

# Alphamstone & Lamarsh Parish Council

Chairman: Cllr Mark Brewer

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

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Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Parishioners meeting held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup>. May 2025 at 6.30pm in Lamarsh Village Hall

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

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from ECC Cllr P. Schwier and Cllr B. Twinn
2. **Approval and signing of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly** on 17<sup>th</sup>. May 2024
3. **Chairman's report**

Welcome everyone to our Annual Assembly. This is my Chairman's report for the year ending March 2025; my third as Chairman. I am pleased to be able to provide an update on events over the last year within the Alphamstone and Lamarsh Parish.

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 uncertain environment. With this in mind, it was not considered justifiable to absorb inflation, thus resulting in a 2.7% increase in the precept for 2025/26.

### **Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement project**

The Planning Inspectorate approved the Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement project on 12 September 2024. Construction work on the Butlers Wood substation continued during the year, with the first transformer installed and ground works being constructed to accommodate a second transformer. Works (temporary haul roads) within the Parish are expected to commence towards the end of 2025, with project completion anticipated in 2028; a year later than originally expected. As a council, we are 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 roads and lanes within the parish. Whilst National Grid and its contractors are obliged to keep such traffic movements to constructed 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.

### **Lamarsh/Alphamstone Road works completed**

After a number of years of discussion with Essex Highways to address the flooding in Alphamstone Road, and despite the Parish Council's desire and insistence to be involved in the design and decision-making process for any flood alleviation scheme, Essex Highways went ahead and resurfaced Lamarsh Road in February between Burnt House and Lower Mead; installing culverts to divert surface water off the road and into the ditches on both sides of Lamarsh Road. We have yet to experience prolonged heavy rainfall to see whether these measures will help prevent the flooding that has occurred in Alphamstone Road.

### **Cooks Green (Dark) Lane drainage**

Dark Lane's drainage problem was partially addressed during the year. Having been informed in February 2022 that the 11 gullies in Dark Lane would be added to the quarterly maintenance schedule they were finally jetted in November 2024 and again in February 2025. The pipeline taking water from the bottom gully of Dark Lane to the ditch opposite High House still needs to be repaired, Essex Highways having identified a blockage and fractures in the pipe in April 2024. A date for the work to be carried out has still to be set.

### **Alphamstone Village Green Wayleave**

Progressing the retrospective wayleave agreement between the Parish Council and County Broadband, which ran its fibre optic cables across the Alphamstone Village Green, has been slower to complete than had been expected but I believe is now close to finalisation.

### **Speed limits**

Supported by the Parish Council, District Cllr D. Holland submitted a proposal to Essex Highways in January 2024 for the implementation of a 40-mph limit on the road from Middleton via Henny Street and Lamarsh to Bures Hamlet (where 30 mph limits are already in place) to replace the existing national speed limit (60 mph), requesting speed surveys to be undertaken to verify excessive speeds. The response from Highways was that having run two speed surveys on Lamarsh Hill and Bells Hill in 2023 they would not fund another survey (each speed survey costs about £350) as there were insufficient funds in the 2024/2025 year to do so and that this should be funded by the Parish Council. The Parish Council does not believe it is its responsibility to fund this and asked Cllr D. Holland to request such survey be undertaken in the 2025/2026 funding round. We are awaiting a further response.

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## Community assets – Village Halls and Community-owned pub

Once again, I would like to express my 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.

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 tax/living wage changes that came into force in April 2025. As mentioned in previous years, I urge all parishioners to use and support the pub as and when they can. To not do so risks the existence of one of the community's assets.

## Parish Council

We welcomed our Parish Clerk, Kevin Money, who joined the Council after the last annual assembly, formally taking up his position in September. Moreover, I thank him for ensuring a seamless transition with our previous clerk, Frankie Kilby.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for all their much-appreciated contributions and efforts over this period, without which the Parish Council would not function. In September, we welcomed Steven Willis as a new Councillor for the Lamarsh ward. The Parish Council is still 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.

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](mailto: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.

4. **Essex County Council report** – Cllr P. Schwier No report was given

5. **District Councillor report** – Cllr D. Holland. No report was given

6. **Lamarsh Village Hall** No report was given

### 7. **Alphamstone Village Hall**

- Steep learning curve for Kathryn Parsons, having taken on Chair
- Bookings are not doing as well as hoped for
- Games on the green
- Coffee mornings are doing well with big number
- Funds are up by about £1000
- The village hall may be changing its Charitable Status
- Structurally the building is sound
- Due to path problems wheel-chair users are having problems accessing the hall
- The Parish Council wants to be more involved with the community
- The 5 trustees are working well together

### 8. **Public Forum**

A play room has been erected in a back garden which overlooks the neighbouring gardens. The Councillors advised the resident to contact BDC Planning Enforcement officer.

The Chair then closed the meeting at 6.50pm.

Signed

*MBrewer*

**Cllr Mark Brewer - Chair**

4<sup>th</sup>. September 2025