

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 16th June 2025, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors, K Hobart (Chair), P James, O Locke, S Nash, M West and the Clerk, Sarah Harvey.
County Councillor S Dark (until 8.15pm)
Borough Councillor A Beales
Member of Public: 8

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** it was AGREED to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs R Arbenz, A Brun, K Frazer and P Harries.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** None.
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 19th May 2025 which were circulated before the meeting were PROPOSED by Cllr M West, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke 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.
Play Area: Cleaned on 20th May (photos available). A further clean is scheduled for 22nd July at a cost of £160.
Noticeboards: Permission granted by BCKLWN and a street furniture licence obtained from NCC Highways.
SAM2 Sign: New unit delivered. Initial payment to be made by the Parish Council, with reimbursement to follow from NCC upon submission of the supplier invoice.
LED Streetlighting: To be discussed at the July meeting. One quote received from T.T. Jones Electrical Ltd. Westcotec Ltd. unable to assist due to winding down their street lighting services. Further enquiries ongoing.
HR/The Mallard Subgroup: Reminder that the next meetings are scheduled for 30th June – HR Group at 6.30pm, followed by The Mallard Group at 7.30pm.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** A parishioner enquired when the Parish Council would begin taking more active steps to benefit residents. They also requested clarification on where vehicles are permitted to park, noting that if parking on the village green is to be allowed, a formal entrance and exit should be established.
A parishioner raised a query regarding the wildflower planting along Abbey Road, asking whether the Parish Council considered the initiative to have been successful. They also sought clarification on the future of the bollards currently in place, specifically whether they are intended to remain as a permanent fixture or are a temporary measure.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** County Councillor Stuart Dark provided an update on the ongoing discussions surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). He acknowledged that there were currently a range of differing and, at times, conflicting views on how the reorganisation should proceed. However, he clarified that the primary objective of LGR was to streamline services by reducing duplication across multiple councils, ultimately aiming to deliver greater efficiency and cost savings.
Cllr Dark noted that Norfolk County Council was in the early stages of developing its position on the preferred structure for local government in the region. As part of this process, the County Council would be gathering input and forming a consensus on what a revised governance model could look like. Once these views had been fully developed, they would be submitted to the Government, who would be responsible for making the final decision on the official model to be adopted.
County Councillor Stuart Dark informed the Council that Norfolk Highways was responsible for maintaining approximately 7,000 miles of roads across the county. He noted that a significant amount of resurfacing work was currently being undertaken. In addition, he reported that Norfolk County Council's performance in repairing potholes was generally strong, with a completion rate consistently in the mid-90% range.

Cllr S Nash raised concerns regarding a number of unresolved potholes along Weasenham Road, noting that they had not been addressed for several weeks. Cllr Nash agreed to forward the specific details to Cllr Dark, who offered to follow the matter up with the relevant Highways team.

Cllr K Hobart raised the issue of Public Rights of Way (PROWs), stating that many were not being cut as scheduled and were falling below the expected standard of being maintained twice a year. Cllr Dark acknowledged this concern and agreed to investigate the matter further and seek clarification from the responsible department.

Cllr Dark highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service to prioritise fire prevention across the county. As part of this initiative, the service was increasing its programme of home fire safety checks, which aimed to identify and mitigate potential fire risks, particularly for vulnerable residents. Members of the public were encouraged to take advantage of this free service, which could be easily arranged through the Norfolk County Council website.

An initiative known as 'Drive Safe' was available to support older drivers in continuing to drive safely and confidently. The scheme aimed to provide road safety and help individuals retain their independence for as long as safely possible.

To encourage community participation in events commemorating Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, Norfolk County Council had agreed to waive the usual fees associated with applying for temporary road closures. This applied specifically to events related to VJ Day celebrations. Parish and community groups were advised that the deadline for submitting applications is 18th July.

A total of £500,000 had been made available through a Norfolk-wide Community Fund initiative. As part of the distribution of these funds, each County Councillor would receive an allocation of £5,000 to support local projects and initiatives within their respective wards. Community groups and parish councils were encouraged to approach their County Councillor with suitable proposals that would benefit their local area.

Borough Councillor A Beales provided an update on the evolving discussions around the strategic governance of Norfolk under the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). One of the current proposals being considered by the Borough Council involved a move towards a new three-council model for the county, which would significantly reduce the number of local authorities operating in Norfolk. At present, the proposal remained under active consultation, with ongoing discussions at both county and district levels. Stakeholders, including elected representatives, councils, and community groups, were being invited to share their views. Feedback gathered during this consultation phase would help inform the final recommendations to be submitted to central government.

