

develop the land, but they could not say 100% for certain that this would not happen.

District Councillor Edward Thompson confirmed to the meeting that the Local Government Reorganisation decision from Government was that Suffolk would be divided into 3 Unitary Authorities and that Martlesham would become part of Ipswich & South Suffolk.

8.2 Reports from County Councillors Note/any issues raised

County Councillor Patti Mulcahy confirmed to the meeting that the election period was in full swing and which limited the things that she was able to do. During the moratorium period no new announcements would be made or work undertaken.

Cllr Mulcahy confirmed that there was now a new contact in respect of the Active Travel Scheme and that details had been provided to the Planning & Project Officer at Martlesham Parish Council. She advised that the costings in respect of the work planned for Main Road, Martlesham had come in higher than expected and work was being undertaken to reduce these costs. Cllr Mulcahy confirmed to the meeting that 2/3 of the costs would be taken from District CIL Funds and 1/3 of money generated from the A12MRN (£65 million pound project). The planning application for the A12MRN has been submitted and work on the Active Travel Scheme would commence once the business case for the A12MRN has been submitted potentially towards the end of July/August.

Cllr Mulcahy informed the meeting that the Unitary Authorities from the Local Government Reorganisation had been confirmed as 3, Suffolk had wanted 1 unitary authority.

8.3 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda

There were no comments raised.

8.4 Any issues raised by the public

There was a query from a member of the public as to what was going to happen with the land that had been proposed by Bloor Homes to be developed.

The Chair confirmed that no planning application had yet been submitted, should an application be submitted the public would be able to comment on the application.

9. Sale of Portal Woodland

The Chair addressed confirmed that Grainger (formerly Bradford Property Trust) were the owners of the land. Portal Woodland Conservation Group (a working party of the Parish Council) have been maintain the woods for approximately 27 years. No formal agreement was ever put in place, despite the Parish Council requesting the same. However, this was continued under an informal agreement.

In the past they had sold off several small pockets of land privately at Auction.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Parish Council had the following options available to them:-

1. Do nothing which would be risky
2. Try to ensure that the woods was safeguarded for future use by the community

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had submitted a nomination for Portal Woodland to be recognised as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). If successful it would mean that there would be a moratorium period of 6 months during which the woods could not be sold. This would allow further time to see whether negotiations could be entered into directly with the seller to purchase the woods.

Questions from the Floor

Who owns the rest of the Woods?

It was confirmed that MHHL have a 999 year lease over the rest of the woods and the whole of the Western Corridor.

Are the footpaths a recognised "Right of Way"?

The routes through the woods are "permissive" which means that they could be withdrawn. If the land is sold it may be possible to apply to change the "permissive" routes to "rights of way". It was confirmed that the footpath edging the Police land was extremely well used.

Is it possible that the owners of the Police Headquarters Site could be interested in the woods in order to create an additional entrance way into the site for future development?

It is extremely unlikely (although not impossible) that the site can be developed. Any applications would need to include an Environmental Impact Assessment.

If the ACV is successful what can be do?

We are hoping that the ACV will go to panel on the 14th April, and if successful the sale of the land auction could be stopped. It should be noted that Grainger can appeal against the ACV.

The Parish Council can use money from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) towards the cost of the purchasing the woods. This may only cover the Guide Price as the more that is spent towards this purpose the less we would have available for other projects.

Have the Parish Council been in contact with Grainger's "Responsible Business Committee"?

No, but we can certainly look into making contact with them. We have spoken directly with a representative from Grainger, they confirmed that they were working through their land bank and selling of land which was no longer of use to them.

If the Parish Council are looking to purchase Portal Woodland – can members of the community contribute towards the purchase price?

It would be possible for members of the Community to contribute towards the purchase price

as long as an accountable system is used.

Could a Pledge type system be implemented for members of the community to assist with the purchase if this is possible?

Cllr Geeson suggested that this could be a sensible option if members of the community wished to support the Parish Council in a bid to purchase Portal Woodland. This would be easier to implement if the land was removed from Auction.

Why is the Auction in Nottingham?

Grainger operate across the country, but anyone can choose where they sell their land.

Have the National Trust been approached?

No but both Suffolk Wildlife and the Woodland Trust have been approached. The land is not a viable site to either due to it's size.

Duncan Sweeting advised the meeting that there were tumuli, revetments & fuel tanks on the land. There are also protected wildlife species that have been reported in the woods.

Is there any other land within the Parish that we should be concerned about?

The Parish Council Office Team are looking into this, but if anyone is aware of any pockets of land that cause concern of potential future sale, please advise the office team.

What could a potential purchasers do with the land if they were unable to develop it?

The Chair advised that the land could be fenced off removing enjoyment of the woods by the Community. Containers could be put onto the land, as has been done with land nearby.

Could we have a committee set up in respect of Portal Woodland?

Co-ordination could be done through the Parish Council, we can set up a mailing list (for use solely for the purpose of communication related to the Portal Woodland). We need to be careful what is said if anything to the media. Cllr L Galbraith offered to be the Councillor point of contact.

Questions were raised about the potential of holding a further meeting once more information is available.

The public were thanked for attending and their comments and questions were helpful. The Parish Council meeting then resumed at 8:45 pm and many members of the public left the meeting.

Discussions took place around next steps and how much the Parish Council would be prepared to investigate to borrow up to. It was apparent from the meeting that there was a lot of community engagement and support with the potential purchase of Portal Woodland as an Asset for the community to continue to enjoy.

Action Points reached:-

1. Attempt to purchase the land for the continued use and enjoyment by the community.
2. Investigate professional valuations and potential fees involved, minimum of two companies.
3. Apply for public borrowing approval
4. How much would we be prepared to/could raise as a Parish Council?
5. Implement a mailing list so we can keep people informed. Further public meeting after the 14th April, potentially in St Michael's Church on the 29th April, Clerk to look at making a booking. Provide details if possible of the time and location of the East Suffolk District Council meeting which is scheduled to take place on the 14th April in respect of the ACV.
6. Investigate what consultations hits the criteria for public borrowing (news articles etc)
7. Investigate employing a professional agent to act on behalf of the Parish Council in case the sale continues to Auction, ensuring that a member of the Parish Council is present at the time of the Auction.

Resolution C2026/4c – carry out action points as listed 1-7 above - **Agreed**

10. TO CONSIDER REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

10.1 Approve the minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee from the 11.03.26

Councillors were provided with a copy of the minutes from the Recreation & Amenities Committee from the 11th March 2026 in advance of the meeting.

Resolution C2026/4d Councillors present at the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting on the 11.03.26 to agree the minutes – **Agreed**

11. The next item to be taken in camera. To consider excluding the public and press for the next items as their presence would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed (Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings Act] 1960).

11.1 Completion of the Council Officer's probationary period review (CP)

Public, Press and others were asked to leave the meeting for this item. These minutes will be shown separately and marked Confidential.

Item 11 was discussed at the end of the meeting.

Extend the meeting to allow time to consider the final items on the agenda - **Agreed**

12. To consider reports from working groups

12.1 Portal Woodland Working Group – any update

12.2 Biodiversity Working Group/Action Plan – any update

12.3 Recreation Ground Steering Group – any update

There were no updates

13. Consultations

13.1 Any consultations?

Following the "Call for Sites", East Suffolk District Council have released a map showing the sites that came forward in the call for sites - **note**

14. Councillor Training -are there any training requirements.

There was no training requested

15. Recreation Ground Trust (the Parish Council acts as sole trustee in the interests of the Trust): to consider any matters other than those within the remit of the Recreation & Amenities Committee

15.1 Anything to report?

Nothing to report.

16. Any reports from representatives on local organisations

There were none

17. Items for Martlesham newsletters (April/May)/Social Media/website

17.1 Consider contributions for the May/June news articles and ideas for articles moving forward.

The Clerk to draft an article for Martlesham In Touch, the flyer and Martlesham Monthly, along with and submit along with the Celebration Tree article for the Martlesham Monthly – **noted**

18. What has this meeting achieved?

- Approval and ratification of payments for the month
- Discussions with community members and points to be action in respect of a potential purchase of Portal Woodland
- Approval of the minutes from the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on the 11.03.26

The meeting closed at :- 9:45pm

Chair, 6th May 2026