

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 17th March 2025, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors, R Arbenz (Chair), A Brun, K Frazer, 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 P Harries and K Hobart.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr S Nash declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 9a (Finance).
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 17th February 2025 which were circulated before the meeting were PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, 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):**
The Clerk's report was circulated ahead of the meeting and updates were received regarding the casual vacancy, rubbish to the rear of Station Road properties and the dog waste bin permissions.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** it was noted that a new Chair has been appointed to the Great Massingham Allotment Association, Alex Richardson. The outgoing Chair would remain on the committee and continue to liaise with Cllr A Brun regarding the planned allotment road repairs. A parishioner noted the continuing issue with dog fouling throughout the village and the failure of owners to clean up after their dogs. The Clerk would include a short piece in relation to this in The Mallard. Parishioners highlighted that there was a significant issue at Sunnyside Rd and along Abbey Road. Cllr P James would source further signage and Cllr R Arbenz would liaise with the field owner (Sunnyside Rd) regarding placement of signage on perimeter fencing.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** County Councillor Stuart Dark relayed his apologies and provided a report for the Council via email, stating the following.
'A couple of brief updates – members will have hopefully seen you have been successful on the attached SAM2 sign Parish Partnership bid, I have supported. As I previously stated I will now engage Highways to pay for the Parish Council's 50% out of my LMF for Apr 2025-2026 – effectively meaning the Parish should pay no contribution with all funds coming directly from NCC. I'll come back to you if there are any issues but I'm confident there won't be.

I'm also pleased to see that the bid supported by GM Parish Council and myself (formal letter submitted) to provide a footpath linking Little Massingham received the full amount required from the Borough council's recent CIL panel and have spoken with Dale already on this. This was no mean feat as I understand the CIL panel was oversubscribed by almost £1m this round – so congratulations are definitely in order.

The main topics at county currently are:

Devolution and local government reform – there have been no major decisions taken since my last update, with the preferred local model and preferred central government model not yet known yet alone negotiated or agreed. Several councils including districts and NCC are working upon their submissions. I will keep you posted as things become clearer.

Reluctantly NCC has like other councils had to increase its council tax by 4.99% as of April (the maximum permissible is 5%) due to the pressures across the entire system. It is a fact that more money is being invested into adults, children's and highways than ever before locally but this money does not go as far. Without getting too political, this pressure has also increased from the new central government's decision to remove the Rural services Support Grant (RSG) and another related grant in Dec 2024 which was designed to specifically support large rural counties such as ours with inherent additional costs of delivering across 2000 sq. miles (extra buildings, people, vehicles, heating etc) and maintaining the majority of 7000 miles of highways. These two grants were worth c.£6.4m to Norfolk each year.'

Borough Councillor A Beales relayed his apologies for the meeting, as he was involved with the Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation briefing for Town/Parish Councils at the Town Hall in King's Lynn.

8. Working Group Updates

- a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr O Locke (Working Group Lead) advised that a “Biodiversity Audit” would be carried out of the various areas around the village that were parish owned and where the Parish Council had responsibility for their management. This would commence on the 4th April at Scotsman's Pit following which the remaining areas would be assessed.
- b. **Christmas Lighting – to confirm membership, adopt the Terms of Reference and agree meeting date:** it was noted that Cllrs R Arbenz, A Brun, P Harries and one co-opted member, Mick Wingell would form the working group. It was PROPOSED by Cllr A Brun, seconded by Cllr R Arbenz and AGREED that the draft terms of reference document should be adopted.
It was noted that an application had been submitted to the BCKWLN for planning permission to undertake the work to the beech tree, applications would be assessed by the Tree Officer and determined within 6 weeks.
It was noted that UKPN had provided a further budget estimate for a new electrical connection for the Christmas lighting, which was £8,817.00 (excluding VAT). It was PROPOSED by Cllr A Brun, SECONDED by Cllr S Nash that the quotation for festive lighting from Cozens (UK) Ltd should be revisited and advice sought whether similar lighting could be supplied that was battery or solar powered.
- c. **Play Area – to confirm membership, adopt the Terms of Reference and agree meeting date:** it was noted that Cllrs P Harries, K Hobart and P James would form the working group. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, seconded by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the draft terms of reference document should be adopted.
The Clerk advised that a training session had been attended on grant funding and project processes that would help progress any project and that the course notes had been circulated to Councillors for their information.
Cllr P James had obtained a copy of the play area management lease between the PC and Village Hall. It was noted that this was important because grant applications, would typically require that the Parish Council should own or lease the site and have at least five years remaining on a lease or formal management agreement.
Cllr P Harries had arranged to meet with a VH representative on the 24th March to discuss and understand how the planned MUGA may impact the Play Area.
- d. **To note and approve the recommendations made by The Mallard subgroup at the meeting held on 24th February:** it was noted that the draft notes/recommendations had been circulated to Councillors for their consideration and approval. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that all recommendations should be actioned.

9. Finance

- a. **To note accounts for payment under the Late Payments Interest Act (1998):**
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| Mrs K Dawes (Reimbursement of costs for 10 x Poly Posts) | 29.60 | BACS |
|--|-------|------|
- b. **To approve the accounts for payment (list at meeting):**
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| Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, January Account) | 625.52 | BACS |
| Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (February 2025) | 54.00 | BACS |
| Norfolk Parish Training & Support (Annual Subscription 2025/26) | 329.34 | BACS |
| Norfolk Parish Training & Support (Grant Funding and the Project Process) | 40.00 | BACS |
| Parish Online (Mapping Software Subscription 2025/26) | 90.00 | BACS |
| Clerk's Salary & Expenses (17 th February to 16 th March) | 803.40 | BACS |
- It was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr K Frazer and AGREED that all payments should be authorised.
- c. **To note the finance received during February 2025:**
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| BCKLWN (Credit, Dog Bins Weekly Emptying 2024/25) | 219.02 |
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- d. **To approve the February 2025 financial statement:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the financial statement for February 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair.

- e. **To approve an annual subscription to the Norfolk ALC and costs for the Gov.uk service:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the Council should subscribe to the Norfolk ALC for 2025/26 at a cost of £276.33 and use the Norfolk ALC's Gov.uk Service. The Clerk advised that the costs associated with these had been accounted for in the 2025/26 budget and precept calculation.

10. Planning Matters

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

25/00323/F - Overflow car park (retrospective) at The Dabbling Duck 11 Abbey Road.

The Parish Council voted to SUPPORT (6 Councillors in SUPPORT, Cllr S Nash OBJECTED) the planning application while providing the following recommendations:

Fire Safety & Privacy: A fire-resistant green hedge should be incorporated to act as a natural firebreak, enhance privacy for neighbouring properties, and improve site aesthetics and biodiversity. The Council requests this be considered as a condition of approval.

Parking Concerns: Surveys indicate strong community support for additional parking behind The Dabbling Duck, addressing a key concern—parking on village greens. The proposed overflow parking would help protect the greens, reduce congestion, and improve safety.

Community Feedback: While six objections have been noted, residents were advised to submit concerns to BCKLWN.

Given the overall benefits and broad community support, the Parish Council considered this application as a positive and necessary improvement.

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

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

24/01606/F Greenville 14 Lynn Lane - New Front Extension, New Rear Extension and New Side Extension, Internal Alterations/Refurbishment and New Parking Layout.

Application Permitted 24 February 2025 Delegated Decision

- b. **Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update:** Jess Cunningham (Chair NDP Steering Group) reported that on the 1st March the NDP group undertook an initial Landscape Views Assessment. This involved walking around the village along a route covering the key entrance points and the publicly accessible footpaths within and out with (but close to) the Great Massingham Development Boundary and within the Parish Boundary.

The purpose of the Views Assessment was to identify a long list of views with aspects of value, these were to be presented for discussion by the Community and to inform the final landscape views for inclusion in the NDP document.

Discussions prior to the walkabout identified it was difficult to be explicit in the criteria for including a particular view in the list, however the following was used to act as a guide.

- Publicly Accessible
- It provides a Sense of Great Massingham as a Place, has Community Value.
- Basically, you would be happy to sit for a while and wonder on it because it makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside.

The discussion highlighted that the Village was beautiful and had a large number of interesting views which added to the character of Great Massingham. These included the juxtaposition of buildings and nature, the brick and flint, red roofs, ponds and general landscape. However, it was also agreed that it was not appropriate to include every view of the village, which amounted to 100s, and the general loveliness of GM would be expressed in the Character Statement of the NDP document.

In total 12 views were identified as having extra value worthy of further discussion and consideration. Details of these would be made available on the NDP website and further engagement with the community was planned. To include

- An online survey where the community would be asked a number of questions
- A Community discussion event on the 25th April to share the views and discuss their value.

Further details would be shared via the Mallard and emailed to the supporters list.

Any views included in the final NDP must have clear justification as to why they were included and the value that they brought. It is expected that from the long list between 6-8 views would be selected for the final document.

It should be noted that the inclusion of a view did not necessarily preclude all development opportunities in the sightline. The views would be considered further, and it is anticipated that refinement of what makes the view so valuable would be further defined to enable, where possible,

appropriate development to support the wider needs of the community whilst protecting the valuable assets.

11. Highways

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

Village Gateway Update, Lynn Lane – it was noted that the revised total project cost would be £3978.14, with the Parish Councils 50% contribution being £1989.07. It was noted that the Council had originally paid £2500 based on the estimated cost of the scheme at the time, therefore, the Council would be due a refund of £510.93. It was AGREED (with Cllr R Arbenz abstaining) that the wording on the gateways should state GREAT MASSINGHAM 'Please Drive Carefully'

Other Highways Updates

Safety Study, 20 mph speed limit – Martin Rose Wells (Highways Engineer) had advised that the safety study should be conducted by their own safety team, at a cost of £5,000. He advised that it may be conducted by an accredited 3rd party, although he could not guarantee Highways would act upon any data provided. Norfolk's Speed Management Strategy defined what their criteria was for speed which should provide a good indication of what their outcome of a safety study may be. It was AGREED that given the cost and the likelihood of a positive outcome a safety study would not be pursued at the present time.

