

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 21st July 2025, at 7.30pm.

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

Borough Councillor A Beales

Member of Public: 7

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 K Frazer.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** None.
4. **Minutes**
Following an amendment to the minutes of the 7th July meeting, Agenda Item 5, Correspondence, to clarify that “correspondence was received from sixteen parishioners residing at eight addresses,” the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 16th June and 7th July 2025, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, were proposed for approval by Cllr O Locke, seconded by Cllr P James, and unanimously agreed as a correct record. The minutes were then signed by the Chair, Cllr K. Hobart.
5. **To consider the Clerks Report (Matters arising for information only):**
The Clerk reported receipt of a Planning Committee meeting notification, dated 28th July, regarding application 25/00323/F for a retrospective overflow car park at The Dabbling Duck, 11 Abbey Road. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council’s comments on the revised plans—prepared at an Extraordinary Meeting on 7th July—had been omitted from the Planning Officer’s report due to an unnotified change in the comment deadline to 14th July. As the published statutory consultation period ran until 21st July, the Clerk confirmed she had written to Stuart Ashworth (Assistant Director – Environment and Planning) and Borough Cllr A. Beales to emphasise that all representations submitted before the statutory deadline should be provided to the Planning Committee to ensure a fair, transparent, and procedurally sound decision-making process.
It was noted that a further clean of the play area was scheduled for 22nd July at a cost of £160. The noticeboards were expected to be delivered within the next two to three weeks, with the agreed locations confirmed in accordance with approvals from Highways and Planning.
The Clerk further advised that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) has been completed and submitted to PKF Littlejohn for external audit.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** A parishioner reported that traffic cones placed outside his property were frequently being removed and later returned. It was noted that parking along Abbey Road, particularly in this narrow section, was creating difficulties for traffic movement and raising safety concerns. Following discussion, it was suggested that Norfolk Highways be approached to explore the possibility of installing yellow lines to restrict parking in this area.
In addition, a member of the public expressed thanks to a parishioner from Lynn Lane for his significant contribution to the Village Gateway project, noting that his efforts had been greatly appreciated by the community.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** Borough Cllr A Beales referred to the issue raised regarding the omission of the Parish Council’s comments from the Planning Officer’s report. He advised that Stuart Ashworth (Assistant Director – Environment and Planning) would ensure a full response was provided to the Council.
Cllr A Beales also referred to the Local Government Reorganisation Briefings that had been scheduled for Town and Parish Councils on the 26th August and 11th September. It was noted that the confirmed details would be received by email in due course.
8. **Working Group Updates**
 - a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan – to receive an update and approve recommendations:**
Cllr O Locke advised that the preliminary biodiversity audits had been completed and that a further working group meeting would be scheduled, in order to generate the initial recommendations to the Parish Council.

- b. **Christmas Lighting – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** it was noted that two quotations had been received: Kings & Barnhams, and Cozens (UK) Ltd. Cozens reported delays in sourcing a suitable long-life battery system, due to slow supplier responses, and advised they were open to the Council seeking alternative providers. They also suggested exploring an electrical feeder pillar as a potential alternative, which could support both the lighting and other community events.

The working group (Cllrs R Arbenz, A Brun, and P Harries) were reminded to review progress against the February Terms of Reference, as it was expected by this stage that quotations would be obtained and a preferred supplier identified. It was AGREED that the working group would assess progress to date and arrange further meetings with suppliers to obtain consistent quotations for the agreed scope of work.

- c. **HR/Staffing - to review the meeting notes and approve recommendations:** the meeting notes of the HR/Staffing Subgroup were reviewed. The recommendations contained within the notes were considered and it was RESOLVED to approve them in full.

- d. **Play Area – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** it was confirmed that the tender opening panel would comprise of Cllr P Harries and the Clerk. All tenders would be opened simultaneously on Tuesday 29th July at 7:00 pm, with no tenders opened beforehand. A written Tender Register would be completed at the time of opening, recording attendees, details of tenders received, and any irregularities. The register would be signed by all panel members to ensure accuracy, fairness, and transparency.

The tenders would then be evaluated against the agreed award criteria by the Play Area Working Group on Wednesday 30th July, with the Parish Council to approve the appointment of the recommended supplier on Thursday 31st July.

