

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 28th July 2025 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

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

County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Attending: Lucinda Rogers (Clerk) and one member of the public

44/25 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Stephen Penney and Sarah Bennett.

District Cllr Bryn Hurren

45/25 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Braithwaite planning item DC/25/02812 Fenshoe.

46/25 Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on 28th July 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47/25 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

County Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 2)
Highways were receptive to the idea of a footpath by the URC. A donkey sanctuary is looking to buy 25 acres as a new home. Reduced speed limit on A1141 at Semer and Kersey of 30/40mph recently introduced. Update on Unitary authorities and Mayoral elections. Biofuel digester for food waste to be introduced.

48/25 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Councillor Hurren was unable to attend the meeting

District Councillor Hurren's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 3)

Recently he has donated £350 locality budget to the mini goalposts (soon to arrive)

He arranged for the Herres fencing near the garages in Churchfields to be taken away and for the spare land to be put into the Babergh maintenance contract for regular cutting. Bryn maybe able to help with water at the allotments. He noted that Babergh District Council will be voting on the plans to ask government minister Steve Read to grant Suffolk three unitary councils across the whole of Suffolk rather than the single unitary authority preferred at county level.

49/25 Public Forum

Hedge near the URC on A1141 – David McMahon, who is a member of the working group on the footpath scheme, advised the meeting that he is to obtaining a quote to cut the hedge back to increase visibility.

50/25 Planning Matters

- a. Listed Building Consent has been granted to DC/25/02505 Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of x5 1980's single glazed casement windows to the rear of the property and 1x bay window to the front. Bay window to front of property is rotten and cannot be repaired see attached from joiner. Replacement of back door. At Old Cottage, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- b. Babergh have approved the Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/23/01347 - Condition 6 (Facing Materials) Location: Alexanders, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- c. DC/25/03093: Notification for works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1, T2, T3....All Scots Pine/ Reduce all 3 in height by 30% at Travellers Joy, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh
- d. DC/25/03061: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - T1 Silver Birch...Reduce crown by up to 30%. T2 Walnut Reduce crown by approximately 50% to limit the possibility of failure due to Bifurcation at approximately 1 metre from the base. T3 Field Maple Crown lift to 5 metres over lawn. T4 Oak Crown lift to 5 metres over lawn at Orchard House, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- e. Notification of works to Trees in a Conservation Area - no.1 Hazel - Reduce by 50%, Prune sides in away from the road & driveway. no.2 (4x) Cherry Trees – Crown reduce by 2.5 - 3 metres, giving clearance to utility wires and the road. Crown clean removing any deadwood. Location: Meadowbank, Brent Eleigh Road, Monks Eleigh
- f. DC/25/03546: Application for Listed Building Consent. To completely block up side bathroom, 1980's single glazed casement window, that is blocked up on the inside at Old Cottage, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- g. DC/25/03619: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - 30% overall crown reductions to (T1) Ash tree and 2 (T2 and T3) Silver Birch trees. 30% overall reduction to (T4) Walnut Meadow House, Foysters Hall, Monks Eleigh
- h. DC/25/02812: Proposal: Householder Application - Removal of thatched roof and replacement with tiled roof at Fenshoe, Swingleton Hill, Monks Eleigh. The Councillors agreed to object to this application on the grounds of the impact on the street view and change of character of an old cottage in the Conservation area. The Council would like the matter to be referred to the Heritage team for consideration.
- i. DC/25/03748 Proposal: Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - Two silver birch tree Both have been dead for at least 2-3 years, cut down and reduced to approximately 4 metres high, leaving the trunks in situ at that height but removing the risk of each tree falling due to wind. Location: Yeomans Cottage, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- j. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/25/01644 - Condition 3 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures) Location: The Manor Farmhouse, Tye Road, Monks Eleigh

- k. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/25/01645 - 3 (Red Brick Plinth Details), 4 (Rainwater Goods), 5 (Eaves, Verges and Abutments) and 6 (Fenestration) Location: The Manor Farmhouse, Tye Road, Monks Eleigh
- l. Noise from Building works – The Councillors agreed that noise of pneumatic drills and other loud work should be limited to weekdays and Saturday mornings keeping Saturday afternoon and Sunday's quiet for neighbours. Also, no loud music from building sites in consideration of neighbours as it can cause distress. Clerk to write to planning to ask that these conditions are applied to building work in Monks Eleigh from now on.

