

# MARLINGFORD & COLTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

to be held at Colton Village Hall 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7pm, refreshments on arrival.

## AGENDA

### Present

John Morse	JM	Chairman
Debbie Perfect	DP	Councillor
Mark Pfeiffer	MP	Councillor
Maria Hutson	MH	Parish Clerk
Margaret Dewsbury	MD	Parish and District Councillor
Liz Plater	LP	Colton PCC
Felicity Maton	FM	Marlingford PCC
Marion Morse	MM	Colton Fuel Allotment
2 members of the public		

- 1 To receive any apologies.  
Colton Village Hall, Marlingford Village Hall, Marlingford Cricket Club, Colton Arts and Craft Club
2. To accept and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
JM proposed and MP seconded that they were a true record.
3. **Reports from Local Community Organisations**
  - a) Marlingford PCC, Felicity Maton read out a report, Appendix A
  - b) Colton PCC, Liz Plater read out a report, Appendix B
  - c) Marlingford Village Hall Report, Chris Whiting sent a report which the clerk read out, Appendix C
  - d) Colton Village Hall Report, a report was read out, Appendix D
  - e) Fuel Allotment Charity, Marion Morse read out a report, Appendix E
  - f) Grapevine, Felicity Maton read out a report, Appendix F
  - g) Marlingford Cricket Club, Johnny Wyndham sent a report that the clerk read out, Appendix G
  - h) Colton Arts and Craft Club, Rosanna Ellis sent a report that the clerk read out, Appendix H
  - i)
4. **Reports from other bodies**
  - a) Parish Council Report, John Morse read out a report, Appendix I
  - b) District Council Report, Margaret Dewsbury read her report, Appendix J
  - c) County Council Report, Margaret Dewsbury read her report, Appendix K
  - d) Police, no report was submitted
5. **General Parish Issues raised by members of the public**

Member of the public raised an issue regarding Highways to MD in relation to the Ornsea project.

It was raised the great job John Morse is doing and thanks were given to him for his hard work.

Meeting closed at 19:53

## Appendix A

St. Marys is in a Benefice of 4 Churches, so has an average of one Service a month. Since May last year there were 13, one being Easter Day with a much larger attendance than usual. People come from the 4 villages to join us, few from Marlingford.

There were 3 Weddings, 1 Funeral Service with burial: Julian Mobbs

We have the Parochial Church Council to manage the Church who, with the exception of the Vicar, are all volunteers. As the building is very old and needs maintenance and repair, we have another volunteer, Mark Pfeiffer, who is acting as the Fabric Officer, keeping in touch with the Diocese of Norwich Architect. A tender from a recommended builder has been accepted and initial fees paid to the Architect.

There have been many regular events to raise money for the fabric: Quizzes, Bingo sessions in the Village Hall, and proceeds from the Open Gardens in Marlingford.

In July there was a Church and Churchyard cleanup organised by residents, which attracted many helpers, including family members and friends of the Wedding couples.

It is a hope that more Marlingford residents will come to the Church, which is rarely locked and be inspired to attend Services.

## Appendix B

2024 has been a relatively quiet year. The pattern of Benefice services ensures that there is a Communion service at each church once a month. The second Sunday of the month is St Andrew's turn and we usually host an All Age Service to which young and not-so-young are equally welcome. The format is less formal and often includes 'audience participation' allowing us to reflect on our faith in a more interactive form. It is hoped more young people will join us at this service. During our July service we invited members of the village and the Falgate family to join us in dedicating a bench in memory of Mr and Mrs Falgate, who left St Andrew's a generous legacy in 2023.

Our annual Carol Service, where singing and worship were, once again, joyfully accompanied by the Cawston Brass Band, was a great success. A donation was sent to St Martin's Housing Trust. Little Owls, the village baby and toddler group, meets weekly in Colton Village Hall; it is well supported by families from the Benefice and beyond. The Open the Book team continue to deliver assemblies at St Peter's School Easton.

We were delighted when the car park was completed during the spring. It means that we can now host services during the most inclement of weathers. It is good to know that both churchgoers and members of the community can park in the churchyard without the worry of having to be pulled out of the mud! The churchyard is in excellent condition and remains a haven of peace and beauty. We are grateful to those who are members of the mowing team and especially to Philippa Blake-Roberts who has co-ordinated the rota to date. She and her husband William have now moved away from the village and we hope others may take on this responsibility. The Parish Council continues to support the costs to maintain the churchyard and we are thankful that Karl Palmer who has undertaken the maintenance work especially in

keeping the hedges cut. We are looking forward to the wildflower seeds yielding a beautiful display over the next few years.

