

# Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors Alan Braithwaite (Chairman), James Hodges, Rupert Perry, Angela Forrest Stephen Penney and Sarah Bennett

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

## **57/25 Apologies for Absence**

County Cllr Robert Lindsay

## **58/25 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation**

Cllr Hodges planning item DC/25/04959 Rushbrooks and Cllr Bennett A1141 road

## **59/25 Minutes of the meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

## **60/25 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay**

County Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 2) and read out at the meeting. It was agreed that the council would respond to the consultation on Local Government Reorganisation.

## **61/25 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren**

District Councillor Hurren's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 3). A particular point of stress is the level of homelessness in the district. In this context five of the houses at Northcote Drive are empty and available for sale but as they are non-standard construction it is difficult to secure mortgages. It was agreed in discussion that MEPC would write in support of lifting the restrictions on these houses being only for sale so that they can also be rented.

## **62/25 Public Forum**

Scripps Cross Bridge Flooding. James Cartlidge MP held a meeting with residents to try to resolve the issue. Highways and the Environment Agency cannot agree who should remove the fallen bricks and rubble and the build-up of sediment which reduces flow under the bridge arches, especially the two lower ones. It appears that one or other of the authorities have a responsibility 10m either side of the bridge but the involvement of the riparian owners in clearance beyond that is a precondition of them turning up to do the work. It will be best to clear this in the summer when river levels are low.

## **63/25 Planning Matters**

- a. DC/25/02505 & DC/25/03546 Old Cottage, The Street, Monks Eleigh - Listed Building Consent has been granted to 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. DC/25/04559 - Notification of works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Fir (T1) Trent Cottage, Back Lane, Monks Eleigh
- c. DC/25/04959- Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area - Tree 1 - Red Norway adjacent to the boundary and shed to fell there is decay at the base of the tree 2 -Heavily Leaning Willow tree to fell to ground level/coppice Tree 3 - x1 Leaning Willow next to it reduce the weight Trees 4 to fell between 3-5 Poplar trees Poplar Plantation ? they are tall spindly trees and some are decayed Tree 5 - Ash tree, Ivy covered and has Ash die back the tree is dying at Rushbrooks, The Street
- d. Babergh have granted consent for DC/25/04142 - Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacing of one clear, single glazed, lead frame window with stained coloured panels for privacy, and then maintenance of all window frames at Foskers, The Street
- e. Babergh have refused DC/25/02812 - Householder Application - Removal of thatched roof and replacement with tiled roof at Fenshoe, Swingleton Hill
- f. DC/25/05008 - Proposal: Application for works to Trees in a conservation Area - Fell 1 No. Walnut (T1) at 2 The Street, Monks Eleigh

#### **64/25 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). Clerk to make a VAT reclaim
- b. Cllr Braithwaite reported on his reconciliation between income and expenditure against budget, which, after projects, shows a small deficit. Because of the scale of the project work and grants received, it is proving quite complex to present. The draft budget was reviewed in the context of the underlying tax base increase of 3.3% and the precept will be set at the January meeting. The present outlook is that the individual parish council tax will not change from the current year.
- c. The Councillors approved the Asset Register and Cllr Braithwaite and the Clerk will 'walk around' the village to double check the items.
- d. The Councillors agreed to either repair or replace the fence at the end of the Recreation Field. Clerk to obtain quotes for the work
- e. Following Many Coll's retirement in mid-December, the Councillors agreed to support the year-long trial contract with Hitcham to operate the Post Office at a cost of £1,500. The shop will pay the other part of the cost. The post office will be open 23 hours a week – mostly in the morning. The Councillors thanked Alan Line for his work in organising this and his support for the shop.

**65/25 Millenium Green Trust** – the Councillors agreed to accept the management role of the Millenium Green from November 2026 when the management committee will step down. It was agreed that the two spring grass cuts will be

funded by the parish council, and the volunteers will cut the grass through the summer. The Councillors agreed to renew the insurance at a cost of approximately £300. The management of the trees and bins was discussed and new arrangements will need to be put in place in the coming months. Clerk to review the Trust deed to ensure there are no legal questions to be addressed.

#### **66/25 Updates / decisions on current topics**

- a. **Flooding at Scrips Cross Bridge** – It was agreed that the parish council will write firmly to both the Environment Agency and Highways saying they are willing to contribute to the effort to clear the blockages and asking for their participation. This is in line with the advice received in the public forum. It was noted that the bollards are in the wrong position to prevent articulated lorries hitting the bridge; they could be moved to a better position to reduce the accidents.
- b. **The Causeway including repairing the Back Lane Green** – The path is working well during the recent heavy rains. It has been cut back and the ditch cleaned and should be fine until May next year. The bridge on the Causeway needs to be painted.
- c. **Footpath lighting on Church Walk** – The path has been concreted and the conduit installed ready for the lights. SCC Street lighting will commence work in January. It was agreed to place warning bollards over the holes left for the lights as a safety precaution.
- d. **Defibrillator Cabinet and Training** – The new cabinet and defibrillator has been installed and is working. The training session for everyone is on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm at the Village Hall. To be advertised on Facebook and on the website.
- e. **Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road; Junction of Church Hill and The Street** – The Clerk has applied for pre-planning advice but has some problems in the application being accepted. Clerk to copy District Cllr Hurren into the emails for assistance. The sequence for this project is (1) pre-planning advice for specs and conditions (2) complete drawings and specs and obtain quotes (3) discuss the proposals with interested parties inc Highways and finalise overall budget (5) full planning (6) do the work.
- f. **Brett Valley Digi Bus** – Suffolk County Council still have funds for the project and Cllr Braithwaite is hoping to resume work soon and be able to update in more detail in January
- g. **Allotments** – The Councillors agreed that bring the allotments back in the good use is a priority. Putting in suitable fencing is of high importance alongside a water supply. Clerk to request this from Anglian Water but if too costly / difficult this could be achieved by a bowser or other source. The scale of the allotment site needs to be reduced; it is currently more than an acre. The parish council has not been able to pay the £75 annual rent to Strutt & Parker for the last three years due to their administrative changes. We need to make sure we have long term secure holding / tenancy before proceeding with a major expenditure. Cllrs Braithwaite and Forrest to meet Martin Bowers and Fiona Jacques to establish the exact position and seek appropriate assurances.

**h. Lighting for MUGA** – The Councillors agreed to pay the cost of installing a motion sensitive security light at the end of the village hall ensuring its angle does not interfere with neighbouring properties. The village hall has agreed to pay the electricity costs. Clerk to instruct contractor.

**67/25 People and Place Plan > Neighbourhood Plan** – This work has not been progressed due to other priorities but must be actioned in the coming months. Strutt and Parker have asked to undertake a housing needs survey and we must make sure we align with that. The meeting in 66/25 g can be used to work on that detail too. Councillor Braithwaite to follow up.

**68/25 Action List Review**

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

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
Neighbourhood Plan – to continue	Cllrs Braithwaite / Forrest
Allotments water/fencing – meet Strutt & Parker	Cllr Braithwaite/Forrest
Paint Causeway Bridge – arrange this with volunteers	Cllr Braithwaite
Traffic problems and pavement along A1141 – assemble detailed proposal through working party	Cllrs Bennett/ Braithwaite
Asset register update on website – team to walk the village and then update	Cllrs and Clerk
Church Hill place bollards and progress lighting installation	Clerk
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite
Play equipment annual inspection - January	Clerk
Village hall outside light installation	Clerk
Wire fence western end recreation field – quotes to repair/replace	Clerk
Millenium Green insurance renewal	Clerk
Millenium Green – check legal documents	Clerk
Scripps Cross Bridge – letter to Highways & Environment Agency	Cler/Cllr Braithwaite
Make VAT reclaim	Clerk
Local Government Reorganisation – prepare and submit response	Cllr Braithwaite to lead

**69/25 Councillors Reports**

Lower Byfield Pathway – Steps leading down from number 7 Lower Byfield are being damaged by tree roots; having no lighting this represents a trip hazard – Cllr Braithwaite to inspect

**70/25 Dates for the Meetings in 2026**

26<sup>th</sup> January, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 20<sup>th</sup> April (Annual Parish Meeting), 18<sup>th</sup> May (AGM), 27<sup>th</sup> July, 28<sup>th</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> November

