

GREAT MASSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of Great Massingham Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 19th May 2025, at 7.30pm.

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

Member of Public: 11

Borough Councillor A Beales

1. **Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor S Nash, seconded by Councillor M West and carried that Councillor K Hobart be elected Chair. Councillor K Hobart accepted and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor P Harries, seconded by Councillor M West and carried that Councillor R Arbenz be elected as Vice-Chair.

3. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr R Arbenz.

4. **Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items:** Cllr K Frazer declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 19a, Scotsman's Pit.

5. **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th April 2025 which were circulated before the meeting were PROPOSED by Cllr A Brun, SECONDED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman, Cllr K Hobart.

6. **Parishioners Questions and Statements:**

A parishioner enquired as to when the new dog waste bin at Abbey Road would be installed. The parishioner also commented on the excellent work carried out to reshape beech tree.

A parishioner commented that the wood store adjacent to the garage at Cobwebs narrowed the gap providing access around Scotsman's Pit. The parishioner also enquired whether Houghton Estate would remove trees from the pit and clear the debris from the willow trees.

A parishioner thanked Cllr A Brun for his involvement in organising the VE Day celebrations. The parishioner commented that the event was too late for many elderly residents to attend and would the Council plan an event for VJ Day in August. A suggestion was made of an afternoon tea. Cllr P James would raise the suggestion with the Village Hall Committee.

7. **To agree Councillor responsibilities:**

- a. **Allotments:** Cllrs K Hobart and O Locke
- b. **Biodiversity Group:** Cllrs P James
- c. **Church:** Cllr K Frazer
- d. **Community Speed Watch/SAM2 Signs:** Cllr P James
- e. **Defibrillator:** Cllr M West
- f. **Fishing:** Cllr S Nash
- g. **Friends of Scotsman's Pit:** Cllrs A Brun, K Hobart and O Locke.
- h. **Great Massingham Community Garden:** Cllrs A Brun and O Locke.
- i. **Greens (Grass Cutting):** Cllrs R Arbenz and P James.
- j. **Highways/Street Lighting:** Cllrs P James, Cllr P Harries and the Clerk
- k. **Play Area (to carry out visual inspections):** Cllrs R Arbenz, P Harries, P James and M West.
- l. **Preschool:** Cllrs K Frazer and M West.
- m. **School:** Cllrs K Frazer and S Nash.
- n. **Village Hall:** Cllrs O Locke.

8. **To review and agree terms of reference for and the appointment of members to subgroups.**

- a. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan:** Cllrs O Locke (Group Lead), K Hobart, P Harries and S Nash
- b. **Christmas Lighting:** Cllrs R Arbenz (Group Lead), A Brun and P Harries
- c. **HR/Staffing:** Cllrs K Hobart (Group Lead), A Brun, K Frazer and S Nash
- d. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:** Cllrs K Hobart, P James and O Locke
- e. **Planning Advisory Group:** Cllrs K Hobart (Group Lead), R Arbenz, P James and S Nash
- f. **Play Area:** Cllrs P Harries (Group Lead), K Hobart, P James and M West
- g. **The Mallard:** Cllrs K Hobart, R Arbenz, P James and S Nash

Each of the draft terms of reference had been reviewed, and it was considered and AGREED that each document should be adopted. It was AGREED that the HR/Staffing and The Mallard Subgroups would meet on the 30th June.

9. **To review and agree bank signatories:** Cllrs K Hobart, P James and S Nash.
10. **To receive reports from the County and Borough Councillors:** in the absence of County Councillor S Dark no report was received. Borough Councillor A Beales report was noted from the Annual Parish Meeting.

11. **To consider the Clerks Report (Matters arising for information only).**

The Dabbling Duck PH had confirmed that they had a welcome letter in the rooms for dogs and that it included ensuring any mess was cleared up. They also provided some bags as part of the doggy welcome pack. They had also said that they would ensure that they mentioned it on check in as well. Roger Canwell would carry out the internal audit on the 23rd in readiness to approve the AGAR at the June Parish Council meeting.

The delegated grass cutting schedule and plans to accompany the service agreement from NCC had still not been received, apparently, they were proving elusive. The Clerk would keep checking on progress.

NCC had now signed and agreed the updated MOU for the SAM2 Signs and provided a location risk assessment (copies of which have been passed to Cllr P James). The SAM2 sign had now been ordered and would be delivered directly to Cllr P James.

It was noted that Houghton Estate planned to start work to Scotsman's Pit on Monday 9th June.

12. **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:** the Clerk advised that Cozens (UK) Ltd had spoken with their lighting supplier who had informed them that operating 230v lights via an inverter was possible however it would void the warranty of the lighting. Cozens (UK) Ltd recommended a mains 230v power supply installed close to the tree. It was AGREED that another quotation should be obtained for lighting that could operate using either power source. Cllr P James would liaise with Cllr R Arbenz regarding the feasibility and timescale for installing the pole that will support the mains electricity supply. To gather details and costs for any additional electrical work that may be required, such as the provision of a circuit breaker, connection to the power source, and any other related components. A full breakdown of these costs would be required, as costs exceeding £1,000 would require a second quotation.
- c. **Play Area – to receive an update and approve recommendations:** the Clerk advised that Mudmagnet would perform a soft wash/rinse of all play equipment on Tuesday 20th May at £160. This has been scheduled ahead of the half term break. It was AGREED that another clean should be scheduled ahead of the summer break at a cost of £160.
- The Clerk advised that a quotation had been received from Online Playgrounds for a replacement seat with chain assembly for the single point swing. The total cost would be £1,711.49 (ex VAT). Cllr P Harries AGREED to obtain a second quotation given that the cost exceeded £1,000. Cllr P Harries noted that the management lease with the Village Hall did not include a site plan showing the land occupied by the Play Area and raised a concern about the potential encroachment of the proposed MUGA on existing equipment.
- Cllr P Harries advised that the next working group meeting had been scheduled for Friday 30th May at 6.00pm.

13. **Village Hall**

- a. **To note an update regarding the car park resurfacing project and replacement of litter bins at the Play Area:** Cllr O Locke provided information relating to the resurfacing of the front car park and overflow car park. It was also noted that the Village Hall had raised concerns that the existing bins were both unsightly and too small to handle the growing amount of rubbish. This had led to frequent litter-picking by trustees and safety issues, particularly near the playground, where overflowing bins result in cans being shredded by mowers and creating hazardous metal fragments on the field.

14. Finance

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

Prime Irrigation Ltd (Replacement Beacon Pole)	601.82	BACS
Salix River & Wetland Services Ltd (Unplanted Coir Roll)	652.20	BACS
Minuteman Press (550 A5 Parish Magazines (May 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):

Scottish Hydro (Street Lighting, March Account)	625.52	BACS
Cozens (UK) Ltd, Street Lighting Maintenance (April 2025)	54.00	BACS
E.Edgley (Mud Magnet – Cleaning of Play Area Equipment, August 2024)	160.00	BACS
HHA Grounds Maintenance Ltd (Grass Cutting April 2025)	993.30	BACS
The Play Inspection Company Ltd (Annual Inspection)	270.00	BACS
Clerk's Salary & Expenses (14 th April to 18 th May)	808.73	BACS
HMRC (Income Tax Payment)	16.00	BACS

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

c. To note the finance received during April 2025:

BCKLWN Parish Precept (1 of 2 Six Monthly Instalments)	16,467.00
Freebridge Community Housing (Allotment Roadway)	785.99
GM Allotment Association (Allotment Roadway)	785.99
GM Allotment Association (Allotment Rents)	130.00
HTB (Gross Interest April 24 to March 25)	74.39
NCC Delegated Grass Cutting Agreement 2023 Season	1,310.12
The Mallard Accounts (following closure & transfer of funds)	4,500.11
Season Fishing Permits	40.00

d. To approve the April 2025 financial statement: it was PROPOSED by Cllr K Hobart, SECONDED by Cllr P James and AGREED that the financial statement for April 2025, should be approved and signed by the Chair.

e. To note the April 2025 Budget vs Actual Financial Review: it was noted that the Council had received a healthy proportion of its income early in the year (around 67% of expected total). Expenditure was generally aligned with the budget except for allotment maintenance, dog waste bins and village maintenance, which had already exceeded its allocation. Reserve levels remained strong, supporting planned and unexpected expenditures.

f. To approve the financial accounts for the financial year ending 31st March, 2025: Copies of the accounts which had been circulated were considered by the Councillors and were PROPOSED by Cllr K Frazer, SECONDED by Cllr A Brun and APPROVED. The Clerk advised that given that both the income and expenditure for 2024/25 was greater than £25k the Council would automatically be subject to a limited assurance review. The AGAR would be completed ahead of the internal audit and approved at the June meeting.

g. To consider any grant applications received and award monies: no grant applications had been received.

h. To approve applications for season fishing permits: two applications for season fishing permits were AGREED, these had been received from 2024 permit holders. It was noted that the current number issued so far was five permits.

15. Planning Matters

a. To consider Planning Applications received:

25/00524/A - APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR: 2 x non-illuminated notice boards at Church Lane – noted, application submitted by Parish Council.

b. To consider plans since publication of agenda:

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

c. Applications approved/refused by Borough Planning Control.

25/00452/F - 18 Abbeyfields Abbey Road - Placement of new boiler flue to the front elevation
Application Permitted 7 May 2025 Delegated Decision

d. Neighbourhood Development Plan: to receive a progress update: no report received.

16. Highways

- a. **To note highway matters requiring attention and to receive any updates.**
 - **Brambles, Abbeyfields Rd:** it was AGREED that a quotation would be sought to reduce the overgrown area, cutting back to boundary wall of property. The property owners would then be informed of the work following approval of the quotation.
 - It was noted that a site meeting had been arranged with Martin Rose Wells (Highways Engineer) for Friday 23rd May to discuss a number of outstanding issues, including car park signs, speed roundels on carriageway, the junction outside of the school onto Weasenham Rd, improved signage along Castle Acre Road and the temporary bollards, Abbey. Cllrs P James, S Nash and M West would attend.