Cllr P Harries reported that, in order to secure £100,000 of funding from FCC, it was necessary to raise third-party funding amounting to 10.75% of the grant value. Approaches had been made to local businesses to support this requirement, and a commitment of £1,000 has already been received from one local business.

- e. **The Mallard – to review the meeting notes and approve recommendations:** the meeting notes of The Mallard Subgroup were reviewed. The recommendations contained within the notes were considered and it was RESOLVED to approve them in full.

9. Finance

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

Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd (Unplanted Coir Roll)	652.20	BACS
Westcotec Ltd (New SAM2 Unit)	3,810.00	BACS
Minuteman Press (550 A5 Parish Magazines (July 2025)	162.00	BACS
Mrs Julia R Lodge (Delivery of July Mallard)	60.00	BACS

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

Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, May Account)	706.01	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (June 2025)	54.00	BACS
HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd (Grass Cutting June 2025)	1,131.90	BACS
GM PCC (Church Clock Annual Service)	234.00	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (16 th June to 20 th July)	813.12	BACS
HMRC (Income Tax Payment)	16.00	BACS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr M West, SECONDED by Cllr K Hobart and AGREED that all payments should be authorised.

- c. **To note the finance received during June 2025:**

Credit Interest (Instant Access Account)	141.15
Fishing Receipts	24.00

- d. **To approve the June 2025 financial statement:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr P Harries, SECONDED by Cllr M West and AGREED that the financial statement for June 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair.

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

- f. **To approve the terms and conditions for the Children's Short Story Competition in *The Mallard* and to agree the prize amount:** the terms and conditions for the Children's Short Story Competition to be published in *The Mallard* were reviewed. It was RESOLVED to approve the

terms and conditions as presented and to agree the prize amount of £25.00. It was further agreed to defer the competition until the October half-term, with the closing date set for the end of the Michaelmas term, to allow the school sufficient time to notify children of the competition.

- g. **To consider a grant application from the Village Hall for financial assistance towards the car park resurfacing project:** a grant application from the Village Hall was considered, requesting financial assistance towards the cost of resurfacing the car park.

Under the Budget and Reserves Update for 2025/26, it was noted that £1,000 has been allocated for grants in the current financial year. It was noted that the Instant Access account currently held £28,745.91; however, significant allocations had already been made, including up to £10,000 for the Neighbourhood Development Plan, £3,000 for new noticeboards, ongoing costs for street lighting and Christmas lighting, and funding to cover the VAT reclaim for the first phase of the play area. Councillors were reminded that the additional £50,000 held in the HTB account would not be accessible until after January 2026, and therefore any further expenditure this year would need to come from the already limited reserves.

In light of these constraints, it was PROPOSED by Cllr M West, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and RESOLVED to approve the application, with funding of £1,000 to be provided from the Council's grants budget.

10. Governance

- a. **To approve a Meeting Conduct Protocol Policy:** the proposed Meeting Conduct Protocol Policy was reviewed. It was RESOLVED to approve the policy as presented, to take immediate effect.
- b. **Email Protocol Policy:** the proposed Email Protocol Policy was reviewed. It was RESOLVED to approve the policy as presented, to take immediate effect. Councillor-specific email addresses would be issued in due course, along with setup instructions, to support the implementation of the policy.

11. Planning Matters

- a. **To consider Planning Applications received:** None.
- b. **To consider plans since publication of agenda:** None.
- c. **Applications approved/refused by Borough Planning Control:** None to date.
- d. **Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update:** it was noted an update would be received at the August meeting.

12. Highways

- a. **To note highway matters requiring attention and to receive any updates:** the Clerk reported receipt of a refund of £510.93 under the 2024/25 Parish Partnership Scheme in respect of the Village Gateways project. A further refund of £3,175.00 had been received under the 2025/26 scheme in respect of the SAM2 sign.

Highways Updates

The Clerk reported that two staggered speed roundels were to be painted on Weasenham Road between Sandy Lane and Parsley's Barn, and an order was to be placed for this work.

