

PARISH OF MARTLESHAM

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 26TH MARCH 2025

Present: Cllr E Thompson, Cllr H Davey, Cllr D Parsons, Cllr R Staines, Cllr J Hall, Cllr C Geeson, Cllr S Daws, Cllr I O'Brien Baker, District Councillor Packard, Helen Fairweather – Headway, John Anderson – Bowls Club, Aldwyn Jones – Martlesham Pavilion, Pat Lisseman – Aviation Society, Maureen & Sonya Burrows – Martlesham in Bloom, Linda & Alistair Mackenzie – Conservation Group, John Burges – Tree Warden, Charlie Zaks – Suffolk Wildlife Trust

In the Chair: Cllr Laurence Burrows (Chair, Martlesham Parish Council)

In attendance: Mrs Lisa Burgess (Clerk/RFO to Martlesham Parish Council)

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr D Parsons, Cllr P Whitby, District Cllr Mulcahy, Martlesham Conservation Group, James Baker of Greenways, Liz Benyon – Martlesham Brass
- 2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 20th of March 2024**
The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair
- 3. Any matters arising from the minutes**
There were no matters arising
- 4. Introductions**
Cllr Burrows welcomed members of the organisations present, Councillors and introduced the Clerk.
- 5. Presentation of grant cheques**
The Chair explained that the actual grant payments would be made by bank transfer, or cheque by request, in April at the start of the new financial year 2025/2026 following approval by Martlesham Parish Council.
The chair presented cheques to: - Martlesham Aviation Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Headway, Martlesham Bowls Club, Martlesham Conservation Group & Greenway Countryside Project (appendix reports).

Pat Lisseman thanked the Parish Council for the grant. Confirming that this was used for the rental of additional event toilets for their open day.

Linda & Alister Mackenzie accepted the cheque on behalf of the Conservation Group.

Charlie Zaks accepted the cheque on behalf of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, she took the opportunity to thank Martlesham for making her feel like part of the family. She confirmed that they now have planning permission for scrapes and ghost ponds. The money they have received will go towards events throughout Martlesham.

Helen Fairweather from Headway thanked the Parish Council for the Grant received. She spoke about the work that Headway undertakes, they provide the opportunity for respite for both those people affected and their families. She spoke about the "Hub" they have at Ransome and various "Outreach" across the County. Cllr Hall asked whether they would look at returning to Martlesham now that the carpark has been completed, this is potentially something they would investigate should the need arise.

John Anderson, Bowls Club accept the grant on behalf of the Bowls Club. He advised the meeting that over the last year they had replaced the accessible ramp, providing safe access to the clubhouse. They had hosted a 1st Aid Course which allowed the bowls club to have 2 or 3 free spaces for their members. Their members play across 4 leagues, and they have social bowls on a Thursday and Saturday which is inclusive, and all are welcome. The Parish Council Grant will go towards upgrading the equipment of the bowls green.

6. Report on Parish Council Activities & Finances

Reports provided by the Chair and Committees of the Parish Council were shared with the meeting and these are included below as appendices: -

Chairman's Report – appendix 1

DETC Report – appendix 2

Recreation & Amenities Report – appendix 3

Finance & General-Purpose Committee Report – appendix 4

7. Recreation Ground Trust (reg charity no 304793) Report

The chairman shared a report from the Recreation Ground Trust – appendix 5

8. Any matters raised by Parishioners

Pat Lisseman asked why the play spaces within the community, other than Harry Higgins, don't have any equipment that is inclusive and accessible for children with disabilities. Cllr Hall advised that the new play space at the Hastoe Development would have a roundabout included that could be used by all. There will be direct access from the Jubilee Play Space to the Hastoe Development.

Aldwyn Jones thanked the Parish Council for the work that they continued to carry out the Harry Higgins play space, including grass cutting. A discussion also took place around the Cricket Pitch on the Green, noting that the "unofficial" pitch seems to have been removed.

Guests invited to stay for refreshments

Meeting closed at 8:15 pm

Signed by Chair

Appendix 1

Martlesham Parish Council

Chairman's Report

Annual Parish Meeting 26th March 2025

The Parish Council has been active in its current legal form since December 1894 (130 years) now consists of 11 Councillors (the full complement could be fourteen). This year we welcomed Chrissie Geeson, who agreed to be coopted as Councillor in July and Simon Daws, who agreed to be coopted as a Councillor in September. Both Chrissie and Simon have proven to be great assets to the Council. We continue to meet both as a full council and as three committees representing the Council.

The Committees.

As always, my thanks go to the three committees and their chairmen who are responsible for the bulk of the work undertaken by the Council.

Their reports are available separately to this and highlight the many activities undertaken and achieved by the parish council this year.

The Staff.

During the year there were changes in the staffing arrangements with the retirement at the end of the summer of our Clerk, Diane Linsley. She has been with the council for a number of years, first as deputy clerk, then as clerk; she has been a valued and supportive throughout her time with us.

In the autumn our Responsible Finance Officer, Kreon Wynn also left the council. During the year Louis Linsley was made up to be our Council Officer and in September Sara Townsend-Cartwright joined us as our new Planning and Project Officer. It unfortunately took some time to recruit a new clerk, however at the beginning of January we were pleased to welcome Lisa Burgess as our new Clerk, and she has also since included being Responsible Finance Officer in her role.

In the period between Diane leaving and Lisa starting the Council formed an Interim Clerking Working Group, consisting of Mike Irwin, Jane Hall and Chrissie Geeson, to help and support the Council and staff during that time. The Council are most grateful to Louis and Sara to the way they rose to the challenge of working without a clerk and to the members of the working group who worked hard to support the staff.

The last year has continued to be difficult to manage within the many activities, uncertainties and staff changes and I would particularly like to thank the Clerk and all the staff, past and present, for their dedicated work ensuring that the Council and its committees had the necessary information and documents available to enable the committees to continue to carry out their work.

Heritage Runway Carpark

This was acquired as an asset by the Parish Council from McCarthy Stone in June 2024 and is the home to two electric vehicle charging points, which support the Council's interest in the Climate Emergency that we are currently experiencing.

The Precept.

This is explained in more detail in the Finance & General Purposes Committee, this has increased by 7.1% following a thorough review of both our 'earmarked reserves' (for specific projects) and General Reserves.

Laurence Burrows, Chairman of Martlesham Parish Council, March 2025

Appendix 2

Development Environment and Transport Committee (DETC) Report 2024/25

Planning Applications

The Council responded to 72 planning applications between 1st March 2024 and 1st March 2025. This is a reduction from last year when responses to over 100 applications were considered during the same period. There are many possible contributing factors; some of the applications received last year related to the McCarthy Stone development in Martlesham Heath which is now complete, an economic downturn, uncertainty before last year's General Election, and reduced investment in development projects, leading to more lapsed planning applications. Applications considered by the Council have included Approval of Reserved Matters for large scale development such as Brightwell Lakes, Approval (Discharge) of Conditions, Variation of Conditions, consent under Tree Preservation Orders, Lawful Development Certificates, Householder Planning Consent, Non-Material Amendments of existing planning permission, and Listed Building Consent.

Brightwell Lakes

I have continued to represent Martlesham Council on the East Suffolk Council Brightwell Lakes Forum. Cllr Mike Irwin has sadly had to step down as chairman of this Forum due to commitments elsewhere. My thanks go to him for his hard work on behalf of Martlesham Council and member parishes since the Forum's inception. Brightwell Lakes has outline planning permission for up to 2000 homes including extensive infrastructure associated with a site of this scale. The Council has continued to consider and respond if appropriate to reserved matters applications and we have continued to question and influence the developers via the Forum. Earthworks taking place between February and September 2025 will enable the infrastructure for the new school, local centre, sports pitches, SANG, (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space), and housing parcels E2 and E3. Parcel W5, 69 homes, has been sold to Denbury Homes, previously Hopkins and Moore. The first residents moved into their new properties in December 2024 and January 2025. We wish them every happiness in their new homes.

Land off Black Tiles Lane, Martlesham

Planning permission was granted in 2016 for 47 dwellings, access, a school carpark, landscape/wildlife corridors, open space and landscaping. Since then, the Parish Council has worked with Hastoe Housing Association to propose new road names for this development and influence the design of the new on-site play area. The Council recently submitted a detailed response to the discharge of condition 23, open space and landscaping-open space management and maintenance. This application has since been refused.

Consultations

In October, the Council submitted a comprehensive response to the A12 MRN improvement scheme which aims to upgrade key sections along the A12, spanning from the A14/Seven Hills junction to the A1152/Woods Lane junction. Suffolk County Council are planning to submit a planning application for the scheme this year.

Martlesham Council will be meeting with representatives from Suffolk County Council this month to learn more about proposed improvements to Main Road Martlesham. A public consultation is planned in June.

A further consultation of interest was the East Suffolk Council licensing of commercial operators of jet skis on the River Deben. Martlesham Council submitted a detailed response. The license was later refused.

Following the General Election, one of the Labour government's first tasks was to launch a full review of the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) responded to this consultation on behalf of all Parish Councils.

Subsequently, key changes to the NPPF were announced. These include:

A new standard method formula for calculating housing need.

Commitment to 1.5 million new homes in this parliament.

Support for community infrastructure and healthy places.

A vision led approach to transport planning.

Support for clean energy, including onshore wind and renewables.

An emphasis on economic growth in key sectors, including laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital economies, and freight and logistics.

Changes related to the Green Belt (not relevant to East Suffolk).

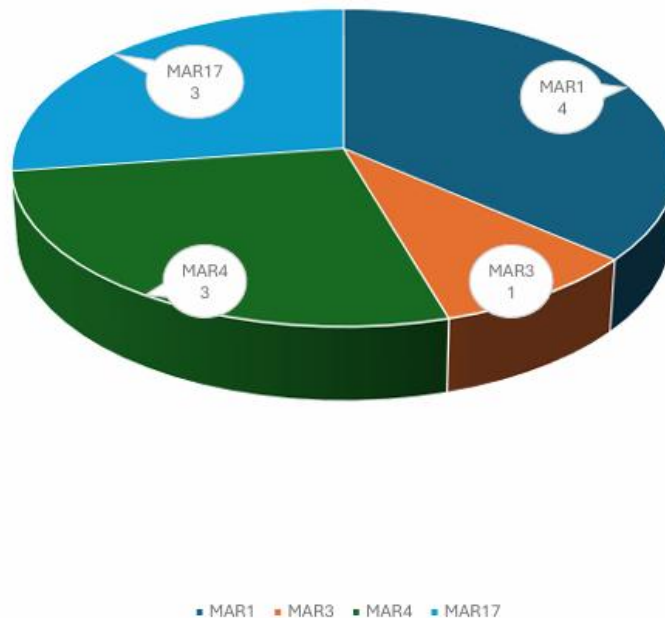
In addition, Martlesham Council has responded to the East Suffolk Council Guidance for Climate Change, the Neighbourhood Plan Guidance for Housing, the Planning Reform Working Paper: Streamlining Infrastructure Planning, and the Consultation on Reforms to the Energy Performance of Buildings Regime. Full Council will soon consider the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Consultation.

Neighbourhood Plan

Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan policies continue to be used as an important guide to development in Martlesham. The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the parish (2016-2031), the other being the Local Plan, (adopted in 2020). The government has asked all local planning authorities to update their timetables for preparing Local Plans by March 6th. East Suffolk Council have prepared a timetable for a new Local Plan. Preparation will begin in Spring/Summer 2025, with adoption in 2029. Martlesham Council will consider how any review of the Local Plan might affect our Neighbourhood Plan over the coming months.

The diagram below shows East Suffolk Council Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan Policy usage between 1st July 2024 and 31st December 2024.

Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan Policy Usage



The work of the DETC

I have continued to represent the Council on NALC, the SALC Climate Forum, the Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership, the East Suffolk Council Greenprint Forum, SAVID, the Deben Estuary Partnership and the West Deben Green Cluster. These groups are all concerned with improving the natural and built environment here, and in neighbouring parishes.

I am pleased that the DETC is continuing to grow and would like to thank new members who have joined us over the last 12 months, Cllr Helen Davey, Cllr Simon Daws, and Cllr Dave Parsons. Thank you for your enthusiasm, commitment to meetings and desire to learn new skills. Cllr Daws has kindly agreed to be the Council's bus representative. My thanks extend to all DETC members who contributed to the vast workload of the DETC over the past 12 months, particularly during the challenging period when the Council was without a Clerk.

In September 2024, the Council was delighted to welcome a new Planning and Project Officer, Sara Townsend-Cartwright. Sara has made a confident and productive contribution to the work of the DETC, bringing with her a wealth of experience from previous roles. My thanks go to Sara for her enthusiasm, support and hard work over the last seven months.

Jane Hall
DETC chairman
March 2025

Appendix 3

Recreation and Amenities Committee Report -

This committee is principally responsible for the management of land and play equipment in the parish. Much of this work is unseen unless something goes wrong, but much of the council's disposal income goes on maintenance and repair of these facilities. To do this we have a dedicated team of inspectors who report when the play equipment needs work to remain safe.

This equipment is located at the Recreation Ground, and the Jubilee, Centenary and Harry Higgins Play Spaces. We are also responsible for the Trim Trail and the Bike Trail. Unfortunately, we have to report that incidents of attempts by users to modify the bike trails made them too dangerous to use and we are currently restoring them back to the original specifications to ensure they can be reopened in safe state.

With our land comes the responsibility of maintaining it safely and in a way that encourages biodiversity as part of the council's response to the climate emergency. We are already well down this route of responsible stewardship and have a biodiversity policy and action plan which we implement to further enhance biodiversity.

