

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 27th July 2026
at the Village Hall, Church Hill, Monks Eleigh at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors Alan Braithwaite (Chairman), James Hodges, Rupert Perry and John Brooks (co-opted at this meeting). County Councillor Robert Lindsay and District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Attending: Amber Allen (Clerk) and 20 members of the public

16/26 Apologies for Absence - Angela Forrest and Sarah Bennet

17/26 Appointment of Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer – the council confirmed the appointment of Amber Allen as Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

18/26 Co-Opt a Councillor – Cllr John Brooks was unanimously co-opted to the council and duly signed the declaration of acceptance

19/26 Declaration of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Braithwaite declared an interest regarding donations to St. Peter's Church and to the Bildeston Community Support where he is Trustee

20/26 Minutes of the meetings held on 11th May 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2026 were approved by the councillors and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

21/26 Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

County Councillor Lindsay's report was circulated to the councillors and summarised by him for the meeting (appendix 2). Key points for the village are traffic issues resulting from the closure of Bildeston High Street and additional funding for buses. There has been trouble with traffic on Highlands Road and through Kettlebaston, with some accidents, but the hope is that it is settling down now. He will keep a watching brief.

22/26 Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

District Councillor Hurren's report was circulated to the councillors and summarised by him for the meeting (appendix 3). Key points to note are:

- The waste bin segregation and collection has been problematic in some places but Monks Eleigh seems to have transitioned successfully. If anyone still has any issues – please shout!
- Funding is available to support a Neighbourhood Plan development – so we need to get our application in asap

- Bryn is committed to supporting the Parish on our various projects and there is quite a lot of grant funding coming through – MEPC was encouraged to apply

23/26 Public Forum

District Cllr Hurren followed up his report by referencing the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan for Monks Eleigh. Cllr Braithwaite confirmed that this was in development and on the agenda. District Cllr Hurren commented that the proposed A1141 footpath and traffic calming measures should be mentioned within the plan.

There was further discussion of possible future development in the village. District Cllr Hurren made it clear that nothing can be ruled out but if the Neighbourhood Plan includes affordable housing options, then this might allow preference to be given to sites on the outskirts of the village. Cllr Hodges noted that the Parish Council had limited influence on development unless we have a Neighbourhood Plan. District Cllr Hurren drew attention to the funding available for the appointment of a consultant.

It was confirmed that the recent Flooding Roundtable organised by SCC was attended by a representative of the community on Coombs Hill with concerns about flooding at Scripps Cross Bridge. There is hope that there will be further communication on this issue from both Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency as they have now engaged fully on this problem. It was made clear that there must be no entry/access into the river by the community on our own initiative.

A representative from the Millenium Green Trust attended to make a case for the speedy transfer of the trust to the parish council. There are now only three trustees with an average age of 80 and all three will be stepping down in November 2026. The Millenium Green Trust wanted to thank the parish council for past contributions. The trustees would fully support the adoption of a corporate trusteeship by the parish council.

A proposal was put forward for an allocated dog park in the village, with a flat, fenced area available for dog recreation.

It was mentioned that the requirement for the parish council to make support payments towards the post office has not yet materialised. The meeting was reminded that the arrangement had been for £50 a week to be paid in support. This equates to £2600 annually and was to be shared as £1100 contributed by the shop and £1500 contributed by the parish council. It was noted that this would be addressed later on in the agenda.

24/26 Planning Matters

- a. The Councillors agreed to make no objection to DC/26/00551 Erection of double stable and tack room, machine store & feed store following demolition of existing stable block at Griggs Meadow, Brent Eleigh Road

- b. The Councillors agreed to make no objection DC/26/01579 Application for Listed Building Consent. Re-tiling roof of central range, internal and external repairs to north elevation, repainting exterior walls and fenestration at The Old Forge, The Street, Monks Eleigh, IP7 7AU
- c. Update was given on 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. It was noted that a decision on this application has been delayed for reasons that are not known. It will be subject to a full committee hearing but no date has been confirmed.

25/26 Finance

- a. The Councillors received the financial report and noted income received
- b. The Councillors authorised payments made and to be made since the last meeting
- c. The Councillors received and approved the Internal Audit 2025/26
- d. The Councillors approved the appointment of Dave Crimmin as Internal Auditor 2026/27
- e. The Councillors considered support to local organisations and agreed a list of beneficiaries. £3500 in contributions was agreed (as below). £1300 remains as reserve.

MESCAL (The Shop)	£500	This gift will be made with the assurance that if the PO requires support, we will consider additional grants
Go Start Bus	£1000	The aim is to keep this limited service working as a platform for the Digibus project
Village Hall		The village hall is now self-sustaining so this support can be paused. The Parish Council agreed to pay for the hire of the VH in future as a compensation for this pause.
Sudbury CAB		Support paused with the possibility of reinstatement at a later date
Kernos		Support paused with the possibility of reinstatement at a later date
Bildeston Foodbank	£1000	It was noted that BCSG currently helps five families in Monks Eleigh
St Peters Church	£1000	The church uses this funding to maintain the churchyard in its excellent condition

26/26 Updates / decisions on current topics

- a. **Flooding at Scrips Cross Bridge** – an update was given and minuted under the public forum

- b. **Flood Lights for MUGA** – Cllr Braithwaite proposed the use of battery operated, fence fixed lights on a 30-minute timer. Clerk to do further research and follow up at the next meeting. It was stated by District Cllr Hurren that he has a locality budget of £2000 to be shared between six parishes that might allow for a sum up to £350 to be used towards this cost.
- c. **Allotments** – we cannot press on with this till we have a new lease. This has been requested repeatedly from SP Farms. Cllr Braithwaite to chase.
- d. **Footpath and traffic calming on A1141 Brent Eleigh Road; Junction of Church Hill and The Street** – The council to review correspondence regarding the Highways boundary search and conditions brought to our attention by Cllr Lindsay. The aim is to bring forward a detailed proposal for our next meeting.
- e. **Pathway between 3 and 4 The Street** – It was agreed that there was deterioration of the paint on the telephone box and that the vegetation is overgrown on footpaths right along the street and in need of management. Clerk to get quotes
- f. **Millennium Green**
 - a. the council agreed in principle to the adoption of a Corporate Trusteeship. Cllr Hodges to review the documents provided by the clerk and advise further.
 - b. The Council awaits a quote for Millenium Green to be added to the grass cutting rota for 2027
 - c. The payment has already been made for the dog bins on Millennium Green for this year with no rebate in prospect. Removal of the bins to be arranged by the clerk before the end of the year and the removal registered with Babergh District Council.
 - d. The sale of the ride on mower owned jointly by the Parish Council and the Millennium Green Trust will be considered and actioned after the mowing season and the transition to a corporate trust.
- g. **Polegate Field** – the council agreed to pay for gates (main entry and a footpath gate) estimated at £650. These will be installed by the tenants who will also put electric fencing in place when livestock are in the field to segregate them from walkers. There is currently £450 in the Polegate Trust that can be used towards this expenditure.
- h. **Grass Cutting** – the Council agreed the risk assessment for grass cutting volunteers and it was signed by Cllr Braithwaite. A quote was received for strimming the footpath between Mill Lane and Back Lane. The council would agree to twice yearly strimming. Clerk to follow up.
- i. **Painting of Causeway Bridge** – the council agreed the risk assessment for painting volunteers and it was signed by Cllr Braithwaite. This work will proceed in the next two weeks.

- j. **First Responder initiative** – the Council had previously agreed a £600 contribution would be made to the First Responder at Chelsworth towards a defibrillator kit to be combined with contributions from surrounding villages. Clerk to follow up on the status of this arrangement
- k. **Village Communications** – positive feedback was noted regarding the inclusion of the council Newsletter in Roundabout. It will be repeated in November/December.

27/26 Policies / Controls / Governance

- a. **Neighbourhood Plan** – Cllr Braithwaite and the Clerk have not yet received the Housing Needs Survey from Community Action Suffolk in spite of the fact that it has been completed. They will continue to chase. This is the crucial building block to preparing the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Braithwaite will be leading the effort through the autumn and Cllr Brooks agreed to assist. The funding support was noted and will be applied for.
- b. **Babergh Joint Local Plan Survey** – Cllr Braithwaite responded to this online questionnaire which was mostly not contentious but he did not get back the completed form from the system. The survey closes this week and we will report feedback.

28/26 Action List Review

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

Action	Who
Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Braithwaite, Cllr Perry and Cllr Brooks to continue to work on this and look at available funding	Cllrs Braithwaite/Perry/Brooks
Allotments lease – to be chased	Cllr Braithwaite
Traffic problems and pavement along A1141 – to review the response from the Highways Boundary Search	Cllrs Bennett/Braithwaite
Asset register update on website – Clerk to organize a date for a team to walk the village and then update	Cllrs Braithwaite, Brooks and Clerk
Progress the Brett Valley Digibus Project	Cllr Braithwaite
Millenium Green – check legal documents and confirm handover arrangements	Cllr Hodges
Speedwatch Team – advertise for 2 volunteers – put in round robin	Cllr Braithwaite
Report faded H lines	Clerk
Floodlights for MUGA – proposed lighting option to be researched and costed	Clerk
Pathway between 3 and 4 The Street – Clerk to get quotes for maintenance	Clerk

14/25 Councillors Reports

Complaints have been received about cycling on The Causeway

15/25 Date of the Next Meeting

Parish Council Meeting 28th September 2026

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

MONKS ELEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REPORT 27 JULY 2026

Schedule of Payments & Receipts from 11 May 2026

Income Received since 11.5.2026

08.6.26	Barclays	Interest	113.10
			<u>113.10</u>

Expenditure (movement since 11.5.2026)

Schedule of verified invoices agreed for payment

Voucher					
13.00	12.5.26	Ed Seeley Gardening	April grass cutting Inv.0182	310.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10
14.00	12.5.26	A Braithwaite	Dog signs	15.98	Public Health Act 1875, s.164
15.00	20.5.2026	Blackthorn	MG grass cutting		Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10
16.00	17.6.2026	Landscapes	Inv.1838	180.00	
17.00	23.6.26	Playquip UK Ltd	Zip-line service	456.00	LGA (MP) 1976, s.19
18.00	23.6.26	Ed Seeley Gardening	May grass cutting Inv. 0236	310.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10
19.00	23.6.26	L Rogers	June wages LR	648.85	LGA 1972, s.111
20.00	23.6.26	L Rogers	June expenses LR	68.90	LGA 1972, s.111
21.00	23.6.26	HMRC	Tax & NI June LR	37.50	LGA 1972, s.111
22.00	23.7.26	A Allen	External hard drive	29.70	LGA 1972, s.111
23.00	23.7.26	A Allen	June wages AA	522.93	LGA 1972, s.111
		HMRC	Tax & NI June AA	53.79	LGA 1972, s.111
				<u>2,633.65</u>	
		Not included on bank statement			
24	20.7.26	Ed Seeley Gardening	June grass cutting Inv. 0294	310.00	Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9-10
25	20.7.26	CAS	Domain name and email	54.50	LGA 1972, s.142
26	20.7.26	GH Bullard & Associates	Highways consultancy	401.04	Highways Act 1980, s.274A
27	20.7.26	Babergh District Council	Bin emptying Expenses, printing and paint	1,036.80	Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6
28	20.7.26	A Braithwaite	Tax & NI July AA	81.77	LGA 1972, s.142
29	20.7.26	HMRC	July wages AA	16.25	LGA 1972, s.111
30	20.7.26	A Allen	Clerk mobile phone	525.33	LGA 1972, s.111
31	20.7.26	A Allen	Annual Play Inspection Expenses June and July AA	89.99	LGA 1972, s.111
32	24.7.26	Babergh District Council		78.64	LGA 1972, s.111
33	24.7.26	A Allen	Data Protection Fee	88.90	LGA 1972, s.111
34	27.7.26	ICO		47.00	Lga 1972, s.111
				<u>2,730.22</u>	

