

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2026 at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm

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

County Cllr Robert Lindsay and District Councillor Bryn Hurren

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

95/25 Apologies for Absence

None

96/25 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

None

97/25 Resignation of Councillor

The Councillors recorded the resignation of Stephen Penney and agreed to organise recruitment of up to 2 additional councillors. Clerk to report to Babergh. Cllr Braithwaite to advertise for new Councillors.

98/25 Minutes of the meetings held on 26th January and 2nd March 2026

The minutes of the Meetings held on 26th January and 2nd March 2026 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

99/25 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

County Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 2) and presented at the meeting

Five month road closure of Bildeston High Street From mid June, Bildeston High Street will be closed until mid November while Anglian Water replace the water main there. An information meeting at 2pm on 14th April at Chamberlain Hall, Bildeston to learn more. **Potential new pavement on High Street, Monks Eleigh** I have met highways officers together with your parish chairman on site to discuss the feasibility of this. The county council Highways will have to legally adopt a footway built alongside the road in order to maintain it and any contractor will need to be Highways accredited. **New bus 51 Hadleigh and Stowmarket** This five day a week, six services a day route is due to start April 13. The number and timing of services is limited because it is just one driver operating one bus. The operator TMS apparently is prepared to flex the timings once the service is underway, depending on demand.

100/25 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

District Councillor Hurren's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 3) and presented at the meeting. Cllr Hurren reported on Babergh's budget, the County Council elections on 7th May – do remember to get your vote registered and check if you usually have a postal vote. The decision about Local Government Reorganisation is due on 26th March. The new bin collection system is in progress and the new

collection times will begin in May. Improvements are to be made at Belle Vue park by building a new café to replace the one that burnt down.

101/25 Public Forum

A planning applicant asked: who had delivered leaflets to houses in the village about the planning application: who has photocopied the Planning Notice and reposted it several times along his curtilage: who put an advert in the newspaper about the application which gave his phone number out to everyone. He expressed concern about prejudice towards gypsies and wants everyone to be treated the same way. He expressed concern that the Parish Council's post on Facebook described the application as controversial. The Chair responded that none of these actions were the action of the council apart from the Facebook post. Clearly the actions noted and level of objections confirm that the applications is controversial. However, the district is following the standard process which is designed to be objective and without prejudice. It was noted that Babergh's decision for this application will not be made by a single planning officer but has been called in to the full Planning Committee. Due to elections that meeting will not be held until late May / early June.

102/25 Planning Matters

- a. DC/25/04727 - Full Planning Application - Siting of 7no. pitches on existing Gypsy and Traveller site, communal dayroom, associated hardstanding; redesign of permitted site layout and construction of dayroom at Rosefield, Highlands Road, Monks Eleigh. The Councillors agreed to object to the planning application for the following reasons: Scale of the proposal which would dominate the area; the contours of the site mean it would be very visible from the surrounding area; over development of the site; it would provide more spaces than Babergh say they need by 2028; it is sited on a narrow road and it would have a big impact on traffic levels; it is distant from local services away from the shop and pub and there is no bus route in the village – schools/doctors are a distance away; it could lead to nearly 50 people living in that part of the village; no public sewer so problem dealing with that much sewage from the site. It was agreed that an objection letter would be prepared for posting on the Babergh Planning portal.
- b. DC/26/00551 - Planning Application. Erection of double stable and tack room, machine store & feed store following demolition of existing stable block at Griggs Meadow, Brent Eleigh Road – The Councillors agreed to make no comments.
- c. Planning permission has been granted to DC/24/05288 Planning Application. Conversion of redundant agricultural building to provide 1no dwelling at Tye Farm, Tye Road, Monks Eleigh
- d. Planning permission has been granted to DC/24/05367 Planning Application - Conversion of redundant agricultural building to provide 1no dwelling including removal of modern additions and demolition of adjacent redundant farm building at Tye Farm, Tye Road

103/25 Finance

- a. The Councillors approved the financial report. The councillors authorised payments since the last meeting to be made. (see appendix 1).
- b. The Councillors approved the Internal Control Statement
- c. The Councillors noted the increase in cost of emptying dog and waste bins. It was agreed to consider how many bins would be provided at the next meeting
- d. The Councillors agreed to donate the final payment of £183 Recycling money to the Community Shop
- e. Grass contract – The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for both a one and three year contract for grass cutting as there may be some benefit in making a three year commitment. It was agreed to ask Ed Seeley to continue until the contract is agreed.