On Castle Acre Road, an additional 30mph roundel would be painted near the Drunken Drove junction, with the order already placed. Highways would also investigate the installation of "Caution, pedestrians in road" signs at either end of this stretch, at an estimated cost of £200 per sign plus £200 for a supplementary subplate and installation. It was noted that site options for these signs were limited and the cost would fall to the Parish Council if approved.

On Abbey Road, a proposal was considered to replace the existing reflector posts with wooden bollards fitted with small reflectors to protect the verge and footpath. The estimated cost was £250 per post plus labour, with potential funding via the PPS or LMF. It was AGREED that a cost should be obtained for 75mm wooden bollards.

On Station Road, Highways would investigate adding a "P" parking symbol with an arrow to the existing bus stop sign opposite the entrance. The estimated cost would be £200 plus fitting, and funding would be required. It was AGREED that, given the car park was already signposted at the Village Hall entrance, this additional signage was unnecessary.

It was noted that line marking was scheduled for later this summer, while signage and bollards remain subject to contractor availability and ordering lead times.

13. Street Lighting

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems:** Cllr S Nash advised that a streetlight on Station Road was not working, and the location would be identified and passed to the Clerk to report.

- b. **To review and consider quotations for upgrading the remaining streetlights to LED units:**
The Clerk advised that to date two quotations had been received for the proposed street lighting upgrade: T.T. Jones Electrical Ltd (£6,864 + VAT) and Cozens (UK) Ltd (£9,240 + VAT). A third quotation was to be sought from King's & Barnhams to comply with Financial Regulations. It was noted that Westcotec Ltd and K & M Lighting had confirmed they were unable to quote. The scope of works includes replacing 26 lanterns with LED units, fitting new bracket arms, decommissioning existing fittings, and full testing/inspection.
It was AGREED that for the current financial year, streetlights would be upgraded to LED units only as they fail, with replacement of the remainder of assets to be reviewed again in the next financial year.

14. Correspondence

- a. **Email from Parishioner, Request for use of village green for Yard Sale – Sunday 17th August:** it was RESOLVED to grant permission.
- b. **Email from Parishioner, Thornham Antiques Posters:** the Council noted correspondence from a parishioner raising concerns about large advertising posters placed around the village by Thornham Antiques to promote their Antiques and Vintage Fair. The parishioner reported that the posters take up space that could be used for promoting local events and were not being removed after the event date. It was AGREED that the Parish Council would contact Thornham Antiques to outline these concerns.
- c. **Email from East Anglian Jaguar Car club, Request for use of village green for parking – Thursday 25th September:** the Council approved the visit to the village on Thursday 25th September and thanked the organiser for advising the Parish Council of the plans. Drivers would be asked to park on the main green, entering from the pond end, and to remove any rubbish after the event. The organiser would be advised that Parish Council Public Liability insurance would not cover the cars. In the event of very wet weather, the Village Hall car park on Station Road would be mentioned as an alternative.
- d. **NCC, Parish Partnership Scheme 2026/27:** it was AGREED to place on the August meeting agenda.
- e. **NCC, Funding to Support Bus Shelter Installations Across Norfolk:** noted.
- f. **BCKLWN, Future Norfolk Survey:** the details were noted and the Clerk advised that a link to the survey had been placed on the Parish Council website.
- g. **BCKLWN, Parish Update Sessions:** the Clerk advised that the details had not been circulated as the BCKLWN are having problems with access issues.

15. Open Spaces

- a. **To receive an update regarding the boundary agreement at Weasenham Road:** the Clerk advised that Hayes & Storr had reported that the owners of 24 Weasenham Road did not accept the current fence line as representing the true boundary but were willing to work positively with the Council. It was agreed the surveyor should prepare a site plan, review relevant deeds and documents, and provide an expert opinion on the correct boundary position. The neighbouring owners would be invited to supply relevant documents to assist this process. Hayes & Storr would contact the owners on this basis and continue to update the Council. Enquiries were being made with local surveyors for availability and costs, with expenditure to date remaining within the authorised £800 limit.
- b. **To receive an update regarding the licence agreement at 9 Rectory Row:** the Clerk advised that the property owners had confirmed their wish to proceed with entering into a licence agreement, on the basis that the Parish Council would contribute 50% of the total legal costs. Roger Taylor of Wellers Hedley had reconfirmed the cost for preparing the agreement at £545 + VAT, to be shared equally between both parties.
In order to progress, the solicitor required the full names and addresses of the licensees, the address of the property concerned, and confirmation of the licensed activity (i.e, vehicle parking). It was RESOLVED to:
- Agree to contribute 50% of the legal cost (£545 + VAT).
 - Approve the annual licence fee of £1.00.
 - Proceed with supplying the required information to the solicitor to enable the drafting of the agreement.

