to replace the existing reflector posts with wooden bollards fitted with small reflectors to protect the verge and footpath. Highways advised that, based on the current layout, approximately 10–12 bollards would be required.

Indicative costs were around £250 per post, with an estimated two days' installation time, giving a broad total of approximately £5,000.

Members noted that the figure was indicative only, but considered the estimated cost to be excessive at this stage and AGREED not to pursue the project further at the present time.

- b. **To consider potential bids to the NCC Parish Partnership Scheme 2026/27:** Council revisited the two potential schemes– the proposed "Caution – Pedestrians in Road" signs on Castle Acre Road and the verge protection bollards along Abbey Road – in the context of the forthcoming Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS) 2026/27.

It was noted that £2,462.78 remained ringfenced within parish funds for this purpose, with the possibility of further support from the County Councillor's Local Member Fund (LMF).

It was AGREED that a PPS bid be submitted for the "Caution – Pedestrians in Road" signage on Castle Acre Road, while the Abbey Road bollard proposal would not be progressed at this time.

The Clerk was instructed to prepare and submit the PPS application in line with Norfolk County Council's 2026/27 requirements.

14. Street Lighting

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems and approve any repair costs:** Council received a report regarding lantern no. 9024, located adjacent to 4B Station Road, which had been inspected by the Council's lighting contractor and assessed as beyond repair. In accordance with the agreed budget for street lighting maintenance, the Clerk authorised the replacement of the unit to avoid unnecessary delay. A quotation had been received to supply and install a new LED lantern and bracket at a cost of £380 + VAT.

It was RESOLVED to ratify the Clerk's action and to note that the expenditure was consistent with previously approved budget provision for street lighting maintenance.

Cllr O Locke noted that the streetlight outside 53 Castle Acre Rd required attention.

15. Correspondence

- a. **Email from Parishioner, Planning Breach:** the email was noted and it was RESOLVED to report the suspected breach of planning to Borough Councillor Alistair Beales so that he may liaise with Planning Enforcement.
- b. **Email from Parishioner, Parking on the Village Green:** it was noted that the wider issue of parking on the village greens was to be considered by Council in order to agree a village green policy which would be both practical and fully compliant with legislation.
- c. **Email from Fishing Warden, Concerns regarding maintenance and role clarity:** it was RESOLVED that a face to face meeting with the Fishing Warden would be arranged with Cllrs K Hobart and S Nash
- d. **Email from Parishioners, Concerns regarding Scotsman's Pit:** the Council noted concerns received regarding anglers and maintenance at Scotsman's Pit. It was confirmed that the pond is a community amenity for casual fishing rather than a commercial fishery. The Council contributes significant funds annually to its upkeep, far exceeding the ~£300 per year generated by fishing permits. The Council has sought external funding, including assistance from Houghton Estate, which has supported bank erosion work, and a DEFRA grant application, which was unfortunately unsuccessful. The Council continues to explore funding and management options and will review suggestions relating to signage, maintenance, biosecurity and future planning.
- e. **BCKLWN, Warm Homes: Local Grant:** noted.
- f. **BCKLWN, Beat your Bills:** noted.

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

16. Open Spaces

- a. **To consider the adoption of the *Village Green Policy Proposal* which outlines a framework for the protection, management, and lawful use of the registered village greens within Great Massingham:** Members considered the draft *Village Green Policy Proposal 2025*, outlining a framework for the protection and lawful management of Great Massingham's registered village greens. The proposal notes the heritage and community value of the greens, increasing pressure from parking (particularly near the Dabbling Duck and Station Road), and the legal protections under relevant legislation. DEFRA/Open Spaces Society guidance confirms that parking on village greens is generally unlawful without existing legal rights and that Parish Councils have powers and duties to prevent unlawful use.

It was AGREED that a Working Group be formed to review the policy and associated actions in more detail and bring recommendations to Council.

The Working Group would consist of Cllrs K Frazer, S Nash, A Brun and P James.

- b. **To consider a request from the Licensees to install sleepers to define the parking area at 9 Rectory Row:** Council noted that the Licensees of 9 Rectory Row, had confirmed their agreement with the draft Licence to Occupy and arrangements were being made for the document to be signed. The Licensees would pay their half of the associated legal fee as previously agreed. The Council considered a request from the Licensees for consent to install wooden sleepers to define the parking area, as required under clause 3(d) of the Licence (alterations requiring Parish Council approval).

It was RESOLVED to approve the request and grant consent for the installation of sleepers as proposed, subject to the following conditions:

- All works were to be carried out at the Licensees' expense;
- Sleepers must be positioned strictly in accordance with the plan approved by the Council.
- The Licensees would be responsible for all future maintenance and removal if required;
- Any required planning or regulatory consents must be obtained by the Licensees prior to works commencing.

17. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To consider any further information, actions and updates:** it was noted that Cllr O Locke would reserve stock for further daffodil bulbs for the village greens.
- b. **To consider a proposal for the clearance of vegetation around Post Office Pit:** Council received the detailed project note prepared by Cllrs R Arbenz and K Hobart outlining priority clearance areas at Scotsman's Pit and Post Office Pit, identifying suitable volunteer tasks and works requiring contractor involvement. The report also set out associated health, safety and ecological considerations.

Cllr R Arbenz would be asked to confirm if he was willing to continue in the role of co-ordinator for the project. Cllr K Hobart reported that initial contact had been made with Houghton Estate regarding the proposed reduction of selected trees around Scotsman's Pit.

It was agreed that a hybrid approach would be taken, with:

- Volunteer-led work to progress at Scotsman's Pit, and
- Contractor-led work to take place at Post Office Pit, with Cllr A Brun obtaining quotations for the contractor elements.

Cllr K Frazer advised that Cllr K Hobart had liaised with the residents of 49 and 51 Station Road regarding the proposed work, but that the owner of 53 Station Road had not yet been spoken to.

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: The Council received a report of recent incidents affecting the parish. It was noted that two thefts had occurred along Castle Acre Road. In addition, concerns were raised regarding an unregistered off-road trail bike being ridden illegally on public highways and across agricultural land in the parish

20. To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website: Play Area Fundraising Fete.

21. To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting – Monday 20th October at 7.30 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.15 pm.

..... Chairman, 20th October, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL