

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup>**  
**MAY 2026**

**Present:** Cllr Geeson, Cllr Whitby, Cllr Burrows, Cllr Galbraith, Cllr O'Brien Baker, Cllr Sheridan, Cllr Staines, Cllr Thompson

**In attendance:** Mrs L Burgess (Clerk/RFO), Mrs R Crompton (Finance Officer), approximately 50 members of the public

The meeting started at 7:30pm

The Chair welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Cllr Daws – **note/accepted**

- 2. Filling the Parish Council Vacancies** – have we had any application, if anyone wishes to be considered for co-option or to become a Councillor please contact the clerk.  
There were no applications for Parish Council vacancies

**3. Any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or local non-pecuniary interests**

There were none raised

**4. Update on action taken so far**

The Chair updated the meeting on action taken so far, confirming the amount of pledges received to date and thanking members of the community for their continued support.

The Chair advised the meeting that we had investigated from several angles the English Devolution & Community Empower Act 2026 but advised that there was currently no legislation to support an extension of the moratorium period to 12 months or the right to bid to a right to buy. She confirmed that we would be watching closely for any changes to available legislation.

The chair confirmed that we were in receipt of 1 x statement as to the value of Portal Woodland and 1 x valuation, and that the Parish Council are awaiting confirmation of a further valuation.

The Chair thanked Cllr Galbraith for contacting and arranging meetings with both Woodbridge & Kesgrave Town Councils. Woodbridge have confirmed their support in respect of use of their comms to raise public awareness, which will include the Mayor's pre-film screenings at the Riverside Cinema.

Kesgrave have agreed to raise the question of support at their next full council meeting.

The chair also confirmed that the Clerk was in the process of arranging a meeting with a representative from Norfolk & Suffolk Police, as they are interested in Portal Woodlands

## **5. PUBLIC FORUM**

### **5.1 Reports from District Councillors in respect of Portal Woodlands**

District Councillor Edward Parkard confirmed that he would be writing to the Chief Executive of East Suffolk District Council to ascertain their support.

### **5.2 Reports from County Councillors in respect of Portal Woodlands**

There was no update or report

### **5.3 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda**

Members of the public were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

#### **Q. What information was provided to the valuers?**

The Clerk responded that they were made aware of the TPO, tumuli and airfield history within the woodlands

#### **Q Have we fed any information back to the Auctioneers that wasn't included with the Auction Pack?**

No information has been sent to the Auctioneers.

#### **Q. How can members of the community make pledges?**

This can be done via letter or email to the clerk through [enquiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk)

#### **Q. How are the Parish Council going to raise awareness of the campaign to the community?**

Cllr Galbraith confirmed that there would be a blanket leaflet drop on all residences within the community. This would include a short questionnaire asking for support from residents should an increase to the precept be necessary to cover the loan payments taken out by the Parish Council. Cllr Galbraith has also secured the front cover and an internal page of the July Martlesham Monthly to raise awareness of the Campaign.

#### **Q. Had we thought about extending the appeal by way of including the historical features from the airfield in Portal Woodlands?**

It was agreed that this was an would provide an alternative route of increased interest in the campaign.

#### **Q. If the Local Plan is being reviewed, why would it not stay the same?**

Councillor Thompson stated that The Head of Planning previously commented that development was highly unlikely or would be allowed within the Woodland.

Q. What Legislation supports this?

Cllr Thompson said that he would ask the Planning Department to provide something in writing to support development not being authorised within the Woodlands.

A member of the public forum advised that he had a copy of an agreement dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 1982 in respect of S52 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1971. The plan only showed the bottom half of the plan. He was happy for the Office Team to take a copy of the document.

## **6. Portal Woodlands Campaign Working Party**

### **6.1 Membership and Terms of Reference**

Cllr Galbraith suggested that the working party should consist of approximately 8 members, 2 of which should be Councillors. She also suggested that people could spread awareness through “WhatsApp” groups and delivering leaflets. It was suggested that the working group should approach local businesses for their support.

Draft Terms of Reference were provided to the Councillors; the objective of the working group is to raise awareness of the sale of Portal Woodlands within the community and to gain support from local residents and neighbouring Town & Parish Councils.

Cllr Burrows suggested that this could include awareness as to how donations and pledges could be made, sending out surveys and encouraging individuals to write to Grainger with their own stories.

**Resolution C2026/EXO8a** to adopt the Portal Woodlands Working Group Draft Terms of Reference – **Agreed**

### **6.2 Resources needed, email address, pay as you go mobile**

It was noted that currently all emails are directed through the [enquiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk) this mailbox is monitored by the 4 members of the Office Team. It was agreed that all Portal Woodland enquiries would continue to utilise this email address to ensure that emails would be responded to promptly.

Potential breaches of GDPR were discussed with sharing emails addresses that had been provided to the Parish Council.

The need for a Martlesham Parish Council mobile phone in respect of lone working and to receive text messages was discussed

The council officers utilise a WhatsApp group to ensure that the lone working policy is adhered to. The officers currently use their personal mobile phones to keep in contact with one another using this method. There was no requirement made regarding additional mobile phones being used for lone working.

There was no decision in respect of who would monitor the mobile phone and respond to the text messages. The working group to discuss and make a recommendation.

**Resolution C2026/EXO8b** the working group to discuss the provision of a mobile phone to allow for additional form of communication, and to agree who would monitor the text messages.- **Agreed**

#### **7. Campaign Budget for spend outside the Clerk's delegate authorised spend.**

Budget requirements for the campaign were necessary to allow for leaflets etc. to be printed without waiting between meetings. Discussions took place regarding what would be included within the campaign Budget.

**Resolution C2026/EXO8c** to allow a campaign budget in the sum of £4,000.00 (four thousand pounds), this excludes the cost of the valuations and any legal fees undertaken to date - **Agreed**

#### **8. Funding Options**

A paper detailing fund options was shared with the meeting each identifying risks and potential costs.

**Recommendation 2026/EXO8/a** – to pursue Option 3: Escrow or Third-Party Holding Arrangements. The Clerk to obtain 3 x quotations to include any potential for a bolt on option allowing members of the community to donate via an online platform or through a QR Code. It was agreed that the Clerk will approach Suffolk Community Foundation to ascertain if they would be able to offer this service. – **Agreed**

Further discussions took place with regards to “BT – My Donate”, it was confirmed that this closed in June 2019.

#### **9. Loan Application Process**

The Clerk shared with the meeting the details of the loan application process, she also shared the draft forecasted budget that was required as part of the loan application. The consultations with members of the community included a short questionnaire affirming community support should a small increase in the precept be required year on year. Questions were raised about whether the amount of any loan could be reduced dependent upon the amount of funds raised from the Community. It was confirmed that donations from the Community would reduce the amount of borrowing required, but that the legal costs would be borne by the Parish Council.

**10. Discussion about next steps**

Discussions took place about what action should be taken, this included writing to Grainger in an attempt to open negotiations.

**Resolution C2026/EX08d** to write to Grainger in the first instance, (whilst documentation and questionnaires are being circulated in respect of the borrowing application), in an attempt to open negotiations. If negotiations do not prove successful then a “Plan B” would be required. “CPO” to be added to the Agenda of the Parish Council Meeting on the 03.06.26 as an in-camera item –  
**Agreed**

**11. What has this meeting achieved?**

- Terms of reference for the Portal Woodlands Campaign Group agreed
- Agreement to approach Grainger and attempt to open negotiations
- £4,000.00 (four thousand pound campaign budget) for use under clerk’s delegated authority
- Obtain 3 x quotes for legal fees and funding options
- Cllr Thompson to speak with ESDC

Cllr O’Brien Baker took the opportunity to encourage members of the public to put themselves forward as Councillors. The Parish Council currently has 5 vacant positions. He advised that being a Councillor was a good way in which to provide continued support for the community.

Cllr O’Brien Baker also thanked the Clerk and Officers for their continued hard work on behalf of the Parish Council.

There was no further business, and the meeting was closed at 9:30 pm.

Cllr C Geeson - signed

Chair, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026