8. **To appoint a Councillor to monitor the defibrillator:** Cllr O Locke kindly agreed to take on responsibility for monitoring the village defibrillator. The Clerk would provide Cllr O Locke with all necessary information, including the procedures and schedule for carrying out regular operational checks to ensure the equipment remains in good working order.
9. **Working Group Updates**
 - a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr O Locke advised that the biodiversity audit of all land leased or owned by the Parish Council continued.
 - b. **Christmas Lighting – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr R Arbenz would provide a further update at the July meeting. Investigations were ongoing into the feasibility and timescale for installing a supporting pole for mains electricity, along with associated electrical requirements and costs. Quotations were being sought for a dual-power lighting system from two suppliers, including Cozens (UK) Ltd and Kings and Barnham's.
 - c. **Play Area – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** Cllr M West provided an update on behalf of the Play Area Working Group. The project would be delivered in two phases: Phase 1 for the under-5s area and groundwork (£70k), and Phase 2 for upgrading equipment for over-5s (£150k). A recent community survey received strong support, with feedback helping shape the design. Meetings had been held with a supplier and the Village Hall Trustees, who were supportive. Key proposals included redesigning the layout, improving inclusivity, and adding new features. The Clerk advised that the Council was required to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for any contract valued at £25,000 or more. This included advertising the opportunity and publishing the contract award on the Contracts Finder website, in addition to following the Council's Standing Orders. While there was no legal obligation to advertise locally,

doing so via the Parish website, noticeboard, or newsletter could improve transparency. Advertising periods must be fair and proportionate to allow suppliers a reasonable chance to respond.

10. Finance

- a. **To note accounts for payment under the Late Payments Interest Act (1998):**
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| Minuteman Press (550 A5 Parish Magazines (June 2025) | 162.00 | BACS |
| Mrs Julia R Lodge (Delivery of May Mallard) | 60.00 | BACS |
- b. **To approve the accounts for payment (list at meeting).**
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| Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, April Account) | 683.20 | BACS |
| Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (April 2025) | 54.00 | BACS |
| Cozens (UK) Ltd, (LED Lantern, 9023, Walcups Lane) | 474.00 | BACS |
| Cozens (UK) Ltd, (LED Lantern, 9045, Weasenham Road) | 474.00 | BACS |
| E.Edgley (Mud Magnet – Cleaning of Play Area Equipment, May 2025) | 160.00 | BACS |
| HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd (Grass Cutting May 2025) | 993.30 | BACS |
| Lighthouse Design & Marketing Ltd (NDP Website Hosting) | 197.94 | BACS |
| Roger Canwell (Internal Audit Fee) | 50.00 | BACS |
| P James (Padlocks for SAM2 Sign) | 19.29 | BACS |
| Clerk's Salary & Expenses (19 th May to 15 th June) | 793.26 | BACS |
| HMRC (Income Tax Payment) | 16.00 | BACS |

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

- c. **To note the finance received during May 2025.**
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| Great Massingham Village Hall (50% of Play Area Inspection Fee) | 112.50 |
| Season Fishing Permits | 120.00 |
- d. **To approve the May 2025 financial statement:** it was PROPOSED by O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr M West and AGREED that the financial statement for May 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair.
- e. **To note the May 2025 Budget vs Actual Financial Review:** the Council noted the Budget vs Actual Financial Review for May 2025. No concerns were raised, and the figures were reviewed as presented.
- f. **To receive a report from the Internal Auditor for the financial accounts 2024/25:** the Clerk reported that the internal audit for the financial accounts 2024/25 had been carried out and there were no matters of concern that the auditor wished to raise with the Parish Council. The internal auditors report would be available on the Parish Council website.
- g. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement in the 2024/25 AGAR (Form 3):** it was noted that Councillors had been circulated with a copy of the Statement for their information and it was AGREED that the Chairman and RFO sign the Statement.
- h. **To approve the Statement of Accounts in the 2024/25 AGAR (Form 3):** it was noted that Councillors had been circulated a copy of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025, together with a bank reconciliation at the year end and reasons for variations. Councillors had also been provided with a copy of the Statement and it was considered and AGREED that the Chairman and RFO sign the Statement.
- h. **To approve applications for season fishing permits:** six applications for season fishing permits were AGREED, three from 2024 permit holders and three from new applicants. It was noted that the current number issued so far was eleven permits.