Car Park Signage: Martin Rose Wells advised that he had no objection to the installation of suitable parking signage but that he would need to approve any locations. It was noted all signs would need to comply with TSRGD 2016 and that there was no Highways budget to provide new signs of this nature. These would need to be sourced through Highways and were around £180. It was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr P James, that further information should be secured regarding the potential locations of the signs and what they would look like.

Castle Acre Rd Footway: It was noted that there was a plan/brief to reconstruct the footway on Castle Acre Road, but that it was yet to be confirmed when this would commence.

Speed Limit Roundels on Carriageway: it was noted that Highways had no budget to provide the roundels, and they typically cost around £150 per pair. It was AGREED to ascertain whether highways would take responsibility for their ongoing maintenance, and it was hoped that funding could be sought from the County Councillors Local Member Fund.

Parish Partnership Scheme Bid 2025/26: it was noted that confirmation had been received that the Parish Council had been successful in seeking 50% funding to purchase the second SAM2 Sign for the village. It was noted that County Councillor S Dark had AGREED to pay for the Parish Council's 50% contribution from his Local Member Fund.

12. Street Lighting

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems and approve any repair costs:** it was noted that an updated street lighting inventory had been provided which included the number, address and what3words location for each streetlight within the village.
It was noted that streetlight 9045 near to The Malthouse, Weasenham Road was still not working. It was noted that Roy Cozens (Cozens (UK) Ltd) was available on 24th or 25th March to undertake a visual survey of street lighting to ascertain whether new columns were needed. The Clerk would liaise with Cllrs R Arbenz and P James regarding a meeting.

13. Correspondence

To note any general correspondence/circulars received (list provided at meeting).

- Email from Parishioner, Failure of dog owners to dispose of dog waste:** noted and a specific item would be included in The Mallard.
- Emails from Parishioners, Planning Application 25/00323/F Overflow car park:** the responses were noted by the Council and considered as part of agenda item 10a (Planning).
- Biodiversity Project, Update and thanks for annual donation:** noted.
- GMACCS, Letter of thanks for annual donation:** noted.
- BCKLWN, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040: Publication of Inspectors' Report:** circulated on Friday 28th February via email to Councillors.
- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk: budget for 2025/26:** circulated on Friday 28th February via email to Councillors.
- St Mary's Church, PCC, Letter of thanks for annual donation:** noted.
- Classics on the Green, Dates for 2025:** these were noted as Saturday 7th June 10am -1pm, Thursday 7th August 6-8pm and Sunday 21st September 10am -1pm

14. Open Spaces

- a. **To receive updated legal advice regarding Rectory Row Cottage licence agreement and to note the new property owners' plans:** the refreshed legal advice was noted from Wellers Hedley including the cost to undertake the work, this would be £545 plus VAT (which the solicitor had advised would be typically covered by the licensee). It was noted that Cllrs R Arbenz and P James were to meet with the property owners to discuss their plans on the 18th March and would update the Council at the next meeting.
- b. **To receive an update regarding the proposed repairs to the allotment roadway and approve the associated cost for the work:** following receipt of two quotations it was PROPOSED by Cllr A Brun, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that J&J Renovations Partnership should carry out the work for £2,458.00. It was noted that the AGREED cost would be divided three ways between the GMAA, the PC and Freebridge. Freebridge had confirmed that they were happy to pay a third of the cost (£800) and that they would provide the PC with their share of the cost on receipt of an invoice following completion of the work.
- c. **To agree a plan of action for the noticeboard displaying a map of the local Great Massingham area:** Cllr O Locke reported that one of the posts supporting the sign was rotting away and it was AGREED that this should be removed. Cllr P James would liaise with the Historical Society regarding content for a replacement option, such as an orientation map.
- d. **To approve the cost to purchase two dog waste bins and the respective annual emptying costs charged by the BCKLWN:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr P James that two further Fido 25 Dog Waste Bins + below ground post and fixings at a cost of £169.38 (ex VAT) per bin should be purchased. It was noted that this was to be approved as part of the budget for 2025/26 along with weekly emptying charges by BCKLWN. The Clerk advised that weekly emptying charges for dog waste bins were set at £4.22 (ex VAT) or £219.70 per annum per bin.

15. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To consider any further information, actions and updates:** None.
- b. **To receive an update regarding work required around Scotsman's Pit from Houghton Estate:** a summary of the site meeting held with Robert Miller (Estate Director, Houghton Estate) was provided, along with the agreed actions. It was noted that Robert Miller (Estate Director, Houghton Estate) would contact the Council in May ahead of the planned work commencing in June.

16. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** None were noted.

17. To note reports of any village incidents:

None.

18. To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website:

Dog Fouling and failure of dog owners to clear up after their dogs.

19. To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting, 14th April, 2025 at 7.30pm.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 pm.

..... Chairman, 14th April, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL