

Brinkley Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 11th May 2026
At 7.00pm in the Memorial Hall, High Street, Brinkley

Councillors present:

Cllr Monks, Cllr Aubert, Cllr McIntyre, Cllr Beamish

Also Present:

Hayley Livermore

Cllr John Trapp

Cllr Jonny Edge

Representative from the Ellesmere centre

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr Coley

2. Welcome by chair-

The chair Ian Monks welcomed everyone to the meeting. It has been a busy year for the parish council. Most notable issues have been:

Highways-both the general state of the roads and the improvements to the junction leading to Six Mile Bottom which was a result of a PC application to the Local Highways initiative.

Purchase by the Parish council of the allotment land which has ensured these are kept as a facility for parishioners in the future.

Kingsway Solar-Brinkley PC have consulted with residents, and the majority are opposed to the Kingsway Solar Farm. The PC has joined the Kingsway Solar Alliance and will continue to advocate opposition to this development on behalf of residents.

Willingham House Stud- the planning application which has now been granted for Change of use to equine stud farm, erection of four yards including stabling, ancillary facilities, service facilities, turnout and two rural worker houses. The 'Forest City' development would significantly affect Brinkley but at present this is just a concept by two individuals. The council has engaged in consultations regarding Local Government reorganisation.

Cllr Monks thanked his fellow councillors, the clerk and the district and county councillor for their help during the past year.

3. To approve the minutes of 19th May 2025- The minutes were approved and signed by the chair.

4. Annual reports

EAST CAMBS DISTRICT COUNCIL – Cllrs John Trapp and Charlotte Cane

The crematorium at Mepal has cost a total of £13.5million thus far. New bins which provide for better recycling are being distributed and new collections will begin in June. The council is working on providing grants to make playgrounds more accessible for those with disabilities. The council continues to engage in consultations regarding the Local government reorganisation.

CAMBS COUNTY COUNCIL- Cllr Jonny Edge

This is my first annual report as an elected councillor. My first year in politics has been a learning curve, a lot of hard work alongside my day-job, but very rewarding. It has been a joy to get to know my 12 parish councils and as many residents as possible. It is helping to resolve problems for individuals and the community that I find so rewarding.

Local elections took place for all 61 seats on Cambridgeshire County Council on Thursday 1 May 2025. The table below shows the current composition of the Council compared to the election results in May 2021, and to this time last year.

	2021	2025	Now	
Conservatives	28	10	10	
Liberal Democrats		20	31	32
Labour	9	5	5	
Independent	4	2	1	
Reform	0	10	8	
Green	0	3	3	
Non-aligned	0	0	2	

Since the election, the Liberal Democrats and Independents have formed a Liberal Democrat and Independent Group and one of the Independents has subsequently become a member of the Liberal Democrats.

1 The Council

1.1 The Liberal Democrat and Independent Group now run the Council. Our vision is to create a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire.

1.2 I am Vice Chair of the Children and Young People's Committee. This is an area of the council responsible for the largest budget and with a huge amount of responsibility, not only for education and child development, but also for children and young people that are in our care as Corporate Parents.

I also sit on the Highways and Transport Committee, which is a great opportunity not only to make sure our area is being listened to, but rural communities across the county.

In addition, I sit on various associated and external boards and working groups, the newest established being Cambridgeshire's Culture Board and the St Edmunds Line (Cambridge to Ipswich) Community Rail Partnership Board.

1.3 The Council has considered motions and issues put forward by councillors for debate. These include opposing any plans to merge our local police force into a larger and more remote body; GP services for growing communities; and the importance of flood prevention in the Fens.

In September I seconded a motion on the need to provide better support for people in mental health crisis or at suicide risk. This motion was close to my heart personally, but also in dedication to the son of local residents that have helped me understand the ongoing battle of families not wanting others to go through the traumas those suffering and their families must contend with. Mental health is beginning to get the status it requires but is still too far behind the curve in most settings. Attending the 1st conference of the Cambridge Children's Hospital more recently gave me hope that the medical profession is recognising this and wanting to handle mental health on parity with physical health and ongoing research.

2 Strategy Resources & Performance

2.1 The Council set its budget in February 2026, including record spending on roads, thousands of extra school places, and support for vulnerable residents.