**71/25 Date of the Next Meeting**

Parish Council meeting 26th January 2026

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

## Appendix 1: Financial Report

### MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT 24 NOVEMBER 2025

#### Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 22 September 2025

##### Income Received since

22.9.2025

Babergh	Precept	11,150.00
Barclays	Apology	200.00
Babergh	Bryn Hurren- grant	350.00
		<u>11,700.00</u>

##### Expenditure (movement since 22.9.2025)

##### Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

6.10.25	Community Action Suffolk	Insurance	710.81	LGA 1972 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
9.10.25	Ed Seeley	Grass	150.00	LGA 1972
9.10.25	L Rogers	October wages	641.45	LGA 1972
9.10.25	HMRC	October NI & tax	44.94	LGA 1972
9.10.25	L Rogers	Back pay 1.4.25 - 30.9.25	121.03	LGA 1972
10.10.25	L Rogers	September expenses	25.00	LGA 1972 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
17.10.25	James Smith Landscapes	Goalposts & Causeway	1,362.00	LGA 1972 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
3.11.25	Community Action Suffolk	Annual website fee	66.00	LGA 1972
3.11.25	Ed Seeley	Inv-1425-007		Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
3.11.25	Gardening	September	150.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
3.11.25	Ed Seeley			Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
3.11.25	Gardening	Inv-1425-008 October	150.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
7.11.25	L Rogers	November wages	641.45	LGA 1972
7.11.25	HMRC	November NI & tax	44.94	LGA 1972
7.11.25	L Rogers	October expenses	31.96	LGA 1972 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
17.11.25	Garden Graft	Strim Millenium Green	185.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
17.11.25	James Smith Landscapes	Footpaths Church Hill&Park	7,895.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10
			<u>12,219.58</u>	

##### Outstanding Payments (movement since 22.9.2025)

##### Uncleared Cheque

7.11.25	HMRC	November NI & tax	44.94	LGA 1972
			<u>44.94</u>	

Account	statement date	statement balance	Balance less outstanding payments	credit/transfers not shown
Community a/c	31.10.25	£8,038.80	£8,374.45	0.00
Business reserve	31.10.25	£65,837.68	£56,337.68	0.00
		£73,876.48	£64,712.13	

#### **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 £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**

**Local government reshuffle plan latest** We await the minister's decision some time next year on whether he will go for a single unitary council across the whole of Suffolk – as proposed by the Conservatives who currently control Suffolk County Council – or for three unitaries, as proposed by all five district and borough councils in the county – controlled by a mix of Greens, independents, Labour and LibDems. The Government have said they will consult communities on the two options. In terms of councillor numbers, the Conservatives are advocating that the current 350 odd councillors across Suffolk comes down to 140, while the districts are talking about a less drastic reduction to about 200. Next May 2026 the county council elections (that were postponed from last year) are planned to be held. At the same time there will be a poll to elect a newly created Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk. That person will take office straight away. All five major political parties (bar, so far, Reform) have now chosen a candidate. May 2027 – yet another election for “shadow” unitary councillors who will have a year to select a leader and a cabinet, find a headquarters, recruit staff etc before... May 2028 – county council and districts are dissolved and the new unitaries start functioning.

**Local nature recovery strategy approved** On 9 September, the council's Cabinet voted to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was produced following a public consultation on the draft strategy between April and June this year. Most of the area mapped out for Suffolk's nature priorities is private farmland, and the strategy does not make improvement mandatory, but the officers who have produced the strategy will now work with landowners to support them and work to find investment for measures in the strategy. Landowners can use areas mapped in the strategy to produce ‘units’ of biodiversity for purchase by developers, as they will be required to meet the government's new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which state that all development should be increasing biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. The units of biodiversity do not need to be onsite or near the development. Post May 2026, the new Mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk will be in charge of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**Predicted £20m needed from risk reserve to finance budget gap this year** After the second quarter of the financial year, the council is predicting that it will overspend by £20.4m by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, which it will balance by taking money from its Risk Reserve. Alongside this is a forecast that the council's interest cost will increase to £4.9m to cover a surge in its “dedicated schools grant” debt. The soaring cost of education, particularly special needs education, is no longer being met by schools grant the council gets from Government. The Government has promised to review the level of the grant. But in the meantime, in common with many other education authorities across the country, the council now has to borrow to make up the shortfall. The schools grant debt is forecast to rise by £70m to a total of £168m by year end. Other cost pressures for the council include placements for children in care, care purchasing and mental health services in adult

social care. **Solar Together Scheme for 2025** The Solar Together Suffolk scheme, which has so far installed 32,000 solar panels at 2,651 Suffolk households, is now open for registration for 2025. The scheme also includes battery storage and EV charge points. The scheme requires householders to register online, and pre-approved solar PV suppliers then take part in a 'reverse auction' to bid for the work. After this, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which they can choose to accept or not. Telephone and email helpdesks are available to support residents in making an informed decision. The scheme is run by Suffolk's councils in partnership with iChoosr, who have been working with UK councils on the Solar Together scheme since 2015. For more information and to register, visit <https://solartogether.co.uk/suffolk/home>

### **Appendix 3 – Notes from District Councillor Bryn Hurren**

Firstly, we are finally getting towards the final conclusions of the long drawn out **local government review** which has been chugging along for close on a year now. Both the County and combined Districts proposals for the future unitaries for Suffolk are now in before Steve Read the new communities and LGR minister for final determination and decision, we are now told that this will be towards the end of March 2026. However, we have just been informed that both Submissions have been accepted by his department and we are now in a consultation period that ends in mid January. Both public bodies and individuals are entitled and indeed encouraged to express their feelings and preferred option. We will then be faced Mayoral elections on the 6<sup>th</sup> May and we already have 4 political and one independent candidate. More to come I am sure as publicity brings more interest before the window closes. We will then have spring campaigning before the ballot and the result being declared 7<sup>th</sup> May. I presume, then they will start work right away to form cabinet and shadow authority before unitary elections in May 27, This is not entirely clear yet. At **BaberghmidSuffolk, we are constantly striving to bring our housing stock** up to date, this is a constant battle due to changing legislation and increasing demands for better standards. We now have Awaab's law after the little boy who died from inhalation of mould spores in an affected house which is now of course unlawful, we of course have some older and in some cases not so old housing stock affected in this way and remedial action is promptly taken. What is even more concerning is the ever increasing numbers of homelessness in our region, the numbers have gone up from 91 in 21/22, 123 in 22/23, 136 in 23/24 and more than that this year already by mid October. More urban councils also have to watch fume and pollution levels. Terrible problem and indictment on our modern society. **The 25/26 budget** is our priority now, with budget and tax setting at the forefront of our minds, it will be hard once again to keep doing everything we do with limited funds and I am sure we will increase Council tax by 3.00.% which is in line with inflation and keeps us standing still at least and with some increased charges (possibly car parking) we will struggle by for one more year, our cifco investments continue to do well and also our environmental tariffs and power from waste initiatives bring in good monies which should increase as power prices rise more than inflation. The Babergh growth scheme at Corks Ln is a disaster but not sure how

big the hit will be yet. We will do well to keep the District budget to around 9% of total Council tax as we always strive to do, in real terms this equates to just under £5.00. per week on a Band D property. But we will have the Mayoral budget as well next year which will be eyewatering, although we will lose the PCC precept and have the combined unitary precept in lieu of County and District ones. Watch this space as things will change and gather pace as we get nearer to D day. **Nearer to home on local matters**, I have been trying to drive things forward apace on the footway alongside the Old Church to Millennium Green steps and also the Allotment initiative, both of which are close to my heart and highly needed and beneficial to our village. Hopefully CIL and grant monies can be ascertained to finance these projects. Both of these matters are on your agenda this evening, so will not comment further. Also, the planning application on land next to Melbourne House which I think will add a new dimension to our village and is a brilliant use of this semi brown field site. This has been put through the planning mill by our esteemed planners but I seem to be abreast and ahead of everything now and expecting a positive result, keeping applicants positive as well which is a lovely task. I will be happy to answer questions from PC and public this evening.