51/25 Finance

- a. The Councillors approved the financial report and noted income received. The councillors authorised payments since the last meeting to be made. see Appendix 1. It was also noted that the new defibrillator is deployed for use in the existing cabinet outside the shop. Clerk to ask James Smith if he can fit the new cabinet. Cllr Braithwaite reported that he had not had sufficient time to reconcile income and expenditure against budget, but would provide that to Councillors for the next meeting.
- b. The Councillors reviewed the External Auditor's report and noted the comments: "The AGAR had not been approved in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The minute references indicate Section 2 was approved before Section 1: Section 1, Assertion 5 has been incorrectly completed as the risk assessment was not reviewed and approved at a meeting during the year under review. This is consistent with the internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective C: The AGAR was not fully completed before submission for review. Section 2 Boxes 11a and 11b of the AGAR have not been completed. The smaller authority has confirmed that it is a sole managing trustee and the responses should be 'Yes' and 'Yes' respectively." Councillors considered this feedback and concluded (a) that it was largely procedural and (b) that support and checking would be carried out next year in the light of these comments,
- c. The Councillors reviewed and approved the annual pay rise for the Clerk based on the agreed pay band – backdated to April 2025
- d. The Councillors agreed to appoint Heelis & Lodge as Internal Auditors for 2025-2026
- e. The Councillors agreed to review the Asset Register by undertaking a 'walk around' the village to double check the items. This would be reported for the next meeting.
- f. The Councillors agreed to donate the proceeds of £47.60 from the bottle bank to the village shop.

52/25 Updates / decisions on current topics

- a. **Flooding at Scrips Cross Bridge** –Mike Evans has written to James Cartlidge MP to raise the problem, citing Parish Council support. He has not yet had a response. The bridge parapet is about to be repaired again and the Councillors expressed concern that yet more bricks will be left in the river to increase flood risk. The situation will be monitored.

- b. **The Causeway including repairing the Back Lane Green** – The path is working well and now needs an autumn cut back and ditch clean. Clerk to obtain quotes. The bridge on the Causeway needs to be painted. Cllr Braithwaite to find volunteers for the work. The green triangle has a dead patch of grass which needs to be removed as it is covering a manhole cover.
- c. **Footpath Warden** – Diana Swansborough has kindly offered to be Footpath warden. Clerk to write to her to accept
- d. **Hedge on Brent Eleigh Road** – As above – David McMahon to obtain a quote to cut the hedge back hard to improve visibility
- e. **Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road; Junction of Church Hill and The Street** – The working group has considered two schemes: traffic calming and creating a footpath on the north side along the boundary of the URC. Cllr Braithwaite met with the URC and has established that they would be open to a proposal. A benefit for them would be that it would improve visibility from their driveway. A rough estimate has been obtained to remove the wall, cut back an area of bank, rebuild the wall and install a footpath has been given at £40,000. It is possible to work around the telegraph poles, and the scheme will not disrupt the graveyard. A parishioner has offered to draw plans to use to get more accurate quotes and support the planning process. SCC have also indicated that they would give such a scheme careful and positive consideration. Cllr Braithwaite will try to bring through the proposal at the next level of detail for the November meeting
- f. **Brett Valley Digi Bus** – Suffolk County Council still have funds for the project and Cllr Braithwaite is hoping to resume work in October and be able to update in more detail in November
- g. **Allotments** – There are as many as 5 potential takers for allotments but only one formal application has been received. Problems with site include water supply, animals eating crops and size of the allotments. It was agreed to follow up a water capture scheme and consider reducing the size of the allotments and fence the growing areas. Cllr Braithwaite to ask Jeff about potential allotment holders. It was noted that grants may be available.
- h. **Five-a-side Football Pitch** – The goals should arrive this week. Clerk to ask James Smith to install in line with the end of the car park and between the zip wire and the line of trees.
- i. **Play Equipment and Field**
 - It was agreed the Clerk would ask Babergh for an annual play inspection for this year.
 - The wire fence at the western end needs repair/replacing. Clerk to obtain a cost for this work.
- j. **Footpath lighting on Church Walk** – Clerk to ask for follow up quotes to resurface the path and install conduit for the lighting. There is a considerable difference between the cost of different types of surfaces with tarmac being the greatest. The Councillors agreed to carry out this work to the best quote

for up to £10,000. Different surface choices will be circulated to councillors for review/approval.

53/25 Policies / Controls / Governance

- a. **Community Governance Review** – Councillor Braithwaite attend James Cartlidge's meeting debating the two proposed options for Unitary authorities. The sentiment from a vote was against a single Suffolk Council and in favour of a 3-authority approach (8 vs 25). It seems that the decision will be made by central Government; the influence of our opinion will be marginal.
- b. **People and Place Plan > Neighbourhood Plan** – It was agreed we need to upgrade our People and Place Plan to a Neighbourhood Plan. Kettlebaston Parish Council wish to work on the planning process jointly with Monks Eleigh. This was agreed. Cllr Hodges to forward the current People and Place Plan information to Cllr Braithwaite. Councillor Forrest to work with Councillor Braithwaite on the planning process.

54/25 Action List Review

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

Action	Who
Neighbourhood Plan – relaunch the process	Cllrs Braithwaite / Forrest
Allotments water/fencing – investigate costs and grants	Cllr Braithwaite
Paint Causeway Bridge – arrange this with volunteers	Cllr Braithwaite
Causeway – cut and ditch clear quotes	Clerk
Traffic problems and pavement along A1141 – assemble detailed proposal through working party	Cllrs Bennett/ Braithwaite
Footpath warden invitation	Clerk
Install football goals	Clerk
Asset register update on website – team to walk the village and then update	Cllrs and Clerk
Church Hill footpath quotes for footpath/conduit	Clerk
Fit defibrillator cabinet outside shop	Clerk/John Naylor
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite
Play equipment annual inspection	Clerk
Dead grass patch at Causeway triangle	Cllr Braithwaite
Village hall outside light installation	Clerk
Wire fence western end recreation field	Clerk

55/25 Councillors Reports

Millenium Green – The Councillors agreed to employ Jem Smith for a day to trim and keep it tidy (£375). There are 3 Trustees – Patti Derry, Angela and Jacques Forrest and no new volunteers. They have cut the grass following the initial 2 cuts by Richard Hartley.

Village Hall – Clerk to ask if a bright external light can be fitted to illuminate the MUGA in the evenings up until 9pm as it is being very well used. It needs to be on a sensor with a timer.

56/25 Date of the Next Meetings

Parish Council meeting 24th November 2025

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL					
FINANCIAL REPORT 22 SEPTEMBER 2025					
Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 28 July 2025					
Income Received since 28.7.2025					
None					0.00
Expenditure (movement since 28.7.2025)					
Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment					
28	1.8.25	ME village hall		Donation	500.00 LGA 1972 s137
29	1.8.25	Roundabout		Donation	259.00 LGA 1972 s137
30	1.8.25	Playquip		Zip wire service	432.00 LGA 1972 s137
31	1.8.25	Babergh		Bin emptying 2025-2	796.80 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
32	1.8.25	Bildeston Foodbank		Donation	1,000.00 LGA 1972 s137
34	1.8.25	St Peters church		Donation	1,000.00 LGA 1972 s137
35	4.8.25	Kernos Centre		Donation	500.00 LGA 1972 s137
36	4.8.25	MESCAL		Donation	1,000.00 LGA 1972 s137
37	4.8.25	GoStart		Donation	1,000.00 LGA 1972 s137
38	4.8.25	Community Heartbeat		Defib new pads	122.34 Public Health Act 1936, s234
39	7.8.25	Sudbury CAB		Donation	500.00 LGA 1972 s137
40	7.8.25	Community Action Suffolk		Domain name	49.00 LGA 1972
41	7.8.25	Ed Seeley		Grass	150.00 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
42	7.8.25	L Rogers		August wages	625.28 LGA 1972
43	7.8.25	HMRC		August tax & NI	37.91 LGA 1972, s111
44	7.8.25	L Rogers		July expenses	25.00 LGA 1972
45	20.8.25	Sevenside Defibrillators		Defib, cabinet & tra	2,106.00 Public Health Act 1936, s234
46	28.8.25	PKF Littlejohn		External audit	378.00 LGA 1972
47	28.8.25	J Naylor		No parking sign	28.60 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
48	28.8.25	Harrod Sport		Football goal	1,193.24 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
49	7.9.25	Ed Seeley		Grass	150.00 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
50	7.9.25	L Rogers		September wages	625.48 LGA 1972
51	7.8.25	HMRC		September tax & NI	37.71 LGA 1972, s111
52	7.8.25	L Rogers		August expenses	25.00 LGA 1972
					12,541.36
Outstanding Payments (movement since 19.5.2025)					
None					0.00
29.8.25	MEPC			Transfer to current a	6,000.00
Account		state ment date	statement balance	Balance less outstanding payments	credit/tra nsfers not shown
Community a/c		29.8.25	£8,682.06	£12,541.36	0.00
Business reserve		29.8.25	£58,625.15	£58,625.15	0.00
			£67,307.21	£71,166.51	
GALLETTS AND POLEBRIDGE RECREATION GROUND					
M.E.P.C. is the sole trustee for the Gallets 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 £420 (2024-2025 inc.) and is to be used solely for maintenance of the ground					
£30 received 1.4.2025					

Appendix 2 – Report from County Councillor Robert Lindsay

Pavement on The Street by URC?