The Quinquennial report has now been received and the PCC is beginning to look at ways to address the issues identified. In the meantime, a ramp has been constructed at the entrance and small maintenance works undertaken. Our thanks, as ever, to Terry Scrivener, our Fabric officer for overseeing all that is done.

The Financial Statement covers the detail of the Church's income and expenditure. We are thankful to those who donate their village Fuel Allotment Charity 'hand out' to St Andrew's. Thank you too to Judy Scrivener our Treasurer who takes such a proactive role in overseeing our finances.

## Appendix C

Marlingford Village Hall continues to be used by the three existing art groups that use the hall on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and the dance classes on Tuesdays are all going well. These regular events bring a regular income which gives stability to the finances of the hall and mean that the regular costs of running the hall are covered as well as adding modest amounts to the reserves.

We also provide a venue for the PCC to hold fund raising events on a regular basis, including quizzes and bingo evenings which allows them to raise the much needed funds for the urgent building repairs. Marlingford Cricket Club has also used the hall for fund raising events through the year.

The annual Christmas Fair was postponed this year and has been moved to an Easter Fair for this year. We hope that this will be as well attended as the Christmas Fair and that the weather will be more predictable in April that it is in December.

The hall was opened one hundred years ago in December 1924 and we held a small celebration with a wide range of artefacts from the hall and the village through the life time of the hall. This was well received and the photographs and records generated a lot of interest.

As we come to the end of the year for the hall we are also saying goodbye to our Treasurer of many years, Carol Chiles. This is a sad loss for us as Carol has overseen the financial stability for the hall and we are indebted to her for her efforts. I would like to add my personal thanks to her for the support and guidance that she has provided over the years.

The committee is always grateful for the support received when holding events and the support that we get from the parish council and South Norfolk District Council. If anyone would like to book the hall in advance for an event/party/group or get involved with the organising committee, please get in touch.

We will make improvements to the facilities when we have the finances to do so and we will continue to do this going forward.

## Appendix D

It doesn't seem possible that 12 months have passed since my last chair's report, but here we are, looking back on 2024!

It was another sound year for the hall. We continue to have good support from our groups of regular users and last year the Little Owls and the Colton Art Group were joined by music band Offshoot, who rehearse in the hall every Monday afternoon. They staged a hugely popular debut gig in the hall which raised around £750 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and we hope to see them performing again this year. A new monthly reading group has also been set up in the village and it recently held its first evening in the hall; it would be great to welcome them as regular users.

Casual hires were relatively few and far between last year, which is disappointing, and the cancellation of the local elections will make a dent in our bookings in 2025. We should extend our efforts to encourage local users to take advantage of the hall and what it can offer.

Events staged by the committee still remain popular, with the bigger set-piece occasions like the seasonal bingo nights and summer barbecue continuing to draw good numbers. New events, like the beetle drives, have been a little slower to attract large numbers of people but we expect these to go up each time.

We worked to improve the fabric of the building in 2024, with the installation of acoustic panelling and a height barrier for the car park. This year we will have the outside of the building painted and, subject to the successful renewal of the car park lease, will get the surface re-covered.

During the year we changed banks after years of poor service, and treasurer Marion Morse, who joined us in 2024, will update the meeting on the financial position in detail. Our broad position remains the same; our outgoings exceed our income and this obviously has to change for the long-term viability of the hall.

The running of a community asset like a village hall often falls to a small number of willing people working hard and I'd like to thank everyone on the committee for their efforts and support through the year. On a personal note, I would like to thank the committee, and Vicky in particular, for stepping up while I dealt with my health issues.

## Appendix E

In the last year, income was £1000. 29 payments of £30 per household were made on the night of the Village Hall Bingo on 07/12/24 (£870) and 15 households donated to the church by cheque (£450) so total payments of £1320.

The next distribution will be made in December 2025, at the Village Hall bingo night on 6/12/25. The amount per household will remain the same for 2025, but will likely be reduced in 2026 because the surplus built up in COVID will have been distributed.

The Trustees received a suggestion to allow funds to be collected by a third party if an eligible resident were unable to attend due to ill health. The Trustees supported this providing the third party could provide a short letter signed and dated by the eligible resident with the eligible resident's name and address, and stating their nominated third party.

The Trustees agreed to seek advice on whether the current rent received is appropriate.

## Appendix F

The Grapevine has had another good year and we are pleased we are now able to print the magazine 5 times a year. The magazine is accessible on line for every edition.

