

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 24th March 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
District Cllr Bryn Hurren

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

109/24 Apologies for Absence

County Cllr Robert Lindsay

110/24 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

None

111/24 Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

112/24 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the Councillors - appendix 2

113/24 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Councillor Hurren's report was circulated to the Councillors - appendix 3

Cllr Hurren may make a Locality grant towards a replacement defibrillator and cabinet outside the shop. He suggested applying for a CIL grant towards the cost.

114/24 Public Forum

Church Walk street lighting – could the bollard lights be more in keeping with the character of the village

Updates on the traffic safety on the A1141

Road verges being damaged by large lorries travelling through and within the village

Thank you to the parish council for the work on the Causeway

115/24 Planning Matters

- a. The Planning Inspector has dismissed the appeal for planning permission for Land off Brent Eleigh Road, Monks Eleigh APP/D3505/W/24/3354585
- b. Babergh have given Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/04243 - Condition 3 (Eaves, Verges and Abutments), 4 (Roofing Materials), 5 (Wall Materials), 6 (Brick and Mortar), 7 (Fenestration), 8 (Rainwater Goods), 9 (Soil Pipe) and 10 (Vents and Flues) Location: The Cottage, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh
- c. Babergh have made a Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/03428 - Condition 4 (Great Crested Newt Statement) and 5 (Biodiversity Enhancement) Location: Onchan, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh
- d. Babergh do not wish to object to DC/25/00316 Application for works to a tree in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No Lawsons cypress to ground level. At Club House, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh

- e. DC/24/05520 Householder Application - Erection of a single storey front extension at 13 Lower Byfield, Monks Eleigh
- f. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/24/01067 - Condition 3 (Walls) and Condition 4 (Ventilation) at The Swan Inn, The Street, Monks Eleigh
- g. DC/25/01119 Application for Listed Building Consent - Reconstruct defective external walls to rear single storey kitchen extension at Alexanders, The Street, Monks Eleigh

116/24 Finance

- a. The councillors approved the financial report and noted income received and recent expenditure – see Appendix 1. The councillors authorised payments from the RFO Report since the last meeting to be made.
- b. To record receipt for the locality budget grant of £350 towards the restoration of the gate on the recreation field from District Cllr Bry Hurren
- c. Defibrillator Funding – it was agreed to allow up to £2,000 to replace the old defibrillator and cabinet at the shop. Clerk to circulate the models to councillors prior to purchase
- d. Glass recycling money – to agree where to donate the monies to the shop (£44.20)
- e. Clerk to send end of year accounts to Cllr Braithwaite when ready

117/24 People and Place Plan – Cllr Hodges will make a draft report of the Neighbourhood Priority Statement. This will be put on the website and Facebook. It was agreed to hold a Community Meeting within the community at the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 28th April. It was agreed that the council should move up to a Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed to invite Kettlebaston parish council to form a joint Neighbourhood Plan. Cllrs Braithwaite and Perry to take the project forwards. Cllr Hodges to forward a recent useful Neighbourhood Plan email to the Councillors.

118/24 Devolution – Clerk to see if there is a recording of the Babergh meeting about this available to show at the village meeting on Monday 7th April at 7.30pm

119/24 Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road – The parish council continue to follow up on last year's petition about this. The matter will be kept on the agenda as an active goal for this year to reassure residents that the parish council have not lost sight of it.

120/24 VE Day Celebration – Cllr Bennett is liaising with the PCC to make arrangements for the celebration. Bank Holiday Monday 5th May 4-6pm will be a tea party at the village hall with people being asked to bring a plate of food for a community get together. Cllr Forrest to supply bunting. On VE Day, Thursday 8th May there will be a Church service to mark the day.

121/24 Causeway Footpath – James Smith Landscapes have cleared the vegetation and dug out the ditches which are draining off. It is ready for the tarmac to be laid on Friday 28th March to raise the path level above the water level. The triangle on Back Lane will have new turf laid to repair the surface.

122/24 Pathway Lighting on Church Hill– Clerk to send minutes and photos of more appropriate bollard lamp in keeping with the character of the village. These will need to be able to be operated remotely by SCC to Mal at the Street Lighting team

123/24 Brett Valley DigiBus – Cllr Braithwaite met with the head of the Passenger Transport Association at a meeting hosted by GoStart. SCC have agreed to a budget of c. £5000 to work with a software company, PADAM, on the project and we await the purchase order to be able to move ahead with the project. Fiontan Connolly is collecting information to populate the software and put in existing rides and is ready to add rides and simulate rides to test the software.

124/24 Millenium Green – The first grass cut has been done and is looking good. The trees will need to be checked in the autumn for any necessary work. We will advertise for volunteers at the Annual Parish Meeting.

125/24 Annual Parish Meeting Arrangements – To have a People and place Plan item. Clerk to invite local organisations – to send the circulate last year’s agenda with a list of local organisations to the Councillors. Clerk to invite Shaun Moffat of Bildeston Food Bank to talk about his organisation.

126/24 Action List Review

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

Action	Who
People & Place Plan Neighbourhood – Annual Parish Meeting 28 April and add to website	Cllrs Perry/Hodges & Braithwaite/Clerk
VE Day Anniversary liaison with PCC	Cllr Bennett
Traffic problems and pavement along A1141 – create draft proposal	Cllrs Hodges/ Braithwaite
Install webcam to monitor traffic	Cllr Braithwaite
Recreation field red gates – renovation quote	Clerk
Asset register update on website	Cllr Hodges/Clerk
Church Hill footpath lighting bollards – meet with contractor	Cllr Braithwaite
Defibrillator order/apply for CIL funding	Clerk/John Naylor
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite

127/24 Councillors Reports

A dog has been reported urinating on the play equipment at the recreation field. It is hoped the owner can be asked to prevent this.

The Councillors agreed who will be awarded Village Person of the Year to be revealed at the APM

128/24 Date of the Next Meetings

Annual Parish Meeting 28th April

Parish Council meeting 19th May

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT 24 MARCH 2025

Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 27 January 2025

Income Received since 27.1.2025

2.12.24	Barclays	Interest	94.91	
6.3.25	Babergh	Locality award	350.00	
			<u>444.91</u>	

Expenditure (movement since 27.1.2025)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

	L			
7.2.25	Rogers	February pay	617.28	LGA 1972
7.2.25	HMRC	February tax	13.80	LGA 1972
	L			
7.2.25	Rogers	January expenses	34.49	LGA 1972
11.2.25	A Braithwaite	Grit shovels	17.97	LGA 1972
	L			
10.3.25	Rogers	March wages	617.28	LGA 1972
10.3.25	HMRC	March tax	13.80	LGA 1972
	L			
10.3.25	Rogers	February expenses	25.00	LGA 1972
			<u>1,339.62</u>	

Pending Payments

5.9.22	Hadleigh United Reformed Church	10.00	101528	LGA 1972
		<u>10.00</u>		

Bank Reconciliation

Account	statement date	statement balance	actual balance	credit/transfers not shown	unpresented cheques
Community a/c	28.2.25	£13,121.23	£11,781.61	0.00	£1,339.62
Business reserve	28.2.25	£39,319.94	£39,319.94	0.00	£0
		£52,441.17	£51,101.55		

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 £390 (2023-2024 inc.) and is to be used solely for maintenance of the ground £30 received 11.4.2024

Appendix 2 – Report from County Councillor Robert Lindsay

Local Government centralisation

Suffolk's councils have now been accepted into the Government's "fast track" scheme for 1. merging councils into "unitaries" and 2. creating a mega Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk combined.

The government is insisting that new unitary councils must have a minimum of 500k people, which doesn't go into 780k Suffolk population. It has demanded that Suffolk councils submit their outline proposals for size and shape of new council on March 21st and then fuller "business case" by late September. The Government will after that at some stage make up its mind. The county has said it wants one, the districts are proposing two or preferably three. Personally I believe that the financial and democratic costs of rejigging existing local government on this scale outweighs any optimistic financial savings that the Conservative county council administration and the Labour government is relying on. Increasing the size of councils and giving much of their powers to a new higher tier mayor will erode local accountability and democracy. But the Government is forcing this on to every council in the country so there is little we can do but try to get the best deal we can. The current Government proposed time table of elections May 2026 Postponed Suffolk County Council elections are theoretically timetabled here, but it is widely considered that the government is likely to postpone this again for another 12 months – so unlikely there will ever be another county council election. May 2026 Election for Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk May 2027 Elections for parish councils and for "shadow" unitary councillors. May 2028 Suffolk County and Babergh district councils will dissolve, new unitary council(s) will commence. The government has launched a public consultation on its proposals to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk, and you can give your views on the proposals by using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution>
Council Pension funds being centralised too