The budget included an additional £20 million for highway maintenance, delivery of the council's climate change and environment strategy, and £11 million to upgrade household recycling centres at Milton and March.

£14.7 million of additional funding was allocated for adult social care providers to help them manage rising costs and ensure care workers are paid the Real Living Wage, improving stability and quality for those who depend on care workers for their support.

The council are ensuring provision of holiday meal vouchers will continue until the end of summer 2026 for those children currently eligible for free school meals, despite closing the fund at the end of March that paid for most of this. The Government's replacement Crisis and Resilience Fund is less generous than its predecessor and is intended to provide a wide range of anti-poverty measures in addition to feeding children in struggling families.

There will be 3,500 new primary school places, and £72 million over five years to increase secondary school places.

There will also be continued funding for the Families First early intervention programme that helps keep more families together. And more than £1.2 million will be invested in libraries and archives over the next two years.

2.2 The council ran its third annual Quality of Life survey in 2025, which provides valuable insights into residents' perspectives and priorities.

5,500 residents (1,100 in each district) were directly polled for their views, and the survey was open in the summer for any other resident who wished to complete it.

2.3 Like almost every county and unitary council, the Council increased its portion of council tax by 4.99 % in total; 2% for adult social care, and 2.99% for general spending.

3 Adults and Health

3.1 The Adults and Health Committee have a significant role in ensuring that health inequalities are reduced, and that people enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support suited to their needs.

One of the first decisions of the new 2025 Liberal Democrat administration was to split the committee into two committees: one for its public health, adult social care and procurement responsibilities, and the other dedicated to the council's role in scrutinising local NHS services.

3.2 The council's adult social care services were rated as Good by the Care Quality Commission in summer last year.

3.3 This has been a turbulent time for the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). ICBs are statutory NHS organisations in England responsible for planning and buying healthcare services for local populations. They replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups in 2022.

Last year the Government required enormous in-year and ongoing savings to be made by ICBs. This has resulted in merge of many ICBs as a way of cutting jobs. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, instead of having its own ICB, is now part of NHS Central East, covering Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire.

3.4 The new Health Scrutiny Committee has held meetings where they have heard from various health providers and had the opportunity to ask searching questions. Subjects considered by the Committee have included dentistry, primary care and GP services, and services for children and young people with autism.

3.5 The future of the Arthur Rank Hospice in Cambridge remains uncertain, after the NHS Trust withdrew over £800,000 of support. A private donation has enabled it to continue for a further year.

4 Assets and Procurement

4.1 The County Council's Assets and Procurement Committee has agreed a partnership with developer Prologis to

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support the future expansion of Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

4.2 The council's Shareholder Sub-Committee approved an updated business plan from the council's wholly owned company This Land.

The current council administration has worked extremely hard to stabilise the company, transforming it from the way it had been set up ten years ago under Conservative control.

The updated business plan enables the company to repay interest, reduce the amounts owed to the council, and limit the council's exposure to risk from the company.

5 Children and Young People

5.1 Like most county councils, Cambridgeshire continues to experience huge financial pressures associated with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and with the costs of home to school transport.

The number of children in Cambridgeshire with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has grown by 71% between 2020 and 2025. The council invested an additional £780,000 in the autumn to increase capacity to process these plans. At the beginning of March, the Government released their Schools White Paper. This showing us a potential pathway to improvements in SEND through a more inclusive education framework, one that aligns with our ambitions in Cambridgeshire. Aligned to this paper is the opportunity for the council to receive funding to pay off 90% of the substantial high-needs deficit that has been hanging over our heads and building for so long.

Later in March we had confirmation The Department for Education will be delivering two new special schools in the county, in Gamlingay and March, with 270 new special school places.

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council's services for care leavers have improved since 2024, according to an Ofsted visit in July 2025. They also listed four areas for further improvement.

5.3 In July I was delighted to be join Cllrs Lorna Dupre and Anna Bradnam at the council's Children in Care Celebration and Awards at Inflationbounce in Wyton.

At the end of October, I attended the Care Leavers celebrations in Cambridge to support the amazing young adults that have had to overcome a lot in their early lives, and those that support them so well.

5.4 A new Community outreach service from the council aims to support and develop the skills of parents and children from birth to five years, and of those leading community groups for families with children from nought to five.

6 COSMIC

6.1 COSMIC (Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee) has continued to oversee support for people experiencing immediate financial hardship. An increasing number of families are struggling financially at the moment.

6.2 One urgent issue is the sudden spike in the price of domestic heating oil resulting from President Trump's war in Iran. The council has received £708,000 from the Government which is ring-fenced to support households struggling with this. The money has been added to the council's Crisis & Resilience Fund, and applications (for up to £400 per household) are being administered by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Eligibility for this fund is currently restricted to those on specific means-tested benefits. If the Government's grant were to be shared equally among every household in the county reliant on oil heating, each household would receive less than £27.50; the council is having to make difficult decisions about priorities.

6.3 The committee has procured an IT system which will enable more systematic and earlier identification of low-income households which would benefit from support. South Cambridgeshire District Council has been using this system for a couple of years now, with remarkable results.

6.4 Work is under way to implement the recommendations of Cambridgeshire's Poverty Strategy Commission. These are grouped into six themes: income maximisation, digital inclusion, rural poverty, housing and homelessness, children and families, and mental health.

6.5 Adult learning services in Cambridgeshire were given a 'Good' rating by Ofsted in spring 2025, with the behaviour and attitude of learners judged to be Outstanding.

7 Environment

7.1 Water scarcity and water management is a key issue for Cambridgeshire. Water Resources East is responsible for producing a regional water resources plan for Eastern England, with a combination of infrastructure investment and demand management.

Meanwhile, the Fens2100+ project, which brings together agencies to develop a long-term plan to manage future flood risk in the Fens, has published a suite of reports including a Case for Change, Partnership Action Plan, and summary baseline report.

The move of Anglian Water's wastewater treatment plant from northeast Cambridge to Horningsea was thwarted after the Government removed the necessary funding.

7.2 Community watercourse grants are available from the council to support communities where the condition of local watercourses is increasing the risk of flooding. These can be used for clearance and maintenance, equipment hires, contractor support, or training and safety equipment.

7.3 Cambridgeshire County Council is calling on residents to play an active role in restoring local nature as part of the 'Nature Recovery - From the Ground Up' project; a new initiative supporting parishes and community groups to design their own Community Nature Recovery Plans.

The first phase of the project runs from July 2025 to March 2027, focusing on Cambridge and twenty parishes across East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, and South Cambridgeshire. Other parishes are invited to use the project resources and mapping software, and to register interest for future phases of the project.

7.4 Cambridgeshire County Council has been ranked by Climate Emergency UK as one of the top performing councils in the country for the action it has taken towards Net Zero.

7.5 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) is urging residents to recycle batteries and battery-powered electricals safely, following an increase in fires caused by incorrectly disposed-of lithium-ion batteries. Across the UK, over 1,200 waste-related fires were recorded last year, a 71% rise since 2022.

8 Highways and Transport

8.1 The condition of our roads and pavements deteriorated rapidly over the winter. Highways and Transport Committee chair Cllr Alex Beckett has written a very informative explainer article at notesfromalex.substack.com/p/why-are-the-roads-so-bad-right-now

8.2 The council continues to add more funding to its road maintenance budget, as the funding from Government via the Combined Authority is completely insufficient.

Around 35,000 permits are being issued annually in Cambridgeshire for work on the highway, and in addition works are undertaken that do not require a permit.

Our peat soil roads are a major problem, taking four or five times as much money to repair as regular roads. St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire MP Ian Sollom asked a question about this in parliament.

The drove ways in the north of our division are soil affected and some are becoming a greater concern need pressing over the coming few years until we see improvements.

8.3 The division has done well this year from the capital maintenance budget. We already have new surfaces to roads in Kirtling and the London Road from Newmarket to Six Mile Bottom. Still to come this year is surface treatment to the B1063 between Newmarket and the Suffolk border heading towards Ousden, as well as the B1061 on the edge of Dullingham which is now set to receive a more robust surface, following campaigning by myself and local residents raising ongoing concerns about this location.

8.4 There was yet another review of highways staffing and in September a new Highways Maintenance Officer, Catriona, started who is proving to be very effective.