We continue to produce 10 issues: double issues for August/September and December/January. This enables the Residents to take advantage of the news we bring them. We have 1000 printed, of which 715 are for Easton, 35 for Festival Homes, 120 for Colton and 130 for Marlingford and the extras are for leaving in village halls, church porches, etc. We have volunteers who deliver a copy to each home and business in the villages. We desperately need more volunteers to help distribute the magazine.

The online version goes out every month and is distributed to all contributors, advertisers and committee contacts as well as those who have asked to be added to the online distribution list.

The magazine is also uploaded to the parish council websites and a link is put on the Nextdoor website which covers Easton, Marlingford and Colton as well as a large part of west Norwich. October and November are busy months for us when we need to renew the advertisers' interest in the magazine..

We are fortunate to have a loyal amount of supporters and now a few new companies to add to our advertisers.

In 2024, Easton Parish Council gave us their annual donation We also received an annual donation from Marlingford & Colton Parish Council Many thanks for your support.

Our advertising revenue amounted to £3399.

Unfortunately the brown envelope scheme for the collection of contributions from residents ceased with Covid restrictions. Consequently we have to rely on donations from villagers with payment into our bank Account and sadly we have only received £45.00 in 2024 and £30.00 to date in 2025 Our Bank Account details are: The Grapevine Magazine Sort Code 20-99-08 Account No20420956

Your help is always appreciated.

Our editor, Annette Hudson is full of great ideas and has developed the magazine over the years and, hopefully, the readers are happy with the new improved version. Annette is always pleased to receive any articles with local interest and news.

Our voluntary committee members are:

Felicity Maton - Assistant Editor

Sally Neale Carol Chiles .....Treasurer

We would welcome anyone who would be interested to join us on the Committee or as a volunteer distributor.

## Appendix G

Marlingford enjoyed another fanatic season on and off the pitch last year.

We reached our first cup final for over fifteen year. Unfortunately we lost but it was a brilliant cup run.

Membership increased and it was a very social and entertaining season.

The club is trying to fundraise to improve facilities and convert part of the pavilion to accommodate a female's changing room.

This season Marlingford is putting on an eight-week cricket programme to coach 5–8-year-olds. There has been a lot of interest and sign ups.

We have 43 fixtures booked in and members have been working hard to get the ground ready for May the 4<sup>th</sup> (our first game).

#### Appendix H

Very successful, 9 members currently but will always welcome more.

These members have made incredible progress as seen at the 2 Art and coffee mornings in the village hall.

The Colton map and art work currently on the general notice board, will find a new permanent home when a specific board put up.

#### Appendix I

**Parish Council Meetings.** As reported at our 2024 Annual Parish Meeting, due to continued non-availability in Marlingford, we currently to hold our meetings in Colton Village Hall. Despite regular, monthly attempts to advertise vacancies in the Community Newsletter, The Grapevine, on Parish Notice Boards and by direct, personal contact, we continue to be short of three councillors and are still very keen to welcome new prospective representatives.

**Precept & Finances.** The Parish Council continues to operate within a tight, but balanced budget. There are however several increased costs, from previous years to include:

- An increase in the Clerk's hours (and pension costs) from 5 to 7 hrs per week.
- A significant increase in legal, audit and subscription costs.
- To create and manage a new .gov.uk website and Email accounts, in accordance with requirements of JPAG (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance).
- The continued maintenance of amenity areas including urgent and necessary remedial work on some trees.
- Legal costs associated with the forthcoming (2025) extension of the lease at Colton Amenity Area & Car Park.
- Continuing to support grants to The Grapevine, Churches, and Marlingford Cricket Club.
- Training Costs and Defibrillator Consumables
- The Establishment of a reserves policy to accommodate unforeseen remedial work.

The proposed uplift to the 2025/26 budget, and particularly, the new reserves policy was presented to and approved at a public meeting in November 2024. It was agreed that £2,000 would be held in reserves, but it is hoped that subject to approval, this will increase in stages to £6,000 in the coming years.

Taking these issues into consideration, the Parish Council precept for 2025/26 has been set at £19,500. This equates to £114.82 per annum, per household or, by comparison with 2024/2025, an increase of 51p a week for a Band D property.

The Parish Council has continued to employ the same Auditors as in 2024.

**Information and Dissemination.** The Parish Council continues to write, print, and distribute a Newsletter, produced in months when the Grapevine Parish Magazine, is only published as an online edition. To date, 14 editions have been published, including a special edition in February 2025, providing information for forthcoming closures over a full weekend, as part of the A47 reconstruction work (see below).

In addition to the use of village notice boards, in line with the requirements of the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance, a new website [www.marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.marlingfordandcolton-pc.gov.uk) has recently been introduced.

Additionally, the Parish Council has been able to augment the membership of the Colton and Marlingford WhatsApp groups. It is still hoped that going forward, we will be able to pool our resources such that both villages can collaborate more, for mutual benefit throughout our parish.

## Local Issues

- 1. Highways.** The continuing construction of the proposed A47 dual carriageway, presents the most significant traffic issue for our parish. This follows on from the complete closure of the A47 over the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> February 2025, and the problems encountered in October 2023 when the same road, near the Honingham Roundabout was closed due to flooding.

Luckily, prior to the more recent event, mitigation efforts to limit the impact of the main road closures through our parish were put in place. These included articles in the Eastern Daily Press, and on BBC Radio Norfolk, plus persuading the local bus companies to change their planned route. Forewarning residents via the Community Newsletter meant that there were no significant problems this time.

The Parish Council continues to send representatives to the A47/NWL Local Liaison Group meetings and additionally to strengthen our profile and effectiveness in lobbying at this forum, we are forging closer ties and have better coordination with several other local parishes on both the north and south sides of the A47.

Despite several attempts, both through the Local Liaison Group, and directly to senior representatives within Norfolk County Council, we have been so far unsuccessful in getting NCC (Highways) to carry out the previously promised remedial works following both the October 2023 and February 2025 issues. The Parish Council find this situation intolerable and will continue to lobby to ensure the promised work is carried out.

One plus side of the relationship with the developers has been the agreement with Galliford Try, Project Managers for the A47 construction, as part of their community outreach programme, The Parish Council, and the Colton Village Hall committee, to re-surface the Colton Village Hall Car Park, in September 2025.

Another issue however, which we believe will have a detrimental effect on our community is the planned permanent closure Easton (Dereham Road) Roundabout, due as the final component of the A47 dualling, and planned for mid-2027. This will mean that the only main road access from Easton onto the A47 will be via the southernmost Longwater roundabout. However, with a significant increase in housing, and thus population, planned in Easton, we are concerned that rat-running to avoid a likely and significant build-up of rush hour traffic, will mean cars will head south, down Marlingford Road, and into Marlingford village.

The Parish Council continues to be concerned about potential speeding and traffic volume issues through both villages, but more specifically, in Marlingford. The Council continues to monitor traffic flow, using both SAM2 speed cameras in Marlingford.

- 2. Footpaths.** Councillors continue to monitor public footpaths in both villages. They are in generally good condition with any issues being reported to Norfolk County Council who oversee these paths, or to the landowners, as necessary. We are however aware that there is still an issue whereby a landowner continues to put up warning signs hoping to persuade the public not to pass near their property. Residents are reminded that such obstruction is against the law, and we are continuing to take steps to rectify the situation.
- 3. The Emergency Services.** The Parish continues to have low levels of crime, although there have been recent examples of fly tipping on roads around the parish. During the recent road closures during the A47 dualling, the Parish Council did approach all three emergency services to appraise them of the situation. Our comments were noted.
- 4. Sports and Recreation Facilities.** In Colton, we will shortly re-start negotiations with the landowner regarding the renewing of lease on the Amenity Area, and Village Hall Car Park. It is hoped that we can get agreement to a longer lease period than previously, for us to seek development funding from such entities as The Heritage Lottery Fund. Following recent inspections, several trees were identified as diseased or rotten and requiring felling. This included trees in the Marlingford Conservation Area, which were adjacent to power lines. This work will be carried out this coming summer.
- 5. Planning Applications.** At the time of writing, in the past year the Parish Council has dealt with five planning applications for properties in Colton, and a further 4 in Marlingford. Of these, the Parish Council has declared no objection to the applications from Marlingford Residents, and similarly for 2 properties in Colton. However, of the remainder, one Colton application was withdrawn, and one has been rejected by the South Norfolk District Council Planning Department, and another is still not resolved.
- 6. The Millenium Yew.** By way of a reminder, and following the item in the 2024 Chairman's Report, it is the intention to plant a replacement yew tree in the churchyard in Saint Andrews Church, Colton. A sapling has been collected and is presently being grown on, hopefully for planting out in 2026.

A Parish Council representative has met with the Bishop of Norwich, the Right Rev. Graham Usher, who is also a keen environmentalist, and he has agreed to participate in the planting of the new tree.

## **CPR Training**

In April, twenty residents took part in a very successful and informative CPR and defibrillator training course of in Colton Village Hall, curated by a representative from NARS, and arranged by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council would again wish to record our considerable thanks for all the work carried out by our Parish Clerk / Bookkeeper / general factotum, Maria Hutson, and to Margaret Dewsbury, our District and County Councillor, for her continuing support, and continued access to grant funding.

I would also like again to extend my thanks to my fellow members of the Parish Council, for their considerable commitment.

## **Appendix J**

South Norfolk Council continues to provide 'business as usual' to support local people with a variety of services including swimming pools, leisure centres and outdoor and play areas to help keep all ages active and healthy. The Help Hub is also there to provide advice and assistance on a wide range of issues when people need support.

South Norfolk Council are part of the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership and work with the Police and other organisations to help make Norfolk a safe place to live.

Last year the council provided a Winter Pressure Grant of £500 to enable local groups to provide a hot drink and somewhere warm for people to meet. The Community Action Fund grant was in great demand and will be offered again this year as well as two new grants, a new Nature Conservation Fund offering five grants of £10,000 to support biodiversity projects and £300 grants to local organisations towards funding VE Celebrations.

The council agreed an average £5 per household increase in Council Tax for the coming year.

Many of our villages have had a lot of development over the last few years and do not want any more so South Norfolk Council has responded to a Government request to plan for a new village rather than continue to add more development to local villages.

The main topic of Conversation at the moment is Devolution and Local Government Reform. The Government expects local councils to come to an agreement but although the other district councils agreed to submit an Interim Report suggesting Norfolk be divided between three Unitary Councils South Norfolk Could not agree because, as part of that, Norwich was proposing an extension of their boundaries to take in parts of Broadland and South Norfolk. South Norfolk submitted a separate report suggesting Norfolk be divided between two Unitaries or just be one single Unitary Council. Further work needs to be done on this, and a Working Group has been set up to collate information to help make the final decision in September.

Over the next few months Parish Councils will be provided with information and consulted by District, County and Government to enable the Government to come to a decision about Norfolk. In 2026 there will be an election for a Mayor who will lead both Norfolk and Suffolk as they become Unitary Councils.

## Appendix K

Norfolk County council has approved a balanced budget for 2025-26. Council Tax will increase by 4.99% which includes a 2.99% rise in General Council Tax and a 2% increase for Adult Social Care. This should raise £572 million to fund all the County Council Services.

### Devolution

As agreed at Cabinet and Full Council, NCC submitted their Interim Plan for devolution by March 21<sup>st</sup>. The Plan stated that the Council would collect all the relevant data and information before suggesting how many Unitaries would be most suitable for Norfolk.

Two working groups have been set up, one to collate information needed to plan for Devolution and a second to collate information required on which to base a decision on the number of unitaries that would be most suitable for Local Government Reform, for Norfolk. The final Plan must be submitted by September 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Ukraine

Last May Kay Mason Billig, NCC Leader, signed a Co-Operation agreement with Lviv. This was to explore educational exchange and trade opportunities. Norwich also has links with Lviv as they are both on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The Fire Service is gradually upgrading our fire engines. At the beginning of April 15 Norfolk fire fighters volunteered to take five ex service vehicles to Ukraine. They joined a convoy of 30 appliances and equipment donated from services across the country as part of a UK wide campaign co-ordinated by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

### National Grid Pylon scheme

NCC objected to the National Grid consultation on the 114 mile overhead power line from Norwich to Tilbury. The Council felt that further consideration should be given to putting more of the power line underground, or by using an off-shore alternative around the coast.

The Council is also concerned about the size and number of solar farms that are being proposed for Norfolk and how they will affect farming and the essential role that farming plays in the local economy.

### Highways

In a National Highways and Transport survey people gave Norfolk the highest satisfaction score, re the condition of the highways, for the second year running. More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed since last April. The Council has also received additional funding for re surfacing roads. Norfolk will receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance this year.

To cut CO2 emissions from street lighting the council began replacing the bulbs with low energy LED bulbs in August 2023 and in November last year the project was completed.

### Parish Partnership Scheme

This year the Parish Partnership Scheme has enabled 97 parishes to deliver schemes that they want for their area. This is a 50/50 scheme by which NCC matches the contributions made by parishes. This year NCC contributed £426,476 which enabled work totalling £848,702 to be delivered.

#### Household Support Fund

The Council committed over one million pounds to help keep people warm during the winter via the Household Support Fund. They worked in partnership with organisations such as Age Uk and Citizens Advice to reach those most affected by the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment. They also helped provide 'warm spaces' in libraries and other community areas for people to meet and socialise. Libraries also provided 'warm packs' of hot water bottle, gloves, hat etc, to take away. Adult Learning provided free courses on cooking on a budget, budgeting and digital skills and the Council also continued providing cost of living vouchers for families eligible for means tested free school meals.

The cost of providing Adult Social Care and Children's Services increases every year. This year we have budgeted £700 million for Adult Social Care and £367 million for Children's Services.

DRAFT