

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Member of Public: 12

Borough Councillor Alistair Beales

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** None.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr A Brun declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 15d (Open Spaces) and Cllr O Locke declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10b (Finance).
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 27th January 2025 which were circulated before the meeting were PROPOSED by Cllr O Locke, SECONDED by Cllr P Harries 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 vacant land adjoining Charles Dewar Close, the boundary agreement, Weasenham Road and the planning application for the Parish Council and Community notice boards.
Cllr K Frazer advised that as part of her responsibilities to act as PC representative for the Primary School she had met with the newly appointed headteacher Hilary Myhill.
6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:** A parishioner enquired how many Councillors had visited the revised location for the proposed village gateways. It was noted that four Councillors had visited the location. The parishioner also enquired whether he was able to attend the planned site meeting with the Highways Engineer and Locality Designer scheduled for the 19th February. It was also asked whether any potential additional fees incurred for the installation of the village gateways could be met by the Council and whether (if the revised proposed village gateway site was rejected) the Council would consider the Gateways being closer to the Public Footpath signpost, avoiding tree root and foliage issues.
7. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** in the absence of County Councillor S Dark no report was received.
Borough Councillor Alistair Beales advised that 'Norfolk had been accepted onto the Government's Devolution Priority Programme and that as a result the Government would work with the Council towards an election for the Mayor of the Strategic Authority in May 2026. It was noted that in order to manage this, local County Council elections planned for May 2025 had been postponed until May 2026. It was noted that the Government was holding a public consultation on proposed devolution in Norfolk and Suffolk, specifically on the proposal to form a Strategic Authority headed by a mayor. The consultation would run until 13 April.'
Cllr A Beales advised that 'Local Government Reorganisation for Norfolk and Suffolk authorities would be subject to a separate engagement process later in the year, once all district councils across Norfolk had collectively made a submission to Government on how reorganisation could look.' Cllr A Beales advised that an update would be provided to Parish/Town Councils over the course of the next week and that further details could be found by visiting the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation page on the BCKWLN website.
8. **Casual Vacancy – to note the resignation of Cllr M Wingell:** It was noted that a letter of resignation had been received from Councillor M Wingell following the January Parish Council meeting. The Council were advised that the Local Election Rules 2006 require a Casual Vacancy to be advertised on the Notice Board and Parish Council Website for a period of 14 days. If within the 14 days of the date of the notice a request, in writing, that an election should be held to fill the vacancy, signed by ten local government electors of the Ward is given to the Proper Officer (BCKLWN), then an election would need to be held. If no such request is received by the Proper Officer (BCKLWN), the Parish Council would take the necessary steps to fill the vacancy by co-option.

It was AGREED to bring agenda item 15d, Open Spaces forward for discussion.

15. Open Spaces

d. **To receive an update regarding the proposed repairs to the allotment roadway and approve the associated cost for the work:** It was noted that two quotations had been received to carry out the proposed work. A quote for the work had been secured from J&J Renovations Partnership for £2,458.00 and Orman (Carrolls Farm) for £3,250. It was noted that the GM Allotment Association, along with the Parish Council and Freebridge Housing Association (whose tenants had permissive rights over the roadways) should contribute to a third of the cost. It was noted that a confirmation from Freebridge as to whether they would assist with part of the cost was still being awaited. It was therefore AGREED to carry the decision forward to the March agenda regarding the work. In the meantime, the Clerk would supply Borough Cllr A Beales with the details that had been sent to Freebridge so that he may liaise with the CEO of Freebridge on the Council's behalf in order to progress the matter.

It was AGREED to continue with the agenda items as publicised.

9. To appoint a member to the HR/Staffing Sub-Committee, NDP Steering Group, carry out Play Inspections and Village Hall Committee:

The following members were appointed.

HR/Staffing Sub-Committee – Cllr A Brun

NDP Steering Group – Cllr O Locke

Play Inspections – Cllr P Harries

Village Hall Committee. – Cllr S Nash

10. Finance

a. **To note accounts for payment under the Late Payments Interest Act (1998):** None.

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

Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, December Account)	625.52	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (January 2025)	54.00	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Installation of LED Lanterns o/ 85/104/112 Summerwood Est	1,422.00	BACS
Online Playgrounds (Removal of Platform Roundabout)	1,307.88	BACS
Great Massingham Area Community Car Scheme (Donation)	500.00	BACS
Great Massingham Parochial Church Council (Donation)	350.00	BACS
Great Massingham Biodiversity Group (Donation)	250.00	BACS
Great Massingham Village Hall (Hall Hire Apr 24 to Mar 25)	640.00	BACS
M Wingell (Materials for Christmas Tree Base)	42.22	BACS
O Locke (Bird Spikes for Swings, Play Area)	22.99	BACS
Sarah Harvey (Wix Domain Name/Hosting Renewal Feb 25 to Feb 26)	144.84	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (20 th January to 16 th February)	803.40	BACS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr R Arbenz, SECONDED by Cllr K Frazer and AGREED that all payments should be authorised.

c. **To note the finance received during January 2025:** None.

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

e. **To approve the Financial Reserves Policy for 2025/26:** copies of the financial reserves policy had been circulated amongst Councillors for approval. It was noted that the purpose of the policy was to set out how the Council would determine and review the level of reserves it held. The policy along with a breakdown of the Councils general and earmarked reserves was approved and would be reviewed in January 2026 as part of the budget. It was PROPOSED by Cllr R Arbenz, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the policy should be adopted.

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.

d. **Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update:** it was noted that on Saturday 1st March at 10.00am a Village Tour had been arranged to assess Views and Green Spaces. Following which a series of NDP Steering Group meetings had been planned over the course of the next few months. These would be held at the Village Hall Bar at 5.00pm on Monday 3rd March, Monday 7th April, Tuesday 6th May and Monday 2nd June.

12. Highways

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

Update from Martin Rose Wells (Highways Engineer) regarding car parking signage and 20 mph village centre speed limit: it was noted that a response was still being awaited regarding car park signage. Regarding the 20mph village centre speed limit it was noted that Highways recognised speeding concerns, but Highways were limited as to what response they could offer. It was noted that a safety study could be undertaken but this would cost around £5000 and had no guarantee that any improvements would be identified. It was AGREED to enquire whether the safety study would have to be carried out by an NCC official or whether a safety study carried out by an independent person would be recognised. A suggestion of additional features was considered, and it was AGREED that Highways should be asked if they could provide roundels painted on the carriageway at various locations within the village.

Village Gateway Update, Lynn Lane: it was noted that a site meeting had been arranged to discuss the placement of the village gateways along Lynn Lane and find a resolution. This would take place on Wednesday 19th February at 8.15. Cllrs R Arbenz and P James to attend alongside a Lynn Lane resident.

13. Street Lighting

a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems and approve any repair costs:** following two items of correspondence regarding streetlights not working from the Rougham Rd junction heading out of the village, the Clerk advised that Cozens (UK) Ltd had been asked to inspect all four LED streetlights for faults.

b. **To receive information/costing relating to upgrading the remainder of streetlighting to LED's:** two budget estimates were noted to replace the remaining streetlights with LED lanterns and bracket arms and the same stock (following a visual survey) with new wooden poles, LED lanterns and bracket arms. A savings comparison chart of projected costs was also received. It was noted that once all streetlighting was changed to LED's a saving of 70 – 80% could be made on electricity bills.

It was AGREED that a visual survey of street lighting should be carried out to ascertain whether new columns would be needed. The Clerk would also enquire whether the street lighting could be renumbered as per the street lighting inventory held by the Council.

14. Correspondence

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

- a. **Letter from Parishioner, Revised proposal for gateways at Lynn Lane:** contents were noted, and the parishioner would join Parish Councillors at the planned site meeting, as per agenda item 12a.
- b. **Email from Parishioner, Parking along Weasenham Road:** the contents were noted. Cllr S Nash AGREED to meet with the parishioner to discuss the suggestion further.
- c. **Concerns from Parishioner, Rubbish to rear of Station Road properties:** it was AGREED that the details of the concern would be passed to Borough Councillor A Beales so that these could be passed directly to Freebridge Housing Association for them to investigate.
- d. **Email from Parishioner, Parking Consultation:** it was noted that the contents of the email had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The contents of a prepared response was AGREED by Council and relayed at the meeting. The agreed response would be forwarded to the parishioner.
- e. **BCKLWN, Ward visit - Massingham with Castle Acre:** it was noted that this visit had been cancelled but would be rescheduled in the second half of the year.
- f. **BCKLWN, Notice of Change to Parish Precept Payments:** noted.

15. Open Spaces

- a. **To agree an action plan to investigate Christmas Lighting and power source for December 2025:** it was AGREED that a working group should be formed to execute the proposed action plan. Cllrs R Arbenz, A Brun and P Harries would form the working party. It was noted that the remit of the group would be to gather information, explore options and report back to Council with recommendations as per the Terms of Reference document (to be adopted).
- b. **To agree an action plan to formalise management arrangements at the Play Area and consider new equipment:** it was AGREED that a working group should be formed to execute the action plan. Cllrs P Harries, K Hobart and P James would form the working party. It was noted that

the remit of the group would be to gather information, explore options and report back to Council with recommendations as per the Terms of Reference document (to be adopted).

- c. **To consider and approve actions to undertake repair work to village beacon:** it was AGREED that Cllr A Brun would source a replacement pole for the village Beacon and advise the Council of the cost.
- e. **To review the dog bin provision around the village greens:** it was noted that permission had already been sought for a dog waste bin to be installed next to the litter bin along Abbey Road. It was PROPOSED by Cllr P James, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that a further dog waste bin should be sited at Weasenham Rd near to the junction with Station Rd.

16. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To consider any further information, actions and updates:** none were noted.
- b. **To approve a request from Model T Ford Tour for parking on the village green on Friday 30th May:** noted and it was AGREED that in the event of wet weather the vehicles should make use of either the Dabbling Duck PH or Village Hall parking facilities.
- c. **To note a response regarding work required around Scotsman's Pit from Houghton Estate Action from January Meeting:** It was AGREED that Cllrs K Hobart and P James would meet with Robert Miller (Estate Director, Houghton Estate) on Friday 21st February at 10am.

17. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** Cllr P James reported that the anti-bird spikes on the swings seem to be working well and those on the children's cradle seat swings were to be replaced. Cllr P James recommended that the 'Rocking Horse should be professionally cleaned and repainted before the winter. Cllr P James reported that the litter bins were to be emptied on a regular basis going forward.

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

19. **To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website:** None.

20. To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting, 17th March, 2025 at 7.30pm.

21. **Pursuant to s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of staffing matters.**

- a. **To approve Clerk's Contract of Employment:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr R Arbenz, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the Clerk's revised contract of employment be approved and signed.
- b. **To approve a grievance policy as recommended by the NALC:** it was PROPOSED by Cllr R Arbenz, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the grievance policy be adopted.

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

..... Chairman, 17th March, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL