

# Minutes of Great Melton's Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 12 May 2025 at 7pm, held at Great Melton Village Hall

---

Parish Councillors present: Bruce Fleming (Chair), Ian Sears (Vice Chair), Mary Barnard, Peter Markham and Mandy Hanby. Also present: Anita Rose (Parish Clerk), Margaret Dewsbury (District and County Councillor), Darren Wood (representing Harrison Civils / Norfolk Rivers Consortium). 14 members of the public.

## 1. **Welcome**

Bruce Fleming, Chair of the Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received for Cllr Richardson.

## 3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2024**

The minutes of the 2024 meeting were signed by the meeting Chair as a correct record without amendment.

## 4. **Darren Wood from Harrison Civils / Norfolk Rivers Consortium gave a presentation on the details of a sewage treatment plant installation scheme in Norfolk**

Mr. Wood introduced himself and outlined the scheme's purpose and the benefits for countryside, villages and towns.

He explained that under Nutrient Neutrality, the septic tank replacement scheme aims to minimise further pollution of Norfolk rivers by exploiting a mechanism under which developers secure planning permission based on their purchase of environmental credits to offset the effects of their developments - thereby providing the source of funding for the scheme. The installation is free for homeowners and involves three parties: the homeowner, developer, and installer. The developer effectively funds the scheme, which is conducted under the auspices of Natural England and the Local Planning Authority.

From day one, the sewage treatment plant will be owned by the applicant, who is contractually obliged to assume responsibility for maintaining the plant in accordance with a set schedule. The plant structure is guaranteed for 15 years, while parts are covered for 3 years. For the first two years after installation, the installer covers servicing costs.

The annual operating cost of a treatment plant for an average property is approximately £65 (power to a compressor) and £150 for yearly servicing. The plant needs to be emptied every 2-3 years, and the annual service is required to maintain the manufacturer's guarantee. This scheme is only available for residential properties, including rental properties (with landlord approval). The property must also be registered with Land Registry to qualify.

Mr. Wood detailed the process from survey to installation, outlining three stages: 1) Survey, 2) Technical suitability, and 3) Signing of Contract. He noted that if the homeowner changes their mind after stage 3, they will be responsible for legal fees of £3,000 + VAT.

He advised anyone interested to sign up and register for the scheme as soon as possible.

**5. Chairman's report on the Council's past year**  
**Chairman Bruce Fleming report 2024 - 25**

Great Melton Parish Council is pleased to report a year marked by success in respect of persistent efforts to address speeding through the village and initiatives to enhance the local environment, as well as a positive financial outturn and sustained satisfactory governance - further details to follow.

At the Annual Parish Council meeting of May 2024, Parish Councillors were delighted to welcome Cllr Mandy Hanby to GMPC following her co-option, thus filling the vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr Liesl Richardson.

In November, the Parish Council received notice of the resignation of Cllr Michelle Collins. Great Melton Parish Council (GMPC) extends grateful thanks to Mrs. Collins for her valued contribution to the Parish Council over the past 3 years - in particular, for her expertise on legal matters. However, I am pleased to report that Mrs. Collins remains ready to assist the Parish Council with any legal issues, on an informal basis, which is greatly appreciated.

The resulting vacancy on the Council has been advertised. In accordance with due process, the vacancy may be filled by co-option and all expressions of interest in the opportunity to contribute to the community in this way, will be most welcome.

In summary, the principal business of the Parish Council over the past year, was as follows:

**Meetings**

GMPC convened meetings in May (comprising the Annual Parish Meeting, which included an update on the Hornsea 3 onshore cable installation project and a presentation by Mr. Rob Hartley, Manager of Great Melton Farms, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting), September and December of 2024 and March 2025. As is customary, members of the public were welcome to attend. The Minutes of the meetings are available for review at the website of GMPC and a summary report is published in the monthly parish magazine, 'Good News' and the 'Hethersett Herald' (both accessible online), following each meeting.

**Planning**

GMPC responded as a consultee to two planning applications as well as one amended application, originally submitted in 2022.

The Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Wind Farm projects, under the Equinor umbrella, were granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) in April 2024. The current focus of the projects is the discharge of the numerous planning conditions and the preparation of construction and operational details. Initial archaeological surveys were completed last year, with a further two phases of surveys expected to follow.

The timing of the onshore cable route works has yet to be confirmed; however, the onshore installations of both projects will be conducted simultaneously, despite separate ownerships. The possible coincidence of this project with the Hornsea 3 project, A47 dualling and Thickthorn improvements, is likely to have an impact on the village, a situation of which the Parish Council is acutely aware and has highlighted repeatedly in its representations to Highways at Norfolk County Council.

### **Highways**

GMPC continues to advocate for safer roads in Great Melton, particularly given the impact of the various aforementioned infrastructure projects and housing developments in neighbouring areas. Having consulted with residents of the village and received unanimous support for reduced speed limits from respondents, the submission of an application to Highways, Norfolk County Council for speed restrictions on certain routes, followed. Confirmation of the success of this application was finally received in November 2024 and a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for a 30mph limit through the village centre has been drafted.

The response of the Parish Council to the TRO has been sought and as a result, an extension to the zone of restriction has been granted to cover the section of highway from immediately north of the secondary access to the cricket ground. The limit applicable to this section will be 40mph. A full advertisement and public consultation process will follow in due course.

### **Biodiversity**

In terms of efforts to protect and promote the biodiversity of the village, GMPC continues to organise an annual litter pick and the contributions of fellow councillors and participating residents, are greatly appreciated. This year's event surpassed all previous litter picks in terms of support, and the tea and cake which followed provided an excellent opportunity to nurture the spirit of the community as all gathered for convivial chat and fellowship.

A successful application for a 'Clean Up and Bloom' grant of £300 awarded by South Norfolk Council (SNC) was used to fund the purchase of four oak barrels and plants to provide added interest and colour adjacent to the village sign as well as the bench adjacent to the Parish Council notice board, with benefit for biodiversity, the butterflies and the bees.

GMPC also recognises the valuable contribution to biodiversity afforded by the farm businesses based in the village and welcomes the opportunity to engage with them in this respect.

### **Grants**

GMPC was pleased to renew its annual grant in favour of Great Melton Parochial Church Council towards the maintenance of the churchyard, as well as that for the wreath laid at the War Memorial on Remembrance Day.

### **Finance**

The finances of the Parish Council will be summarised by the Parish Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The increase in the precept levied by the Parish Council was limited to 3.01% for 2025-26, following the unwelcome substantial increase in 2024-25. The precept for a Band D rated home will therefore be £16.11 for this financial year.

### **Governance and Audit**

The annual internal audit of GMPC resulted in a very satisfactory report, with an assessment that the governance procedures and accounting records are of a very high standard and that the Parish Council continues to fully discharge its legal and statutory duties.

As the income and expenditure of GMPC amounts to less than £25,000, external audit is not mandatory.

### **Representative Forums and Training**

GMPC continues to be represented as often as possible at monthly Town and Parish Council Forums (convened online by South Norfolk and Broadland Councils) and at the A47 / Norwich Western Link Local Liaison Group meetings.

Town and Parish Council Summits convened in person have also become a more frequent fixture of recent times given the focus on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, as a result of which, the role of Parish Councils is likely to expand.

### **Working Groups**

It is several years since GMPC established a Highways Working Group, comprising Peter Markham, Ian Sears and myself, which has focused on concerns regarding the speed of through traffic, accident black spots, road markings, standing water in flood prone areas and the condition of the War Memorial precinct.

Twelve months ago, it was agreed that a Project Working Group should be established. Its membership comprises Mary Barnard, Mandy Hanby and Ian Sears. Their first mission was the acquisition and establishment of the aforementioned planted oak barrels, etc, following the grant award.

The Project Group will continue to coordinate the annual litter pick but also welcomes any and all ideas for ways in which the village environment and community engagement may be enhanced and fostered.

The most recent endeavour of the group was rewarded by the late notification of a successful application for a grant of £300 from South Norfolk Council towards a memorable VE Day 80 celebration at the Village Hall on Bank Holiday Monday, last week. Besides sharing hearty chat, banter, party food and cake to the accompaniment of many old favourite swing tunes of the time, those present were treated to the poignant stories and memories of life in war-time Norfolk by those in a position to remember that period or the times following the end of hostilities. All present were very appreciative of the contributions of David Richardson, Joe Huckle, Eileen Pennington and Roger Symonds to the enjoyment of the occasion.

### **Village History**

GMPC is familiar with the activities of the Great Melton History Group and records of historical interest pertaining to the village, and the church. Liaison with the custodians of these records and artefacts will be fostered by the Parish Council in order to ensure that items of interest are preserved in accordance with the custodians' wishes, in an appropriate form and setting.

### **Thanks**

GMPC extends its appreciation and grateful thanks to Mrs. Margaret Dewsbury, our County and District Councillor, who loyally attends meetings of GMPC whenever she is able to, providing insights and updates from both Councils, frequently correcting misapprehensions and responding to questions from Parish Councillors.

GMPC wishes to thank members of the Great Melton community who contribute in an undemonstrative way, quietly helping in the background to improve and nurture our shared environment for the benefit and pleasure of all.

GMPC is very grateful to the Village Hall Committee and Great Melton Cricket Club for their continued stewardship of the Village Hall - and to the latter for the installation of mobile broadband, facilitating internet connectivity on site.

I am most thankful and grateful for the support and counsel of the Parish Clerk, Mrs. Anita Rose, in respect of the many and varied matters of procedure and process, and for her due diligence as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Parish Council.

Finally, thank you to my colleague Parish Councillors for their hard work and commitment to the various activities and requirements of the role over this past year - the Council is fortunate to be able to call upon a wide range of expertise and experience and I am very grateful to each of them.

#### **6. Clerk's report from Anita Rose on the Council's finances for 2024-25**

The Parish Clerk gave a summary of the finances, the full report can be viewed on the website, Appendix 1.

#### **Receipts and Payments Summary**

|                                         |            |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| Balance brought forward from April 2024 | £15,623.43 |
| Total Receipts                          | £ 3,654.56 |

|                                                  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Less Total Payments (97% spent against budget)   | £ 3,297.01 |
| Closing balance per cashbook as at 31 March 2025 | £15,980.98 |

## 7. **Report from District and County Cllr Margaret Dewsbury**

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury introduced herself as both District and County Councillor, representing the Great Melton area within her remit at both Councils.

### **South Norfolk Council report**

South Norfolk Council continues to provide ‘business as usual’ to support local people with a variety of services including swimming pools, leisure centres and outdoor and play areas to help keep all ages active and healthy. The Help Hub is also there to provide advice and assistance on a wide range of issues when people need support.

South Norfolk Council are part of the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership and work with the Police and other organisations to help make Norfolk a safe place to live.

Last year the council provided a Winter Pressure Grant of £500 to enable local groups to provide a hot drink and somewhere warm for people to meet. The Community Action Fund grant was in great demand and will be offered again this year as well as two new grants, a new Nature Conservation Fund offering five grants of £10,000 to support biodiversity projects and £300 grants to local organisations towards funding VE Celebrations.

The council agreed an average £5 per household increase in Council Tax for the coming year.

Many of our villages have had a lot of development over the last few years and do not want any more so South Norfolk Council has responded to a government request to plan for a new village rather than continue to add more development to local villages.

The main topic of conversation at the moment is Devolution and Local Government Reform. The Government expects local councils to come to an agreement but although the other district councils agreed to submit an Interim Report suggesting Norfolk be divided between three Unitary Councils, South Norfolk Could not agree because, as part of that, Norwich was proposing an extension of their boundaries to take in parts of Broadland and South Norfolk. South Norfolk submitted a separate report suggesting Norfolk be divided between two Unitaries or just be one single Unitary Council. Further work needs to be done on this, and a Working Group has been set up to collate information to help make the final decision in September.

Over the next few months Parish Councils will be provided with information and consulted by District, County and Government to enable the Government to come to a decision about Norfolk. In 2026 there will be an election for a

Mayor who will lead both Norfolk and Suffolk as they become Unitary Councils.

### **Norfolk County Council report**

Norfolk County council has approved a balanced budget for 2025-26. Council Tax will increase by 4.99% which includes a 2.99% rise in General Council Tax and a 2% increase for Adult Social Care. This should raise £572 million to fund all the County Council Services.

### **Devolution**

As agreed at Cabinet and Full Council, NCC submitted their Interim Plan for devolution by March 21st. The Plan stated that the Council would collect all the relevant data and information before suggesting how many Unitaries would be most suitable for Norfolk.

Two working groups have been set up, one to collate information needed to plan for Devolution and a second to collate information required on which to base a decision on the number of unitaries that would be most suitable for Local Government Reform, for Norfolk. The final Plan must be submitted by September 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Ukraine**

Last May Kay Mason Billig, NCC Leader, signed a Co-Operation agreement with Lviv. This was to explore educational exchange and trade opportunities. Norwich also has links with Lviv as they are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The Fire Service is gradually upgrading our fire engines. At the beginning of April 15 Norfolk fire fighters volunteered to take five ex-service vehicles to Ukraine. They joined a convoy of 30 appliances and equipment donated from services across the country as part of a UK wide campaign co-ordinated by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

### **National Grid Pylon scheme**

NCC objected to the National Grid consultation on the 114-mile overhead power line from Norwich to Tilbury. The Council felt that further consideration should be given to putting more of the power line underground, or by using an offshore alternative around the coast.

The Council is also concerned about the size and number of solar farms that are being proposed for Norfolk and how they will affect farming and the essential role that farming plays in the local economy.

### **Highways**

In a National Highways and Transport survey people gave Norfolk the highest satisfaction score, re the condition of the highways, for the second year running. More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed since last April. The Council has also received additional funding for re surfacing roads. Norfolk will receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance this year. £56 million for highways maintenance this year.

To cut CO2 emissions from street lighting the council began replacing the bulbs with low energy LED bulbs in August 2023 and in November last year the project was completed.

#### **Parish Partnership Scheme**

This year the Parish Partnership Scheme has enabled 97 parishes to deliver schemes that they want for their area. This is a 50/50 scheme by which NCC matches the contributions made by parishes. This year NCC contributed £426,476 which enabled work totalling £848,702 to be delivered.

#### **Household Support Fund**

The Council committed over one million pounds to help keep people warm during the winter via the Household Support Fund. They worked in partnership with organisations such as Age UK and Citizens Advice to reach those most affected by the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment. They also helped provide 'warm spaces' in libraries and other community areas for people to meet and socialise. Libraries also provided 'warm packs' of hot water bottle, gloves, hat, etc, to take away. Adult Learning provided free courses on cooking on a budget, budgeting and digital skills and the Council also continued providing cost of living vouchers for families eligible for means tested free school meals.

The cost of providing Adult Social Care and Children's Services increases every year. This year we have budgeted £700 million for Adult Social Care and £367 million for Children's Services.

#### **8. Comments and questions from electors in the Parish**

There were none.

The Chair expressed gratitude to all attendees for their presence and encouraged them to partake of the refreshments provided.

Meeting closed at 20:13.