A new highways Asset Management System, Aurora, also went live in September, enabling better report handling, workflow handling, and performance oversight.

8.5 New LED streetlights are being installed across the county at a rate of about 2,000 per month. Over 47,000 lights will see the new components fitted, with the aim of reducing the council's energy use by one-third.

8.6 Far too many fatalities are being reported on Cambridgeshire roads at present, particularly involving young motorcyclists.

8.7 The council is getting tough on utilities and developers who overstay their permits to work on the highway or fail to abide by the conditions of their permits. In 2024/25 the council issued fines totalling £483,000.

8.8 Bottisham was successful in being the first in the Woodditton division to have a 20mph scheme approved. This has passed public consultation and is set to be installed later this year.

There have been delays to the delivery of projects from the 2024/25 Local Highways Improvement (LHI) projects, but Bottisham, Brinkley, Burrough Green, Lode and Kirtling have all recently or are shortly scheduled to receive delivery of their planned improvements.

Cheveley, Dullingham and Swaffham Bulbeck had LHI projects approved in the 2025/26 programme and many more have submitted applications that I will support through feasibility for 2026/27. Ashley, Bottisham, Burrough Green, Cheveley, Swaffham Bulbeck, Westley Waterless and Woodditton.

8.9 Over the coming year, I had planned to emphasise the importance of reporting issues with the quality of our pavement. Unfortunately, the pertinence of this has recently been highlighted by two separate serious incidents in Swaffham Bulbeck. Upcoming newsletters will offer more clarity around how we can work together to improve this.

8.10 More information about the council's highways work can be found at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transparency

9 Combined Authority

9.1 Work is ongoing on options for bus franchising, with an update due in June. Meanwhile, thirty-five bus routes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, are hanging by a thread as the Mayor seeks to cut half a million pounds from local bus services. The County Council had to contribute funding to keep the young people's Tiger Pass going until March 2027.

The successful introduction of the T4 (Newmarket to Addenbrookes) and T5 (Soham to Cambridge) in the northern section of the Woodditton division have been welcomed. Bus services in the southern section of the division remain very limited and in need of improvement.

9.2 The Combined Authority produced a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire during the year. It is now working on projects including an employment strategy for young people not in education, employment or training; accreditation as a Local Visitor Economy Partnership; and a small trial to install channels in pavements to carry cables for on-street charging of electric vehicles.

10. Council reorganisation

Far too much time this year has been taken up with the Government's plan to abolish district and county councils and replace them with all-purpose unitary authorities.

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Four options for different ways of carving up our area submitted by local councils, were publicly consulted on in February and March. We expect to hear this summer what the Government decide for the future of our area. The County Council submitted 'Option A' which would join East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire in one council, and Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire in another.

Most parish councils across Woodditton and Burwell worked together to write to ministers with a strong case for Option A' and why if the Government decide to proceed with an alternative, our area must be aligned with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This received support from neighbouring parishes in South Cambridgeshire, and we can only hope it has the desired effect.

11 Finally

My thanks to the clerks and parish councillors of the 12 parishes in the Woodditton division, and the many community organisations, whose hard work helps keep our communities together.

Please do continue to contact me by email or phone should you require any support.

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TRUSTEES OF THE BRINKLEY MEMORIAL HALL

It has been another fairly quiet year for the Memorial Hall.

We did not need to carry out any major repairs to the building last year, but we hope to repaint the exterior this year.

Energy costs have also been a concern latterly, fortunately we have enough oil to take us through to the autumn.

We have not acquired any new regular hirers for the Hall and unfortunately the Brownie group have had to discontinue due to lack of members. We had though had a wide variety of other users such as the cycling group, the twice monthly coffee morning is a very successful addition. As a result, our accounting figures are similar to last year, just covering our costs, we currently have nearly £ 21K in total in our bank and saving accounts.

The committee has been able to recruit some new trustees and hope to find more uses of the Hall in 2026/27.