11. Governance

- a. **To review and approve Standing Orders:** it was RESOLVED to adopt the model Standing Orders without amendment. A copy would be published on the Parish Council website and retained in the Council's records.
- b. **To review and approve Financial Regulations:** it was RESOLVED to adopt the model Financial Regulations without amendment. A copy would be published on the Parish Council website and retained in the Council's records.
- c. **To approve Procurement Policy:** members reviewed the draft Procurement Policy, which set out clear, transparent procedures for the procurement of goods and services. The policy aimed to promote value for money, ensure fair competition, and maintain full compliance with public procurement regulations. Its adoption was noted as particularly timely and important given the

anticipated expenditure related to the play area redevelopment project. **RESOLVED:** The Procurement Policy was unanimously adopted.

- d. **To approve Delegated Powers Policy:** the Council considered the proposed Delegated Powers Policy, which clarified the authority delegated to the Clerk, especially concerning routine operational matters and time-sensitive decisions. The policy supported efficient day-to-day management while retaining appropriate Council oversight. **RESOLVED:** The Delegated Powers Policy was unanimously adopted.
- e. **To review and approve the internet banking policy:** it was considered and **AGREED** that the reviewed policy be adopted by the Council and placed on the Parish Council website. This would be reviewed in June 2026 or as required.
- f. **To review and approve the general risk assessment policy:** the Council reviewed the General Risk Assessment Policy, which outlined the procedures for identifying, evaluating, and managing risks across all areas of Council activity. Members agreed that the policy remained appropriate and comprehensive in addressing current operational and governance risks.
RESOLVED: The General Risk Assessment Policy was reviewed and approved without amendment.

12. 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 reviewed the amended planning application for the proposed overflow car park to the rear of The Dabbling Duck Public House. Following discussion, the Council resolved to support the application, subject to the inclusion of specific planning conditions aimed at addressing resident concerns and preserving the rural character of the site.

Key conditions recommended include:

- Planting of a fire-safe green hedge to serve as a firebreak, privacy screen, and biodiversity enhancement.
- Installation of secure post-and-wire fencing to prevent trespass and define boundaries.
- Restriction of car park use to business hours to minimise disruption to neighbouring properties.

The Council also expressed support for the application to be called in for consideration by the Planning Committee to ensure thorough scrutiny and alignment with local community expectations.

Voting outcome: 3 Councillors in favour, Cllrs S Nash and M West opposed.

- b. **To consider plans since publication of agenda:** None.
- c. **Applications approved/refused by Borough Planning Control:**
25/00524/A Great Massingham APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR: 2 x non-illuminated notice boards, Church Lane
Application Permitted 27 May 2025 Delegated Decision

WITHDRAWN 25/00783/F Provision of a multi use games area (MUGA). at Great Massingham Village Hall Station Road

- d. **Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update:** Cllrs K Hobart and O Locke reported that they had met with Jess Cunningham, Chair of the NDP Steering Group, and confirmed that they, along with Cllr P James, would join the group to provide additional support on behalf of the Parish Council. It was noted that a minute taker had been appointed for Steering Group meetings. Additionally, a preliminary enquiry had been made with Collective Community Planning regarding consultancy support, as Rachel Hogger of Modicum Planning was no longer available to assist with the project.

13. Highways

- a. **To note highway matters requiring attention and to receive any updates.**
 - **Footpath, adjacent to St Mary's Church:** work completed by volunteers.
- b. **To note actions/recommendations following Highways site visit attended by Cllrs P James, S Nash and M West:** the Council noted the actions and recommendations arising from the recent Highways site visit attended by Cllrs P James, S Nash, and M West. A summary report, compiled by Cllr P James, was circulated and reviewed. The report outlines key issues discussed on-site and proposed follow-up actions to address local highways concerns.
- c. **To note Temporary Event Road Closure – Classics On The Green – Saturday 7 June 2025.**

14. Street Lighting

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems:** the Council received a copy of the up-to-date street lighting inventory. It was noted that Streetlight 9039 on Drunken Drove had been reported as not working and would be followed up accordingly.
- b. **To ratify the costs to replace streetlights 9023, Walcups Lane and 9045, Weasenham Road with LED lighting units:** the Council ratified the decision to replace streetlights 9023 (Walcups Lane) and 9045 (Weasenham Road) with new LED units, following an engineer's assessment confirming both lights required replacement. The work had been completed. The cost per unit was £395 + VAT, covering supply and installation.