I have talked informally to Highways about whether a scenario in which the parish could use URC land and their own contractor rather than a pavement built onto the roadway that would be acceptable to them. They indicated that if the work was done by a creditable contractor and they were not paying for the land, they would likely be prepared to adopt it as their own asset and taken on the maintenance.

Donkey sanctuary looking for new home

I heard that horse and donkey charity French's Care Haven, which rescues unwanted animals and also offers mental health therapy for humans, is about to be evicted from the land it rents near Groton. On contacting founder Jann Turner, I learnt that it is seeking to purchase 20 acres of grazing land within a ten mile radius of Hadleigh. I said I would let my parish councils know in case they knew of anyone who might be interested in selling. Jann's contact details are on her website: <https://www.frenchscarehaven.org.uk/>

40mph and 30mph signs now up on A1141 at Union Hill through Semer and Kersey

As you will have seen these signs have now been installed. I have contributed funding to these from my discretionary budget – because I believe it will make it easier, quieter and safer for residents and businesses along that road as well as safer for drivers going through it.

Daily Hadleigh to Stowmarket Bus route

The funding for this has been allocated, but the existing operator, Hadleigh Community Transport which operates existing routes (461 and 462) between those towns does not want to take on the contract so it will be put to tender with a timetable that does not conflict with HCT's routes. Parish councils who had bid for this along the route are being consulted on the timetable.

One Suffolk or three Suffolk councils?

We had an interesting debate at an extraordinary county council meeting on whether to endorse the Conservative administration's proposal for one unitary council. The endorsement was carried by the majority Conservative vote but all opposition councillors of all other parties (save Reform) voted against, believing that most residents (who will not get to vote on this) prefer smaller authorities. The argument that cost savings will be significant with One Suffolk model does not hold much water, even by their own estimates. Much of the Conservative's One Suffolk case promotes reviewing parking and creating local neighbourhood committees and £40m for market towns. But this is not within the gift of the business plan, since it is will be up to whoever to the new unitary or unitaries to decide.

Leaflets and media promoting Conservatives' "one Suffolk" funded by council taxpayers.

The Conservatives who control Suffolk County Council are estimated to have so far spent more than £130,000 of council tax payers' money on selling their proposal for a single Suffolk mega unitary and attacking the district councils' rival proposals for three unitaries. The bulk of this went on a social media campaign and through the costs of delivering a leaflet to every household.

When this came to light, the Government issued a letter to all chief executives of local authorities saying:

“We would like to also take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity. Please do take care in having regard to ... the principles of objectivity and even-handedness and particularly paragraph 16 which states that local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy.”

County council AND Mayoral Elections May 2026

The Government’s official position since December 2024 was that county council elections would be postponed for 12 months until May 2026. There was much speculation that this would again be cancelled because people would only be electing a body that lasts for two years before being dissolved. However as that date creeps ever closer, without any change of heart from Government, it is looking more and more likely that Suffolk County Council elections will be held then, at the same time as the Norfolk Suffolk Mayoral elections.

Progress on recycling household waste including food waste

New Government rules coming into force next year rightly insist councils must now collect and recycle glass and food waste and more plastics from the doorstep.

District councils are responsible for collecting the rubbish and the county council has to handle it at the depots. On Tuesday 15 July, the administration decided to put £5.9m into updating the recycling centre at Great Blakenham so that it can handle more recyclable waste. Biffa runs the centre and this means it will charge them less for the service.

Separately, the council has signed a four-year contract to process all the county’s food waste collected from the kerbside from next year at Adnams’ anaerobic digestion plant near Southwold. The waste will be used to generate biomethane that can be connected to the gas grid and also used as a fuel for Adnams’ lorries. The residue can be turned into fertiliser for nearby farmers.

Appendix 3 – Notes from District Councillor Bryn Hurren

Cllr Hurren sent his apologies via email with the following points of note:

- I was happy to give your share of my locality budget to the mini goalposts this year and hope that they have arrived and are already being used.
- As you may already know, I did arrange for the herres fencing to be taken away and for the spare land to be put into the Babergh maintenance contract for regular cutting. Should be all done by now??
- I was asked recently about the allotments by someone who has just moved into the village, Mill Ln in fact. This is a very worthwhile project and could attract grant funding to install water supply and fencing. Best someone gets in touch I think.
- Babergh District Council will be voting on our agreed plans to ask government minister Steve Read to grant Suffolk three unitary councils across the whole of Suffolk.