Account		statement date	statement balance	Balance less outstanding payments	credit/transfers not shown
Community a/c		30.6.26	£9,995.17	£7,264.95	0.00
Business reserve		30.6.26	£33,779.27	£33,779.27	0.00
			<u>£43,774.44</u>	<u>£41,044.22</u>	

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 £450 (2026-2027 inc.) and is to be used solely for maintenance of the ground
£30 received 13.4.2026

Appendix 2: Report from County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Monks Eleigh Parish report from Robert Lindsay County councillor 27.7.26

Bildeston Road closure

The closure was delayed a fortnight because there was a gas leak elsewhere and the High Street was required as a diversion. However it is now underway and in the second phase. As you know following a meeting I arranged with PC chairs (including Monks Eleigh), Anglian Water and Highways, AW agreed to erect the large signs at all the potential entrances to potential short cuts, such as Highland Road, warning that these were not diversions.

In the initial days there were still some incidents and accidents but I hope these will reduce as people get used to the need to drive ultra cautiously and slowly on these routes and lorry drivers avoid them.

The 51 bus has split into two services for the duration of the closure, with one bus running all the way between Hadleigh and Stowmarket but via Needham Market, cutting out Hitcham and Bildeston and one bus shuttling between Bildeston and Stowmarket.

Melting Roads, heatwave and climate change

Parts of over 20 Suffolk roads melted during the heatwave we saw at the end of June and in recent days in July. Highways had to use gritters with granite chips instead of salt to try to repair them but the A143 between Bury and Diss closed for about a week and will need further repairs later this summer. At this stage we do not know what the extra cost implications are of these needed repairs.

Reform cancel climate emergency

In 2019 I successfully seconded a Green motion to declare a climate emergency and produce an action plan to reduce the council's carbon emissions. It was approved unanimously. As a direct consequence of that, the council has come up with measures – more efficient heating systems, solar panels, batteries, electrifying the car fleet – that now save the council £3.9m a year. At the full county council meeting this month, Reform councillors proposed a motion to cancel the climate emergency. The Conservatives amended it to recognize that the climate was changing, but it did not recognize that there was anything we could do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The motion is similar to ones Reform, who obtain two thirds of their funding from wealthy fossil fuel interests, have passed in several authorities they control. This motion was passed with the support of Reform and Conservative votes, though the other parties voted against.

Buses

189 out of 490 parishes in Suffolk do not have a commuter bus. Yet there is now funding for bus services available from Government.

So at the same meeting I proposed a motion to draw up a costed plan for a minimum level of bus service to every parish in Suffolk. But this was voted down by Reform. Meanwhile the county has won £564,000 funding from Government to fund a feasibility study into Suffolk (or Suffolk and Norfolk) running their own bus service using franchising. Franchising works by the council setting fares and routes and paying bus companies to provide the buses and drivers. It would allow the council to use profits from the major routes to subsidise the more rural ones. Franchising in London and Manchester has driven bus passenger growth by over a third in the first few years.

Bus Fare caps and free for kids offers

For those places that do have a bus, the Government has announced a £2 cap on the fare from January (currently it's a £3 cap) but it is voluntary for the bus companies and not all Suffolk companies had taken up the £3 cap, though Konect has. In August the Government is offering to fund bus companies offering free fares to children between 5 and 15. At this stage it is thought likely Konect will take this up. But they are waiting to hear how much funding they get.

Reform launch £500k judicial review of three unitary decision

The county's new leader Michael Hadwen has launched a judicial review of the Government decision to create three unitaries. The administration says this is "unlikely to cost more than £500,000".

Cllr Hadwen says he doesn't want any change at all and his aim is to retain the districts and Suffolk county councils. He says he has ordered officers to continue working with district councils in case his legal challenge fails. However, the distraction this case causes to councillors and officers will not ease the creation of unitaries if his challenge does fail.

£19m more agreed for creating more local SEND places

The cabinet on Tuesday 14 July agreed proposals to spend £18.9m of High Needs Provision Capital Funding received from the government on increasing the number of specialist education placements in the county for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – 248 new places will be created in both mainstream and specialist schools

Budget Outturn for 2025-26 Financial Year

Cabinet on 14 July also reviewed the council's financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2026. The council overspent last year by £15m overall, a figure which the council will need to take from its reserves to balance the books. The main areas of overspend for the council are in Care Purchasing for Adult Social Care, and Children in Care placements.

Public Consultation on Cuts to Healthy Child Service

The county has begun a public consultation on proposed cuts to its Healthy Child Service, which is provided by the council's Public Health team. They want to cease providing support to parents under the age of 21 after they have a and axe the Community Staff Nurse role from Health Visiting teams. The consultation runs until 18 September, with a decision likely to be made at Cabinet after that.

You can read through the proposals and respond to the consultation here:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/healthy-child-services-consultations>

Appendix 3: Report from District Cllr Bryn Hurren

Report for Monks Eleigh PC 27th July 2026.From Cllr Bryn Hurren.

Firstly the only place to start is with the bins, the bins. Whilst most of the delivery has gone well and we have now achieved 98% delivery rate, we have had massive failings in Box Vale at Groton and Edwardstone which has caused me great angst and a very short temper this morning. We have employed a separate firm to deliver the bins for us on a separate fixed contract and have been let down very badly in this instance. I think I have a handle on it all now, if you know of anyone who has not received the new allocated recycling bins and the correct food containers. Please let me know. Monks Eleigh and Brent Eleigh have come of quite well, with a near complete transition. Everybody should now have a black bin with a green lid, not a black bin with a blue lid.

Our Joint Local Plan is in the news again, along with the call for sites initiative, which could be controversial as things move on into the autumn, with increased housing numbers needed to fit the higher demands from the government. We now have the new initiative from our PM to end rough sleeping, build more homes for those that actually need them and increase housing stock, possibly by allowing councils to build more housing. This would be a very welcome news but the money has to follow to enable this to happen.

Since I last saw you, BMS has put money aside to allow villages to bid for funds to carry out full or partial Neighbourhood Plans, so now would be a good time to think about that If monks Eleigh were inclined to shore up the village defences a bit. Your Call.

Babergh mid Suffolk recently grant aided £250,000 towards improvements at Sudbury bus Station, all part of our commitment to public transport throughout our rural area. This will continue throughout and into our new existence after unitary authorities.

Despite rumours and counter claims, the LGR process is still running to a timetable and until we hear anything to the contrary or courts make a ruling, my council will keep up the pace on that.

In my wider role as your representative on Babergh DC, I have today spent 6 hours chairing the Joint Audit and Standards committee, while no significant changes were made to our financial direction, it is worth noting that we do seem to have more grant aided initiatives coming our way like working together with neighbouring authorities to achieve walking and cycling infrastructure plans along with community energy and sustainable travel initiatives. These are all woven now into our budgets to make more of a meaningful commentary. Along with promises of finance to follow.

I remain fully committed to projects throughout Monks Eleigh, such as the footway along the street, the allotments and the river clearance at Scripscross Bridge.

We are now in the throes of a hosepipe ban which is a minor inconvenience but praying for rain now, for the sugar beet but not on the hay crop or standing corn.

I will try to be with you by 7.30.pm. but otherwise start without me and I will get there soonest. Stay Cool.

Kind Regards. Bryn.