Cllr S. Nash expressed the view that the property owners should not be required to pay for parking on the village green land adjacent to their property, as this had been permitted without charge in the past.

- c. **To approve the cost to remove brambles at Abbeyfields:** the Council considered two options for bramble clearance: work by Houghton Estate using a hedge cutter (flail) later in the year, or a quotation from HHA Ground Maintenance to flail brambles to ground level, mulch the cuttings, and apply herbicide at a cost of £550 + VAT. The Council AGREED to proceed with the former option.
- d. **To confirm plans to mark VJ Day (Friday 15th August) and approve a risk assessment for the event:** it was AGREED that Cllr A Brun would liaise with a third party to coordinate the organisation of the beacon lighting, including arrangements for the installation of appropriate safety fencing. Cllr P James would prepare and deliver an address for the occasion. The beacon would be scheduled to be lit at 8:00 pm. The accompanying risk assessment was reviewed in detail and formally approved by the Council.

16. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To note concerns regarding Carp Pox and to discuss and approve any necessary actions:** it was noted that the Fishing Warden had reported the presence of carp pox at Scotsman's Pit. It was noted that the condition was cosmetic, poses no threat to humans or other wildlife, was non-notifiable and often improved naturally with warmer water and reduced stress. The Council AGREED to place biosecurity messages at Scotsman's Pit advising anglers to disinfect and dry nets before fishing elsewhere.
- b. **Weasenham Road Pit: To note concerns regarding silt build-up and pollution and consider the recommendation for periodic dredging:** concerns were noted regarding silt accumulation at Weasenham Road Pit. The recommendation for periodic dredging to maintain water quality and depth was considered. It was AGREED that dredging and associated bank erosion works would be planned for inclusion in the 2026/27 budget. Cllr A Brun would check the current level of silt build-up within the pond to inform future works planning.
Cllr O. Locke reported a blockage in the roadside drain adjacent to the pit and would provide a What3Words location to the Clerk for reporting to Highways.

17. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** no issues noted.
- b. **To consider and approve the cost to remove the single point swing:** Cllr P Harries confirmed that the proposed MUGA, should it proceed in the future, would not require the removal of the existing single-point swing. On this basis, it was AGREED to proceed with the replacement of the current unit with an inclusive swing to improve accessibility. Given the requirement for an inclusive option and noting that previous quotations obtained for similar equipment exceeded £1,000, it was further AGREED that two quotations would be sought in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- c. **To approve the Play Area cleaning risk assessment and consider costs for further cleaning:** the Play Area Cleaning Risk Assessment was reviewed and APPROVED. The Clerk provided costs for additional cleaning and for bird fouling prevention measures. It was AGREED that prevention measures would be incorporated into the design of the new play area rather than implemented at the existing site. Cleaning would continue to be carried out as agreed ahead of school holidays at a cost of £160 per visit.
- d. **Request from GM Village Hall Trustees for a larger litter bin at the Play Area:** the Council noted a request from the Village Hall Trustees for the replacement of the small bin in the play area, with a larger enclosed bin similar to those installed on the main village greens. The Trustees reported that the existing bin was frequently overflowing, creating a hazard for children and attracting vermin, and offered that Village Hall staff would empty the bin alongside their own as part of the regular waste collection.
It was noted that provision was already being made under the new play area project for the installation of new bins for the play area. The Clerk would investigate costs for a 240L litter bin.

18. **To note reports of any village incidents:** None.

19. **To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website:** VJ Day – Beacon Lighting.

20. **To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting** – Monday 18th August at 7.30 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.

..... Chairman, 18th August, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL