

Mulbarton Parish Council

Clerk's Report

March 2025



Items not on the agenda

All information available relates to items on the agenda.

Items on the agenda

Item 6: Co-option applications

We have 11 seats on the parish council but currently only 4 of them are filled. We have received an application from a resident wishing to join the councillors, but we still need many more councillors. We ask that if you are interested in working with your community you consider joining us. For more information, contact the clerk, any of our councillors or see our website.

Item 7: 2023-24 finance

The external auditor received challenge paperwork from an anonymous source. This resulted in the parish council needing to provide additional information to the auditor for them to consider the challenge they had received. They have now concluded that the accounts have been produced in accordance with proper practices and that no other matters have come to their attention that cause concern. They have also noted that the council has sought legal advice and are trying to resolve the dispute with the Village Hall Management Committee. The full external auditor report is available on our website, along with the notice of conclusion of audit.

As a result of the additional work carried out by the external auditor, the parish council have received an additional charge of £1,242.50.

Item 8: Governance

Legislative changes means that the parish council need to update their financial regulations and standing orders.

Item 9: Allotment working group

Inspections have been carried out at all sites and some work has been identified. Water has been switched on at all sites.

The temporary fencing at Long Lane has been reduced making it easier to access the site and the vehicular gate padlock has been replaced.

We will also replace the key padlock at Swamp with a combination padlock. Tenants will be notified by email of the code before any changes.

We are still trying to find a suitable way to number the plots but will be trialling a possible solution at Long Lane. If you can help with this, please contact the clerk or a member of the working group. Many thanks to those who have numbered their own plots already.

Item 12: Open spaces & play areas working group

The weekly inspection template for the Village Hall has been updated to make it easier for the checker. A new basketball net has been purchased and is waiting to be fitted, while the table tennis table has been fitted with new protective corners.

The Common climbing tyres have again become unattached at the bottom and a new fix is being trialled. The wooden steps on Meadows climbing frame are showing signs of ageing so we are seeking quotes to repair.

One of the seats on Orchard Park is also in need to repair.

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Item 18: Highways matters

The parish council have raised several items with Norfolk County Council's Highways team. The parish councillors will consider any responses and agree next steps.

Item 21: Additional SAM2 sign

The parish council have been successful in winning a grant to help fund the purchase of an additional SAM2 sign. Councillors will be asked to formally accept the grant and to proceed with the purchase.

Item 22: Dog fouling on Long Lane

A resident has contacted the parish council highlighting the frequent fouling on the pavement and asked if they can take some action.

South Norfolk Council has renewed the existing Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) made under section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which cover dog fouling. The PSPO makes it an offence for a person in control of a dog not to clear up the dog mess immediately, on any land that is open to the air and to which the public is entitled or permitted to have access. Offenders are subject to a fixed penalty notice of £100, reduced to £80 if paid within 10 days, or if taken to court, a fine up to £1,000. In order for an offence to be investigated, South Norfolk Council will need to know the address of the owner and as much information as possible including a description of both the dog(s) and the owner. More information is available on [South Norfolk Council's website](#).

Item 23: Skatepark

A member of the public has contacted the council to suggest some changes to the skatepark. Councillors will be asked to discuss this request.

Item 24: Devolution and Local Government Reform

Devolution is the statutory delegation of powers from the central government. The government will be delegating powers to a Norfolk and Suffolk mayoral combined authority. The details of this are still being worked through.

Local Government Reform (LGR) is the reorganising the current two-tier areas in England (e.g. areas which have both a County Council and a District Council) to create more efficient and streamlined structures in the form of new Unitary Councils. Unitary Councils are a single tier of local government responsible for all local services in an area. For Norfolk, this means fewer and larger Unitary Councils compared to the current two-tier model which has a total of eight local councils covering the county. The exact number and shape and size of any new Unitary Councils for Norfolk is to be determined. All Councils in Norfolk have been asked to submit reorganisation proposals to Government by 26 September 2025.

It is expected that Parish Council's will play a key role in supporting their parishioners but the details of this are not yet available.

Item 25: Update seminar

The chair and clerk attended an update seminar held by Norfolk Parish Training and Support. This was an opportunity to hear from other sectors that impact parish councils and discuss matters with other councils.

Item 27: South Norfolk Council's Nature Conservation Fund

South Norfolk Council are seeking expressions of interest for biodiversity projects. The grants available are up to £10,000.