THE BRINKLEY PCC Achievements

1. 4 meetings of the PCC were held on 16th January, 10th April, 31st July, and 18th November. Our Annual Meeting was held on 10th April.
2. The parish has held Holy Communion services on the 1st Sunday of every month, (apart from April 20th, when we 'donated' the Easter service to Carlton); and Morning Prayer services on the 3rd Sunday (apart from 20th July, when we 'donated' that service to Carlton). We held a service of Nine Lessons and Carols on 21st December. We have held 2 funerals, and a memorial service.
3. There were 5 principle fund raising events held in 2025, which raised the sum of £6395 (not including gift aid)
 - For the repair of the churchyard wall, for which no grants were available
 - We had an Easter tea in April, a quiz night in October, and a winter fair in December
 - We produced a village Christmas card which raised money for the church (£ 1250) and for the St Nicholas Hospice (£ 605.00).
4. The parish paid its full share, of £ 7403.15 to the diocese.
5. The Church Electoral roll currently stands at 14 members.
6. The PCC continues to maintain the fabric of the church. Following the Quinquennial inspection in April, we have addressed the main issues, and continue to work on the other areas highlighted by the church architect.
 - PAT testing is current, all appliances having been tested in April, 2025, and some items are due to be re-tested this year.
 - Gutters were cleaned in September
 - following the working party who worked on clearing the churchyard, the church wall, having been exposed, we have employed a local craftsman to repair the wall. The work has begun, but deferred over the winter months, and will be completed once the weather becomes drier and warmer.
 - The old pipe organ was tuned in June.
 - All the fire extinguishers were checked/replaced by Chubb in December.
7. The bells are rung fortnightly, along with tuition ringing for beginners. We hosted visiting bellringers in June, August and December.

The tower captain's husband has trained to repair broken stays, fix ropes, etc for the 6 bells in our church tower.
8. The book exchange has been extended to include jigsaws also, alongside the newspapers and the Food Bank boxes within the church porch.

BURROUGH GREEN PLAYGROUP

Playgroup is doing well. We currently have 27 children on role, although 14 of these children will be leaving in July ready to start school in September. We do have children on a waiting list for more sessions come September and already have 3 children enrolled to start in September. We also have some show arounds booked in over the next few weeks so hopefully we can get our numbers back up for September. We are looking at holding an open morning in the next couple of months which we will advertise on social media and leaflets/posters etc.

BURROUGH GREEN ARCHIVE GROUP

The archive group continues to run.

VILLAGE VOICE NEWSLETTER

Another good year for Village Voice with lots of articles of interest to local residents delivered free to every resident. (460 copies across the four villages). Print costs average about £215 monthly and advertising brings in approx. £1200 annually. A shortfall of approx. £1400. Parish Council donations are therefore an essential part of the financing. After much form filling, I have been awarded a grant of £1000 from Wadlow Community Fund towards printing costs of our village newsletter in 2026, which will also help offset the shortfall. Parish Council funding was part of the application. I hope you value the magazine as a source of information for your residents, especially those not on social media. One of the special things that occurred due to circulating details in Village Voice earlier this year, was the wonderful response following the news that our Postie Carol was retiring after 22 years. Donations came flooding in, as well as presents being given to her on her way round. An invitation in Village Voice to join the coffee morning in Brinkley to present her with her gift, saw over 70 people coming along to say goodbye. Please carry on with your financial support to Village Voice this year. Your donation is vital to its continued publication. Many thanks
Trish Bull

ELLESMERE CENTRE

The Ellesmere Centre is a nonprofit-making charitable Trust managed by a Board of Trustees whose aim is to provide excellent quality, affordable community facilities for the advancement of education, lectures, arts sports, and social gatherings. Over the year we have lost the Post Mistress due to poor health which also meant the Post Office. We then had a battle with the people at Head Office. I am pleased to say they are keen to reopen the service. We are now working on various ideas. With the po shut at present we have noticed a cut back of people visiting the centre. Together with the above we have lost 2 activities, which were out of our control. We are still running the 2 Hubs, a walking group, and a cycling group. We are still hosting a thriving choir, garden club and W.I. We now have a Cancer support coffee morning, for anyone to attend taking place on Thursday mornings. The Rural Plate Project comes every Wednesday supplying beautiful baskets of food for just £5 for those who needed them. Our wellness garden is progressing, and we hope to have an opening at the Summer Show on the 5th of July. We hope that the parish will consider nominating a representative.

5. Q and A session- None