

Alphamstone & Lamarsh Parish Council

Chairman: Cllr Mark Brewer

Clerk: Kevin B. Money 7 Roach Vale Colchester Essex CO4 3YN

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<https://wordpress.com/pages/alphamstoneandlamarshparishcouncil.wordpress.com>

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Parishioners meeting held on Friday 15th. May 2026 at 6.30pm in Alphamstone Village Hall

Present: Cllr M. Brewer (Chair), Cllr S. Nichols, Cllr S. Willis, Cllr B. Twinn and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were 2 members of the public present.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from BDC Cllr D. Holland and Cllr S. Pitman

2. **Chair's report**

Welcome to our Annual Assembly. This is my chairman's report for the year ending March 2026; my fifth as Chairman. I am pleased to be able to provide an update on events over the last year within the Alphamstone and Lamarsh Parish. There have been no changes to the Parish Council over the past 12 months and we still seek a 6th member to the council.

The council's finances remained in good order throughout the year with a healthy financial reserve at the financial year end, which we consider to be prudent in the current environment. The Parish Council increased the precept for 2026/27 by a below-inflation 2.7% or 71p.

Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement project

Pre-construction works, such as the marking out of temporary haul roads and hedge clearance started within the Parish as did an archaeological dig above Daws Hall Cottage and over to Rhyne Park Farm. Major construction activity is expected to commence shortly, with project completion anticipated by late 2028 or into 2029 – as completion date continues to slip.

The Parish Council is mindful of the expected significant increase in both LGV and HGV traffic movements that this project brings and the potential impact that this could have on the narrow lanes in the parish. Whilst National Grid and its contractors are obliged to keep such traffic movements to temporary haul roads, we urge parishioners to bring to the Parish Council's attention any deviations from these obligations so that we hold National Grid to account.

Planning

The Parish Council continues to monitor all planning applications and respond to BDC with consultee comments, mindful that we have no jurisdiction in the process. As an example, despite the PC's objection to the application from School Bungalow to erect a new dwelling next to Lamarsh Village Hall, BDC granted outline planning permission in late March.

Cooks Green (Dark) Lane drainage

Dark Lane's drainage problems sadly continue, with quarterly gully jetting ceasing for no particular reason in December. A new works order has been raised by Essex Highways to repair the broken pipeline that takes taking water from the bottom gully of Dark Lane to the ditch opposite High House, although a date for the work to be carried out has still to be set – after which gully clearance should be resumed.

Alphamstone Village Green Wayleave

The retrospective wayleave agreement between the Parish Council and County Broadband, which ran its fibre optic cables across the Alphamstone Village Green, was finally signed in December 2025 – the costs for which were borne by County Broadband, which is also due to make a one-off payment of £175.50 together with an ongoing annual peppercorn rent.

Speed limits

The Parish Council is aware that speeding throughout the village is a concern to many residents and, as such, continues to look for potential mitigations. Despite representations from the Parish Council, supported by District Cllr Holland in 2024/25 and 2025/26, Essex Highways considers the current status quo to be satisfactory. The Braintree Local Highways Panel (LHP) which is responsible for setting and prioritising speed limits in our parish has indicated that it will not recommend further schemes for inclusion in its two-year programme of work to 2026/27.

Community assets – Village Halls and Community-owned pub

Once again, the Parish Council would like to express its thanks to Helen Neal and Kathryn Parsons as respective chairs of Lamarsh and Alphamstone Village Halls, as well as to all their committee members, for all their time and effort in ensuring that both village halls continue to be focal hubs of the two villages; with many events having taken place in both. There remains a significant and unexpected funding need for

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Alphamstone Village Hall, which expects to require at least £15,000 to repair the rear wall, chimney and roofing.

The Lamarsh Lion Community Pub has continued to serve the community well, although like many businesses within the hospitality sector, it will have been negatively affected by the additional tax/living wage changes that came into force in April 2026. As mentioned in previous years, I urge all parishioners to use and support the pub as and when they can as it looks to transition from a managed pub to a tenanted pub. To not do so risks the existence of one of the community's assets.

Parish Council

I also have a number of thankyou's to make, including and in no particular order:

- Thanks to Cllr David Holland for the work and guidance he has provided the Parish Council as well as our village assets; including help to secure funding for the various projects at the Lamarsh Lion, Lamarsh Village Hall and Alphamstone Village Hall.
 - Thanks to Cllr Peter Schwier who helped in our dialogue with Essex Highways; escalating potholes for repair as well as works relating to Dark Lane.
 - Thanks to Janet Penfold for her outstanding street cleaning services over many years but who confirmed to the Parish Council in April that she would no longer be able to continue.
 - Thanks to our clerk, Kevin Money, without whom the Parish Council would not function.
 - Thanks to my fellow Councillors for all their much-appreciated contributions and efforts over this period.
- The Parish Council continues to be short of **one additional Councillor** within the Alphamstone ward so please let me or the clerk know if you, or anyone that you might know, is interested in filling this vacancy.

I look forward to meeting our new County Councillor, Cllr Collins, who replaced Peter Schwier in the recent local elections.

Finally, I would like to say that as a Parish Council we are interested in the community's views so please write to the council via the clerk (alphandlampc@gmail.com) or come and share your views at a meeting if there is something you think the Parish Council could or should be doing. Parish Council meetings are open to the public, with an agenda item that allows residents to raise issues they want to bring to the council's attention.

3. **Essex County Council report** – No report was given
4. **District Councillor report** – Cllr D. Holland. No report was given
5. **Lamarsh Village Hall** No report was submitted
6. **Alphamstone Village Hall** No report was submitted
7. **Public Forum**

A resident raised the issue about a give way/pull-in area at Park View on Lamarsh Road, following the installation of kerbstones and reduction in size of the "pull-in". The resident indicated that there was evidence that this driveway has been used by passing cars as a pull-in for over 20 years and that there was a safety issue for motorists that had to reverse downhill and around blind bends. Essex Highways have responded by saying that according to the definitive map there is no reason to change what Park View has done with regards kerbstones as they lie within the boundary of Park View. According to Essex Highways, a final determination was recorded and the file has been closed. The resident asked the Parish Council to determine whether the definitive map could be amended. Given that Essex Highways has made its final judgment, the Parish Council believes that there is nothing else that it can do in this instance.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 6.50pm.

Signed

MBrewer

Mark Brewer - Chair

3rd. September 2026