104/25 Updates / decisions on current topics

- a. **Flooding at Scrips Cross Bridge** – It was agreed that the parish council will organise to remove the items blocking the bridge from the Polegate side as noted previously in these minutes. Working party to be arranged
- b. **Allotments** – The edge of the site has been cleared prior to the nesting season ready for the new fencing. The work will be done in early April. Cllr Braithwaite to organise a 10 year lease / licence with Strutt & Parker. Cllr Forrest to discuss proposed changes with current allotment tenants
- c. **Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road; Junction of Church Hill and The Street** – The meeting with Highways was helpful and notes to be circulated to the Councillors. Clerk to arrange a Highways Boundary search. Cllr Braithwaite to continue the process of obtaining a price for the work.
- d. **Brett Valley Digi Bus** – Cllr Braithwaite continues to try push this project forward and has attended two meeting this month. SCC is acquiring the PADAM software and the first step will be to model capacity and potential demand. The project will be looking for an intern to work with the software to model the number of passengers; duration 9-10 weeks. Cllr Hurren and Cllr Braithwaite to visit GO Start to introduce the project to them and get their feedback.
- e. **Footpath lighting on Church Walk** – SCC have completed installing the lights. It now needs to be set up for timing and brightness. This can only happen when it has migrated to the SCC control system for streetlights which takes a few days. The hours will match the streetlights in the village, and the brightness of the lights will be reduced.
- f. **Speed Watch Team Update** – Mike Evans is looking for two more volunteers to join the team
- g. **First Responder** – Chelsworth would like Monks Eleigh to join the scheme and enable one or more additional responders with the right kit. This will create a more joined up and a comprehensive service. This will be on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting to gauge support.

104/25 People and Place Plan > Neighbourhood Plan – Cllrs Braithwaite and Forrest met with CAS and Strutt & Parker. Subject to approval by this meeting, CAS will be

commissioned to conduct the Housing Needs Survey and S&P will fund the work. This approach was agreed by councillors. The People & Place plan will be put on the website and the FB page. The evolution to the Neighbourhood Plan from the P&P plan will be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting and the importance of completing the Housing Needs Survey emphasised.

105/25 Annual Parish Meeting – This is on 20th April 2026. Clerk to send list of groups to Councillors to check it is up to date. Speakers will be the First Responder from Chelsworth and the Neighbourhood Plan/Housing Needs project.

106/25 Annual Litter Pick – the Councillors thanked Patti Derry and John Naylor for organising such a successful Litter Pick.

107/25 Action List Review

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

Action	Who
Neighbourhood Plan – to progress as noted above	Cllrs Braithwaite / Forrest
Allotments lease	Cllr Braithwaite
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
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite
Play equipment quotes for repairs	Clerk
Millenium Green – check legal documents	Clerk
Scripps Cross Bridge	Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite
Speedwatch Team – advertise for 2 volunteers	Cllr Braithwaite
Annual Parish Meeting 20.4.26 arrangements	Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite
Report faded H lines	Clerk
Grass contract quotes	Clerk
Annual CIL Statement	Clerk
Internal Audit preparation	Clerk

108/25 Councillors Reports

Clerk to report faded H Lines

Clerk to get quotes to repair play equipment

109/25 Date of the Next Meeting

Annual Parish meeting 20th April 2026

Annual Parish Council Meeting 18th May 2026

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Appendix 1: Financial Report

Expenditure (movement since 26.1.2026)

Voucher

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

79	9.2.26	L Rogers	February wages	641.45	LGA 1972
80	9.2.26	HMRC	February tax & NI	44.94	LGA 1972
81	9.2.26	L Rogers	January expenses	25.00	LGA 1972
82	24.2.26	CAS	Website hosting	66.00	LGA 1972
83	9.3.26	L Rogers	March wages	641.65	LGA 1972
84	9.3.26	HMRC	March tax & NI	44.74	LGA 1972
85	9.3.26	L Rogers	February expenses	25.00	LGA 1972
86	23.3.26	SCC	Streetlights	436.63	Highways Act 1980, s30
				<u>1,925.41</u>	

Still to pay £19,700 for Church Hill lights

Account	statement date	statement balance	Balance less outstanding payments	credit/transfers not shown
Community a/c	27.2.26	£7,983.15	£436.63	0.00
Business reserve	27.2.26	£56,523.08	£56,086.45	0.00
		£64,506.23	£64,069.78	

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

New bus 51 Hadleigh and Stowmarket

This five day a week, six services a day route is due to start April 13. The number and timing of services is limited because it is just one driver operating one bus going to and fro, and by law a single driver's shift is limited. The operator TMS apparently is prepared to flex the timings once the service is underway, within these limits, depending on demand.

Potential new pavement on High Street, Monks Eleigh

I have met highways officers together with your parish chairman on site to discuss the feasibility of this. The county council Highways (or its successor authority) will have to legally adopt a footway built alongside the road in order to maintain it and any contractor will need to be Highways accredited.

Five month road closure of Bildeston High Street

From mid June, Bildeston High Street will be closed until mid November while Anglian Water replace the main there. The main has not been upgraded since it was first put

in in the 1930s to replace the village pump and as a result there have been frequent closures in recent years due to leaks. The closures were the source of frequent complaints to me from residents outside the village asking why AW hasn't replaced the main. And as a result I wrote to them about four years ago asking them to do so. So this will be a massive inconvenience but it is a necessary evil. Both I and Bildeston PC have warned the TMS bus operator about this and asked Anglian Water to liaise with them. All businesses will be accessible on foot throughout the closure. Car drivers will be able to access the surgery from one direction or another throughout the closure, since the closure will be in a series of phases with the stretch closed moving up the High Street from south to north. This means that diversions will vary depending on the phase. AW are setting up a dedicated website to give you all the relevant info. I will let you know when it is up. They are reaching out to businesses that may be affected. AW have put two businesses in Bildeston – the shop and the Crown - in touch with their loss adjusters and compensation will be looked into, if they do make losses as a result of the roadworks.

County council elections back on

As you probably heard, last month the Government suddenly U-turned on its move to scrap county council elections and they are now back on with v little notice. This is owing to a legal challenge which the Government found it could not defend against, although before its lawyers saw the challenge the government was adamant that it had legal precedence on its side. All in all this strikes me as representative of the cavalier way local government changes are being pushed through.

Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works

Often road works have been delayed and extra costs added because people fail to heed the warning to move their cars beforehand. Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial towing away vehicles that have not been removed between March and June this year for about 19 specific planned resurfacing works. The council will a fortnight before place cards placed under windscreens and through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage warning that it will become a towing zone on the day. If there are cars parked on the road on the day, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner and as a last resort, vehicles will be moved. There is a £70 fine to get it back. Essex County Council has been doing this for about a decade and found that it has worked to cut costs of road works.

County Council chief executive quits with no new job to go to

On 13 February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be resigning after six years at the end of March. Because the council will be dissolved in May 2028, the administration will be appointing two existing directors – Andrew Cook (currently deputy CEO) and Mark Ash (currently director of local government reorganisation) – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence.

Appendix 3 – Notes from District Councillor Bryn Hurren

Firstly the news that the proposed mayoral elections scheduled for May 2026 have been postponed until May 2028 to allow the government time to make the necessary changes through parliamentary legislation, or maybe for other reasons.

Given that this is now the case, we should now revert back to normal schedule of County and PCC elections but as the government has also written to the County Council giving them an option of postponing them for a further two years, hence never again, it is quite understandable that sincere concern is being raised, especially by myself, seven years without a public vote is not democratic.

Second item that needs attention is the BDC call for sites, this is an attempt to match in with the national ambition to have the biggest housebuilding targets ever seen, we have at least moved on from the Build, Build, Build anything anywhere scenario of 5 -6 yrs ago to a more planned and focussed effort to put needed dwellings on semi brown field sites and as part of now recognised settlements. I will try quickly to explain tonight how and if it might effect Monks Eleigh.

Given that BMSDC is now likely to be in existence for more years than we thought, we have to now concentrate on setting a budget to take us through next year and possibly two more years after that, we have no usable reserves any more to use to prop up the general fund without going below the recommended limit to cover emergencies but we may well do that anyway. Good news is that the government has given all local councils a lump sum in recognition of the fact that we are now not able to carry out even statutory duties on existing budgets. This will help but expect an in line with inflation increase of around 2.9% from Babergh, along with a raising of parking charges. Coupled with much higher increases from everyone else we collect for, I expect the overall Council Tax to rise by about 5% overall. However we are determined to keep the Babergh charges to under £5.00. per week for band D property which we continue to do.

Also a gentle reminder that we are accepting late bids for our Tree for Live initiative. Applications for the 25/26 calendar year will be accepted up until the end of January 26.

Also as is now being publicised, the collection of rubbish and recycling materials will be changed to accept glass, food waste and other compostable materials as instructed by national government. This is due to happen in May/June this year and I will posting in BRN and all other channels from now on.

I have continued to promote progress on the Footway along the street past Old Chapel and am so pleased that at last it seems possible and even probable.

Also the resurrection and running of the existing Allotment site in an environmental and productive manner to produce food and support existing wildlife.

Appendix 4

C.R.Eames 03-01-2026

SID summary – 2025 for MEPC

SID - Speed Indicating Device

Summary table

	2018/19Average	2020/21Average	2022 Average	2023 Average	2024 Average	2025/H1 Average	2025/H2 Average
Average Speed	29.4 mph	29.4 mph	28.8 mph	28.4 mph	28.5 mph	28.5 mph	28.2 mph
85 % percentile	34.4 mph	34.5 mph	33.8 mph	33.2 mph	33.3 mph	33.2 mph	33.0 mph
% Speeders from Lavenham	14.2 %	15.2 %	11.7 %	8.0 %	8.1%	7.6%	7.8%
% Speeders from the East	8.2 %	8.5 %	5.7 %	4.9 %	5.4%	4.8%	4.2%
Average Vehicles per day in one direction (AADT)	1,852	1,440	1,673	1,855	1,811	1,841	1,790

Note: A speeder is someone travelling at 35 mph or more

- Busiest hours: morning 07:00 - 08:00, afternoon 16:00 - 17:00
- Speeds slightly reduced over time
- SID belongs exclusively to Monks Eleigh, delivered in March 2023