I sit on the Suffolk pension committee which now manages £4.5bn in investments (nearly six times the turnover of the council). The government, alongside its move to centralise local authorities into the hands of a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk (which for some reason it calls "devolution"), is also forcing all local authority pension funds to give up most of the democratic control they exercise over investment strategy. Our funds will be pooled with other local authority funds into the hands of paid professional City managers who will have the power to select individual sub fund managers and decide on most of the details of where funds are allocated. The pension committee of councillors at Suffolk – which has been advised by professionals - will have a mere supervisory, rather than deciding role. The government wants to encourage "local investment" by these pooled funds. What, where and how much local investment will be decided by the professional managers in consultation with the new Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk - who must produce a "growth plan" for the two counties. The problem here is that the legal responsibility for providing adequate pensions rests currently with the committee, not with the mayor or professional managers.

Challenge to county's decision to take Suffolk Libraries in house

My political group, (Green, LibDem, independent) is seeking to "call in" the decision on March 18 th by Suffolk County Council's all-Conservative cabinet to take the libraries in house. The administration had failed to agree a renewal of the contract with the charity, The Suffolk Library Service, that has been running them since 2012. There were no other bidders. If our call in request is approved by the council's monitoring officer, it means cabinet decision can be examined again in public by a committee of councillors – scrutiny committee. The charity insisted the terms it was

offered (same budget as last year with no annual increase for inflation etc) meant opening hours would have to be cut by 30%. The council say they can run it with no hours being cut. The fear is that this will mean cuts in staff numbers and an increased reliance on volunteers. The amount the library charity was being paid has not risen significantly for more than ten years. Meanwhile, the county council itself will be abolished in May 2018 meaning that the future of an house library service is perhaps less certain than if there was a long term contract in place with an outside provider.

Appendix 3 – Report from District Councillor Bryn Hurren

The devolution opportunity as offered by the government is taking shape now and it is becoming more clear as to what is on offer and what the powers of the new Mayor will be. The remit of the new upper level of government includes, power over highways, policing, (hopefully at the expense of the dreadful current Police and Crime commissioner post) general transport (including railways) and health, also the bigger planning decisions across the new region of Norfolk and Suffolk. A huge remit indeed. Sadly no idea of what funding will be given for this, although the new mayor/mayoreess will have their own precept raising opportunities, presumably from the current system of local council tax. Although the new unitarities may be cheaper to run than the current two tier system and we could hopefully be losing the ever increasing Police and Crime Commissioner budget, I do feel that our local taxes may see a severe increase and more demand on the local population to fund the new governance scenario. The coming months will hopefully bring more clarity and information on this matter. The unitary council or councils that sit below the new upper tier and hopefully feed into it are being debated at this very moment and it is now clear that although the County Council favour one huge unitary across the whole of Suffolk, the District and Borough Councils very much favour 3 smaller unitaries across Suffolk and I understand that all Norfolk Councils including their County authority feel the same. For Babergh/MidSuffolk this was agreed at our meetings on 20th March to meet the Gov deadline of Friday 21st March and we await the outcome of all of the Suffolk and Norfolk submissions. For Suffolk the proposed 3 new unitaries, if accepted would be Greater Ipswich, East Suffolk and West Suffolk, including the current Babergh area in which you now live. Nearer to home Babergh are focusing with ever increasing speed on our Joint Local Plan to accommodate the new housing demands of the new government, 775 new dwellings for Babergh alone in the coming year. The against policy application on Brent Eleigh Rd was won at appeal after being turned down by planners at the initial stage to the relief of myself and PC alike. We are now trying to focus on the latest demands from central Government to collect glass and household compostable waste from all properties as a kerbside collection. A tough and unnecessary task in a rural area. Very happy to grant aid the refurbishment of the playing field gates from my locality budget and I look forward to seeing the finished improvements.