

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 25th March 2024 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Alan Braithwaite (Chairman), Angela Forrest, James Hodges and Rupert Perry

Cllr Robert Lindsay (SCC)

District Cllr Bryn Hurren (BDC)

Attending: Lucinda Rogers (Clerk) and four members of the public

111/23 Apologies for Absence

None

112/23 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

None declared

113/23 Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

114/23 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Highways have filled in the pot holes in Mill Lane and have ordered work to repair the culvert but no date for this has been given. Milestone started the Highways contract in October 2023 and there has been a 364% increase in reports on the Highways Reporting Tool since then due to the very wet winter and spring. Cllr Lindsay's full report is in appendix 2.

115/23 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Cllr Hurren confirmed that the unsightly accumulation of stuff on Highlands Road has the attention of Babergh through the Planning Dept. Cllr Hurren is pleased that the grant bid for Millenium Green was successful.

Cllr Hurren's full report is in appendix 3.

116/23 Public Forum

- Swan Inn Planning Application – it was noted that the application does not affect the pub but will provide a further three bedrooms for B&B which will help to make the pub a viable business. It will bring employment to the village. The pub will not serve food but will continue with snacks and drinks. The new rooms will be easy access for everyone to use.
- Church Hill Junction – the problem of poor visibility was raised. The number of vehicles parked around the junction does not relate to the pub – it is as busy when the pub is closed.
- Hedge opposite Mill Road Junction – the poor line of sight was raised and it was agreed to use the new hedge trimmer to cut this back to aid visibility

117/23 Planning Matters

- a. Planning permission has been granted for application DC/23/05312
Householder Application - Replacement of 7No front windows and door at Highfield, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh

- b. Babergh does not wish to object to Application Reference: DC/24/00304 Proposal & Location of Development: Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order WS317/A6 - Reduce 1 No. Pine (T1) by 40% at 1 Foysters Hall, Monks Eleigh
- c. APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO TREE(S) IN A CONSERVATION AREA - DC/24/01063 Application for works to a Tree in a Conservation Area - Reduce two main branches of 1No Canadian Maple tree to protect against future damage to the main roof structure of the house(barn) and the shed by 15ft above ground level. At High Barn, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh. Cllrs agreed not to comment.
- d. Appeal Reference: APP/D3505/W/23/3333575 Planning Application - Erection of 2no 1 bedroom thatched cottages. Location: Land At Former Cottages at Manor Farm, Tye Road. Councillors agreed they are content with the previous parish council's response and so decided to take no further action on the planning appeal. It was noted that the original comments will have been passed to the Planning Inspector
- e. Planning permission has been granted for Application Reference: DC/24/00333 Householder Planning Application - Erection of retaining wall to support earth bank. At Fen Cottage, Brent Eleigh Road, Monks Eleigh
- f. Application for Planning Permission - DC/24/01066 Internal alterations and Change of Use of restaurant part of the pub to B&B, whilst retaining the Wet Trade. At The Swan Inn, The Street, Monks Eleigh. The councillors agreed to make no comment. The clerk was asked to investigate if planning permission can be given that is vested with the owner, not the building.
- g. Babergh does not wish to object to Application Reference: DC/24/00736 Date Registered: 15-Feb-24 Proposal & Location of Development: Notification of Works to Tree in Conservation Area - No.1 Magnolia (T1) Overall crown reduction by 40%. Foskers, The Street, Monks Eleigh

118/23 Finance

- a. The councillors approved the financial report and noted income received – see appendix 1.
- b. The councillors authorised payments from the RFO Report made since the last meeting and to be made.
- c. Reserves - The councillors are confident that the reserves are more than adequate and agreed to formally review and re-state them following the end of the current financial year.
- d. The councillors approved the invoice for the replacement LED street lights and agreed to move the cost of £6389.40 from the CIL monies received and report on the use of the CIL accordingly.
- e. The councillors agreed to donate the Babergh Recycling Credits for the glass recycling to the village shop (£35.00)
- f. The councillors agreed the Clerk will prepare the end of financial year income and expenditure statement and bank reconciliation to the councillors after 31.3.2024

119/23 People and Place Plan – The team have made good progress designing the village survey; the draft needs to be topped and tailed. Final version to be agreed via email. Ready to launch at the Annual Parish Meeting. It will be a village questionnaire not touching on possible future developments.

120/23 Millenium Green Trust – The councillors agreed to meet the cost of two days of work by two people in the autumn to carry out essential maintenance work that the trustees are no longer able to do. Cllr Forrest to provide two quotes for the work.

121/23 Annual Play Equipment Report – Clerk to chase Playdale to carry out work identified in the report. Concerns were raised about reports of / evidence of vandalism. It was noted that CCTV is now in place. Cllr Hurren to enquire if the inspector can fully inspect the aerial runway / zipwire.

122/23 Opening of New Play Area – The councillors agreed to wait to arrange this until the equipment has been maintained as per the report.

123/23 Church Hill Village Green Removable Bollards - The councillors agreed to the proposal subject to the condition that the village green may only be accessed in emergency situations once the removable bollards are installed. A letter outlining the conditions to the custodian of the key will be agreed prior to the bollards being installed

124/23 Causeway – Cllrs Braithwaite, Perry and the Clerk met an officer from SCC's Rights of Way team at the Causeway. It was established that the installation of a board walk can be made subject to a letter of confirmation by Suffolk Rights of Way whose responsibility the path is. It was agreed that a walkway of plastic wood rails with wooden planks with wire on to walk on would be best. Cllr Braithwaite to meet the Sustainability Officer of BMSDC to discuss possible CIL funding for the project. It was agreed that the parish council would maintain the walkway and causeway after installation. The ditches and vegetation to be cleared before the installation. Cllrs Braithwaite and Forrest can meet Chris Mortimer on site to discuss the specification. Clerk to enquire about the footway from Back Lane to the Lavenham Road be adopted by Rights of Way.

125/23 Brett Valley DigiBus – Cllr Braithwaite's explained that economic viability of the project is not assured. There is a process of evaluation and planning in progress at present. The catchment area has been expanded. The working committee consist of representatives from the Parish Councils of Hitcham, Gt Waldingfield, Bildeston and Monks Eleigh. There is a meeting on 27th March to list the questions to ask when visiting schemes in Suffolk, Lincolnshire and Hertfordshire. Katherine Davies from BMSDC is facilitating contacts for the visits.

125/23 Grass Cutting Contract – The contract runs until the end of the year

126/23 Village Gates– To defer until the May meeting

127/23 Street Light Times – The councillors agreed for all the street lights to be turned off at 23.15 each night and to light at 6am at the appropriate times of the year.

128/23 Arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting – It was agreed to provide cheese and wine for the meeting. Councillors to review the invitation list and let the clerk know of any changes.

129/23 Action List Review

Actions from the previous minutes have been completed unless otherwise stated.

Action	Who
Circulate bank reconciliation 31.3.24 to councillors	Clerk
People & Place Plan launch at APM 25.4.23	Cllr Hodges
Chase Playdale repairs to play equipment	Clerk
Play area opening in the Spring liaise with BDC to set a date	Clerk
Agreement for removable bollards	Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite
Causeway footway funding/quote	Cllr Braithwaite/Clerk
Adjust street lighting times	Clerk
APM refreshments	Cllrs
Christmas tree on May agenda	Clerk
Memorial cherry tree at Recreation field	Cllr Braithwaite

130/23 Councillors Reports

It was agreed to discuss permission for a Christmas Tree with battery lights on Church Hill green at the May meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda.

131/23 Date of the next meetings

Annual Parish Meeting 25th April 2024

Parish Council Meeting 3rd June 2024

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REPORT 25 MARCH 2024

Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 22 January 2024

Income Received since 22.1.24

23.1.24	SCC	Cllr Lindsay	250.00
5.2.24	Roundabout Babergh Locality	Donation	300.00
4.3.24	grant	Cllr Hurren	403.00
			<u>953.00</u>

Expenditure (movement since 22.1.24)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

24.1.24	Tye Farm Contracting	Nov - March 2023 cuts Millenium Green	278.00	BACS	Open Spaces Act 19
1.2.24	CAS	insurance	311.69		Open Spaces Act 19

7.2.24	L Rogers	February wages	575.45		LGA 1972
7.2.24	HMRC	February tax	19.40		LGA 1972
7.2.24	L Rogers	January expenses	21.10		LGA 1972
16.2.24	Mortimer Contracts	Play area fence	312.00		Open Spaces Act 19
27.2.24	L Rogers	Hedge trimmer	158.13		Open Spaces Act 19
7.3.234	L Rogers	March wages	575.45		LGA 1972
7.3.24	HMRC	March tax	19.40		LGA 1972
7.3.24	L Rogers	February expenses	48.20		LGA 1972
14.3.24	A Braithwaite	Flip-chart	9.95		LGA 1972
			<u>2,328.77</u>		

Pending Payments

5.9.22	Hadleigh United Reformed Church		10.00	101528	LGA 1972
6.12.23	Blueclouds Training	Defibrillator training	125.00	101632	Public Health Act 19
			<u>135.00</u>		

Bank Reconciliation

Account	statement date	statement balance	actual balance	credit/transfers not shown	unpresented cheques
Community a/c	29.2.24	£8,691.43	£8,556.43	0.00	£135.00
Business reserve	29.2.24	£23,987.01	£23,987.01	0.00	£0
		£32,678.44	£32,543.44		

GALLETTS AND POLEBRIDGE RECREATION GROUND

M.E.P.C. is the sole trustee for the Galletts and Polebridge Trust.

To date there has been no expenditure. Income is held in the Parish Council's bank account on behalf of the Trust equates to £360 (2023-2024 inc.) and is to be used solely for maintenance of the ground

Appendix 2: Report for Monks Eleigh Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor

Mill Lane I am told that work has been commissioned to fix the culvert here and a date for commencement is expected this summer, but at time of writing it had not been confirmed. **Floods, drainage and potholes** Storm Babet, followed by extreme rainfall – including the fifth wettest February on record, combined with spells of freezing weather, and the fact that Highways changed its contractor at the start of

October, have created a perfect storm. The number of reports of action needed no the reporting tool rose by 82% in the current financial year, while drainage and flooding issues increased by 364% in the past five months compared to a year ago. Emergency incidents rose by 64% to 2,117 over the same timeframe. I'm pleased to say that locally, a long running flooding of the road at Kettlebaston has been eased greatly because I was able to get Highways to push on a local landowner to get the ditch dug and highways also jetted out gulleys there. **County Council budget** Cuts to this year's budget, passed by the council in February, were probably the deepest on record. The council is taking heavily from its reserves to meet the growing demand for social care for adults and children, and council tax is due to rise by £74 annually for Band D properties from April this year. There will also be cuts to Family Hubs (children's centres) and Housing Related Support, which supports vulnerable people like care leavers to find accommodation. Funding for arts and museums will be maintained for 2024-25 only and subject to a bidding process for grants after that. The Bury St Edmunds local archives will be moved to The Hold in Ipswich, which like the arts funding cuts has been controversial locally. My group's (Green, LibDem and independent) proposed amendment to save funding for arts and museums and young people not in education or training was voted down as was the Labour amendment which also proposed to reverse some of the planned cuts. **Bus improvement money – no Suffolk plan** A number of bids by parish councils for some extra funding on bus improvements were made in my Cosford division. Unfortunately the county council did not take up Hitcham and Bildeston PC's suggestion of daily bus links to Stowmarket. But they also approved extra services on the 753 route between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds and they agreed to consider an application by Monks Eleigh PC for a "digibus" demand responsive service. The exercise highlighted for me the fact that the county council has no adequate strategy to prioritise and identify where sporadic and randomly available government funding for buses should be invested. **Suffolk Devolution expected 2025** More details of the devolution deal signed last year between the Government and the leader of Suffolk County Council have been settled. The government is offering the county council a bit more freedom on decisions and funding for transport, skills and adult education, regenerating brownfield sites and retrofitting homes to make them more energy-efficient. It will go to consultation with the public later this month. If the deal is approved, the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk - every four years. The first election would take place in May 2025 alongside county council elections.. For more information, see <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>

This deal ought to help with bus planning because, as part of it, the government will agree the level of transport funding for Suffolk for several years ahead rather than just one year at a time as currently. However it increases the urgency for Suffolk to draw up a proper investment plan based on proper evidence. **Safer Speed Limits** Bildeston's 20mph limit has finally been installed with a 30mph buffer zone. I am told Milestone will return in mid May – subject to weather - to complete the work. Lavenham gained approval for a 20mph limit a year ago, after protracted discussion with Lavenham parish council the design is now going to a formal consultation. In addition, during the year, the council approved my application to reduce the speed

limit on A1140 at Semer from 60mph to 40mph. Semer PC and Kersey PC will provide half the funding with the remaining half coming from my locality budget. It coincides with an approved change from 40mph to 30mph on the Stone Street section of the road leading onto the Hadleigh bypass. Both these schemes went to formal consultation last week. **SEND failure again– “Priority Action Plan”** Suffolk’s special educational needs services failed its Ofsted inspection this autumn for the third time. The county has submitted a Priority Action Plan to inspectors which they have signed off. It will be spending £4.4 million extra in the next financial year to enable this action plan to be delivered. New staff will be hired to, amongst other things, enable care plans to be produced more promptly as well as extra training. The county are commissioning an independent chair for the SEND Improvement Board they must appoint to oversee delivery of the plan. The failure came despite the council last year saying it had adopted all recommendations made by an independent consultant following a failure in 2021.

Appendix 3: Report for Monks Eleigh Parish Council by Bryn Hurren, Babergh District Councillor

Firstly it will be noted and noticed by residents that our public realm team has been very active throughout Boxford and other villages, we have been able to carry out some much needed hedge trimming at amongst other places, the bottom of Sherbourne St. This is always tricky as it can only really be done with a tractor and flail which brings several safety issues into play and entails keeping people and vehicles at a safe distance as well. However the results look good and the crew did a superb job in sweeping and clearing away all the debris as well. Fine result. Also the first village sweep of the year has also been started in many of the rural core villages, with the smaller villages to follow as we get around to them, with as much handwork as we can muster to back up the mechanical methods, I had a little drive through most areas of the three villages before catching the footie bus on Saturday and could see a marked improvement everywhere. The shocking downside of this is that two of the village roads have fallen into such a state of disrepair that it is no longer possible to sweep them. We continue to try to work with County Highways to persuade them to carry out their statutory duties but to no avail at this moment. One of these is Butchers Lane which runs up to Groton and is a link road to that area and serves as an alternative to Swan St, it also has to be noted that Slabs Lane, running from Groton through to Edwardstone has been closed for some time due to initial repairs and now repairs to the repairs. Not what we want to hear. I myself have taken on the task of organizing and helping with a village litter pick, which took place in Boxford on the weekend of 23rd/24th March. I would suggest that people can organize their own litter pick throughout their own villages at any time and maybe help to pick on the by-pass on Sunday mornings, this is not without some danger, so please let me know if you can come. Bags and tools provided, please bring fluorescent jacket. We have set a balanced budget at BDC as we legally have to do with a 2.99% rise in Council tax. This means that the average bill for a Band D property, will rise to £188.00 per annum, this equates to around £3.50 per house per week for all our services. The same approximately as the licence charges to watch all the BBCs radio and TV and as good value. While having said we now have a balanced

budget to run everything that we do, we have some crucial decisions as to what we can do with the monies we have and how it is allocated. I will try to explain at your meeting on Thursday. Two pieces of good news, first to tell Monks Eleigh PC that the DC planning team have successfully defended the appeal to build 64 houses at Sandhill Boxford and planning permission has been denied, this has a considerable effect on residents of Groton and Edwardstone and further afield, due to the difficulties of connectivity to our core village of Boxford and its greater services. Especially Drs, Post Office, shops and Bus services which act as a hub to connectivity. Secondly, to reveal that BaberghMidSuffolk has won a prestigious award as Best DC across the whole of the UK. A terrific accolade to the ruling coalition, its management and dedicated staff. I personally chaired a three hour session of our joint Audit and Standards committee this morning which was far reaching and successful. Our purpose is to ensure that " the right people are doing the right things, in the right way, at the right time for the right reasons. This has become our motto and we will stick to it. We again have a form of devolution back on the agenda, it is a 30yr deal worth nearly £500 m to the Suffolk County Council, which is not index linked, this means that in the latter years it will seriously decreasing in value. This is on top of what is awarded to the County Council already and is to enhance general tasks that the council would like to do although amounts for education and public transport are ring fenced. This plan comes with an ambition for a directly elected leader, standing separately to councillors with a budget for staff etc. I Have been very pleased to have helped the Millenium Green with an award this year and look forward to seeing and sampling the results. Happy to take questions from Councillors and public at meeting. All Best Wishes to All. Bryn.