15. Correspondence

- a. **Email from Parishioner, Streetlighting and other issues:** both the content of the email and the Clerk's response to the parishioner were noted.
- b. **Email from Parishioner, Vandalism:** it was noted that the incident had been reported to the Police by the parishioner and a crime number had been allocated.
- c. **Response from Parishioner, Complaint of damage to rear garden of property:** the parishioner's response was noted and it was AGREED that under 16's would continue to be able to fish at Scotsman's Pit free of charge.
- d. **Email from Ducklings Preschool, Unsuccessful Funding Application:** noted.
- e. **Gray's Fun Fair, Request to attend village from 6th to 12th October:** noted.
- f. **BCKLWN, Rural Community Project Fund opens for 2025/26:** noted and made available to the Play Area Working Group.
- g. **NCC, Local Government Reorganisation:** noted.

16. Village Hall

- a. **To receive an update and note costs regarding improved auditory arrangements at Parish Council meetings:** it was noted that Cllrs R Arbenz and S Nash had met with a representative of the Village Hall to discuss the necessary arrangements for meeting with potential suppliers. The purpose of these meetings was to obtain quotations for improvements to the auditory environment within the hall. Part of the planned enhancements were specifically intended to address hearing and sound quality issues experienced during Parish Council and Historical Society meetings, ensuring that discussions were more accessible and inclusive for all attendees. At present, two quotations were awaited from suppliers, which would outline proposed solutions and associated costs.

17. Open Spaces

- a. **To receive an update regarding the boundary agreement at Weasenham Road:** it was reported that legal advice had been sought regarding the boundary line adjacent to 24 Weasenham Road. Councillors who had visited the site were satisfied that the fencing erected by the neighbouring property appeared to be appropriately positioned. As such, it may no longer be necessary to pursue a formal boundary agreement. However, it remained advisable to proceed with instructing a surveyor to prepare a plan based on the current boundary as it existed on the ground, which would support an application for first registration of the land. The Council agreed that a letter should be sent to the owners of 24 Weasenham Road to notify them of the forthcoming first registration application and the intention to instruct a surveyor. The letter would ask the owners to confirm whether the fencing they installed reflected their understanding of the boundary line. If not, they would be invited to clarify their position. The Parish Council approved the content and approach outlined in the draft letter and authorised its preparation and submission by the legal representative.
- b. **To approve installation costs for Parish Council/Community Noticeboards, Seat and Dog Waste Bins:** two quotations were received from TD Build for upcoming installation works: £575.00 (ex VAT) for the installation of a new bench, and £550.00 (ex VAT) for the installation of two dog waste bins and two notice boards. It was PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr P James, and AGREED by all that the works should proceed as quoted.
- c. **To consider and approve the cost for a commemorative plaque to be fixed to new Millenium Seat:** A suggestion was received to install a commemorative plaque on the new bench to mark the Millennium. Glasdon UK Ltd had offered two plaque options, with the preferred choice being a Polycarbonate Plaque (150 x 140 mm) at a cost of £43.55 (ex VAT). It was AGREED that the

plaque be purchased and installed with the bench as part of the commemoration. The Clerk would draft suggested wording for the plaque and circulate it to Councillors for approval prior to placing the order.

- d. **To approve the cost to remove brambles at Abbeyfields:** the Council noted that a quotation was still being awaited, with the supplier experiencing a short delay due to a recent bereavement.
- e. **To consider arrangements to mark the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day:** it was noted that a Beacon lighting ceremony would be planned for Friday 15th August and arrangements for this would be confirmed at the next meeting.

18. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To approve costs for additional unplanted coir roll:** it was AGREED that the proposed quotation from Salix Wetland & River Services Ltd for unplanted coir roll at a cost of £543.50 should be approved

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

19. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** Cllr P James would confirm the weekly inspection rota with all participating Councillors.
- b. **To consider and approve the cost to remove the single point swing:** it was noted that the proposed location for the MUGA would encompass the area currently occupied by the single point swing. As the swing was identified as a moderate risk in the most recent inspection report, and in light of its uncertain future use, a quotation had been obtained for its removal rather than relocation or replacement at this time.
Online Playgrounds had provided a quotation to carry out the removal at a cost of £1,020.00 (net). It was agreed to defer a decision on the removal until the July meeting. In the meantime, the Clerk advised that the swing should continue to be carefully assessed as part of the weekly inspection programme to ensure ongoing safety.

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

21. **To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website:** Drive Safe, Fire Inspections, Play Area survey

22. **To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting** – Monday 19th May at 7.00 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

..... Chairman, 21st July, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL