

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 19th May 2025 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Alan Braithwaite (Chairman), Angela Forrest, Sarah Bennett, James Hodges and Rupert Perry – joined by Stephen Penney on his co-option.

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

1/25 Election of Chairman

Cllr Alan Braithwaite was unanimously elected Chairman

2/25 To Coopt a Councillor

Stephen Penney submitted an application to become a Parish Councillor which met all the criteria. He was unanimously elected as a Councillor and welcomed to the council.

3/25 Apologies for Absence

County Cllr Robert Lindsay and District Councillor Bryn Hurren.

4/25 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Bennett declared an interest in agenda item 9 c. It was agreed that she could comment on the planning application but not vote.

5/25 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6/25 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Councillor Lindsay's full report is at appendix 2. The following points were considered by the council to be significant and requiring action.

Suffolk's Nature Recovery Strategy – improving wildlife habitat in your village

The county are asking residents, parishes, landowners, community groups to comment on a detailed map they have produced which goes right down to field level in each parish with suggestions of which areas would benefit wildlife most from changes in management and in some cases suggestions. For example if you zoom into Monks Eleigh it shows an area of fenland between Back Lane and the Street labelled "irreplaceable fenland habitat" and then it has labelled other areas between those roads and in the Brett valley as "with good potential for improved habitat" and it makes suggestions for how to improve it eg increasing scrub. Deadline is 11 June and the link is:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/local-nature-recovery-strategy>.

It was agreed that Cllr Braithwaite would mobilise the wildlife group in Monks Eleigh to participate in this effort.

£4m for “skills bootcamps”

The Department for Education has allocated Suffolk County Council up to £4m to be spent delivering free skills training to an extra 1,345 adults across Norfolk and Suffolk this year. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer a combination of online and in-person learning. Employers can work directly with training providers to create courses that align with their needs. Those interested in taking part in the Skills Bootcamps can find more information here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/supporting-employers-training-your-workforce/skills-bootcamps>.

It was agreed that this initiative would be publicised and brought to the attention of the local businesses. Cllr Braithwaite to action.

7/25 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Councillor Hurren sent a note explaining that the house at Highlands Road that has been the subject an enforcement process has now met the criteria of the order; the action has been halted. Cllr Hurren is arranging to meet with Katherine Davies of Babergh DC to discuss the lack of a suitable footpath on the A1140 the URC Chapel. This issue is related to agenda item 17 and Cllr Braithwaite said the he would try to join that meeting and endeavour to involve other interested parishioners in the discussion.

8/25 Public Forum

There was a discussion about traffic management through the village, particularly the lack of footway near the Chapel (see Cllr Hurren’s report above). The request was for a chicane be installed to slow traffic and make space for a footway. Pictures were offered to show such schemes implemented elsewhere. It was noted that extra houses in the village will add to the number if vehicles using the A1141. A chicane has been installed on the A1141 at water Street in Lavenham. The problem of visibility at the junction of The Street and Church Hill was also raised and is related due to the high roads speeds at present. It was requested that double yellow lines be installed to reduce parking and improve visibility at this spot. This will be added to the July agenda.

9/25 Planning Matters

- a. The Councillors agreed to make no comment for the APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/01644 Proposal: Householder Application - Demolition of existing 20th century lean-to, alterations to existing openings and construction of conservatory. (re-submission of DC/24/03671 and DC/24/03672) Location: Manor Farm, Tye Road, Monks Eleigh.
- b. The Councillors agreed to make no comment for the APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - DC/25/01645 Proposal: Listed Building Consent - Demolition of existing 20th century lean-to, alterations to existing openings and

construction of conservatory. (re-submission of DC/24/03671 and DC/24/03672) Location: Manor Farm, Tye Road, Monks Eleigh.

- c. The Councillors agreed to make no comment for the APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - DC/25/01597 Proposal: Householder Application - Erection of a blockwork wall Location: Monks Cottage, Brent Eleigh Road, Monks Eleigh.
- d. Babergh have granted permission for DC/25/01119 Proposal & Location of Development: Application for Listed Building Consent - Reconstruct defective external walls to rear single storey kitchen extension at Alexanders, The Street, Monks Eleigh.
- e. Babergh have granted permission for DC/25/00633 Householder Application - Erection of single storey rear extension at Hill View, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- f. It was agreed to hold a meeting to discuss DC/25/02057 a Full Planning Application - Erection of 2No. Dwellings; Location: Land At , 3 Swingleton Hill, Monks Eleigh.

10/25 Finance

- a. The Councillors approved the Internal Audit 2024-2025 and noted the following actions: /1. To undertake and minute a review of the Risk Assessment and Internal Control during the year of Audit; /2/. To adopt a Statement of Internal Control; /3 The insurance Fidelity cover to be in line with the recommended guidelines of year-end balance plus 50% of the precept.
- b. The Councillors approved and the Chairman signed the Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025.
- c. The Councillors approved and the Chairman signed the Accounting Statements 2024-2025. It was noted that, excluding projects such as the Causeway upgrade, the council ran with a balanced budget last year against a budgeted deficit of c.£3,000.
- d. The Councillors approved the financial report and noted income received.
- e. The Councillors approved the RFO's financial report and noted income received and recent expenditure – see Appendix 1. The councillors authorised payments since the last meeting to be made.
- f. Reserves – The Councillors agreed to consider the reserves policy of the council at the July meeting.
- g. The Councillors approved and the Chairman signed the CIL statement 2024-2025.
- h. The Councillors agreed to consider the updated Financial Regulations at the July meeting.
- i. The Councillors reviewed and approved the Financial Risk document 2025-26.
- j. The Councillors agreed to adopt the Statement of Internal Control 2025-26.

11/25 Standing Orders – The Councillors agreed to consider the updated Standing Orders at the July meeting.

12/25 People and Place Plan – The People and Place Plan is complete and ready for consultation with the village and adoption by the Council. The chair thanked Cllr Hodges and the team for the excellent effort. The process was agreed as follows.

- i) It was agreed to put the draft People and Place Plan on the website, Facebook, circulate in Roundabout and use every effort to communicate with the village using wording to explain it is a village consultation.
- ii) There will be a submissions deadline and then a consultation meeting to review the document and the feedback.
- iii) Based on that process, the council will then endeavour to approve the plan at the July meeting.

However, in the context of the housing pressures that are to be placed on the village by Government, the People and Place Plan does not carry sufficient legal force. It was agreed that we should move on from this considerable achievement to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a more expensive process but carries full legal force.

It was agreed that employing outside professionals may be needed and we will need to look for grant funding. Cllr Braithwaite agreed to learn more from Hitcham who have just completed their full Neighbourhood Plan. He will arrange a meeting for this. It was agreed to form a Sub-committee with Councillors and others from the village to oversee the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Forrest to chair this team

13/25 Flooding at Scripscros Bridge –The residents of the three houses on Coombs Hill are concerned about the risk of flooding. One house was very badly flooded during storm Babet. The concern is that silting under the bridge will increase the risk although the EA have dismissed this concern. But the residents remain very concerned. It was agreed the parish council will write to the Environment Agency to support their concerns about flooding from the silted-up bridge using evidence from the parishioners. Cllr Braitwaite to prepare the letter.

14/25 Causeway Footpath –James Smith Landscapes have completed the work and the new path has been well received in the village. The bridge over the Brett has a loose handrail and broken support posts. This has been reported to Rights of Way who are considering their course of action. It was agreed the Causeway needs to be strimmed 3-4 times a year. Clerk to ask for three quotes. It was agreed that the oak posts at the Back Lane end are a worthwhile addition to protect the grass and can be funded by our CIL account.

15/25 Brett Valley DigiBus – This project is still live. Suffolk County Council are in the process of organising a contract with software company PADAM to make available the necessary software for the project. This process seems to be going through a number of hoops with ICT approvals. When this is available the next step of analysis and software testing can take place.

16/25 Pathway Lighting on Church Hill – Councillors had hoped to be able to install a 'rustic' design. However, the SCC Street Lighting Team have confirmed that they are restricted on the type of bollard they can use. The bollards must be compatible with the electricity supply and their software. This will allow the lights to be operated remotely by SCC and they will also maintain the lights. After consideration, the Councillors agreed to ask SCC to supply and fit the bollard lights as proposed by SCC

on the basis that light levels can be adjusted to avoid glare. Clerk to arrange a meeting with SCC to influence / agree where the lights will be installed.

17/25 Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road – It was agreed that the council would work to prepare a compelling and difficult to argue proposition for SCC to slow traffic with a chicane and improved footpath access. We will also put in white ‘gates’ and signage on all entries to the village (A1141 from the West, A1141 from the East and the B1115 from the East). District Councillor Bryn Hurren is arranging a meeting with Katherine Davies of BDC to discuss this. We will also look at the original plans from SCC to install a chicane and footway near the Chapel. Cllr Braithwaite to join the meeting.

18/25 Action List Review

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

Action	Who
Post / notify People & Place Plan – to website, Facebook Roundabout for consultation and organise meetings	Cllrs Perry/Hodges/Forrest & Braithwaite/Clerk
Initiate Neighbourhood planning process	Cllrs Forrest / Braithwaite
Post / notify skills bootcamp opportunity	Cllr Braithwaite
Scripscross Bridge - letter to Environment Agency	Cllr Braithwaite
Traffic problems and pavement along A1141 – create proposal	Cllrs Bennett/Braithwaite
Install webcam to monitor traffic	Cllrs Braithwaite/Bennett
Strimming on Causeway path - quotes	Clerk
Asset register update on website	Cllr Hodges/Clerk
Church Hill footpath lighting bollards – meet with SCC / contractor	Clerk / Cllrs
Defibrillator order/apply for CIL funding at July meeting	Clerk/John Naylor
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite
Arrange to clear fencing and large boards from BDC land on Churchfield	Clerk
Arrange special meeting of the council to consider the recent planning notification 4 th June	Clerk

19/25 Councillors Reports

Land between Northcote Drive and the garages has an abandoned piece of Heras fencing and some large boards. Clerk to ask Babergh to remove this.

20/25 Date of the Next Meetings

Parish Council meeting 28th July

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT 19 MAY 2025

Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 24 March 2025

Income Received since 24.3.2025

1.4.25	Whitehead	Polegate	30.00
14.4.25	Babergh	Precept	11,150.00
14.4.25	Babergh	CIL	4,074.20
31.3.25	Babergh	Grants	33,324.50
28.3.25	Thomson	Allotment	30.00
			<u>48,608.70</u>

Expenditure (movement since 24.3.2025)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

7.5.25	Heelis & Lodge	Internal audit 2024-25	260.00
7.5.25	James Smith Landscapes	Causeway oak posts	389.53
7.5.25	Ed Seeley Gardens	April 1425-002	300.00
7.5.25	L Rogers	April wages	625.28
7.5.25	HMRC	April tax	37.91
7.5.25	L Rogers	April expenses	40.75
	ED SEELEY		
11.4.25	GARDENIN	Mowing	300.00
11.4.25	SUFFOLK MACS	Laptop set up	240.00
11.4.25	L ROGERS	March Exes	34.00
11.4.25	LAVENHAM PRESS LIM	VE day printing	50.00
7.4.25	SUFFOLK ASSOCIATIO	SALC subs	274.30
7.4.25	HMRC PAYE/NIC SHIP	March PAYE	37.71
7.4.25	L ROGERS	March Wages	625.48
28.3.25	JAMES SMITH LANDSC	Causeway	9,055.20
28.3.25	SUFFOLK COUNTY COU	Lights	407.83
			<u>12,677.99</u>

Account		statement date	statement balance	actual balance	credit/transfers not shown
Community a/c		30.4.25	£15,596.13	£15,596.13	0.00
Business reserve		30.4.25	£64,459.01	£64,459.01	0.00
			£80,055.14	£80,055.14	

Appendix 2 – Report from County Councillor Robert Lindsay

Suffolk's Nature Recovery Strategy – improving wildlife habitat in your village
The county are asking residents, parishes, landowners, community groups to

comment on a detailed map they have produced which goes right down to field level in each parish with suggestions of which areas would benefit wildlife most from changes in management and in some cases suggestions. For example if you zoom into Monks Eleigh it shows an area of fenland between Back Lane and the Street labelled “irreplaceable fenland habitat” and then it has labelled other areas between those roads and in the Brett valley as “with good potential for improved habitat” and it makes suggestions for how to improve it eg increasing scrub. Deadline is 11 June and the link is <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/local-nature-recovery-strategy>

Parishes can now apply for funding to improve bus stops

Separate to the Digibus funding you are looking at, you are probably aware that the county is now taking bids for bus stop improvements. There is no deadline.

You can find the form on the SCC website

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

Improvements can range from installing a paved area, adding raised kerbs for easier access on/off buses or small lengths of footway to link bus stops to existing routes up to new Bus Shelters. I have been assured by the officer that bus shelters are arguably more important for infrequent routes, given the waiting time. Limits are space available and whether it impacts safety visibility for drivers. They are asking to include photographs of the stop area if you can. Those interested in bidding are invited to attend the next meeting of the Enhanced Bus Partnership Passenger Group this Friday, 23rd May at 1000 where the process will be discussed.

Increasing School Places for SEND Students

On Tuesday 1 April, Cabinet voted to increase the number of school places in the county for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

1. £18.6m to be spent creating about 100 places would be created within existing mainstream schools, from next academic year.

2. Up to £12m to create 100 places the following year in “satellite” locations of existing special schools in Suffolk.

Since the Cabinet report was tabled, the government has announced that Suffolk will receive an extra £9.4m to invest in new SEND school places. Plans will now be drawn up by the Local Area SEND Partnership on how to spend the money.

£4m for “skills bootcamps”

The Department for Education has allocated Suffolk County Council up to £4m to be spent delivering free skills training to an extra 1,345 adults across Norfolk and Suffolk this year. Courses last up to 16 weeks and offer a combination of online and in-person learning. Employers can work directly with training providers to create courses that align with their needs. Those interested in taking part in the Skills Bootcamps can find more information here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/supporting-employers-training-your-workforce/skills-bootcamps>

6,000 Public EV Chargepoints Planned

Suffolk County Council will be installing around 6,000 new public electric vehicle

(EV) charge-points across the county. From the summer, many will be on residential streets, with many locations suggested by residents following the survey which was undertaken last year, or by liaison with communities and district/borough councils. The majority of installations will be bollard-style units at the kerbside, suitable for long-stay or overnight charging, when drivers will be able to benefit from an overnight off-peak tariff, and there will also be a dedicated resident's tariff which features discounted charging at all times. Public car parks will also see a number of rapid and ultra-rapid charge-point installations, for quicker charging. This project has been made possible due to a successful £5.3 million bid by SCC to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund. This summer's roll-out will use a proportion of this funding, with a further £16 million of funding provided by the charge-point operator, Believe.