17. Street Lighting

- a. **To receive reports of any lighting problems:** Cllr S Nash advised that a streetlight was still not working along Weasenham Rd, details of which would be forwarded to the Clerk.
- b. **To receive quotations for proposed work for street lighting defects and to upgrade remaining lighting stock to LEDS following the visual survey conducted of all street lighting with Cozens (UK):** the quotation received from Cozens (UK) Ltd for the replacement of 26 streetlights with LED lanterns was noted. The Clerk informed the Council that two additional quotations were being obtained for comparison.
Further quotations had also been received for maintenance work on an additional 18 streetlights, including painting, replacing bracket arms, and correcting leaning columns. As the cost of each individual item was under £1,000, it was PROPOSED by Cllr P Harries, SECONDFED by Cllr O Locke and AGREED that the work should proceed.
The Clerk noted that a sum of £12,200 had been allocated from reserves for street lighting in the 2025/26 financial year.

18. Correspondence

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

- a. **Email from Parishioner, Complaint of damage to rear garden of property:** the complaint was noted, and the Council were advised that in order to improve the drainage along the track and to prevent future potholes from developing, it was necessary in some areas to taper the track edges. This adjustment involved creating a sufficient camber to allow rainwater to run off effectively. As a result, a portion of the verge was removed during the course of the work. It was AGREED that the Council should offer its apologies that the work was carried out without the property owner's prior knowledge or consent and that the Council would be happy to returf or reseed the affected area.
- b. **Email from GM Allotment Association, Disposal of Asbestos Waste:** it was noted that Freebridge Community Housing had arranged for specialist contractors to clear the asbestos material on Tuesday 20th May.
- c. **Email from Parishioner, Village Green Parking and Car Sales:** the contents of the email were noted along with the Clerk's response.
- d. **Letter from Parishioner, Bus Stops and Duck Feeding:** the contents of the email were noted. The Clerk advised that whilst the Council had the legal power to purchase bus shelters, the Council did not have a role in determining where bus stops were located.
- e. **BCKLWN, Planning Parish Update Sessions:** dates were noted. Councillors would advise the Clerk should they wish to attend. Cllr M West expressed an interest in joining the session scheduled for the 25th June via MS Teams.
- f. **Houghton Festival - 7th-10th August, 2025:** noted.
- g. **Request for Friends of Saint Botolph's Grimston Vintage Tractor Road Run to use the Village Green on Sunday 15th June 2025, for the purposes of a break:** it was AGREED to support the visit and request that all vehicles be parked on the main village green, with access via the pond end to minimise damage to the surface. It was also requested that all litter be removed following the event. The Clerk was asked to thank the organiser on behalf of the Council for making contact in advance. The Council noted that its Public Liability insurance does not extend to cover the vintage tractors and assumes appropriate cover is in place by the organisers.
In the event of inclement weather, the Council suggested the Village Hall car park on Station Road be used as an alternative parking location.
- h. **NCC, Local Government Reorganisation - Parish and Town Council engagement events:** noted. Cllr K Hobart would attend on behalf of the Council.

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

18. Open Spaces

- a. **To note the state of repair and approve the cost to replace the Millenium Bench:** it was AGREED to replace the seat with the Lowther Seat from Glasdon UK at a cost of £631.77 (ex VAT). Cllr P James would approach a local tradesperson for a quote to install the new bench and dispose of the current bench
- b. **To note an update regarding parking arrangements at 9 Rectory Row Cottage:** the Clerk provided an update to the Council, which was duly noted. It was PROPOSED by Cllr A. Brun, SECONDED by Cllr P. James, and RESOLVED (with Cllr S. Nash objecting) that permission for parking be granted, subject to the completion of a formal licence agreement. The Council further AGREED to cover 50% of the associated legal costs. If this arrangement is not acceptable to the property owners, they will be requested to refrain from using the area for parking.
- c. **To receive an update regarding the boundary agreement at Weasenham Road:** the Council noted correspondence received concerning the proposed course of action on the boundary matter. As the boundary has now been informally agreed by the relevant parties, clarification has been sought on whether the previously proposed steps are still required. It was suggested that the agreed boundary might be addressed as part of the first registration process for the village green, potentially simplifying the process and avoiding additional procedures. A response is awaited regarding the feasibility of this approach and any potential issues. It was confirmed that images of the boundary fencing installed by the property owners had been made available to the solicitor.

19. Ponds/Village Greens

- a. **Scotsman's Pit: To consider any further information, actions and updates:** Cllr P James expressed thanks to the Parish Council on behalf of FOSPGM for the provision of the unplanted coir roll, noting that it had been partially installed due to the low water level.

20. Play Area

- a. **To note any issues arising from the Play Area weekly visual inspections:** Cllr P James would update the Play Area inspection rota

21. **To note reports of any village incidents:** Assault on parishioner.

22. **To propose items for the Mallard and Parish Council website:** Beacon Lighting ceremony.

23. **To note the date of the next Parish Council Meeting** – Monday 16th June at 7.00 p.m.

With no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm.

..... Chairman, 16th June, 2025

THESE MINUTES ARE UNCONFIRMED UNTIL APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL