



Little Blakenham Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Church on Tuesday, 19th May 2026 at 7pm

PRESENT: Cllr W Binder (PC), S Wright (PC), L Keen (PC), B Palmer (PC), A Brown (PC), M Kenningale (PCC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs J Blackburn (Clerk), District Cllr Marriott and two members of the public.

LB01/26/27 - CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman of Little Blakenham Parish Council, Cllr Wally Binder, welcomed those present.

LB02/26/27 - APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr J Latham.

LB03/26/27 - MINUTES 20th MAY 2025

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, held on 20th May 2025, were approved as a true record and were duly signed by the Chair.

LB04/26/27 - REPORTS RELATING TO THE PARISH

Representatives of the following organisations were invited to speak and answer any questions. Where received, their reports are attached to the Minutes.

- a) **Little Blakenham Parish Council** – *Cllr Wally Binder*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Binder read through his report, which would be published on the village website.

- b) **Mid-Suffolk District Council** – *Cllr Adrienne Marriott*

Cllr Marriott reported that over the past year, she had done the following:

- Regularly acted upon enquiries from the public, e.g. in relation to household flooding and to inappropriate disposal of household waste.
- Spent all my Locality Allowance for 25/26 in supporting local projects such as work on the new village hall at Little Blakenham and picnic tables and lighting for Somersham & District Community Association and would shortly be inviting parish organisations to contact me regarding this year's grant.
- Attended many meetings relating to Port One developments and to the three local solar farms. At meetings with EDF we discussed, amongst other things, the setting up of the Tye Lane Community Benefit Fund.
- Last spring she attended many Planning Committee meetings in place of a colleague who was ill, as well as attending Joint Planning and Audit meetings and meetings of the Biodiversity Working Group. The latter have come to an end now but were instrumental in the decision by Mid Suffolk District Council to commit £1.8m over the next three years to accelerate work which enhanced biodiversity and nature. The plan focused on priority

habitats and species in Mid Suffolk which were identified by the Working Group. Around half of the funding was going to a new community Nature Recovery Grant fund and money would go both to community-led projects and towards the restoration of rivers and their catchments.

- c) **Little Blakenham Parochial Church Council (PCC) and Village Recorder – Michele Kenningale**
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Michele Kenningale went through her report, which would be published on the village website.

- d) **Suffolk County Council – Cllr Asa Downing**

Newly elected Cllr Downing was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

LB05/26/27 - PUBLIC FORUM

Two members of the public were present. The following matters were raised:

- Opening in hedge on Valley Road – what was it for?
- Fly tipping concerns
- Nine Acres – building work had commenced

The meeting closed at 7.22pm

Chairman Date

Chairman's Report 2026

As council chairman it is my pleasure and responsibility to thank our clerk Jennie for the very excellent way she has managed our parish business during the last year much extra work has been created with the all the planning details that had to be completed Thank you JENNIE very much

Port one have kept in touch during the snagging problems we have had and although it has gone on longer than we hoped I am sure we are all greatfull for what they have done The development that port one are working on has been a subject of considerable worry to all the parishioners in the village and consents for this are beyond our level but I hope that our comments will be considered

Your council has had the required number of meetings and council members have given their apologies

if unable to attend

I would also like to thank councillor Keen for her stirring work in organising the hire of the village hall and putting in the bits and pieces to make it feel efficient

I am sure she has enjoyed letting the new hall Thank you Linda

This year we have seen an increase in the number of parishioners attending our meetings and they have put forward useful comments to the councillors for their reconsideration

The difficult spot again this year has been the opening of the new gateway at the top of church hill in valley road we had a very serious complaint from a parishioner and this was passed on to the relevant authorities and to date we have not had closure on this matter

The village play area is reviewed as the possibility of moving this to another play area opposite the village hall and I thank councillor Andy BROWN for his work on this project

Speeding traffic through our village has also been a concern especially the bottleneck on leather bottle hill we have reported this and hopefully something will be done pound lane is still a problem with HGVs taking a short cut this too is being looked at

Our new village hall cleaner. has started work and although they have had a bit of a muddy start they seem to be doing a good job

There are now several small plots of land in the village and I am sure that our parishioners will wish that we make sure that any development is in the correct format

I have been a councillor for It blakenham for about 60 years and I think the time has come for me to stand down I thank you all for your tolerance

Wally Binder

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Parish Council for inviting me on behalf of the Parochial Church Council to present St. Mary's 2025 Summary.

All four churches in the benefice have an established pattern of Sunday worship with Holy Communion.

Sunday worship at Lt B is at 11am on the 4th Sunday of the month. Attendance remains static at between 11-20 including support from our sister parishes.

We also thank the Parish Council for allowing the use of the new Village Hall for post service refreshments.

Life Events 2025

Baptisms 0, Weddings 0, Internment 1

Parish Share

The Parish Share continues to be our biggest financial challenge.

The Diocese requested £7,000 from us in 2025, we managed to pay £3,000.

Church Interior

The PCC have been exploring ways to sensitively improve the interior of the church so it may better serve the community.

Initial proposals are:

The removal of the dilapidated organ alongside some back pews and 2 rows of choir pews.

On 5th March we received a visit from various members of the Diocese, alongside representation from Suffolk Church Buildings, Historic England and English Heritage all were very supportive of our ideas.

Churchyard Care and Upkeep

The churchyard is very large for such a small parish and previously has been extremely difficult to manage. We are grateful that we now have The Probation Service, Community Payback Team helping us to maintain this large area on a regular basis.

Reclaim the Rain

This is a project run by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils to test new ways of managing water in small rural locations. Lt Blakenham were one of the three villages chosen for the project and the PCC have received a new bench at the front of the church alongside 3 water SUDs Pods (x1 at the front and 2 at the back) from the project

PCC Village Events

February - Annual Snowdrop Event and April - Annual Bluebell Event at Blakenham Woodland Garden in aid of Lt Blakenham and Nettlestead Churches

We are grateful to Marcia Blakenham for her ongoing support of both Lt Blakenham and Nettlestead Churches through the Snowdrop and Bluebell events. These events witness both parishes coming together with many people from both parishes playing a part in the very successful baking and running of the events.

Annual Village Fete and Dog Show - The Old Rectory Garden,

July witnessed the Annual Village Fete in aid of Little Blakenham Church Fabric Fund. We are so grateful to Julia Buckmaster for her continued support of this popular village event by making her garden available to us.

The Three Cordettes

August witnessed an evening with The Three Chordettes, a 1940's/50's Jazz and Swing group. The event venue was supported by Marcia Blakenham and held in the Amphitheatre inside the Woodland Garden. The event was in aid of Little Blakenham Fabric Fund and supported very well from near and far.

Christmas Bazaar

November witnessed the annual Christmas Bazaar held in the church and Rev Eric Falla in full swing playing Christmas carols via his speaker system

Christmas Eve Service 6pm

Over the last 4 years this service more than any other has witnessed the engagement of the community and reflects a full church each year. Post service neighbours and visitors alike have an opportunity to know each other while refreshments including warm mulled wine are served

Finally

As previously mentioned, the PCC are not only grateful to Marcia Blakenham and Julia Buckmaster for their continued support allowing us to use their properties for the venues. The biggest appreciation however goes to all those from our community and beyond who support us so well at these events whether it is behind the scenes or attending an event.

Finally, the PCC we give many thanks to Steve Wright, who without his help and support, none of these village events would happen.

Michele Kenningale
St. Mary the Virgin
Churchwarden.