

# Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 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 ten members of the public

## **72/25 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Stephen Penney

## **73/25 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation**

Cllr Hodges planning item DC/2/00085 Land North of The Street and Cllr Bennett A1141 road

## **74/25 Minutes of the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

The minutes of the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

## **75/25 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay**

County Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the Councillors (appendix 2) and presented at the meeting. Flooding at Scripps Cross bridge was discussed Monks Eleigh own Polegate so are riparian owner to the north east of the bridge where some of the brick rubble is. It was agreed that the parish council will organise clearing the rubble from their side of the bridge to see if it will improve the situation. This will have to be done by hand in wellies but we can bring a digger down and use the bucket and trailer to lift and take away.

The introduction of permission for insulation for Listed Buildings was welcomed but it would be helpful if it could extend to more measures.

## **76/25 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 confirmed he is looking for grant funding to support the allotments plans. It was confirmed that some of the 5 houses on Friars View that were reserved for affordable purchase are now let. He agreed to check and advise the status of that run of houses and report.

He expressed his concerns about the planning application 'in principle' to develop land to the North of The Street and these were duly noted by Councillors.

## **77/25 Public Forum**

- Scripps Cross Bridge Flooding. James Cartlidge MP wrote to Highways and the EA. The response from Highways was a prevarication notwithstanding that their workforce created the problem. The Environment Agency replied that the riparian owners have a responsibility 10m either side of the bridge.

- Allotments: it was asked if can people begin to clear them. This was confirmed and the council confirmed it is planned to put animal proof fencing around them and help with rotovating and path building.
- Housing needs: The need for smaller houses to be built in the village for people to downsize to and to attract younger families to the village to support the shop, pub and other amenities was raised. This will help the village to thrive. It was confirmed this requirement is part of bringing through the Neighbourhood Plan and would be discussed later.

### **78/25 Planning Matters**

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE - DC/26/00085 Proposal: Application for Permission in Principle - Residential development (Use Class C3) of up to 3no dwellings at Land North of the Street, Monks Eleigh, IP7 7AU

The Councillors agreed to refuse the application for the following reasons:

- Not enough detail to make a decision, the request for 'in principle' seems to invite and authorise the potential for unsatisfactory options to be brought forward leading great concern about subsequent control of any development on the site,
- Road access to and from the site to the A1141 is difficult due to a steep ramp being needed and so many parked cars along the road hindering visibility,
- There are continuing problems with the sewage system in the village especially near the site which would exacerbate the issues
- It would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance the street scene in a Conservation area and adjacent to Monks Eleigh's oldest path – The Hamplings.
- The increased density would have a harmful impact on the heritage setting.

### **79/25 Finance**

- a. The Councillors approved the financial report and noted income received including VAT recovery. The councillors authorised payments since the last meeting to be made. (see appendix 1).
- b. The Chair provided a report to councillors of the performance against budget for the current year. The precept was £22,300 and we received additional income in the form of CIL and Grants of £37,950 together with VAT rebates of £6,400. – we would normally expect this to be c.£1,000 so the uplift is due to the project work we have done. Our total income was therefore £64,000 including some minor sundries. The core budget, excluding projects, was £25,793 so there was a planned deficit of c. £2,500 and actual expenditure with projections to the yearend included is projected to be £25,400. This was a planned deficit less than budget based on our strong cash position.
- c. Councillors approved the Budget at £64,475 with an underlying core expenditure of £29,475 but noted that the timing of projects was not certain to fall in the coming year.
- d. The Councillors noted that the increase of 3.3% in the tax base for the village and approved the Precept at £23,036 with a planned core deficit of c.£6,000. This means that parishioners will not pay more for the PC by household vs the current year (+/- a few pence). The precept demand was duly signed.

- e. The Clerk was asked to investigate our Section 137 compliance before the audit.
- f. Babergh are changing waste collection and will end bottle recycling payments in April. They will make a final payment of £183 based on the average of the previous three years actual payments. The glass recycling in the village will become a doorstep collection from April.

#### **80/25 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.
- b. **Fence to rear of Recreation Field** – It was agreed to replace the wire fence at the rear of the field and to insert a gap so footballs can be retrieved without damage to the fence. Only one quote had been received to consider so clerk to obtain at least one further quote
- c. **Lighting for MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)**– The Councillors were informed that a motion sensitive security light at the end of the village hall will not provide sufficient lighting without disturbance to the neighbours. The village hall committee has offered to have a solar powered light on the end of the hall to light the path to the MUGA and a corner of it. It was agreed that the Parish council would pay the cost of this installation along with whatever is concluded is best for the MUGA. It was agree to get quotes for 2 or 4 x 15ft high posts with lights on.
- d. **Allotments** – The Councillors agreed to obtain a further quotes to put in suitable fencing and pathways. Councillors also agreed to pay the £413 charge for Anglia Water to investigate and quote to install a water supply. It was agreed that provision of a shed(s) will be for the allotment holders to sources and fund.
- e. **Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road; Junction of Church Hill and The Street** – The meeting was advised that Babergh has given useful and positive pre-planning advice which has added to the process that must be worked. The next step is to (1) draw up complete drawings and specs and obtain quotes (2) discuss the proposals with the URC and other interested parties including Highways and finalise overall budget (3) consult with archaeology and other parties that will influence planning (4) full planning (5) do the work.
- f. **Brett Valley Digi Bus** – There has been a big increase in bus funding from central government. This project is still on the starting grid. However, Suffolk County Council are raising issues about personal data and data protection for the simulation phase; we think this is not correct as we will use fictitious locations to see if the system can work as intended. Cllr Braithwaite to follow up.
- g. **The Causeway**– The path continues worked well during the recent heavy rain. It did flood briefly but cleared very quickly leaving some debris which needs to be cleared. Cllr Braithwaite to check. The bridge on the Causeway needs to be painted – an outstanding point on the action list.

- h. Footpath lighting on Church Walk** –SCC Street Lighting plan to complete the work by the end of March and will provide a start date soon. Warning bollards have been placed over the holes left for the lights as a safety precaution.
- i. Speed Watch Team Update** – Mike Evans has taken over from Chris Eames. The meeting thanked Chris for all his work. Mike is looking for two additional volunteers. AB agreed to advertise on Facebook. It was noted that the average speeds and volumes of traffic through the village are quite low and stable. It was noted that the Parish Council also has data from Back Lane from a recent traffic survey – see appendix 4 for the annual data
- j. Lower Byfield Path** – The path is very uneven where tree roots have pushed up the path. It does not appear to be a Suffolk County Council path. The Parish Council will look at options for the path.

**81/25 People and Place Plan > Neighbourhood Plan** – It was noted that we had previously agreed to upgrade the People and Place Plan to a fuller Neighbourhood plan. AB has offered to lead this process. Part of that is completing a housing needs survey. Councillors agreed to carry out this which Strutt and Parker have offered to fund. It was proposed and agreed that the Council want to develop a time line for the Neighbourhood Plan before meeting with Strutt & Parker to confirm the approach. Cllr Hurren suggested employing professional help for the Neighbourhood Plan. Clerk to investigate.

**82/25 Annual Parish Meeting** – This is on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026. We will plan for it at the 23 March meeting.

**83/25 Annual Litter Pick** – This is on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March. Clerk to ask Patti Derry if she is willing to organise it. Clerk to liaise with Babergh about equipment and collection of the sacks.

**84/25 Action List Review**

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

| Action   | Who                         |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Neighbourhood Plan – to continue   | Cllrs Braithwaite / Forrest |
| Allotments water/fencing – quotes for work   | Cllr Braithwaite/Clerk      |
| 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                  |
| Lights for MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) - quotes                    | Clerk                  |
| Millenium Green – check legal documents                            | Clerk                  |
| Scripps Cross Bridge   | Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite |
| Speedwatch Team – advertise for 2 volunteers                       | Cllr Braithwaite       |
| Lower Byefield Path – uneven surface – review options and propose  | Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite |
| Annual Litter Pick – ask Patti Derry                               | Clerk                  |
| Annual Parish Meeting 20.4.26 arrangements                         | Clerk/Cllr Braithwaite |

### **85/25 Councillors Reports**

First Responder – to add to March meeting agenda for discussion  
 30MPH Sign near Foysters is very faded – Cllr Forrest to report to Highways  
 Recreation Field Self Watering pipes – agreed to remove

### **86/25 Date of the Next Meeting**

Parish Council meeting 23rd March 2026

The meeting closed at 9.45pm



<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/> **Sustainable Travel** The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of this could include new pavements, road crossings, or better surfacing of off-road footpaths/bridleways. **20mph limits** The county's cabinet on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Jan approved a new set of rules over 20mph limits, which should make it easier for communities to get approval for them. The only criterion which must now be met is the level of average speed. Average speeds below **28mph** – signs only scheme allowed. Average **speed 28 – 32mph** – gateway signing and “traffic calming throughout the area” though this may not mean anything expensive, just more signs and lines. **Above 32mph** road humps, cushions, buildouts, chicanes required. However communities must still fund the schemes once they are approved. And the rules have not been simplified for speed limit reductions to anything higher than 20mph (eg 60mph down to 40mph). There is also an added requirement for parish councils to show that communities want the scheme. **County elections scheduled for this May will be cancelled (probably)** On 12 January, the county council held an egm to debate whether to delay county council elections, due this May, for the second year running. I and my political group (Green, LibDem, independent) spoke against delaying the election. The Conservatives claimed they were not making a decision but they voted to write to the minister to say they had capacity issues. The minister has responded to say that Suffolk County Council elections would be “postponed”. In reality this means cancelled for good since the Government will legislate to cancel the county council elections altogether since the county will be dissolved in May 2028. There is a legal challenge to this decision which will be heard in February but it is not generally considered likely that it will succeed. The new election timetable (subject to no more last minute Government decisions) will be:

**May 2027** “shadow” unitary council elections

**May 2028** Norfolk/Suffolk Mayor elections – Suffolk County and Babergh District dissolved, unitary councils start.

### **More Warm Homes Grants funding**

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly for £1.38million in Warm Homes Local Grant funding secured at the end of November last year as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026. It is only available to those with household income at or below £36k pa. and homes with an EPC below C. (you can find this out when you apply). You can find out more and apply using this link: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/> **Winter Warmth Packs** In addition, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk council have teamed up to provide Winter Warmth Packs to help vulnerable residents stay warm and healthy at home even if they are struggling with rising living costs. Referrals are via community groups, food banks, GP surgeries or hospitals and each pack includes items such as thermal hats, gloves, blankets and gilets, tailored as necessary – for example, children's winter coats can be included. Although the Warm Homes Healthy People programme is delivered by East Suffolk Council, it is a county-wide programme.

### **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<br>Average | 2023<br>Average | 2024<br>Average | 2025/H1<br>Average | 2025/H2<br>Average |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Average Speed</b>                                    | 29.4 mph       | 29.4 mph       | 28.8 mph        | 28.4 mph        | 28.5 mph        | 28.5 mph           | 28.2 mph           |
| <b>85 % percentile</b>                                  | 34.4 mph       | 34.5 mph       | 33.8 mph        | 33.2 mph        | 33.3 mph        | 33.2 mph           | 33.0 mph           |
| <b>% Speeders from Lavenham</b>                         | 14.2 %         | 15.2 %         | 11.7 %          | 8.0 %           | 8.1%            | 7.6%               | 7.8%               |
| <b>% Speeders from the East</b>                         | 8.2 %          | 8.5 %          | 5.7 %           | 4.9 %           | 5.4%            | 4.8%               | 4.2%               |
| <b>Average Vehicles per day in one direction (AADT)</b> | 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