

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 7th July 2025, at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors, R Arbenz (Chair), K Frazer, P James, O Locke, S Nash, M West and the Clerk, Sarah Harvey.

Borough Councillor A Beales (from 7.45pm)

Member of Public: 11

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** it was AGREED to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs A Brun, P Harries and K Hobart.
3. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** None.
4. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:**

Cllr R Arbenz explained the procedures for public participation at meetings and that these would be tightened to maintain order, ensure fairness, and adhere to allocated time limits going forward. It was also noted that Parish Council meetings were not public meetings, but meetings held in public, with participation governed by the Council's standing orders. These standing orders, based on the model developed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), apply to all parish councils and provide a framework to ensure consistency, transparency, and lawful conduct. The Council confirmed that these standing orders would be strictly adhered to, and that meeting protocol would be further clarified and expanded upon to support effective governance and clear expectations for public engagement.

A parishioner raised concerns regarding the current parking arrangements at The Dabbling Duck Public House. During the discussion, the parishioner also noted a series of break-ins that had recently occurred at his property. He confirmed that each incident had been duly reported to the police and that he possesses photographic evidence documenting every occurrence.

A parishioner queried why there was to be a different approach taken in the management of parishioners and expressed concern that this was creating the impression that the Parish Council did not represent all villages within the parish equally.

A parishioner specifically asked what changes, if any, would be made to meeting protocols that would affect parishioners.

A parishioner referred to a recent BBC2 programme which examined the effects of extreme heat on both people and the environment. In light of the programme's findings, the parishioner expressed concern regarding fire safety in relation to the current planning application under consideration. They emphasised the increasing risks posed by hotter, drier conditions and strongly urged that all appropriate precautionary measures be implemented to minimise the risk of fire.

A parishioner expressed concern that not all correspondence submitted by parishioners was being read or reviewed by Councillors ahead of Parish Council meetings. He stated that he was not comfortable with the possibility that important communications from residents might not be fully considered in advance of discussions or decision-making. The parishioner further advised that, should it be the case that correspondence was not being appropriately circulated or reviewed, he would follow up the matter in writing via email.

5. **To note correspondence received relating to the planning application under consideration:** correspondence was received from sixteen parishioners (living at 8 residences) detailing their objections to the amended planning application. The email received on behalf of all nine parishioners was read out by the Chair, Cllr Robin Arbenz on their behalf.

6. **Planning Matters**

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

Before the planning application was formally considered, the Chair, Cllr R. Arbenz, read aloud the statements submitted by Cllrs A Brun and P Harries, who were unable to attend the meeting. Their views had been circulated to all Councillors in advance and were presented to ensure their

perspectives were included in the discussion and taken into account during the Council's deliberations.

Following the reading of one of the remarks, a parishioner responded by stating that they believed the Councillor was lying. The Chair noted the comment and asked that all participants remain respectful during the meeting.

The Clerk advised the Council that it was necessary to consider whether they wished to revise their previously submitted comments on the matter at hand or, alternatively, confirm that no further comment was required. The Clerk noted that the Council's existing response remains a valid and official representation of its position. However, this point in the process provides an opportunity to review the response to ensure it continues to accurately reflect the Council's current views, particularly in light of any new information, material changes, or recent developments that may have emerged since the original submission.

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

It was AGREED to SUPPORT the planning application (with 4 Councillors voting in favour and Cllrs S Nash and M West abstaining). The Parish Council AGREED that its formal response to the Local Planning Authority regarding the proposed overflow car park at The Dabbling Duck should be updated to incorporate additional comments from a Councillor with professional experience as both a farmer and a firefighter. The Councillor had advised that the suggested bare earth fire break was unrealistic and unsustainable, and that a wildflower strip would be ineffective in this context. He recommended a living hedge as the most suitable boundary treatment, citing its benefits as a natural firebreak, visual screen, defined boundary, trespass deterrent, and low-maintenance ecological feature.

The Council agreed that these informed comments should be reflected in the final submission to the LPA to ensure practical, site-appropriate fire safety measures are considered.

A parishioner enquired whether a member of the Parish Council would be attending the Borough Council's Planning Committee meeting to represent the Parish Council and its position on the proposed planning application. Cllr R Arbenz responded, confirming that, should the Chair, Cllr K Hobart, be unable to attend, he would represent the Parish Council in his capacity as Vice-Chair.

Borough Councillor A Beales emphasised the importance of the applicant doing more to address community concerns, particularly regarding boundary treatments and the interface with neighbouring land. He expressed full support for the Parish Council's recommendation that a native-species hedge be planted along the site boundary and strongly advocated for the installation of a post-and-wire livestock fence around the entire boundary. This would help prevent trespass onto adjacent farmland and protect the hedge as it becomes established. Cllr A Beales also confirmed that he would support the Parish Council's comments at the Planning Committee meeting.

7. Play Area

- a. **To agree the proposed project scope for the phased redevelopment of the Play Area and the issuing of a public tender for the design, supply and installation of new and replacement play equipment, in accordance with procurement requirements:** it was resolved to approve the proposed project scope and to proceed with the tender process as outlined. The resolution was supported by five Councillors, with Cllr S. Nash abstaining.

The Clerk advised that the DUNS number, required to identify the Parish Council on the Government's procurement system, was still awaited. As a result, the Council's registration on Contracts Finder could not be completed until the DUNS number was received. Consequently, the submission deadline for tenders would need to be revised to accommodate this delay.

8. To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting – Monday 21st July at 7.30 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.20 pm.

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

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