

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY PARISH MEETING OF MARTLESHAM
PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THE 29TH APRIL 2026

PRESENT: Cllr L Burrows (Chair), Cllr I Baker, Cllr S Daws, Cllr L Galbraith, Cllr C Geeson (Vice Chair), Cllr R Staines, Cllr E Thompson, Cllr P Whitby

In attendance: Mrs L Burgess (Clerk/RFO) MPC
Mrs R Crompton (Finance Officer) MPC
County Councillor Patti Mulcahy
District Councillor Mark Packard
Members of the public (approximately 80 members of the public were in attendance)

Cllr Burrows opened the meeting introducing himself as Chair of the Parish Council and thanking members of the public for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence

2. Sale of Portal Woodlands – situation so far

Cllr Burrows confirmed that the Parish Council had been successful with their nomination of Portal Woodlands to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. He confirmed that the listing was effective as of the 14th April 2026. Following the listing the Parish Council had registered a non-binding interest in bidding for the land. This expression of interest triggered the 6 month Moratorium Period, meaning that Portal Woodlands could not be sold within this period. Consideration could be made to offers made by the Community group but it does not stop the Owner entering into negotiations with other parties.

We should be mindful that Portal Woodlands may go up for Auction after the moratorium period has ended.

Cllr Burrows confirmed the following actions that were agreed at the Parish Council Meeting which took place on the 01.04.26 (Resolution C2026/4c)

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. Four companies have been approached, one which advised that the land is worth what someone wants to pay for it.
3. Apply for public borrowing approval. It should be noted that this is not as straight forward as applying to the bank for a loan and have started to work through the process.
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. This has been done

and any new information will be sent out directly to those on the mailing list as well as being added to our website and social media

6. Investigate what consultations hits the criteria for public borrowing (news articles etc). We will have to carry out further consultation with the community, but are thankful for the support that we are receiving so far.
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. It should be noted that we were advised to attend on line as a Parish Council and the Clerk was registered to bid and would have attended the Auction on line with 2 Councillors present.

3. Proposals to try to purchase Portal Woodlands

The Parish Council will apply to the Public Works Loan Board for borrowing. Cllr Burrows advised that the Parish Council had received several offers of Pledges and encouraged the floor to contact the Parish Council Office at equiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk if they wishes to pledge or donate to a potential purchase of the Woodland. The Council Officer would keep informed received confidential and would create a spreadsheet of any pledges received.

4. Comments (C), questions (Q) or related matters which members of the Community wish to raise

Q. If we don't manage to buy the land, does it stay listed as an Asset of Community Value?

Yes it does for 5 years.

Q. How short are we from being able to make an offer?

That is a difficult question to answer as we there has been no decision about what should be offered. The Parish Council can meet the Guide Price of £50,000.00 (fifty thousand pounds) from its reserves, but we would rather to borrow in this instance so that projects that have already been agreed can be pushed forward.

Q. What can be done or considered to protect the land from being sold outside of the Parish Council?

- Apply for open access (it should be noted that this was not successful at Mill Heath)
- Try to establish a public right of way on some of the Paths (Cllr Thompson confirmed that there was a procedure to establish this. You can only apply for one and MHHL/Grainger permission would be required. The process can take up to 12 months)

C. If we made it unappealing it might put us in a better position.

Q What is the position of Suffolk Constabulary?

The Council Office have been contact by Suffolk Constabulary in respect of the proposed sale of Portal Woodlands. The are keen to hold onto the right of access that they have to the rear of their property. Currently this is done via the permissible cycle route.

Q. How big is the reach if we are going to do some serious fund raising? Can we reach out to neighbouring communities?

It was noted that Portal Woodlands is used/accessed by people from neighbouring communities (including Kesgrave and Woodbridge). One of the special things about Portal Woodlands is that it remains dry and accessible throughout the year.

If we were looking at crowd funding/pledges/donations we can publicise within our own parishes and can contact other neighbouring parishes. Members from Kesgrave have attended our previous meetings, we are also able to use social media and our website.

Q. Open Land and whether Portal Woodlands feel into this category?

Investigations will be undertaken as to whether Portal Woodlands was included in any section 52 Agreement of the Town & Country Planning Act 1971

Q. Listening to the local knowledge in the room is extremely interesting, much of which was not included in the Auction House Legal Pack. Does the Auction House have a Legal Duty to include the information in the pack if they become aware of it? If Grainger were made aware of the information would they be obliged to share it?

Advice can be sought to see whether this would be the case.

Councillor Burrows provide the following thanks:-

- To members of the community for coming to the meeting and for their continued support.
- To Ian Read from Martlesham Community Hall Committee for the loan of the PA system.
- To the Clerk, Finance Officer and Councillors of Martlesham Parish Council for being in attendance.

The meeting was closed at 20:47

Chair, 6th May 2025