The land we are responsible for (in addition to the play spaces) are the Recreation Ground, Portal Woodlands, Martlesham Common Local Nature Reserve and Bright's Orchard. We also assist other landowners which manage property which is used by the public. These include MHHL, The Pavilion, Community Centre and Village Hall. We also work with the principal authorities to manage wildflower areas on our verges and with Martlesham Wilds to maximise the benefits of having that asset in our community

The assets of the parish have also been increased by taking ownership of the Runway Heritage Car Park. We now manage this plus the car parks at the community centre and the recreation ground.

We are pleased to be able to give such a positive report in the light of serious staff shortages and unfilled councillor vacancies over the last year. We especially thank the staff we have, particularly Louis Linsley who has led on keeping the show on the road. Councillors on the committee have also worked hard and we are pleased to draw special attention to the work of volunteers who have done such sterling work particularly on the Portal Woodlands Conservation Group and the Bright's Orchard Working Group and those from Greenways who maintain our local nature reserve.

Appendix 4

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Annual Report 2024/25

The purpose of this committee is to ensure that the conduct, finances, management, and administration of the Parish Council is properly and effectively carried out.

The main duties of the committee relate to: -

1. To consider and recommend to the Parish Council matters relating to: -
 - Committees' terms of reference and delegated powers
 - Amendments to Standing Orders
 - Various policies and procedures
 - Budget and Precept
 - Tenders and quotations
 - Provision of facilities or services not covered by other Committees.
 - Risk Management and Insurance
 - Remuneration and other matters concerning the Clerk and employees.
 - Grants and donations
 - Parish Trusts
2. Financial management and control
3. Administration of the Parish Room and Office

The committee met four times during year and as well as focussing on the above responsibilities they have also undertaken: -

- The Council's policies, procedures, standing orders and financial regulations were reviewed when needed and updated as necessary by any changes in legislation and recommended good practice. Our safeguarding and lone working policies were updated, considered and approved by the Parish Council.
- Drafting of the annual budget for the Council and recommending the precept (the amount to be received from Council Tax) needed for 2025/26. In doing this it considered the expected expenditure needed for the Council to carry out its activities and the many risks that the Council's finances may face in the future. It also assessed what earmarked reserves, i.e., for specific projects or activities, were needed and that its general reserves would be adequate. Following the committee's recommendations, the Council set the total budget for 2025/26 at £203,038 and the precept at £165,000, this represented an increase of 7.1% on the 2024/25 council tax bill, this rise was unfortunately necessary because of the increased costs we are experiencing and the need to maintain an adequate reserve.
- As part of its risk management and planning for the future Earmarked Reserves are set to fund particular matters that are expected to arise, and the total agreed for 2025/26 is £192,624.
- Each year local organisations are invited to apply to the Council for a grant; the committee considers all application, and the grants decided to be awarded in 2024/25 were: -
 - Greenways Countryside Project £1,200.00.
 - Martlesham Bowls Club £600.00.
 - Martlesham Conservation Group £201.87.
 - Martlesham Heath Aviation Society £450.00.
 - Suffolk Wildlife Trust £310.00
 - Headway £500.00
 - Total: £3,753.79.**
- Further to the earlier Green Audit report on The Parish Room/Richards Room, where several recommendations were agreed by the Council and following the earlier installation of solar panels on the roof of the building the installation of battery storage and its weather protection has been completed.
- External audit arrangements remained as previous years which means there will be the usual tight timetable to finalise the accounts.
- Minor changes to the IT systems have continued in order to improve the provision of information and documents for councillors including parish council email addresses for each councillor, the use of SharePoint to help have documents available on laptops during meetings and internet banking.

The committee now comprises Jane Hall, Mike Irwin and Ian O'Brien Baker and I would like to conclude by thanking them for their work over the year.

Laurence Burrows, Chairman – Finance and General Purposes Committee,
March 2025

Appendix 5

Recreation Ground Trust Report

Charity Annual Return 2024 for Martlesham Recreation Ground

The total annual income for the trust in 2024 was £546.67 This came in the form of a donation from Mr M Tester (Fitness Instructor) for £80.00 and a grant from the Tree Council for £466.67.

The total annual expenditure for 2024 was £615.41 This was a payment to Botanica Plant Collections to supply new Tree's in January.

I have attached a copy of the Recreation Ground Trust Bank Statements, highlighting the above-mentioned transactions along with an income and expenditure table.

Rachel Crompton
Finance & Administration Officer.

Financial Statement 01/01/24 – 31/12/2024

	£	£
Funds at start of financial year 01/01/24		6,266.90
Income		
The Tree Council Grant		466.67
Fitness Instructor Donation		80.00
Total Income		546.67
Expenditure		
Botanica Plant Collection	-615.41	
Total Expenditure		-615.41
Funds on 31/12/2024		6,198.16

Charity registration number: 304793 Charity name: MARTLESHAM RECREATION GROUND

Thank you for submitting your Annual Return for the financial period ending 31/12/2024